

the logical gamer

THE MONTHLY HOME VIDEO GAMES REVIEW

JUNE, 1983

Number 11

\$1.50

Starpath's Dr. Robert Brown Interviewed

Pre-CES News

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JUNE, 1983

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Imagic Announces New Games, '82 Sales

Imagic disclosed their 1982 fiscal year sales results May Third, as well as a preview of major product in-

leased yet. **BEEZER** will be released for Intellivision and **NOVA BLAST**, just released for Intellivision, will soon

sales figures cannot yet reflect the consumer interest in systems beyond Atari and Mattel -- "a reason for con-

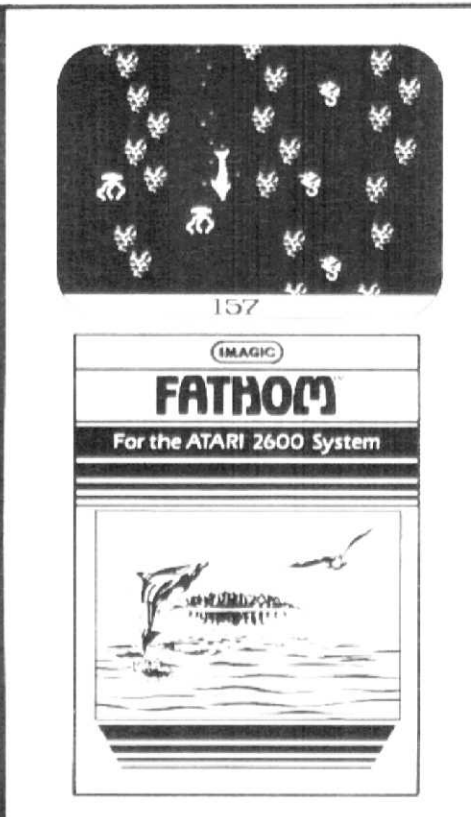
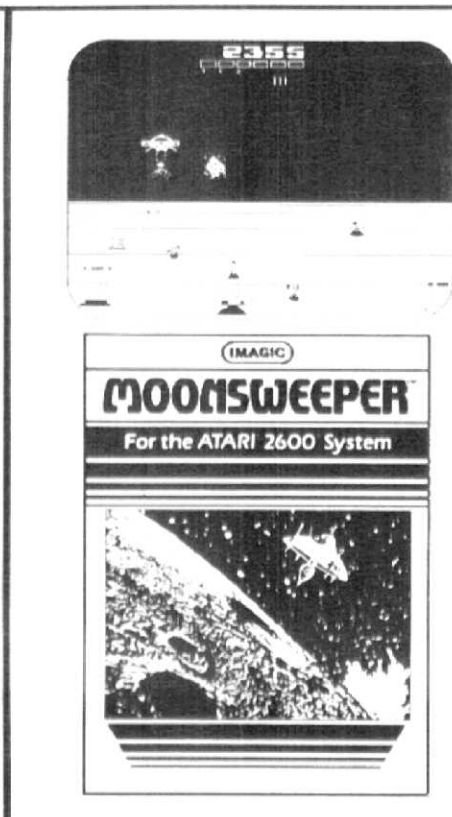
U.S. Games
Folded by Quaker

The Quaker Oats Company reported April 26 their earnings for the third fiscal quarter ending March 31. The results included major write offs for three of the company's operations, including that of its U.S. Games video game cartridge business segment.

The U.S. Games subsidiary, a supplier of video game cartridges, was acquired by Quaker Oats a year ago, and is being closed at a charge of \$.10 per share. "The acquisition of U.S. Games was made to explore the possible fit of video game technology with the Fisher-Price toy business," said William D. Smithburg, President and Chief Executive Officer. "However, we did not foresee the rapid oversaturation in the market and have decided that without major marketing investments, continuing the business was not viable."

U.S. Games, a Santa Clara, California-based company, was founded in 1980 as a manufacturer of hand-held electronic games and introduced its first home video game cartridges at the January 1982 Consumer Electronics Show. The company was acquired by Quaker Oats in April 1982.

Following acquisition, market dynamics changed, -- from that of retail demand for cartridges that outpaced supply to "saturation of the market," according to company releases. Of the nine cartridges produced by U.S. Games within the past year, none achieved major "hit" status. Some of the titles included **SPACE JOCKEY**, **WORD ZAPPER**, **SNEAK 'N PEEK**, **TOWERING INFERNO** and **COMMANDO RAID**. Sales in calendar 1982 were approximately \$6 million.



roductions planned for unveiling at the June Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. Imagic currently produces software for Atari's 2600 VCS and 400/800 computers, Commodore's VIC-20 personal computer and the Odyssey-2 video game system.

"In June we'll show more than a dozen new titles compatible on six video computer systems and personal computers," said Imagic President William F. X. Grubb. "Among our introductions will be a number of 'firsts.' We will be launching games for Colecovision and will unveil our first game licensed from a coin-operated game production, **BEEZER**, a challenging strategy game."

Imagic also has announced the unveiling at the June CES of four new games for the VCS, two for Intellivision and one for Colecovision. **SOLAR STORM** is a space attack VCS challenge where the player must eliminate a colorful bunch of aliens who threaten to overheat Earth and destroy it. In **MOONSWEeper**, coming for the VCS, Intellivision and Colecovision, players must dodge asteroids to land on one of Jupiter's moons and dodge alien ships and towers to rescue some stranded miners. VCS and Intellivision players begin as a seagull in **FATHOM**, then, after searching for needed treasures, turn into an enchanted dolphin that must reach the ocean bottom, dodging seaweed and octopi. If he or she can rescue a trapped mermaid, she will lead the dolphin to Neptune's cave and countless treasures. Details about **TARANTULA**, another new Imagic VCS game, haven't been re-

be available for Colecovision and for the VIC-20. **TRUCKIN'**, a new Imagic video simulation for the Intellivision system, has just seen release.

Grubb also announced that Imagic achieved over \$75 million in sales during their past fiscal year (ending March 1983), "a volume substantially ahead of original projections." According to the company president, these

siderable optimism at Imagic."

"We are positioning ourselves for a virtual explosion in consumer demand for home computer entertainment software," Grubb added. "This new software generation has just begun -- blending technology, art, practical application and fun. That's where Imagic is headed."

5-6 New games from Starpath

Starpath Corporation, producers of the Supercharger, for the Atari VCS, Sears Video Arcade and other similar systems, announced May sixth that it will introduce five or six new video games at the June Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. The company also announced it will debut all-new packaging for its Supercharger unit.

"We anticipate an enthusiastic reception for **SWEAT** and **RABBIT TRANSIT**, as well as for the currently untitled games," commented Bob Brown, executive vice president of research, development and engineering.

RABBIT TRANSIT involves three separate game screens. The player is a rabbit who must avoid snakes and poison moths, take a boat ride and jump platforms while dodging dropped objects. The third screen is a scoring display.

SWEAT is a Multi-Load decathlon game. Up to nine players can participate in ten video decathlon events.

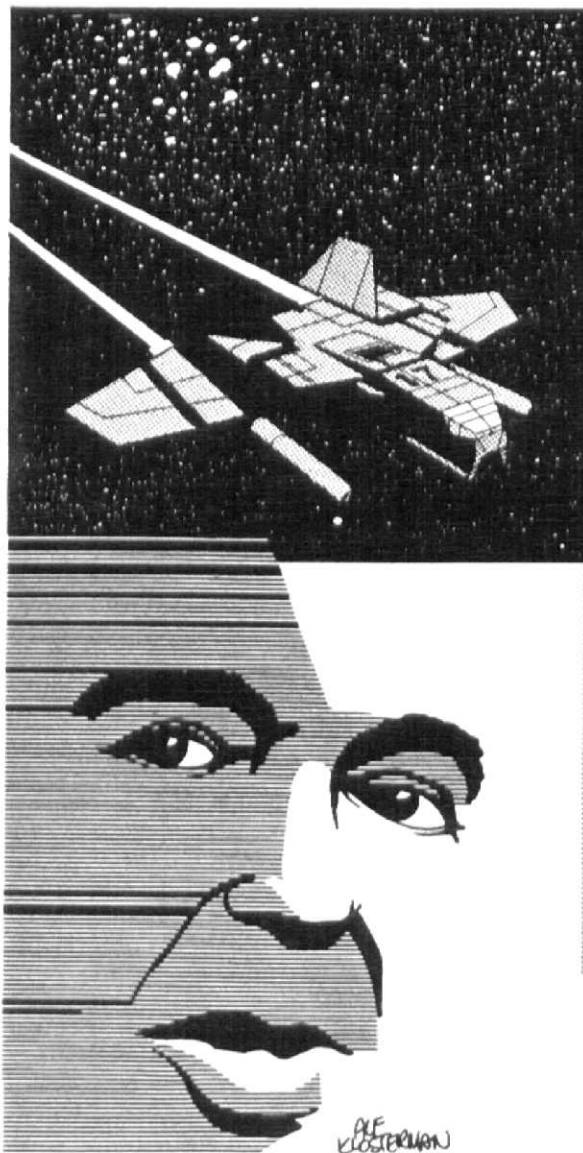
One of Starpath's untitled games is a Multi-Load challenge that pits the blue team

against the red team in high-action party games for up to four players. In another, the

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GAME VIEWS

The Editor Speaks

by Alan R. Bechtold

YOU SPEAK -- WE LISTEN!

The results of our last mini-survey are now in and being tallied. I want to thank each and every one of you who cared enough to respond, and all of you for your enthusiastic reaction to THE LOGICAL GAMER. We'll be covering the results of that survey -- and running another -- next issue.

Meanwhile, we've been watching your comments on our publication closely, and it's been both enlightening and heartwarming. It seems that THE LOGICAL GAMER is definitely on the right track in most every way, with a couple of possible exceptions, which we are trying to correct beginning with this issue. Most of you said you love our reviews, and the news pages are the best you've seen. We'll keep that up, I promise. With so many of our readers saying we are better than all of the video game publications on the newsstands, we don't want to mess too much with a formula that is obviously working well already.

One suggested improvement, however, cropped up repeatedly enough to make us open our eyes. Many of you have suggested that we shorten our game descriptions a little, to make room for more reviews. This makes a lot of sense to me, since writing those descriptions is probably the hardest part of my job, so this issue reflects a change more along those lines.

To be honest, we were always afraid that our game descriptions might be running a bit long from the beginning, but have always felt that our readers deserve to know enough about a new game to make up their own minds from the description itself, with the added comments from Mike and myself serving as additional help. You, on the other hand, have told us time and again that it's more comments from us you want to see, so this month's reviews feature shorter descriptions, of more games than ever before in one issue, each with the same detailed, careful analysis from Mike and I.

Let us know if you like the difference I feel this change has made. We worked very hard to shorten the descriptions without losing any of the necessary details, but we're always open to more changes if you, the readers, see the need.

Despite the surprising number of you who also own home computers, we will also be cutting back our coverage of video games for those systems. As evidenced by the news pages in this issue alone, there is still so much happening for the dedicated game machines that I am beginning to feel they will always deserve an entire publication devoted exclusively to their offerings and their users' needs. Read through this issue. A number of major announcements and breakthroughs, like GameLine, the new re-programmable cartridges from Romox, K-Tel's entrance into the cartridge scene and new computer modules and systems that will utilize your current game systems, to name just a few, will fill up pages and pages of THE LOGICAL GAMER for many months to come. I said a few months back that we would cover computer gaming, as long as there was room after video game machines and software were fully covered, but it doesn't look like there will ever be enough room to do both and do either any justice. Consequently, we'll continue to cover what we already cover best, and leave computer game coverage to all the other fine publications out there who are already doing such an excellent job.

This doesn't mean that we don't feel computers are important. We just believe that both types of systems are important, and will remain so for many years to come. THE LOGICAL GAMER'S complete coverage of the home video game systems and software is unique and should remain so. It simply wouldn't be right any other way.

This also doesn't mean we won't be covering computers. We will cover hardware and software for the computer add-ons coming for your present dedicated systems. We'll also publish programs to run on them and solicit them from you, the readers, as well. I suspect that computers just won't serve much purpose for many of the owners of game systems, so there will always be those who just own those systems. Many others will add computer capabilities to the existing systems they already own. THE LOGICAL GAMER will remain the only publication you need for information and reviews like no one else offers for these systems. You can count on that!

In the months ahead: Next issue will feature our own exclusive and detailed coverage of the June Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. Many exciting new products and innovations are scheduled to debut this time around, so you won't want to miss that issue. You also won't want to miss our special gala FIRST BIRTHDAY issue and celebration in August, when we'll give you a run-down of what's happened in the past year, a wrap-up of the games we've covered so far, and some strong opinions on where this crazy exciting hobby is headed. Then we will begin our special Collector's features, running monthly checklists of complete video game catalogues from the various producers, with brief ratings and descriptions, and information on how you can get into video game collecting (and playing, of course!) and use our pages to help.

We will also begin regular coverage of what's happening on cable services like The Games Network and others such as GameLine -- and, as always, a lot of what is coming will be as much of a surprise to us as it will be to you. Believe it or not, those reader-participation contests are also still in the works, and the first one will debut next month, with free subscriptions, back-issue collections, games and, yes, even complete systems, on board for the winners. Stay tuned, won't you?

-- See ya' next month.

IMAGIC —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1—

shipwrecked player must evade shark attacks and conserve food and water while trying to reach an island refuge. Trials en route to and within a secret temple on the island complete the adventure. The third game, billed as "an

ultimate adventure game of invisible mazes," involves secret rooms, treasure, magic and cunning.

The Starpath Supercharger increases the Random Access Memory (RAM) of the Atari VCS and similar systems, adding high resolution graphics capabilities and giving the unit "true computing power."

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SEND US YOUR NEWS!!!

CVC Rolls Out GameLine, Plans VCS Telecommunications

Control Video Corporation (CVC) officially announced May 5 the first interactive telecommunications service linking the popular Atari VCS and VCS-compatible video game consoles with a distant central computer.

The service, GameLine, will allow the estimated 12 million owners of VCS units in the U.S. to tap a central computerized library of video games licensed from leading manufacturers, on a pay-per-play basis. Gameline will begin operation this month, according to William F. von Meister, founder, president and chief executive officer of the Vienna, Virginia-based company, who made the announcement.

Von Meister, 41, developer of The Source, a pioneer home information retrieval system (subsequently acquired by The Reader's Digest Association), said GameLine is the first of a number of CVC services planned, including electronic mail, news and information, home banking and financial management.

Financial backing for the telecommunications venture comes primarily from Imagic, the video games manufacturer, and a number of prominent venture capital firms and individuals. CVC's telecommunications link for the Atari VCS and other game units with VCS adapters is its Master Module, a unique device which is inserted into a game console, just like a game cartridge, and connects to a telephone or telephone outlet.

The Master Module automatically calls the GameLine central computer and receives a video game program, all within 60 seconds. Once the game is transmitted and stored in the Master Module's memory unit (8k RAM), the phone is free to be used again and the game can be played exactly as if it were

in conventional cartridge form. Telephone calls are always local or toll-free and are routed either through CVC's own data transmission network or channelled via standard IN-WATS lines.

The Master Module and GameLine will initially be available directly from CVC, by calling (1-800-CVC-2100) and then from consumer electronics and video game retailers, beginning this summer. The Master Module is expected to be priced to retail for \$50 - \$60. A one-time membership fee of \$15 is required and billing is via a major credit card. Parents will be able to establish and change individual weekly credit limits to regulate their children's use of the system. Von Meister said the company expects to be in at least 30 markets by the end of 1983.

Generally, each game session ordered through Gameline will cost \$1.00. Depending on the game and the player's skill, a session could last from a minimum of about 40 minutes to hours. The number of plays of each game is determined in consultation with its manufacturers to ensure sufficient play value for the average player. Home video games also usually have a top score limit. Once the limit is exceeded, the game "rolls over" and it restarts. Rollover will also be considered one play.

In addition to providing an enormous variety of games, GameLine will also offer previews of new games just coming out on the market, a chance to sample games before purchase and a way for avid players to match skills and scores against opponents throughout the nation.

GameLine is unique in its ability to gather scores instantly and let a player see

—CONTINUED ON PAGE 22—



Control Video's new GameLine Master Module hooks up to your Atari VCS, then to any telephone, bringing CVC's large Mainframe computing power to your video game system, including a complete library of games and true telecommunications capabilities.

THE NEWS ... IN BRIEF

***Another home video game has been purchased for coin-op production. The first-ever home game purchased for arcade release was Data Age's **JOURNEY'S ESCAPE**. The second, and most recently-announced, is **COSMIC CHASM**, originally released for Vectrex play. Cinematronic has purchased the rights from General Consumer Electronics.

***Colecovision has now joined the ranks of the All-Mighty, as far as game system sales go, by announcing the sale, during the third week of March, of their one millionth Colecovision game console. The company predicts sales could reach 2.5 million by mid-summer.

***Telesys' **FAST FOOD** competition, a Multiple Sclerosis benefit held for two weekends at Marine World/Africa USA in Redwood City, California, was won by Ronda Kirby, a 33-year-old lady from San Jose. First prize was a trip for two to Hawaii. Ronda played **FAST FOOD** for 25 minutes, scoring 11,556 points, to win.

***Astrocaders unite! That's right -- now you can get together with other owners of the venerable Bally system and swap talk, tips and even software, through **BUG**, the Bally Users Group. Kevin O'Neill is President of the Niagara Regional **BUG**. Contact him at 6 Wood-dale Drive, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2T 1Y8, for information on joining and participating. You'll get more from your system if you do.

***North American Phillips, producers of the Odyssey-2 video game system, have announced they are abandoning plans to produce and market their previously-announced Odyssey-3, an upgraded version of the earlier console. The Odyssey-3 was to have a typewriter-like keyboard and built-in telecommunications capabilities. It was also to offer gamers more detailed graphics and play, on cartridges that would also be playable on the Odyssey-2. Reports from company officials indicate they are now working on a full-fledged home computer, instead.

***Data Age has definitely filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy, after many rumors to such effect. Their initial line-up of five games, including **AIRLOCK**, **SSSNAKE**, **BUGS**, **ENCOUNTER AT L-5** and **WARPLOCK**, generally received little praise from critics, and didn't sell very well following their release. Data Age's three latest releases, **JOURNEY'S ESCAPE**, **FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER** and **BERMUDA TRIANGLE**, fared better, but industry rumors have it that promotional efforts on their **JOURNEY'S ESCAPE** game outstripped sales at a time the company was swamped with returns on their earlier releases, and the pressure was just too much.

***Spectre Systems, an independent software publisher, has released a new game for the Astrocade system. **TREASURE COVE** is a one-to-four-player game where gamers must retrieve ocean treasures and avoid contact with 25 different types of sea life, any five of which can be on-screen at the same time. A limited oxygen supply and mean boat captain must also be dealt with. The game features continuous music and a unique mode for tournament competition. It's available from Esoterica Ltd., Box 614, Warren Ohio 44482.

***N.A.P. Consumer Electronics has announced plans to produce new video games for the Atari VCS, Intellivision and Colecovision systems. They have picked up home game rights for the Pink Panther character who should star in their first releases.

***Imagic's new game, **NO ESCAPE**, includes an unusual enticement to purchase. The company will send gamers who return a proof-of-purchase seal from the VCS-compatible game a free Zircon gourmet joystick, valued at \$15.95 retail. Designed by Michael Greene, the game pits players against the Furies in the Temple of Aphrodite. The Furies must be destroyed by throwing rocks at them. The cartridge offers eight levels of play.

***North American Phillips has sued Bally, for royalties they say are coming to them from profits earned on the Bally/Midway arcade phenomenon, **PAC-MAN**. Phillips claims the exclusive license for circuitry used in such video games belongs to them, and was licensed to Bally/Midway in 1976.

***K-Tel has announced their entry into the video games market, under the Xonox label. The record giant has announced plans to market a number of double-header cartridges, each with a completely different 8k game at each end. They'll use their already-familiar late-night TV format for the ads, which will begin running right after Labor Day. Titles already announced include **SPIKE'S PEAK/GHOST MANOR**, **SIR LANCELOT THE JOUSTER/ROBIN HOOD**, **HERCULES vs. THE TITANS/CHUCK NORRIS - SUPERKICKS** and **THUNDARR THE BARBARIAN**. Rumor has it that Xonox will release games for the VCS and Colecovision systems. Stephen Beck, author of an upcoming Fox release, **SAVE THE WHALES**, is one Xonox designer who has been named. The company claims their games will feature particularly strong graphics. Many will feature multiple-screen challenges. The carts will sell for the same price as

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New VCS Add-Ons, Games Coming From Amiga

Amiga Corporation, a manufacturer of video games and controllers, has announced a three-pronged product line for the last half of 1983, including an Atari Memory Expander and several new video games, a new Professional joystick and an innovative video game controller that allows players to use their entire bodies as a joystick.

"The Power," is a RAM (Random Access Memory) module that allows loading of games into the Atari VCS with any standard audio cassette player or recorder. It plugs directly into the VCS. Instead of using ROM (Read Only Memory) -- which cannot be changed -- "The Power" uses RAM, which can be. After "The Power" is purchased the first time -- at basically the same price as a ROM cartridge -- the software is changed with inexpensive "Power-Play" game cassettes, which are loaded through any cassette recorder or player.

When the program is loaded, the Atari then functions the same as if a ROM cartridge were in place. Loading time averages between 15 and 30 seconds.

Another feature of The Power is its interactive game-playing capability. When combined with individual modems (computer telephone communications devices, which can be purchased separately), two Power modules can "talk" to each other over any dial-up phone line -- virtually anywhere. One player can be the submarine commander, another the destroyer -- each with their own display and commands. The modem handles the transfer of information between player's machines.

Power-Play games also offer additional features. A unique programming procedure allows games to be played in 3-D, with the same red/blue glasses (included with the Power Module) used to watch 3-D movies. This option brings a new dimension to video game play. Other features include expanded sound capabilities and more complex graphics.

The Power module comes packed with two Power Play game cassettes: **3-D GHOST ATTACK**, the first true 3-D video game, and **DEPTH CHARGE**, the first machine-interactive video game. **GHOST ATTACK** is a search-and-destroy challenge that takes place in a haunted mansion. **DEPTH CHARGE** is a one- or two-player submarine/destroyer battle that can be played head-to-head or even through the telephone lines, with the optional modem.

Other games are also coming soon for the Power Module. **STRAFE** is a graphically detailed shoot-em-up offering play that is similar to Activision's **RIVER RAID**. **3-D HAVOC** is an **ASTEROIDS**-type game for use with the special Module-included glasses for depth. **S.A.C. ALERT** is a first-person airplane dogfight. **SCAVENGER HUNT** asks players to locate a number of hidden objects before the sun goes down.

The game cassettes are set to retail for under \$10.00. Most of Amiga's games will also be available in VCS cartridges and for the Commodore VIC-20 and Atari's 400/800/1200XL home computers.

Amiga has also announced a precision joystick for use with the VCS, and for Atari 400/800/1200 and Commodore VIC-20 home computers.

Dubbed the Power-Stick, the new controller employs a dynamically different technology than other Atari-compatible joysticks do. The Power Stick differs from conventional joysticks in that it provides true eight-way response. Most other joysticks -- which use only four switches -- require that two of these switches be activated to achieve 45 degree on-screen direction changes. According to the company, the Power Stick's precision design can actually increase a player's scoring potential on virtually any video game.

The Power-Stick features a one and one half-inch handle, for "faster, more direct control of screen objects." The company says the shorter joysticks will be more durable, as well as more responsive. "Joysticks which use a longer handle are more prone to failure because of the leverage which can be exerted upon the internal switching mechanisms." Two fire buttons

will accommodate both left and right-handed players. Individual Power-Sticks are set to retail for a suggested \$9.95, pairs for \$19.95.

The Joyboard is another new Amiga controller that utilizes the gamer's entire body. It can be stood on to simulate skiing, sat on for bobsledding or even layed on for body-surfing. In fact, Amiga has produced a complete line of first-person video games to utilize the board. The games announced so far include skiing, surfing and body-party games.

According to the company, the Joyboard can also be used with many currently available video games, to add an exciting new twist. Used with "Maze-type" games such as Atari's **PAC-MAN** and M-Net's **LOCK-n-CHASE**, the Joyboard introduces a whole new control element. Or a conventional joystick can be plugged into the Joyboard and used with "invader-type" games such as Imagic's **DEMON ATTACK** and Activision's **MEGA-MANIA**. The joystick trigger button is used for firing and the Joyboard controls the lateral movement of the shooter.

The Joyboard comes with **MOGUL MANIAC**, a first-person skiing/slalom simulation game. Other planned game titles include **SURF'S UP** and **OFF YOUR ROCKER**. Additional games are under development.

Re-Programmable Game Cartridge by Romox

Soon, trading in your games could take on a whole new meaning. Romox, Incorporated, a volume manufacturer of computer games, has announced the first 100% guarantee on computer software ever, based on a new programmable cartridge technology that promises to revolutionize the distribution methods of the entire computer/video game industry.

Romox's patent-pending "Edge Connector Programmable Cartridge" (ECPC) -- the first "returnable" cartridge -- differs from conventional video/computer game cartridges, which use ROM (Read Only Memory) chips that cannot be reprogrammed. The ECPC cartridges use EPROM (erasable programmable read-only memory) chips that can be programmed in minutes without being removed from the cartridge. Because programming is now practical and economical, Romox can accept the return from any retailer of any of its current 19 game titles that remain unsold after 90 days.

Romox is also making ECPC technology available, under a licensing arrangement, to software producers in the

—CONTINUED ON PAGE 5—

New Games, Hardware, Name for Vectrex

General Consumer Electronics, the Milton-Bradley company that created and now markets their Vectrex programmable stand-alone arcade system, has announced a number of new game cartridges and hardware add-ons to be unveiled at the June Consumer Electronics Show, and a subtle name-change for the unit.

The California-based company has begun referring to its system as a "Graphics Computer System," rather than the "Arcade System" it has been referred to in the past. The emphasis has been put on the graphics, a company release stated, because of the system's ability to create 3-D images, fluidity and speed -- all graphic capabilities.

The new Vectrex Light Pen will be a new add-on that will allow users to participate in direct interaction with the built-in screen. Specially-developed cartridges will work with the pen to allow Vectrex owners the ability to create their own brilliant graphic effects, compose music, play educational games and even create real animation.

The Vectrex Light Pen should be available this fall, with the following cartridges: **ART MASTER**, an introduction to the Vectrex's graphic capabilities with games like "Connect the Dots," "Sketching" and "Beginning Animation." **MUSIC????**, a Vectrex introduction to the fine art of music composition, **ANIMATION**, a

step beyond the animation skills available in **ART MASTER**, with "unlimited graphic opportunities," and **MAIL PLANE**, a game that instructs

as it entertains, with graphic depictions of the world's geography. The **ART MASTER**

—CONTINUED ON PAGE 5—



M*A*S*H star Jamie Farr autographed a copy of Fox Games of the Century's M*A*S*H game for a fan during a personal appearance at Gimbels Department Store in New York City.

Farr, the official spokesman for the game, drew approximately two thousand people to the Manhattan store, despite a torrential rain storm.

The Gimbels appearance was part of a major U.S. city tour he made on behalf of the game. The tour also included a stop in Farr's hometown of Toledo, Ohio.

A free M*A*S*H T-shirt is being packaged with the game as an introductory offer. It is now available in VIC-20 and Atari 400/800 personal computer formats, and for the Atari 2600, Intellivision, and Colecovision systems.

'On The Road' with Inn-Room Games

Thanks to Inn-Room Video Games, Inc., now you don't have to take your video games with you when you travel. Begun just about a year ago, the innovative new company has begun making Colecovision game consoles and cartridges available to hotels and motels across the country. Many roadside inns have, for some time, debated the option of providing video game rooms for their clientele, but found the idea impractical. In stepped Inn-Room Video Games.

They chose the Colecovision units "because of the superior playability of the games, excellent graphics and effects as well as its durability in a commercial setting...they are also streamlined and attractive, which makes it suitable for a variety of room decors."

The idea should help alleviate boredom among traveling business people who must spend a lot of time at the hotel or motel, and provide travelling parents with some low-cost entertainment for the kids. Hotels and motels providing their customers with the service will generally charge an additional \$5.00 rental per day for the units, with one or two games included. Additional games can also be rented at a nominal charge. If you already have a Colecovision in your home, the rental units will allow you to play while you are away, by only bringing

your cartridges along for the ride. Plans are in the works to offer the computer modules when they become available, to turn the game units into practical in-room work-mates,

too. When planning your next trip, check with the hotels and motels along the way. If they don't have Inn-Room games, they should. Or -- you

can call Inn-Room Video Games at 408-559-4811, to find out which inn chains are currently offering the service. The call might just brighten up your next trip.

Activision Contest, Race-Car Sponsorship to Promote ENDURO

Activision has just released **ENDURO**, a single-player road racing game, designed by Larry Miller, for the Atari VCS and Sears Tele-Games Video Arcade. It was released in late May and carries a suggested retail price of \$31.95. The object of the game is to pass as many cars as you can and survive as many days of driving as possible.

Using the joystick controller, the player drives a super-charged roadster that dodges to the left and right. The red button is the accelerator. There are 99 days of racing possible. A gauge counts the days and counts down the number of cars passed. A scrolling odometer racks up the miles. On the first day, 200 cars must be passed. On each day thereafter, 300. Every new day the cars get faster and spread across the road, making it harder to pass them.

Scenery and road conditions throughout the game include the different times of day from sunrise to night-fall, snow, the blackness of night and even fog.

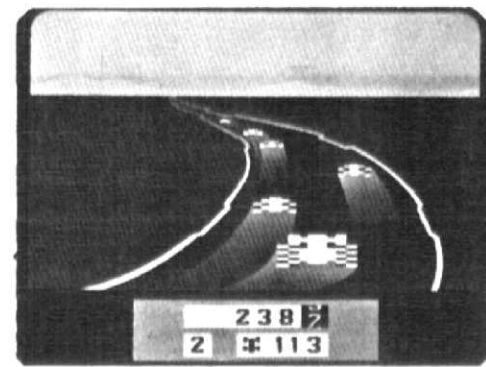
Activision also announced it will be giving away a Datsun 280 ZX Pace Car and thousands of other prizes in a nationwide \$75,000 **ENDURO** "Race-for-Riches" Sweepstakes. The Sweepstakes started May 29 and ends July

15. In addition to the Pace Car, Activision will be giving away a Datsun 200 SL Hatchback SX, six trips for two to the Caesar's Palace Grand Prix in Las Vegas (October 8 and 9), 50 radio-controlled cars, 500 Activision **GRAND PRIX** video game cartridges and 2,000 Datsun racing posters.

To enter the **ENDURO** Sweepstakes, participants must complete and mail in entry blanks which can be found only on special **ENDURO** displays at participating Activision retailers. A drawing will be held and winners will be notified by August 15.

To further promote **ENDURO**, Activision will also be a major sponsor of the 1983 Nissan Motor Corporation's Racing Team. The four-driver Nissan Racing Team will drive Activision-sponsored cars and trucks in several classes in more than 50 races this racing season, including the GTO

class, the GTU class, the Championship Series and events of the Sports Car Club of America and the High Desert Racing Association. The team is headed by Don Deventorf, the defending International Motor Sports Association champion for 1982, GTO class. He drives a specially-prepared turbocharged Datsun 280 ZX.



ENDURO, Activision's new VCS racing game, is the subject of a national contest and some real auto racing.

VECTREX — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4—

cartridge will come free with the Light Pen during a special introductory promotion and the others will be priced comparably with other Vectrex cartridges. The Light Pen is set to retail for under \$40.

A 3-D Imager will also be made available. This periph-

ROMOX —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4—

form of a Cartridge Programming System for the production of software. The Romox Cartridge Development System is now available to software publishers, priced at \$1500.00. The device will allow publishers to duplicate their proprietary programs on blank Romox cartridges. It is designed to be operated by any non-technical person. The system features two "locks" to prevent copyright abuse: a hardware circuit built into all ECPC cartridges and a software code that can be inserted by the publisher.

The system offers publishers, especially small companies, a solution to costly overproduction and the 13-week lead-time for ROM masking. Also, if an error is found in traditional ROM production after masking, the manufacturer must live with it; the new Romox technology allows for changes at any time.

The development could well mean a lot to small producers -- and to home gamers everywhere. Now even companies that lack the resources to produce large volumes of games, and the ability to speculate on what will sell in large quantities, can enter the market, offering the same 100% replacement guarantee Romox now offers.

eral will plug into the Vectrex's second hand controller port. When used in conjunction with special cartridges, it will allow owners to play in real 3-D and full color with the standard Vectrex unit. The 3-D Imager will be given away free with the purchase of a Vectrex system during a special promotion this fall. The 3-D Imager will also sell for under \$40.

A computer keyboard for use with the Vectrex system will also be introduced. When the keyboard is used in conjunction with an expander, it will add 16K ROM (Read Only Memory) and 16K RAM (Random Access Memory) to the system with a 65-key full-travel keyboard. The system will use built-in BASIC and memory storage will be provided with the use of a wafer-type storage device (also known as a stringy floppy), a storage medium that is as easy to use as a cassette and provides 128K bytes of storage. The retail price is set to be under \$80. Five cartridges will also be made available with the introduction of the unit, offering musical composition, exploration of the solar system, the ability to create maze games and learn how to program, the ability to create basic animation and lessons in the basic laws of physics. A wordprocessing program is also under wraps for early 1984, able to handle a full page of text.

Six new Vectrex games are also set to debut at the Chicago Consumer Electronics Show this month, including **POLE POSITION**, **STAR CASTLE**, **DARK TOWER**, **POLAR RESCUE**, **BATTER-UP** and another licensed game, to be announced later.



Charles Compton, 30, of Santa Monica, California, not only solved the **RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX** but won \$1,000 for his efforts. Representing first place in Imagic's **RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX** contest, the cash prize was presented to Compton by Bob Smith, designer of the popular video game, in the appropriate surroundings of Egyptian artifacts and antiques in San Jose's Rosicrucian Museum.

"Contest rules dictated that you not only solve the riddle," explains Compton, "but have the most creative and intriguing answer." Compton presented his answer in story form on a papyrus-like 12-foot-long scroll using authentic Egyptian hieroglyphics. "I even came up with a way the ancient Egyptians might have written 'Imagic' if the company had existed then," he said.

Owner of Immaculate Reception, a special-events decorating firm, Compton admits he began playing video games to help him give up smoking. Ironically, he has enjoyed a long-time interest in egyptology. "Answering the **RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX** contest was a natural for me," he says.

GAMELINE

—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3—

his of her up-to-the-minute local, regional and national rankings in monthly competition. "On-Line" contest participation will cost \$1 for the play session plus 50 cents to enter and register a high score in the GameLine central computer. These contests will also qualify players to participate in "live" or "off-line" regional and national competitions to be held at selected sites around the country.

Prizes will range from certificates and free-play on the GameLine system up to the first "video game" college scholarship, world-class sports cars and, ultimately, to a World Video Game Championship award of an expected \$100,000.00 in gold.

Control Video's chief executive emphasized that the system is not just for video games. "By offering an inexpensive link between a standard game console already in place in more than 12 million American homes and a powerful distant central computer," he explained, "we are, in effect, turning those dedicated game units into multi-purpose communications terminals and bringing the benefits of sophisticated computers within the reach of the average household. A video game console can now be a real teaching machine."

The development of a low-cost, high-speed modem -- a unit which converts the electrical signals transmitted via telephone lines into digital signals understandable to a computer, and vice versa -- is the major technological breakthrough involved in allowing CVC to bring the telecommunications revolution

Funtastic Signs on with The Games Network

Funtastic, Inc., has licensed cable television rights for its games to The Games Network, the new cable-delivered video games programming service that is about to begin delivery. Jim Summers, Vice President of The Games Network Program Acquisitions, added that Funtastic's bestseller, **SNACK ATTACK**, would be one of the games included in the premier launch of their service.

SNACK ATTACK was used on one of the new service's on-line tests, conducted on the Group W Cable system in Fullerton, California. According to Summers, "**SNACK ATTACK** was one of the most popular games with our test families." **SPACE CADETT**, a new game from Dan Illowsky, **SNACK ATTACK**'s designer, will also be offered on the new cable service.

The Games Network will offer a variety of video games in both educational and entertainment formats. For a monthly fee, cable subscribers will be able to choose from a selection of 20 games, with at least five rotated every month. The service is scheduled to launch during the fourth quarter of this year.

home, according to von Meister. A comparable modem, designed for use with a personal computer, ranges in cost between \$100 and \$300, and operates at less than one-sixth the speed.

In order to further reduce

telecommunications costs, CVC is building its own data transmission network. The company is selling "multiplexors" to private investors, known as CVC Affiliates, in major population centers, as well as operating its own.

The units, which make use of local telephone lines and microcomputer controlled modems, are capable of handling multiple telephone requests simultaneously.

—CONTINUED ON PAGE 22—

Starpath's Dr. Robert Brown Interviewed

by Deborah Wickert

Before the arcades became popular, video games were played on \$20,000 computers by hi-tech engineers on coffee breaks. It was here that one man, Dr. Robert Brown, saw their potential for home entertainment and launched a career which put the Atari VCS in the living room of every dedicated game player in the nation. Today, he is executive Vice-President of Starpath Corporation, a Santa Clara, California firm which has succeeded in expanding the capabilities of the VCS with graphic quality equal to that of many computers.

Reminiscing about the early days of the video game industry, Bob recalls that at first it did not seem possible to produce a system inexpensive enough for mass consumption. Nevertheless, in 1974, Dr. Brown and another engineer, Harold Lee, sold Atari on the idea of developing a custom chip which would yield a practical consumer-affordable video game system. First, there was **PONG** -- then **SUPER PONG**. In just four short years, Dr. Brown was Director of Corporate Research and Development and the Atari 2600 Video Computer System was on the market.

No one predicted the video game boom which started in 1979. Regarding it as more than a fad which had seen its time, companies which had previously curtailed production of their own video games and systems suddenly scrambled to meet the overwhelming demand from an eager public. As consumers became more discerning -- demanding higher quality graphics and more intricate game play -- a new company rose to fill the need.

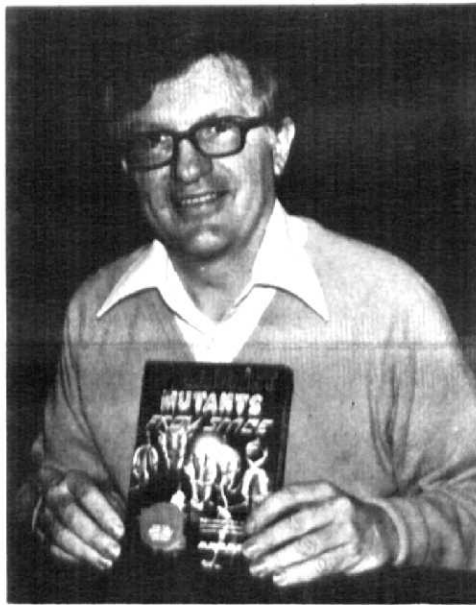
In June of 1981, Bob Brown, a graduate of Stanford University, gathered together some of the best minds in the video game industry and founded Starpath Corporation. Their concept was straightforward -- bring the VCS to state of the art graphics by the use of a Supercharger, which turns the basic system into a powerhouse with 48k bits of RAM. In September, 1982, they shipped their first product, ushering in a new era in video game entertainment.

Plugging the Supercharger unit into the cartridge slot of a VCS immediately gives it the capability to run games with outstanding graphic quality and more complicated game play. Since the games are produced on cassette tapes, they are cheaper and can run longer than the basic cartridge. Some Starpath games are even longer-running than the basic cartridge most

companies now sell. Starpath's new multi-load games even allow a series of inter-related game segments to be loaded from a single tape. This makes it like having several games in one.

Starpath has already received awards for three of their games, **PHASER PATROL**, **DRAGONSTOMPER** and **ESCAPE FROM THE MINDMASTER**. Other Starpath games which are available include **FIREBALL**, **SUICIDE MISSION**, **KILLER SATELLITES** and **COMMUNIST MUTANTS FROM SPACE**, a game which surely could win an award for its intriguing title.

When asked how Starpath comes up with names for their games, Bob laughed and com-



Starpath Corporation's Dr. Robert Brown.

mented, "With great difficulty." In top secrecy, meetings are held, ideas are proposed and the lengthy process of evaluation begun. Weeks later, the final decision is made. Since there is no protection on the name until the game is shipped, only a select few know in advance what you will see on the shelves of your video game store.

Starpath has its own system for testing the new games. As the concept is being developed, it is constantly tested in the plant. Later, it is sent to individuals who typically score high points on video game play. This is to insure that the game operates properly at the higher-scoring levels.

Since Starpath produces all the games for its Supercharger unit, the core of their success lies with their design group. Bob has been particularly careful to provide a congenial atmosphere for his designers, one that allows them the freedom to create in a professional manner, both individually and as a group. Group effort is important here, establishing a camaraderie among the de-

signers which has led to their success.

It takes a certain kind of person -- one with a 'special spark' -- to be a Starpath designer. They are few and far between. Bob looks for a person who is an artist, creator and programmer all in one, relying upon his 'gut feel' to tell him if an applicant has these qualifications. One of his designers has a Master's Degree -- another only one year of junior college. Nevertheless, all of them have one thing in common -- they know how to get the most out of a computer system. Bob feels that it is essential to know both the capabilities and the limitations of the hardware so that new ideas for using the system can be developed.

Bob believes that video game playing helps bridge the gap into the computer age by removing the fear of the machine through an understanding of how it works. Playing the games can also be very challenging. Starpath's **DRAGONSTOMPER** is an example. In this game, you have to use your ingenuity to figure out how to get out of the forest while deciding which items to collect in order to capture the dragon. It takes a lot of puzzle solving -- a valuable mental technique which just happens to be a lot of fun.

Starpath plans to release five new games for their Supercharger this summer, at just about the time they start selling to the international market. Further plans include adapting their games for the Atari 400 and 800 computers.

Bob feels, however, that the Atari 2600 has yet to be matched in the marketplace. Not only is there a tremendous amount of software available now, but the designers are still finding new ways to perform better graphics. He would suggest that anyone buying a game system should start with the VCS.

And Starpath is there, to expand your VCS horizons, stretching for the innovative and creative in both software and hardware. This can only result in the consumer getting a better product for his money. Aptly named, Starpath is truly treading a "starry path."

Starpath Corporation is located at 2005 de la Cruz Blvd., Suite 121, Santa Clara, California 95050, or by phone, at (408) 970-0200. The Supercharger unit, which comes with **PHASER PATROL**, retails for around \$40. Starpath's single load games sell for a suggested \$14.95 retail. Multi-load games retail for \$17.95.

binaryvisions

HOME VIDEO GAMES REVIEWED

by Alan R. Bechtold and
Mike Wilson

NOTE: THE LOGICAL GAMER's reviews now feature an additional combined rating, covering four important aspects for each cartridge reviewed.

Points covered include Concept, Sound/Graphics, Skill and Interest. Concept is ranked by how new to the home video games market the game is, either "new," "familiar" or "too familiar." A familiar arcade game brought to the home front for the first time will still earn a "new" rating. A new twist on a familiar theme will be ranked as "familiar." A familiar theme done with no real improvements or major changes will be ranked as "too familiar."

Graphics and Sound are self-explanatory. These ratings will be based solely upon the reviewers' opinions and will be expressed as "Excellent," "Very Good," "Good," "Fair," and "Poor."

For the Skill rating, the reviewers will carefully consider the amount of skill generally required to play and enjoy the game by ranking players according to the amount of general video games experience they have had. These ratings will include "Master," "Graduate," "Student" and "Beginner." A "Beginner" rating is not always bad, since many games are better for the fact that total newcomers can just sit down and start having fun right away.

The Interest rating is possibly the most important. This is based on the length of time both reviewers think the game will be played often by the average gamer. Ratings here will run anywhere from "1 Week" to "1 Year," at the reviewers' discretion. Games they both think will simply not wear out will achieve a rating of "Infinity." Those which hold absolutely no interest will be ranked as a "Yawn."

The list of four ratings for each new game will be compiled from the separate rankings of the two reviewers, combined into one set of averaged ratings. The addition of this system will, it is hoped, better enable our readers to see what we think at a glance. Let us know if you like it!

CENTIPEDE

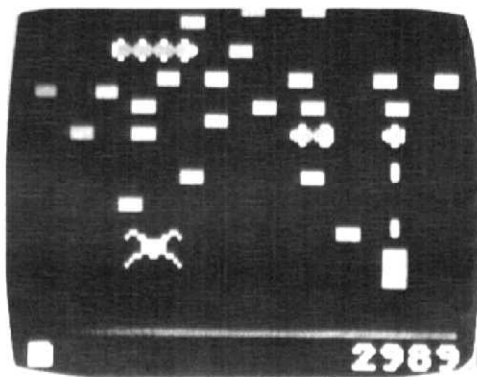
From Atari, for their 2600 VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade and other similar systems.

CENTIPEDE is the VCS version of Atari's arcade classic, for one player at a time using the joystick or optional trackball controller. The object of this game is the same as for the popular arcade and 5200 versions: shoot the centipede, eliminate mushrooms, scorpions and fleas, and avoid touching all the animated creatures on the screen while doing it. Play is for points.

The centipede enters at the top of the screen and slithers its way down between the magic mushrooms that are scattered liberally about the entire display. The player moves his or her magic wand across the bottom and up and down the lower 1/3 of the screen by pushing on the joystick or rolling the optional trackball controller in the desired direction. The magic wand fires upward at the on-screen creatures when the red fire button is pressed.

Each time a segment of the centipede is hit, the insect splits and the remaining parts keep coming. When one centipede is completely eliminated a new one enters at the top, coming at the player's wand in a fiercer configuration. Mushrooms are eliminated when hit three times, but touching them won't harm the wand.

A spider almost constantly bobs up and down the area in which the player must maneuver his or her magic wand. It eliminates the wand if it touches it, and earns the player more points the closer it is when it is hit. If most all of the mushrooms near the player's wand are destroyed, fleas will drop rapidly from the top of the screen, placing more mushrooms as they



fall and eliminating the wand if they hit it. The player must shoot a flea twice to make it disappear. After the third centipede wave, scorpions run across the screen. They will make any mushrooms they touch poisonous, unless the player shoots the scorpion in time to undo their evil magic. When a centipede touches any poisoned mushroom, it goes completely wild and drops toward the bottom of the screen at an alarming, erratic rate.

VCS CENTIPEDE can be played in color or black and white. Two skill variations are offered on the cartridge, one for beginners and young children and another for skilled arcaders. Different point values are scored for hitting centipede body segments and heads, spiders at different ranges, fleas, scorpions, and for partially or completely destroying mushrooms (poisonous or plain).

Players start with three wands and earn an extra bonus wand every 10,000 points. The game is over when all the wands have been eliminated.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: Initially, I was a little disappointed in the display on this game, but not after I started playing it. Atari's designers have done their arcade classic justice in this VCS version. It might not be as graphically beautiful as the arcade or 5200 versions are, but all the elements of the play are left intact and work beautifully.

There isn't really too much else I can say about this game, except that it's just as fun as in the arcades. Get it for your VCS. You'll be glad you did.

MIKE: If, like Alan, you are expecting the same color and brilliance of the arcade version you will be disappointed in this one. Most of the graphics are done in rough blocks that have no resemblance to a mushroom. But all is not lost. Atari's designers did indeed put most of the feel and action of the arcade original into this version of CENTIPEDE.

Everything you really expect to see is here, however, with the fleas constantly pestering you and the scorpion running across the screen poisoning the mushrooms, in addition to the spider and centipede -- they just don't look as nice. I liked the game in the arcades and enjoyed playing it on the VCS just as much.

The sound effects are fine, and it's a good thing. They are essential to the play of the game, since every individual creature and stage of the game has its own unique sound effect. If you have a rollerball, the control is excellent, but it is completely fine with the joystick, too.

I liked the play action in this version. Unfortunately, a lot of people were mostly attracted to the graphics of the arcade game, more than just the overall play. If you are one of these people, this one might leave you cold. If you have a 5200 in addition to a VCS, that version looks nicer. Otherwise, I highly recommend VCS CENTIPEDE. Get it.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Fair
Difficulty: Student
Interest:
Nine Months - One Year

REALSPORTS TENNIS

From Atari, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade and other similar compatible video game systems.

REALSPORTS TENNIS is a video sports simulation for one player against the computer or two against one another, using the joystick controllers. The object of the game is to win two out of three matches.

This video sports game is played on a vertically-running court. The gamer moves his or her on-screen player

around the court by pushing the joystick in the desired direction. Pressing the red fire button serves the ball.

Players can make three kinds of shots in REALSPORTS TENNIS, a normal shot, a lob or a smash. Normal shots are made when the on-screen player is standing still or moving from side to side. Smashes are hit when the player is running towards the net. Lobs are hit when the player is running back from the net. Shots can also be angled by hitting them on the tip of the racket. The difficulty switches allow for either automatic racket swings or rackets that swing when the red fire button is pressed.

Scoring is the same as for real Tennis. The first player to win six games with a two-game lead wins the set. If the score is six-to-six, a seventh game is added. Players who win two out of three sets win the match. Following each game, the players switch sides and serves, according to official tennis rules.

Players may also program their names on the on-screen scoreboard, using the joystick and fire button to roll the right combination of letters on the screen and enter them. Game options, controlled by the Game Select switch, allow for fast or slow play, for one player against the computer or two against one another.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: It's already been said that this game is in many respects very similar to Activision's own rendition of the venerable sport. I agree. It's very similar.

The display is almost exactly the same, and the player action and rules of the game are virtually identical, but there are a couple of differences worth noting. I found the on-screen players in this game to be depicted in a clearer fashion. Their motions are a bit more lifelike, and they are very responsive to the player's controllers.

Still, it won't pay you to buy REALSPORTS TENNIS if you already have the game by Activision. If, on the other hand, you don't have tennis for your VCS yet, you might like the ability to put your name on the scoreboard and prettier display that this one offers. Otherwise, both are excellent versions. I had fun playing it again. You really should have as good for yourself.

MIKE: Sports games are always going to be a top priority

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with software producers, so here we have another game of Tennis, from Atari with love. This, of course, isn't the only game of Tennis available for VCS play, but it's by far one of the best. The graphics are excellent, and the movement of the players is impeccable. On top of that, I think it plays as well for one player as it does for two. It's an all-around good simulation.

The question is whether we need another good tennis game at all. Activision already has a really fine version on the market. Atari's graphics on their new one are a little better, but they aren't important to the play, and both versions, as Alan said, play very well. Listen to Alan. If you already have Activision's **TENNIS**, this one isn't for you. Get it if you have been wanting a tennis game. Avoid it if you hate all sports. Period.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Novice - Student
Interest:
Three - Six Months

JUNGLE HUNT

From Atari, for their VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade and other, similar compatible systems.

JUNGLE HUNT is a multi-screen jungle action game for one player at a time, using the joystick controller. The object of the game is to survive through four screens of obstacles and hazards and save a helpless damsel from ferocious cannibals.

Players control Sir Dashly, a fearless jungle hunter. First he must swing from vine to vine in the opening scene. Dashly swings automatically, and jumps from one swinging vine to another when the red fire button is pressed. If the hero misses a vine, he falls off the screen and one chance is lost.

The second screen has Sir Dashly swimming through a river choked with crocodiles. Here, the fearless hunter swims up and down and from one side of the screen to the other when the joystick is pushed in the corresponding direction. Crocodiles enter from the left and swim toward Dashly. Some of the beasts swim in a straight line and others follow an erratic path that takes them from the surface to the bottom. The player's hero can only stay underwater a limited time before he must swim to the surface for more air. An on-screen gauge displays the amount of air left in his lung. He must either avoid the crocodiles or stab them. To stab a crocodile, the player must move Sir Dashly in for the kill and press the red fire button at just the right moment. Eliminated crocodiles earn the player points. If Dashly touches one of the huge creatures, he'll float to the surface and one

chance will be lost.

In the third screen, Dashly must jump or duck as deadily bouncing and rolling boulders travel by. He jumps when the player presses the red fire button and ducks when the player pulls down on the joystick. The hero runs across the screen when the joystick is pushed to the left or right. The larger boulders bounce. All of the rolling and bouncing rocks will smash Dashly if they touch him -- another horrid opportunity to lose a chance.

Once all the boulders have been jumped, Dashly meets the cannibals, running back and forth, defending their freshly-capture white woman with their spears. The jungle hunter must jump and avoid the moving cannibals and their spears to reach Penelope and save the day -- or be punctured trying. If the cannibals get the hero, another chance is lost.

Points are earned for jumping each vine, stabbing the crocodiles, jumping over and running under the rocks, and for avoiding the cannibals. The crocodiles are worth varying point values, depending on which type of beast the player's hero stabs. Bonus points are earned for each section of the jungle the hero leaves, and, depending on how much time is left on the on-screen timer, for rescuing Penelope. Gamers start off with five chances to reach the girl. Extra lives are earned when the score reaches 10,000 points.

The cartridge offers two skill levels, one easy and one hard. The color/black and white and difficulty switches don't affect the play.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: The graphics on new VCS games are getting so good any more that, at times, I'm beginning to think I'm playing on one of the newer super systems. The graphics on most new VCS games aren't quite that good, but the ones employed in Atari's **JUNGLE HUNT** are sure getting close. They've done a really fine job of bringing this arcade game to the home screen. The movement is very good, especially in the vine-swinging scene. It's just like the one on the arcade machine!

The problem here is that the game itself simply isn't that challenging. It's difficult enough, on the harder play level, but I always thought the whole concept was weak in the arcades. When it comes to this type of game for home play, I prefer Activision's **PITFALL**. The graphics on that game are at least as good, and the scrolling screen and overall challenge is a lot more intriguing.

Still, **JUNGLE HUNT** plays well and there are plenty of opportunities to score a lot of points as you are going through the screens to save Penelope. I don't like the fact that the screens switch from one to the other, rather than scrolling, and you can only travel in one direction, but if you liked this one in the arcades, you'll like it

on your VCS. I'd advise you to take a look at it.

ALAN: Personally, I think **JUNGLE HUNT** and **PITFALL** are two completely different games. It's true that Atari's new entry might not be as challenging for those of you who can by now breeze through Activision's earlier release, but I see both games as being produced with a bit different audience in mind.

Maybe I'm wrong, but it seems to me that **PITFALL** is for serious gamers. **JUNGLE HUNT** is fun right off, without hours of practice. I picked up the joystick and played this one right from the start, without having to read the instructions first. More dedicated gamers might lose interest in **JUNGLE HUNT** a bit sooner because of this, but kids and uninitiated guests will love it.

The game is challenging enough to hold the attention of most of you as you happily run through the jungle. To top it all off, Atari's graphics on this version are flawless. Those swinging vines are a joy to watch, though they probably present the easiest challenge of the entire game.

Give this one a look in the stores. I loved **PITFALL** and agree that it's probably a tougher challenge and every bit as good as this one, but **JUNGLE HUNT** is a job well done that deserves a place in some video gamers' libraries, too.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Student
Interest: Three - Six Months

GALAXIAN

From Atari, for their VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade and other similar systems.

GALAXIAN is the official VCS translation of Atari's arcade space action game, also recently translated for Atari 5200 play, for one gamer at a time, using the joystick controller.

The player maneuvers a laser canon across the bottom of the screen by pushing the joystick to the left and right. The cannon fires its lasers up at the attacking aliens when the red fire button is pressed.

The aliens attack in rows that march back and forth across the top of the screen. Each fleet, or wave, is made up of a combination of drones, emissaries, escorts and flagships. Flagships and escorts occasionally leave the grouping and streak down toward the player's gun, in an attempt to collide with it and wipe it out. If the player doesn't blast the alien ships and gets out of their way, they re-join the fleet at the top of the screen.

Atari **GALAXIAN** features nine distinct skill levels. The first level is slow and easy and the ninth level is fast and deadly. The diffi-

culty level also increases each time the player clears the screen of aliens, to level nine. The left difficulty switch can be set to allow for continuous fire or laser shots that fire one at a time. Players begin the game with three laser bases and earn a bonus base at 7,000 points. The game is over when all the player's bases are gone.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: "SPACE INVADERS with more movement," was my first thought when I saw this game in the arcades, what seems like many years ago, and I fell in love with it right off. The problem is, as games got more complex and demanding, my love for the game began to dwindle. Now I have no desire to play it for any prolonged length of time. This all really has little to do with Atari's VCS rendition of this venerable arcade classic. But it does cover my feelings about the game in general.

The graphics on this version are very good, for a VCS game. The movement as the aliens descend are very fluid, without any sign of the jerkiness that I've seen on some inferior **GALAXIAN** knock-offs, and the sound effects are also good, though not particularly exciting.

Action is the most important aspect of this game, though, and the action here is solid. It starts at a level that is difficult, but yet offers hope that you won't be annihilated before the first wave has been conquered, then escalates to a point that should keep even the most hardened of gamers busy.

So, this version of **GALAXIAN** has good potential and Atari has done an excellent job of bringing it to the VCS screen. But, if you are tired of such games, it won't offer you anything new. Get it only if you absolutely have to have it.

ALAN: What else could I say about an old stand-by like **GALAXIAN**, after Mike has said it all? Yes, this is a good VCS rendition of an arcade classic. Yes, it probably could have been left well enough alone. Period. I never thought 5200 **GALAXIAN** was a necessary release and this one, though very classy for what it is, is certainly not as good as that one.

I guess I've just tired of slide-and-shoots possibly even more than Mike has. At least as much. Maybe some of you would still like to have this game in your homes. You will be happy with it if this is the case. Personally I wouldn't buy it. Not after some of the other games I've played.

RATINGS:

Concept: Too Familiar
Graphics/Sound:
Good - Very Good
Difficulty: Novice - Student
Interest:
One Week - Six Months

DOLPHIN

From Activision, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade, and other similar systems.

DOLPHIN is an undersea chase game for one or two players, using the joystick controllers. The object of the game is to swim a dolphin as far as possible, avoiding a deadly squid that is constantly chasing close behind.

Players make the dolphin swim up, down, back and forth on the horizontally-scrolling underwater screen by pushing the joystick in the desired direction. The sea creature encounters numerous walls of seahorses with only one small opening as it tries to avoid the squid. If the dolphin touches the seahorses, he will be slowed down and the squid will get closer or catch him. Unfortunately, the seahorses usually approach too quickly for the player to get the dolphin positioned to go through the single opening. Fortunately, sonic cues (variously-pitched musical tones) warn the player of the opening's position in each approaching wall of seahorses.

"Currents," are depicted as moving lines that travel by occasionally. If the dolphin touches a "wave" moving in its direction, it will be speeded along. If a wave traveling in the opposite direction is touched, the dolphin will be slowed down. The squid is also slowed down or speeded up if it touches the waves.

Every now and then, a seagull flies by overhead. If the player can make his or her dolphin jump out of the water, and touch the gull, it will be temporarily charged with the power to turn on the squid and attack it. The dolphin jumps when the red fire button is pressed. If the dolphin touches the squid, it will disappear from the screen, but only for a few moments.

Points are scored for each column of seahorses the dolphin passes and whenever it catches a seagull or attacks the squid. The cartridge offers four different difficulty levels, for one or two players. Two players take turns whenever an opponent loses a dolphin.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: Being chased by a squid through columns of seahorses isn't really my idea of a good time and this game wasn't for me. The graphics are good, but I've come to expect that from Activision. **DOLPHIN** is most certainly up

to Activision's current graphic standards, but sound is what makes this game unique, since it is an integral part of the overall action. Without those sonic cues you wouldn't have a chance. The cues are so helpful on this game that it really doesn't take long before you can react correctly without thinking about it.

There really isn't much I can say about this cartridge that would make you think I disliked it, but graphics and sound aren't the entire story here. Actually, it could prove to be a winner with younger gamers, but I can only say this with reservations. The play might be a bit difficult for the very youngest of players, but even they will be able to catch on soon enough and this might be what I object to most. You really don't want to buy a game that's too easy to master, do you?

Anyone who is serious about video games will find this one to be rather dull from the second day of play. In the end, I have to advise that you hold off adding it to your collection. Activision has produced many better.

ALAN: I thought **DOLPHIN** was amusing, but I must admit it won't have much staying power, so far as the interest level goes. I really liked the idea of making you use your ears to play and found the action to be simple but challenging enough for the time that I played it, but I need more than simple play for points to make me keep coming back for more. Some added goals, like the need to feed, or obstacles, like added barriers beneath the sea, would have made the game more interesting.

Although **DOLPHIN** is noteworthy as the first video game depending so completely on audible clues, I can't recommend it for serious play. There's just not enough to it.

RATINGS:

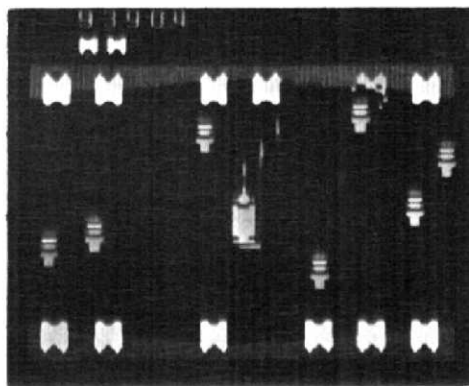
Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Good
Difficulty: Novice
Interest: One Week

PLAQUE ATTACK

From Activision, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade and other similar systems.

PLAQUE ATTACK is a "cute" arcade shooting game for one or two players at a time, using the joystick controllers. The idea of the game is to protect the player's eight on-screen teeth from a continuous barrage of decay-causing junk food, by shooting each food item with toothpaste from a tube, before time and the toothpaste runs out.

The player's tube of toothpaste starts out full of "ammo," in the center of the screen. The teeth he or she must protect are above and



below. As soon as the game begins, the junk food starts to attack, floating in and trying to touch the teeth. The player must use the joystick to move the tube back and forth, or to point it up or down, and press the red button to fire some toothpaste at the food and eliminate it before it has done any damage.

The food attacks in waves. First it's double cheeseburgers, then coney island dogs, french fries, strawberry candies, cherry gumdrops, glazed donuts, candy canes and, finally, ice cream cones. The player has only 35 seconds to eliminate each wave of junk food before his or her tube shrinks to nothing. Points are earned for each food item destroyed and bonus points are scored for getting all the food before time runs out. More points are scored for each accomplishment in each successive wave to level eight, then it all begins over again. Gamers each begin with eight teeth. Bonus teeth are added to the mouth with each increase of 2000 points. The game ends when a player loses all of his or her teeth and runs completely out of toothpaste.

Game Select switch options allow for beginner's or advanced play, for one or two players. The Difficulty switches make the tube fire one shot at a time or a continuous stream of toothpaste, when the red button is pressed.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: Now that we've tried to protect the world from alien destruction, humanoid enemy attack and almost anything else that could be thought of, we are now forced to protect our teeth from decay. I use the word "forced" because that's really what it seemed like to me.

Shooting at some of my favorite foods with toothpaste was not my idea of fun. Almost anything can be made fun with the proper application, but the problem with this cartridge is the fact that they failed to make it fun. Period.

The game's graphics are good and the play in the upper levels is difficult, but there isn't that edge of excitement that will make you keep coming back for another try at beating your last score.

PLAQUE ATTACK has a lot of cute features, but cute alone isn't really going to get it any more. There has to be more to a new video game now days, and it has to have some level of sophistication, all of which this game lacks, or

no amount of play or graphics will make it appealing enough to own. This is one you would definitely be better off leaving on the shelf.

ALAN: I can't help but think that this game was designed with very young kids in mind. Even so, I don't think many kids will play it for long, if they have anything else around the house to play on the VCS instead. **PLAQUE ATTACK** is cute, but it's really just another slide-and-shoot with fiends that can be shot both above and below the player's gun. I didn't enjoy it all that much and I don't think you will, either.

In our earlier review of Activision's **SPIDER FIGHTER**, we raked that game over the coals for not offering anything really new or innovative in the way of slide-and-shoots. **PLAQUE ATTACK** offers less. As Mike has already pointed out so well, it's all based on a cute idea with nothing more to back it up. Look elsewhere for your video game fun. It's out there to be had, believe me.

RATINGS:

Concept: Too Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Good
Difficulty: Novice - Student
Interest: One Week

KILLER SATELLITES

From Starpath, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games or other similar systems, when equipped with the Starpath Supercharger module and any standard cassette tape recorder.

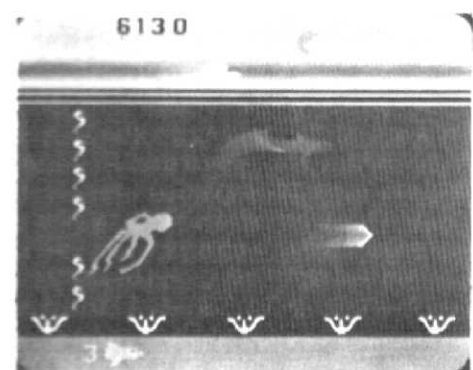
KILLER SATELLITES is an alien attack arcade action game for one player at a time, using the joystick controllers. The object of the game is to stop all the alien satellites and bombs before they reach the city below and wipe it out.

The game is played on a horizontal scrolling screen. Players start out with six ships, one on-screen and five in reserve. The ships are moved up, down, back and forth by pushing on the joystick in the desired direction. The ship's guns fire straight out from its nose when the red button is pressed. A city is spread across the bottom of the screen, protected by a flimsy energy barrier that will destroy the weaker of the invading satellites, but not those that are more powerful.

Each ship has a limited fuel supply, indicated on a gauge at the top of the screen, and guns that can overheat and become inactive, if fired too often.

Gamers use a narrow scanner just above the main display to locate enemy satellites and attackers and determine the direction they must head their ship to find them. The aliens arrive in a wide variety of shapes and increase in number and speed as higher levels of play are

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encountered. At the more difficult levels, meteorites also fill the sky. These can eliminate a player's ship if it collides with one.

Points are awarded for each enemy satellite destroyed, ranging in value from 10 to 90. At the end of each wave, bonus points are also awarded for each remaining ground object, for each wave completed so far and for each hundred pounds of fuel still remaining. The Game Select switch allows players to choose the level at which they begin playing and the Difficulty switches control the speed of the ship and rate at which the lasers fire. Players may select ships with faster or slower maximum speeds and guns that fire once each time the red button is pressed or continuously as long as the red button is held down.

Ships are lost if they collide with an alien satellite or any meteorite, or if they run out of fuel. The game is over when all a player's ships are lost.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: This game is extremely deceptive. The first time I loaded it into my VCS, I was visiting with a friend. While talking with him, I fiddled with the joysticks and made it through level 8 without blinking an eye. "Too simple," I thought, and put it away for a little while.

Then I sat down to play **KILLER SATELLITES** without distraction. Again, things started out easily. What I hadn't noticed before, while talking and playing at the same time, was the way the action literally lulled even the serious player into a false sense of security. Level eight is easy to reach, but from there on things get heated, but never quickly enough to discourage. I liked that.

What we have here is a game that is very akin to **DEFENDER** at about half the price and pace. The difference is the fact that **KILLER SATELLITES** is a lot simpler. Things start out at a more manageable pace and build slowly to almost the same fever pitch -- but not until wave 16 or so. I liked that.

I also liked the crisp colorful graphic display. The simplified radar scanner at the top of the screen was less confusing than **DEFENDER**'s, too.

I don't think **KILLER SATELLITES** is a game for the die-hard video gamer. It might not hold their interest for long. But -- if you got frustrated with **DEFENDER** after a while, but like something that plays in a similar manner, this one might be for you.

MIKE: Was there anything before **DEFENDER** was created? It seems as though everyone is trying to come out with a **DEFENDER** clone, and some haven't done it too well. Starpath, however, has done some things with this game that haven't been done be-

fore, while repeating a lot of the similar characteristics that have been done a whole lot better. **KILLER SATELLITES** offers no smart bombs or hyperspace to get you out of all the trouble you will undoubtedly get into. In fact, there's very little in this cartridge to help you at all.

Since you start out with plenty of ships, and new ones aren't too hard to come by, it's fairly easy to get along quite well in the lower levels, just as Alan has pointed out. Keep in mind, however, that there are 99 skill levels available and you can pick the level at which you wish to start or go from the beginning up. This was one new twist to the old theme that I really liked. You can easily skip all the easy stuff if you are good enough and jump right out of the pan into the fire, and the fire gets really hot at the higher levels.

The graphics here are good, but not really excellent. They are a lot better than on the first few games Starpath produced, however, and each new game from them seems to get better. I thought the radar screen at the top could have been left out for all the good it did me in the higher levels, and in the lower levels it wasn't really needed.

Give this one some consideration. It's not a barn-burner that you have to rush right out and buy, but it really is worth playing. If, however, you are tired of all the **DEFENDER** clones, you might want to save your money.

RATINGS:

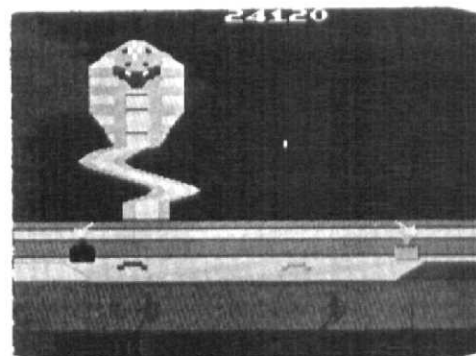
Concept: Too Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Good
Difficulty:
Student - Graduate
Interest: Six Months

G.I. JOE COBRA STRIKE

From Parker Brothers, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games and other similar systems.

G.I. JOE COBRA STRIKE is a military arcade action game for one, two or three players at a time, using the paddle controllers (or the paddle controllers and one joystick controller, in the three-player game). The object of the game is to stop a giant cobra snake from wiping out four G. I. Joes and, if possible, to destroy the snake in the process.

The display consists of a number of recruits running across the bottom of the screen, from one barracks to



the other, while a gigantic cobra slithers back and forth across the top. One anti-aircraft gun is located on either side of the middle of the screen. Two shields, one for use by each cannon operator, are also located at the screen's center.

The giant cobra begins immediately firing its deadly venom down at the running recruits as it slides back and forth. The snake spits randomly but often. Recruits that are hit are eliminated from the screen. In higher rounds of play, the cobra also shoots laser beams that have the power of capturing a recruit and carrying him up off the screen.

The player or players, if they are fighting on Joe's side of the line, must try to stop the venom before it reaches the recruits, by sliding a shield between the deadly stuff and its intended victims. The shields move back and forth across the center of the screen when the paddle knob is turned in the corresponding direction. Each player takes control of one gun and one shield.

The guns are fired when the red button is pressed and the resulting single shot can then be guided, until it explodes, by turning the paddle knob. Players must try to hit the cobra in the eyes. If the cobra is hit eight times, it is destroyed, only to be replaced by another, more fierce and faster moving than the last. In the higher rounds of play, a series of three rising notes will sound. This is the player's signal to shoot the cobra because, at that moment, one hit will destroy him, earning the player a 10,000-point bonus.

Players who choose to control the Cobra use a single joystick to move him back and forth across the screen, and spit venom by pressing on the red fire button. Pulling down on the joystick will activate the snake's laser beam. The cobra player must try to hit four G.I. Joe recruits before the other player or players destroy him. In this mode, the game is over when the four recruits are gone or the cobra is destroyed. In regular play, the game progresses from round to round until the Cobra has destroyed four recruits.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: My goodness! I never expected to see G.I. Joe battling an oversized cobra that is spitting venom on poor unsuspecting recruits! And what stupid recruits they are!

Throughout the battle, they insist on running out of the barracks, even with imminent danger lurking just overhead and only G.I. Joe to protect them, with a shield that doesn't move all that well across the middle of the screen.

Seriously, though, the graphics on this game are very good. The movement of the men across the bottom of the screen is extremely lifelike and that menacing cobra is beautifully depicted.

Unfortunately, the graphics are about the only good thing about this game. The rest is left to poor movement and really very little excitement. What we have here is a video game that revolves entirely around a licensed name and superb graphics, with little else to offer. The shield is very hard to control even at the slowest speeds and at the fastest level it is almost impossible to do anything with it. I'd suggest that **G.I. JOE COBRA STRIKE** be left to those with nothing better to do with their time and money.

ALAN: For the most part, I have to agree with Mike on this one. The overall concept is ridiculous by real-life standards and the game itself is far too difficult to play for the young market it was aimed at. Still, a lot of video games are based on ridiculous concepts and the graphics on this one were fantastic -- so I overlooked my first impressions while I tried to play it.

I said tried, didn't I? That's what I spent the better part of my first two hours doing. Trying to get the hang of moving that !%\$#@*&! shield and shooting my gun. After a while, I got the hang of it, but the challenge of the game itself really wasn't worth it.

My five-year-old son is really into G.I. Joe, so I made a point of playing the game with him. We had some fun, but I soon noticed that I was the one doing all the firing and sliding. He was fiddling with the paddle controllers, trying to figure out how to make it all work. No amount of instruction from me made it any easier for him.

In conclusion, let me say that this is a superb example of the kind of graphics the VCS is capable of, and how little memory is left in such instances for an interesting game. **G.I. COBRA STRIKE** is important because of its one, two or three-player options, controlling one or both of the guns and/or the snake itself, but I think it should be left for the history books. The name of the game is play and this one doesn't really have much.

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty:
Student - Graduate
Interest: One Week

SKY SKIPPER

From Parker Brothers, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade and other similar systems.

This is an arcade flying/rescue game for VCS play, for one gamer at a time, using the joystick controllers. The object of the game is to rescue animals in a larger-than-the-screen maze,

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scoring as many points as possible along the way.

Gamers must pilot an airplane, using the joystick to move it up, down, left and right, around a vertically-scrolling maze that is roughly twice as tall as the TV screen. A number of animals have been captured by evil gorillas and are being held in cages. It is the player's mission to rescue the animals.

The gorillas stand on ledges within the maze. To open the animals' cages, the player must fly the plane over one of the apes and drop a bomb on it, by pressing on the red fire button. If hit, the gorilla will be temporarily knocked off its feet and the cages will open. Then, the player has a limited amount of time to collect the freed little creatures. As the plane touches the captives, they are picked up. Soon, the gorilla will get back on its feet and the animals will be returned to their cages.

Each plane has a limited amount of fuel, monitored on a gauge at the bottom of the screen. If of one each of all the different types of captured animals is rescued, the player will get a full tank of gas. When the fuel gauge reaches zero, the plane will crash. White clouds also appear in the maze from time to time. Running into these -- or the walls of the maze -- will also crash the plane.

Points are scored each time a gorilla is knocked off its feet and for each animal rescued. Bonus points are awarded for rescuing one of each type of animal. Extra planes are earned for each 10,000 points scored.

When all the animals have been rescued, the action moves on to a more difficult maze, with clouds, a speedier plane and fuel that is consumed faster. The game is over when all the planes are gone.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: This is a hard game to play. I had some fun trying, but a very limited amount. I'm not sure why. Possibly it's the lack of really good graphics, and maybe it was the sheer repetitiveness of the overall play. Whatever the reason, I've seen a lot of better games for the VCS and expect there will be more.

The play is tough and I defy anyone to sit right down and master it in a short while. **SKY SKIPPER** does have that going for it. But I doubt that many serious gamers will enjoy it.

MIKE: I really thought the days of looking at something as simple and archaic as this were long gone but, as usual, I was mistaken. Here's another one.

The graphics, for the most part, would have been bad by the standards that were established a year ago, though the movement of the plane was not that bad. The sound effects were up to par with other games now entering the

market, but not really superior.

Those of you who abhor "violent" video games (and I think that's another subject entirely), might appreciate **SKY SKIPPER** because there's nothing violent about it, really. You just hit the ape on the head and go rescue animals until he gets back up on his feet. Sounds kind of like the car chases on TV lately, with all kinds of serious wrecks but never any injuries, doesn't it? **SKY SKIPPER** is just as dumb as those chases, but not nearly as exciting.

I can't pinpoint an age group that might find this one amusing, I'm afraid to say. Neither of my own children could stand it, and I didn't care for it, either. I'd say **SKY SKIPPER** is a definite "no go." If you must have it, wait a while. It's bound to get cheaper soon.

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Poor - Fair
Difficulty:
Novice - Student
Interest:
Yawn!!! - One Week

MASTER BUILDER

From Spectra Video, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade and other similar systems.

MASTER BUILDER is a video construction simulation for one player at a time, utilizing the joystick controller. The object of the game is to remember blueprints and construct as many as five different buildings in games with either limited bricks or time, before running out of construction workers.

As the game begins, one of five different buildings will flash on the screen, but only for about five seconds. Then the player has to construct the building pictured, with bricks that are gathered whenever the construction worker touches either side of the screen. All buildings are built from the bottom up.

Once the bricks are collected, the player makes his or her construction worker lay them in their proper places by pressing the red fire button, when the on-screen worker is standing where the player wishes the bricks to be placed. The worker can only hold a few bricks at a time, so he has to keep going back for more. A ladder in the center of the screen can be used to climb to higher levels as the lower rows of bricks are laid. The worker climbs up and down the ladder when the joystick is pushed up or down. Improperly placed bricks can also be picked back up and replaced using the red button.

While the worker is busy constructing the building, his progress is hampered by a dog and a little boy. One construction worker will be lost if the dog touches him, so he must climb the ladder or jump over the dog, when the player pushes the joy-

stick up and to the right or left, to avoid him. When the worker is on the ladder, a little boy can run out from the side of the screen and push the ladder out from under him. The resulting fall will also eliminate the worker, so he must be moved onto the building and off the ladder when the kid appears.

As the building grows taller, a storm will move in overhead and send deadly lightning bolts down from time to time. If lightning flashes while the builder is on the top row of bricks, he'll be eliminated. One row of bricks is eliminated from the building each time the lightning flashes.

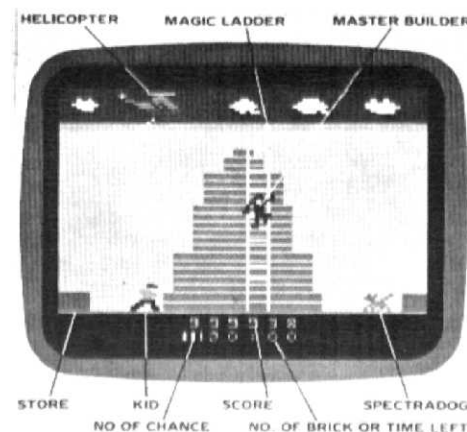
Gamers each start with four construction workers. The cartridge allows for a choice between play against the clock or with a limited supply of bricks. Points are scored for each building that is completed, including a bonus that is proportional to the number of bricks remaining after each building is completed. The game is over when all the builders are eliminated or when the clock or brick supply runs out.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: This is a game that is as unique in concept as video games themselves were a few years ago. With the plans planted firmly in your mind, you have to recreate the displayed blueprint and build a building. This isn't easy to do with the dog and kid trying to stop you and the lightning undoing what you've already done. The graphics on this game are good and the movements of the builder are very realistic as he runs from side to side, picking up bricks and trying to get that building up.

The problem with this game comes from the overall control of the builder himself. It is very hard at times to move to the appropriate spot to lay the bricks. This usually occurs when you have only one brick down, rather than an entire row of them. While you are fighting the controller, there is nothing else you can do. Since the dog and kid can't climb the ladder, there isn't much else to do up on the building but lay bricks. This makes things pretty aggravating when the builder is stuck and you can't get him free.

In the end, I'd have to say this is a near miss. The concept and the graphics are good but the problem I had with the controller are so bad, at times, that this just can't be overlooked. If you are willing to put up with



the hassle, you might take a look at **MASTER BUILDER**. It's a refreshing concept.

ALAN: I had some problems with the controller, too. As I stepped off the ladder to lay some bricks, the construction worker would occasionally not move as I had intended, and he would get stuck. I did manage to free him after a bit of fiddling, by picking up the bricks and replacing them behind him, when I could get the controller to respond well enough to make him carry out this maneuver.

My main complaint was with the difficulty I had remembering each blueprint, after it was flashed on the screen for such a short time, and following through building it correctly. The only way around this is to look at the illustrations in the instruction booklet very carefully before you begin, but even these pictures won't tell you a lot about the exact configuration and location of the bricks for each plan. Consequently, playing **MASTER BUILDER** very often will most certainly improve your memory! You might find this to be a major benefit of buying the game.

I agree the concept and graphics are excellent, and I think Spectra Video has a good game here, but the control of the man is frustrating to the point of putting me off, too. It works a bit better with Wico's improved VCS joystick, but there are still some problems that must be carefully considered before you buy this one. I wish it had worked better, because this one really is different. Look at it. Don't buy it until you've tried it a while.

RATINGS:

Concept: Original
Graphics/Sound:
Good - Very Good
Difficulty:
Student - Graduate
Interest: One - Three Months

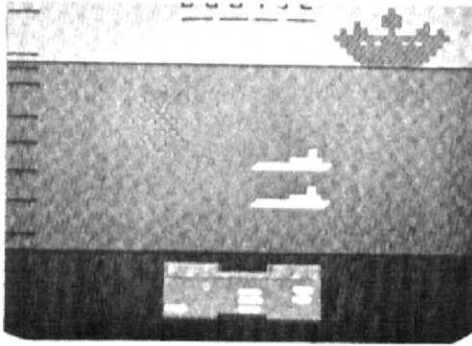
SUB SCAN

From Sega, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade and other similar systems.

SUB SCAN is a sea battle arcade game for one player at a time, using the joystick controller. The player must move a destroyer across the top of the screen and drop depth charges on enemy submarines that pass below. The object of the game is to eliminate as many subs as possible before ten have made it across the screen without being blasted.

The player moves his or her destroyer back and forth by pushing the joystick to the left or right. Depth charges are dropped whenever the red fire button is pressed. The charges drift slowly toward the bottom of the screen, making the lower

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ly build to the level of excitement that would interest most serious video gamers. Sega has done a good job of bringing a game this simple to the screen with a little extra flair, but, as Alan pointed out, there isn't much game to be had here. I really can't recommend that you buy it.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Good
Difficulty: Novice - Student
Interest: One week

SPACE PANIC

From Coleco, for their Colecovision video game console.

SPACE PANIC is an arcade climbing game brought home, for one or two players at a time. The object of the game is to eliminate all the space monsters on each screen before the player's spaceman's oxygen runs out.

The game is played on a display of four horizontal floors that are intersected by a number of ladders of various lengths. The player controls a spaceman by pushing the Coleco joystick back and forth. He climbs the ladders up and down when the joystick is pushed up and down.

A number of alien beings also appear on the screen right from the start, and immediately begin pursuing the player's spaceman. The spaceman can't jump or shoot the aliens, but he can dig holes in the floor for them to fall in, then cover them up, to eliminate them. He digs a hole where he is standing when the player presses the left side button, and covers the alien up when he or she presses the right side button. When an alien is covered up, it falls through to the floor below it and is eliminated. Creatures not covered up will work themselves back out of a hole and, after skill level one, re-enter the game as tougher monsters than they were before.

There are three types of aliens the player will encounter. "Creature" must fall through one floor to be eliminated. "Boss" must fall through two floors (the player's spaceman accomplishes this by digging two holes, one below the other). "Don," the third space being, must fall through three floors to be eliminated. The creatures appear in waves, starting with three "Creatures," then five, then seven, then two "Creatures" and a "Boss," and so on, in successively more difficult combinations, whenever the player clears a screen of all the extraterrestrials. The ladders are also placed differently in each new wave of aliens.

An on-screen timer displays the amount of air the gamer's spaceman has remaining in his oxygen tanks. If the tank gets to "Empty" before all the aliens have been eliminated, he staggers and falls, and must be re-

placed by a reserve spaceman, if any are remaining.

Points are earned for eliminating the aliens. The number of points earned for covering up each monster depends on how many floors it falls through. If a monster falls on another monster, bonus points are awarded and, usually, both creatures are eliminated at the same time. Bonus points are also awarded for oxygen remaining in the spaceman's tanks when all of the space creatures have been eliminated. Bonus spacemen are awarded when a player earns 5,000 points.

The cartridge offers four different skill levels, for one or two players at a time. Players each start out with five spacemen in level one and three in levels two through four. The game is over when all of the spacemen are gone.

OPINIONS:

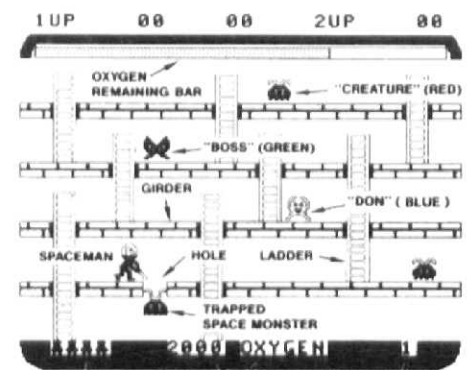
MIKE: This is another really good climbing game from Coleco. It seems they are really good at bringing climbing games to the home screen and **SPACE PANIC** is no exception. The graphics are superb, rendered in fine detail with outstanding movement of the spaceman, who is quick and responsive to the controller. It is this excellent response that really pleased me while playing this one. I get very irritated when I can't make my character do what it's supposed to, and indeed it detracts from many otherwise fine video challenges I have seen. A nice touch of humor has been added in the graphics and play, especially when the spaceman runs out of oxygen. You have to see that to believe it.

SPACE PANIC presents us with a refreshing new look and challenge in the genre of climbing games. It starts out very easy and doesn't get so hard so quickly, in the lower levels of play, that younger gamers won't be able to manage it and have some fun, too. A lot of strategy is involved in the actual play. It'll keep you interested for many months. When you get to where you must drop "Don" through three floors, knowing what you are doing before you do it becomes very important.

Go get this one. All the people I've played it with are as excited about it as I am. It looks like a sure winner to me.

ALAN: **SPACE PANIC** is a closet classic from the arcades that had such a strong cult following it spawned a number of computer-format copy-cats, most of which have done quite well. The only thing I can't understand is why it never became a full-blown arcade hit. I never played **SPACE PANIC** in the arcades, but if that version played anything like the Colecovision game does, it should have been a hit of major proportions.

I really love the sense of humor utilized in the display, the overall movement and the sound effects. As simple as it might sound from the description above, this game gets so complex, as the



skill level increases, that it often requires chess-like strategic thinking, at about 200 miles an hour, to get rid of all those pesky space critters. As Mike pointed out, the way the spaceman runs out of oxygen is so amusing it'll make you commit "suicide" several times, just to see it again.

I haven't heard a lot of publicity about this one yet, though it's been available for a while as of this writing, but I predict it will pick up a lot of enthusiastic fans as word about it spreads. Hop on the bandwagon. **SPACE PANIC** is a riot.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Student
Interest: One Year

GORF

From Coleco, for their Colecovision video game console.

GORF is a space invasion arcade game, for one or two players. The object of the game is to eliminate a variety of alien ships on three different screens, to reach the alien flag ship in the fourth screen and do it in, too.

This game is the same as the arcade version, and is also similar to others, now reaching other home video game formats as well. The player uses the Coleco joystick to move his or her ship back and forth, or up and down the lower half of the screen. Pressing either side fire button fires the ship's lasers up at the extraterrestrial attackers.

The first screen is the Astro Battle. The player's ship is protected by a bubble-shaped shield. Three lines of alien ships march **SPACE INVADERS**-style down at it, firing their own lasers that chip away at the shield and eventually find the player's ship if possible. The second screen is the Laser Attack, featuring a cluster or clusters of alien ships around an enemy laser ship or ships. These move all over the screen, firing and eliminating the player's ship if they can touch it or hit it with their lasers. The laser ship fires a solid stream of deadly laser fire. The third screen is the Space Warp. Here, alien attackers leave a space warp tunnel, one at a time, swinging around it in widening circles and firing at the player's ship until

—CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE—

they either hit it or touch it as they leave the screen safely, unless the player can eliminate them first. The fourth screen is the Flag Ship. Here, the giant alien mother ship moves slowly back and forth across the top of the screen, firing down at the player's ship below, protected by a bubble-shaped shield the player must first chip away. The large alien vessel is chipped away with every hit from the player's guns, until it's internal reactor is hit or it does the player's vessel in.

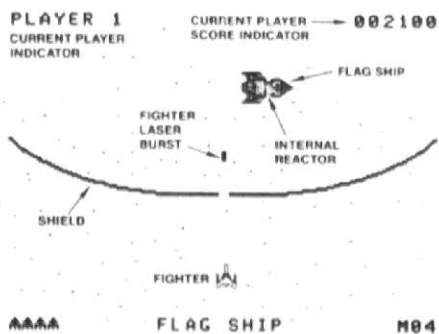
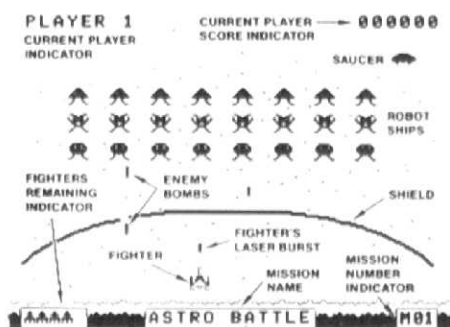
All the aliens on a previous screen must be eliminated before the action moves on to the next one. If all four missions are completed, the game begins again, with each new scene a tougher challenge than in the round before. Points are awarded for eliminating alien robot ships, saucers and fireballs. Four skill levels are offered, for one or two players. Each player starts with five ships and bonus ships are awarded for completing all four rounds. The game ends when players lose all their ships.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: This is yet another Coleco home version of an arcade classic, brought to the screen with a great deal of care and accuracy. The question here, as it was in all versions, is whether or not the game was really that good in the first place. The arcade **GORF** just a conglomeration of all the space arcade games that were most popular at the time it was released, rolled into one. This might be ok with you, if you liked all the games this one brings together. It wasn't that great for me.

Basically, **GORF** is a slide and shoot with multiple screens. This sets it above most similar games for home play right off. At least you aren't stuck with shooting the same aliens a million times each. You only have to shoot them a hundred thousand or so. The weakest and most boring sequence in this game is the attack on the mother ship. The most exciting part, and the most beautiful graphically, is the laser attack, and even it isn't really all that exciting. Not any more, anyway.

The overall performance here is good, but, as I have already pointed out, the excitement just doesn't seem to be there for me. It's definitely not the kind of game you will want to rush right out and buy. Give it careful consideration before you shell out your money. If my kids are any indication, the



youngsters will have a good time with it, but I'm not sure at what age this fascination will cease. Colecovision **GORF** is a good home version of the early arcade classic, but it's most definitely not another **DEFENDER** or **VANGUARD**.

ALAN: I reluctantly agree. Coleco has done a superb job of bringing this classic to the home, with all the detail and color of the arcade original, but I wonder why everyone is so eager to put it on your TV.

I guess it's my loss of interest in slide-and-shoots. I'm tired of them, even if they have four different screens. Period. Even the crisp graphics and true-to-the-arcade music and play on this one didn't help all that much.

If you are looking for a slide-and-shoot with something different, this one is probably the best you can find for your Colecovision. If you are like Mike and I, there are a lot better games already available or coming soon. You might just want to save your money.

RATINGS:

- Concept:** Too Familiar
- Graphics/Sound:** Good - Very Good
- Difficulty:** Novice
- Interest:** One Week - One Month

PEPPER II

From Coleco, for their Colecovision video game console.

PEPPER II is a home version of the zipper-zipping maze game of the same name, for one or two players. Players run around four different mazes, trying to zip around all four sides and enclose each of the number of rooms in every maze, while avoiding deadly roaming eyes and a Zipper Ripper that tries to undo the good the player has already done.

The game features four separate mazes through which the player's Pepper can roam, controlled by the joystick. Each maze is made up of a number of various-sized rooms. Pepper travels the sides of these rooms, on tracks that look like zippers. As he travels along a wall, the zipper zips up, by changing colors behind him. If he can safely zip all the way around a room, it fills up with kaleidoscopic colors. But -- the player has to watch where he or she is going. Pepper can unzip his own tracks, if he travels back over them the wrong way before all the walls have been zipped around a room.

The player has to move fast, too, because the Roaming Eyes soon enter the maze and begin chasing Pepper down. They'll eliminate him if they can touch him, so quick action must be taken to avoid them at all costs. The Zipper Ripper also starts ripping his way around the maze in the upper levels of play, undoing any zippers Pepper has zipped up, if they don't completely enclose a room, and eliminating Pepper if he can touch him.

Each maze also has four exits, through which Pepper can slip whenever the going gets hot, or when he's completed a maze. Pepper can jump from one of the four mazes to another as often as he likes, and the eyes and ripper won't follow for a few moments, but any rooms that haven't been completely zipped up will be unzipped when he returns.

Some of the rooms contain pitchforks. If Pepper can enclose one of these, he'll be able to eliminate the Roaming Eyes for a few moments. Other rooms contain various bonus prizes that add extra points when they are zipped up tight.

Players start out with five Peppers in level one and three in the others. Points are earned for every wall that's zipped, and for eliminating eyes. Bonus points are earned for enclosing all the rooms in a maze and a Super bonus and extra Pepper is earned for completing all four mazes. Extra Peppers are also earned for every 15,000 points the player collects. Then the action moves on to four new mazes, but this time the tracks can temporarily disappear on occasion, leaving only the intersections visible to guide the player. The longer a player spends in any one maze, the faster the adversaries move.

Four skill levels are offered, featuring beginner's play, near-arcade level, arcade level and harder-than-the-arcade level action. Two players take turns each time one loses a Pepper, maintaining separate scores. Each time all four mazes are completed, another four, harder than the last, are presented.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: For many months, the **PEPPER II** arcade machine ate my quarters, until they finally took it away, citing a lack of players, thinking they could make more money on some other machine. This is a very faithful adaptation of the arcade game, even at level two. Level one is far too easy for anyone that has played the game in the arcades. The graphics here are just as good as on the arcade version, but the sound effects are off as far as the timing goes, when you are the eater rather than the eatee. This is a very minor problem, however, that can be adjusted for with very little play.

All is not well with this cartridge, however. Plan to dig out your old Atari joysticks, if you have any, because that is the only way you will really enjoy the

control of your Pepper. The original Coleco controllers are far too hard to use with the fine quick movements that are required to play this game well. So -- plug in the old "standards," after selecting a game option with your Coleco controller, and be prepared to have a lot of fun.

I'm not really a lover of maze games, but this one is different. It seems to be a very warped version of the game **AMIDAR**. It's warped in the respect that the maze disappears a lot in the higher levels, and you have to really memorize where the tracks are, preparing for this usually-untimely event. If you like maze games at all, then this is going to be a cartridge you will cherish for a long long time.

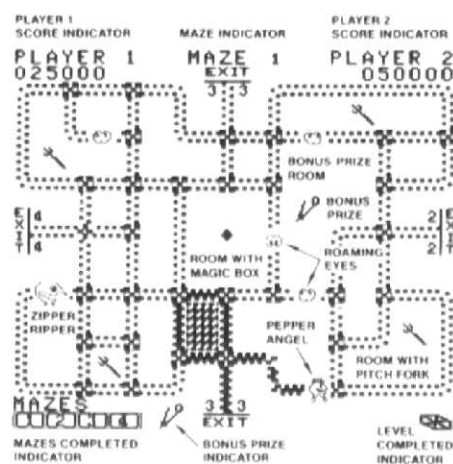
ALAN: Bravo, Coleco! It takes one heck of a maze game to make Mike happy and this is just the one to do it. I loved it, too. But, then again, I'm just an uncontrollable maze freak.

The graphics and sound effects on this one are great, especially when you fill in all those rooms and get a bonus. What a treat! It looks like a psychedelic quilt with colors that move. The action is tense, too, because not only does Pepper run fast, but the Roaming Eyes are awfully quick. It takes a lot of rapid thinking -- and luck -- to make it through four of these mazes, especially when you hit level two and the tracks start disappearing. But the rewards make it all worthwhile.

I didn't have as much trouble with the Coleco controllers as Mike did, but I never played this one in the arcades. That might make the difference. I had a little trouble getting Pepper to stay in one maze when he was near an entrance and I had to move fast, but I soon mastered the necessary technique and was flying through those mazes before I knew it, enclosing pitchforks, eating eyes and jumping from maze to maze. You will be, too, if you give it just half a chance. Enjoy this one. It's a maze chase that's well worth the price. If you like mazes like I do, I doubt that you'll ever tire of it.

RATINGS:

- Concept:** Familiar
- Graphics/Sound:** Excellent
- Difficulty:** Student - Graduate
- Interest:** One Year - Infinity



SPACE FURY

By Coleco, for their Coleco-
vision video game console.

SPACE FURY is a space ac-
tion arcade game for one or
two players. The object of
the game is to eliminate as
many of the alien commander's
ships as possible before your
own ships are destroyed.

Once the game option has
been selected and the game
begins, the Alien Commander
challenges the player to bat-
tle. Then the gamer's ship
appears in the center of the
screen. In round one, alien
scout ships come together to
form larger ships that can
eliminate the player's vessel
on contact or with their
deadly fireballs. The player
must rotate the ship with the
joystick and fire at the
enemy by pressing on the
right-hand side button. The
left fire button activates
the ship's thrusters, pushing
it through space in the di-
rection it was last pointed.

Once all the alien attack-
ers have been vanquished, the
display changes to that of
the docking mode. Here, the
player's ship is surrounded
by three "mother ships." The
gamer must rotate the ship
and point it toward one of
the mother ships, then acti-
vate the thrusters to dock
with it and gain extra fire
power for the next round of
play. Each docking gives the
player's guns a different
kind of super-energized fire
power, such as the ability to
fire forward and backwards at
the same time, or to fire
double laser bursts with
every press on the left-side
button. A docking mode pre-
cedes each new round of ali-
ens. If a docking isn't ac-
complished during this sec-
tion of play, the gamer must
take on the next round of ali-
ens with only the single
laser guns he or she started
with.

In the following rounds,
the Commander sends out his
cruisers, then his attackers.
If the player survives all
these, he or she must take on
the entire fleet. Throughout
it all, the player is given
only three chances to dock
with three different mother
ships before each round.

The play is for points,
which are earned for each
ship and fireball the player
eliminates. Each target is
worth more points in each
successive wave. Bonus points
are also earned for time
remaining on a timer at the
end of each round. Gamers
each start with five fighters
and earn bonus fighters when
they reach 20,000 points. The
game ends when all the fight-
ers are gone.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: At times the arcade
version of this game really
lives up to its name, with a
blinding fury of colors and
all the simplicity of a bad
dream. Coleco has done an
excellent job of bringing
this one to the home screen,
though it does lack some of
the visual sharpness of the
arcade original. It also
lacks some of the blinding

speed and overall difficulty.
This isn't really a negative
comment; just my way of
pointing out the fact that
this home game is not really
the same as the arcade game
of the same name, regardless
of what is printed on the
box.

In spite of the afore-men-
tioned shortcomings, this is
really another fine transla-
tion from Coleco. **SPACE
FURY**'s just a game that
doesn't translate to the home
screen without losing some-
thing. The arcade game is
presented on a vector screen
and your TV has a raster
screen. That's at least a
mile of difference.

The color is here, though,
and the action is almost the
same, but it lacks the full
brilliance of the arcade ver-
sion and this will disappoint
some of those who buy it hop-
ing for Coleco's usual arcade
duplication. In my opinion,
no one else could have come
closer. My first reaction was
disappointment, too, but that
soon disappeared when I
started to play.

At the first two levels,
the play is slow, but the
fourth level will give most
of you all the competition
that you can handle. If you
have played the arcade ver-
sion of this game, or if you
like **ASTEROIDS**-type video
game play, **SPACE FURY** will be
a good one for you. If you
don't frequent the arcades,
you just might like it right
from the start.

I think **SPACE FURY** will be
a game you'll come back to
long after your Colecovision
library has grown huge. You
should get it. I'm still hav-
ing fun playing **SPACE FURY**
and you should, too.

ALAN: Mike's right. I don't
frequent the arcades and I
wasn't at all disappointed in
the graphics on **SPACE FURY**.
It was the overall game-play
that left me cold -- but only
after a couple of hours of
fevered play.

Games like **ASTEROIDS** don't
hold up well with me any
more. I still enjoy **ASTEROIDS**
occasionally, and I think
SPACE FURY will satisfy any
lover of that game. It's
definitely better than VCS
ASTEROIDS, but that's an un-
fair comparison between two
systems that have completely
different memory capacities
and abilities.

The opening scene in **SPACE
FURY**, with unearthly music
playing while the alien com-
mander moves his mouth, is
very impressive. I also liked
the variety of weapons al-
lowed each player. Otherwise,
I was disappointed in the
fact that so little else was
that different from **AS-
TEROIDS**. The docking sequence
might be classified as dif-
ferent, but I fail to see how
anyone could miss hitting the
dock and changing weapons
before the next round begins,
so it really can't be taken
into consideration.

I must say that you'll
like this one if you like
ASTEROIDS and don't already
have it for another system.
Otherwise, I tired of **SPACE
FURY** very quickly.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Good
Difficulty:
Beginner - Graduate
Interest:
Two Weeks - One Year

LOOPING

From Coleco, for their Cole-
covision video game console.

LOOPING is an airplane-
flying arcade game for one or
two players at a time. The
object of the game is to fly
the entire course in the
shortest time possible. Play
is for points. Two players
take turns whenever one loses
a plane.

The game begins with the
plane sitting on a runway. A
large rocket is standing to
the left and a cityscape is
spread out all around. Soon,
the plane starts down the
runway. The player must pull
back on the joystick to make
it lift off. If he or she
continues pulling on the joy-
stick, the plane will do
loops. The right side button
makes the plane fire bullets
straight out from its nose.
Pressing the left side button
makes it speedup. The loops
get bigger as the plane goes
faster.

The player must swing his
or her plane around and shoot
the rocket behind the runway
to open the gate for the sec-
ond level of play. As the
plane flies, balloons rise up
from the ground. These will
eliminate the player's plane
if they touch it, so they
must be avoided or shot out
of the way. In level four, a
second rocket, located behind
a barrier that must first be
shot away, must also be
blasted before the gate will
open.

The gate leads to a wind-
ing twisting series of pipes
between which the player must
fly as quickly and as care-
fully as possible. The faster
the twisting course is tra-
versed, the more points the
player earns.

At the end of the pipes is
an entrance to another room,
guarded by twinkle monsters.
These look like stars and
bounce around in the close
confines of the tiny box.
They will eliminate the play-
er's plane if they touch it,
so they must be blasted out
of the way if the player is
to make it to the home
stretch. A spigot at the end
of the pipes also threatens
to drip on the gamer's plane
at any moment. This drip will
also destroy the flier, so
it, too, must be avoided or
blasted out of the way.

The final stretch is ac-
tually a room within a room.
The smaller room in this
final area is the end of the
course, but it's filled with

large colorful bouncing balls
that exit and bound around in
the larger room as well.
These balls must be cleared
out of the way or avoided if
the player is to succeed in
getting into the last room
and touching the "End" box.

Once the end is reached,
the game begins again, with
more rockets to be blasted
out of the way, more balloons
and faster-bouncing balls.
There are more green drops,
too.

Points are earned for
shooting balloons, rockets,
green drops, twinkle mon-
sters, bouncing balls and for
each brick shot from the
rocket barriers. Points are
also awarded for flying time
spent in the pipes, more for
flying through them faster.
Players each start with five
planes and the game ends when
they are all gone.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: I really tried playing
this game in the arcades and
now at home, too, but it
still gives me nothing back
for the effort. The game
lacks excitement and any-
thing, really, to keep me
interested for any length of
time.

This might be purely sub-
jective on my part, because
the graphics are good and the
controllers work more than
adequately for this game but
I did think the fire and ac-
celerator buttons should have
been on the opposite sides
from where they were. I like
using my thumb to fire on the
Coleco controllers. Other
than this minor problem, they
worked fine.

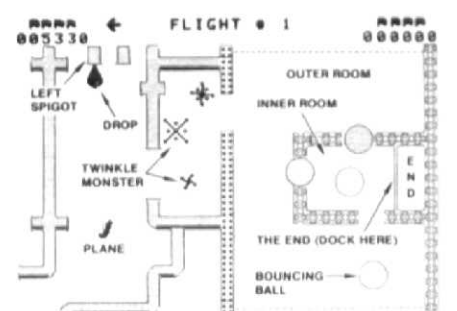
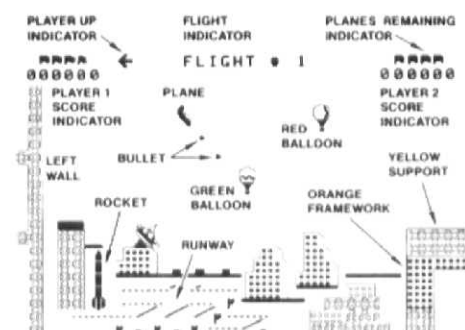
Despite the fact that
LOOPING is played on a scrol-
ling screen, most of the
action takes place in the
first section. It didn't take
long for the action to bore
me. I'm getting pretty used
to Coleco's games taking me
somewhere, if you know what I
mean, and this one failed to
give me that feeling. In all
fairness, I must point out
that the arcade game was
lacking on this point, too.

Once the gate is open, you
are forced to fly through a
maze that is almost too short
to make it worth the effort.
Unfortunately, at this point,
I didn't really care if I
made it to the end or not.

Don't rush out to get this
one. I don't think it plays
as well as the arcade version
did and it doesn't offer much
in the way of challenge or
variety. If you've played the
arcade version and hated it,
you already know what to do
about this one.

ALAN: This is another graphic
beauty from Coleco. Like
Mike, I also thought the
first segment of the game was

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the most challenging, especially when you had to knock out more than one rocket to open the gate. And, even though I have to agree there isn't a whole lot to the rest of the game, the music that plays while you fly through the pipes is worth hearing.

Listen to Mike, though. The action on that first section of play gets pretty furious and I had some fun with it for a while, but the entire game isn't really worth the price, if you ask me. In short, **LOOPING** is OK, but there's better. You might want to save your money on this one.

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Fair - Very Good
Difficulty: Student
Interest: One Week

HAPPY TRAILS

From Activision, for Mattel's Intellivision and Intellivision II, and Sears' Super Video Arcade.

HAPPY TRAILS is a strategic action video game/puzzle for one or two players. Black Bart has robbed a stagecoach and the player must "create" a trail, so the hero can pick up stolen loot and, if possible, capture the evil bad-guy.

The game is played on a number of squares, jumbled pieces of a combination maze/path with one square always missing in each screen. The squares must be slid around by the player to make a safe useable path over which his or her on-screen character can walk. A path must be made so the hero can pick up a number of money bags that are scattered throughout the maze, while avoiding Black Bart, who is also travelling through the maze in the upper levels of play. One chance is lost whenever Black Bart touches the player's character. If the player-controlled hero can touche a red Sheriff's star, he will turn into a Deputy for a short time. While Deputized, the player's hero can "capture" (eliminate) Black Bart when he touches him.

The hero walks automatically. The player slides the path pieces nearest the blank square by pressing on the corresponding side of the Intellivision disc. When the player holds down either top side button, the hero walks faster. Pressing either lower side button will make the hero change directions. The player can change the path any way the squares will slide, but one chance will be lost every time his or her on-screen character runs into a dead end.

Each successive game screen is made up of more sliding squares than the last, until the entire screen is filled, in the highest level. Eight game variations



are available, offering four different beginning skill levels for one or two players, who take turns each time an opponent loses a chance. Game one begins with only three panels and each successive screen changed according to a set pattern. Game three is the same as game one, but each new trail pattern is selected at random. Game five starts out with 11 panels, moves faster, and doesn't allow players a chance to move the panels back if they aren't moved into their proper places. Game seven is the same as game five, with successive trails that are randomized.

Players each start out with one on-screen hero and three in reserve. Points are awarded for each money bag and badge the player picks up, and for each criminal eliminated. Additional points are awarded for capturing extra criminals and money bags in the same trail. A bonus timer starts at 500 and counts down to 0. Points remaining on the bonus timer are added to the player's score when the last money bag in each trail is collected.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: It never ceases to amaze me, despite the number of new video games now hitting the market every month, how few of them utilize a new concept that is both fun and challenging. Carol Shaw's **HAPPY TRAILS** does just exactly that. I love it!

The graphics are crisp and colorful, too, with a friendly cartoonish flair. The game concept is fresh and fun, and the challenge can get mind-boggling. This is a serious gamer's delight, despite the apparent simplicity and comical nature of it all, requiring a high level of strategic thought and fast action. I liked the subtle background music and sound effects, too.

After the first simple warm-up round, in games one through four, Black Bart makes things really tough, often rendering at least one trail panel completely useless. He's hard to catch while you are deputized, too. Despite the amount of strategy this game requires, it moves fast, even though it's not really a high-action shooting match type of game. I must thank Carol for giving me the ability to reverse my hero's direction, or I never would be able to get as far as I do.

In short, get this game. It's a rare gem you shouldn't be without, even if you are a dedicated space gamer.

MIKE: My greatest pleasure as a video game critic is that moment when I discover something totally new and refreshing like **HAPPY TRAILS**. The concept is new and as well done as anything I have seen produced for Intellivision play in a long long while. The game is so simple that even a young child can quickly become interested in the play, but even those

gamers who consider themselves experts will find the going tough, especially in the upper levels.

The graphics are great and I loved the comical touch given them by making my hero and Black Bart nothing more than oversized cowboy hats with feet. It added a necessary touch of humor to a game

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that is otherwise incredibly demanding.

I also appreciated the sound effects, with the maze panels sharply sliding and locking into place. This might even be one of the most effective parts of the game. Either way, between the sound effects and graphics, you can almost feel those panels sliding and colliding.

Playing the game is an experience you don't want to end. The levels get more complex each time you finish a maze until the entire screen is covered with sliding panels, and changing the initial skill level will keep your interest at a high peak.

Carol Shaw has a potential big hit with this one, even though it's not as fast-moving as **RIVER RAID** for the VCS was. It's every bit as challenging. **HAPPY TRAILS** is a must for Intellivision owners. Those of you who don't own an Intellivision ought to at least find someone who does and play it with them. It will be well worth your effort.

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Student - Graduate
Interest: One Year - Infinity

TROPICAL TROUBLE

From Imagic, for Mattel's Intellivision and Intellivision II, Sears' Super Video Arcade and for other, similar systems.

TROPICAL TROUBLE is an original arcade chase game for one or two players. The action is set on a tropical island. The Beach Bruiser has stolen Clarence's girlfriend, Doris and is carrying her off. The player must help Clarence rescue her and, if possible, overthrow the bully.

The game opens with a view of the entire island, with Clarence standing by his boat on the left-hand shore. This scene appears each time the player loses a Clarence, showing how far across the entire island he has traveled so far and what lies just ahead.

The first actual game screen opens with the Bruiser picking Doris up in his arms and giving Clarence a swift kick that sends him to the left side of the screen. Then the chase is on. The player must press on the controller disc to make Clarence run after the bully as he leaves with the girl, but many obstacles make it hard for our hero to catch up and save the day, including boulders, snakes, coconuts, falling lava, clams, ferns and lava pools. The first four are moving obstacles and the last three are stationary. Tripping over any obstacle will slow Clarence down. Clarence can jump over obstacles when the player presses on any side button. Occasionally,

Doris drops a white handkerchief. If Clarence can touch one of these, he will be made invincible for a short time, and can run through all obstacles, going straight for the girl, until he stops blushing red and returns to his normal color.

All the action moves from left to right on a scrolling screen with a background and obstacles that change according to Clarence's current location on the island. The bully always stays just off the right-hand side and one Clarence is lost if the player allows the hero to touch the left-hand side of the screen. In some areas, monkeys run along and throw coconuts at our hero. In front of the volcano, lava drops out of the sky and, later, collects in pools on the beach. The final scene is played out on a high bridge. Here, the bully himself throws rocks at Clarence, and falls from the bridge if our hero can avoid being hit and touch the ugly brute. Then the action moves on to a new, tougher island.

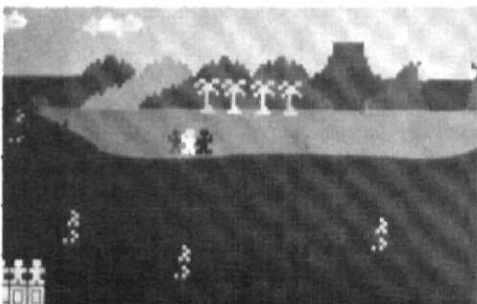
Points are earned for each white handkerchief Clarence picks up, for each moving obstacle he touches while blushing and for each time he reaches Doris. Players each start out with three Clarences. Two players trade turns whenever the opponent loses a hero. Skill options allow for fewer obstacles, more hankies and no snakes in the sand, snakes, more obstacles and fewer hankies, or lots of obstacles and hankies that are few and far between. The game is over when all the Clarences have been lost.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: This is, essentially, a horizontal variation on Imagic's earlier **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**. I liked the earlier game, and enjoyed this one, too. **TROPICAL TROUBLE** features virtually all the identical characters, with different names, of course, and the same basic concept, but a lot more scenic variety, depicted in Imagic's usual state-of-the-art style. And the game's not as simple as it looks.

On the screen, the bully never seems that far off, but it only takes a few minutes of serious play to realize that he might as well be across town in a traffic jam. The obstacles, even in the lower levels, seem to be scattered everywhere, always tripping our poor hero up. And that left side of the screen is always too close for comfort!

This is not a game for serious arcaders. It's obviously designed for family play, and for party people who like a simple-but-graph-



ically impressive challenge for friends to be entertained with. The graphics are superior, and play an important part in the overall action and strategy. I don't think **TROPICAL TROUBLE** will be an all-time best-selling classic, but you should definitely give it a look. It just might be for you.

MIKE: Excellent graphics on the screen and the possibility of saving a damsel in distress. This is a perfect scenario for a rousing video game, at least for the males among us. Unfortunately, **TROPICAL TROUBLE** has the above attributes, but still fails to deliver.

There are some very difficult sections that will at times seem almost impossible, though even these can be conquered with just a little practice. The real question here is whether or not you really want to spend your time trying to master it. I did because I kept thinking there had to be more to this game than what I was experiencing, only to find out that there really isn't much. Even meeting the bully on the bridge was a bit anti-climactic, considering the build-up I gave it trying to get to that point.

The hardest part of this game is the lava pits, which really proved to be my undoing many times, in the upper levels of play, but a game that merely makes you work hard is not necessarily good.

All is not bad, however. The graphics are some of the best I've seen from Imagic yet and the controllers work well enough that I suspect they had the system in mind when the game was designed. Still, the fact that **TROPICAL TROUBLE** was made for Intellivision made me hope for more in the game play itself and I was ultimately disappointed.

I agree with Alan that this game isn't going to be a classic. Personally, I'd leave it alone, maybe somewhere on that far away island that it so graphically depicts.

RATINGS:

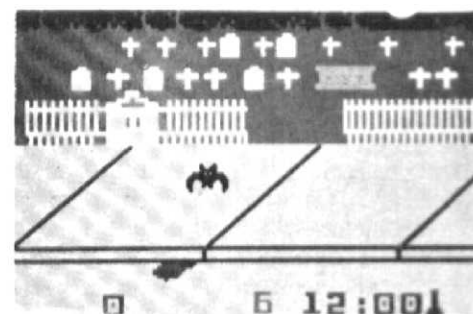
Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Student
Interest: One Week- Two Months

DRACULA

From Imagic, for Mattel's Intellivision and Intellivision II, Sears' Super Video Arcade and other similar systems.

DRACULA is a video simulation arcade game for one or two players. The object of the game is to roam the streets and bite as many victims as possible before the sun comes up.

Dracula rises from the grave and must be moved about the streets by the player, using the disc controller. He finds victims by knocking on doors. The eyes of his potential victims shine in the



darkened windows of the homes where they reside. Victims will answer the door and try to flee. Dracula must chase them down and bite them on the neck to score points, meet his quota and add to his blood supply. He can change into a bat and back to a vampire at the gamer's discretion.

Things aren't easy for our friendly ghoul, either. Along the way, he can be chased by a wolf that will slow him down with his bites. Dracula can escape the wolf by turning into a bat, but can then be scooped up by a large vulture and carried off-screen, if the player doesn't turn him back into a vampire in time to stop him. If that weren't enough, Dracula can also be chased by a constable who throws wooden crosses, in certain levels of play. The crosses also slow Dracula down.

But there's hope; when a constable is on-screen, Dracula can turn a bitten victim into a zombie capable of eliminating him. The vampire can also bite the constable and freeze him for a short while, if he's fast enough. It's a constant race against time as the vampire's blood supply is lowered if he goes too long without a refueling and the sun gets ever closer to the horizon.

The **DRACULA** game cartridge allows for play alone against the computer, with two players who take turns and accumulate separate scores, or head-to-head with another player who controls the victims. In this latter version, players switch roles each night and the player operating the victims earns five points for each unsuccessful bite Dracula takes. A choice of three skill levels set the number of victims and obstacles. In skill level three, Dracula must bite all of the offered victims before being allowed to return to the grave. In all the versions, Dracula can rise again the following night as long as he returns to his grave before sun-up.

Points are scored for each victim Dracula bites, and for every patrolman eliminated by a zombie. Bonus points are awarded for every victim over 2, and for every hour earlier than 6 AM that Dracula returns.

The game ends if Dracula can't make it back to his grave before sunrise, if he runs out of blood or if he is carried off-screen by a vulture.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: Imagic has really done it again with the graphics on this game. The display was a

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pleasant surprise after some of the games I've reviewed lately -- but I've come to expect that from Imagic.

I appreciated the fact that **DRACULA** is not really the blood-and-gore game it sounds like it could have been, and I really liked the realism in the way the zombies moved. So much for the good things I can say about this cartridge.

The overall play of the game, however, is weak to poor. It gets boring in a short time. I'm not saying that **DRACULA** is easy to master although, at the first level of play, it can be. It's just that the action itself seems to have no overall purpose -- no movement. I was also disappointed in the way only the lower half of the screen was in any way involved as more than a mere backdrop. This seemed such a waste when there are all those beautiful buildings in the background and Dracula couldn't fly above the center of the screen when he was a bat. I would think he could at least soar over the tops of the buildings, if not on to other vistas.

Don't let the blood rush to your head on this one. It's not really worth too much trouble. I think you will find the movement slow, with very little action -- definitely not enough to keep you interested for very long. At first I thought **DRACULA** might have been aimed at the younger market, so I let my kids try it out. They got bored with it faster than I did. Take a look at it in the stores. The graphics are a sight to be seen, but you should probably leave it alone.

ALAN: Hold on there! I'll admit this game didn't offer the kind of variety and action I had hoped it would, but there is a game here; the two-player version with one gamer being the victim. This makes it all more challenging because the victims are harder to catch and another human to play with always makes for a livelier challenge during the game, if nothing else. By yourself, however, the action does seem a bit limited, as Dracula has so little area in which to move and the background, though unquestionably one of the prettiest I've ever seen, is a fairly repetitious "wrap-around" of building after building.

It was the restricted play area that really did it for me, though. Half of your TV screen simply is not enough room in which to run around and avoid a wolf, constable and vulture, let alone to keep up with victims. I didn't get bored playing this one -- I got claustrophobic!

Although the graphics should be hanging in a gallery, Imagic has definitely created better games.

RATINGS:

Concept: Original
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Novice - Beginner

Interest:
One Week - One Month

ICE TREK

From Imagic, for Mattel's Intellivision and Intellivision II and Sears' Super Video Arcade.

ICE TREK is an action/adventure arcade challenge for one player at a time. The object of the game is to melt the ice palace and release the captured Aurora Borealis, before another terrible ice age is brought about. To reach the palace, players must trek through a herd of caribou then cross a river by building a bridge out of icebergs.

The player controls Vali the Avenger through a series of three different screens by pressing on the corresponding side of the disc controller. Vali skis through a caribou herd in the first screen, dodging trees and animals as he works his way from the left to the right side of a horizontally scrolling display. If he touches a caribou, one hero's life is lost.

The player can activate Vali's axe to kill a caribou that gets in the way, but he will lose points for every animal he must kill. In addition to lost points, the Wildlife Goddess will appear at the top of the screen whenever Vali kills a caribou. The Goddess will shoot two of her arrows at Vali before disappearing, and he will lose one life if hit by them. The skill level of the next screen will also advance by one whenever a caribou is slain.

The second screen is an icy river. Vali must build a bridge across the river to reach his goal, the dreaded Palace of Kalkron the Terrible. He builds the bridge out of icebergs that float by, by roping the chunks of ice with a grappling hook. The player activates Vali's grappling hook by pressing either lower side button and throws it by pressing on the disk. Icebergs caught by the hook can then be reeled in and added to the bridge by pressing on the lower edge of the disk. Chunks that collide with the bridge Vali had already built will demolish that portion, but Vali can eliminate approaching icebergs by throwing fireballs at them. The hero's fireball-throwing capability is activated by pressing on either lower side button, and fireballs are thrown by pressing on the disk.

Vali can accidentally walked off the bridge he is building, but will automatically climb back on. He will temporarily turn blue from the cold after a fall in the water. Another dunk in the water before he has returned to his original coloration will eliminate him.

Once the hero has built a complete bridge from the bottom to the top of the screen,

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he can cross it and enter the third and final challenge, the dreaded Ice Palace.

In the Palace screen, Vali moves back and forth in front of the great ice castle when the left or right side of the disk is pressed. The evil Prince's cohorts throw numerous black ice crystals that will eliminate the player's hero if they touch him. In this screen, Vali's torch is always activated. He must avoid the crystals or melt them by hitting them with his fireballs, which are thrown straight up whenever the player presses either side button. Vali must hit a number of targets on the Palace to melt it and move on to a new trek, more difficult than the last one. Successive quests feature more caribou, more icebergs that move faster, a bridge that is tougher to build and more black crystals that fall faster.

Points are scored for passing caribou, for each section of the ice bridge Vali builds, and for each section of the Ice Palace that he melts away. Bonus points are earned for getting through an entire caribou herd without killing one animal, and for each entire ice castle melted. The cartridge offers six different starting skill levels and difficulty that increases as the game is played. Each gamer starts with five chances in levels one and two, four in levels three and four and three chances in levels five and six. Bonus Valis are awarded whenever a player makes it through all three scenes without losing one hero. The game ends when all of a player's heroes have been eliminated.

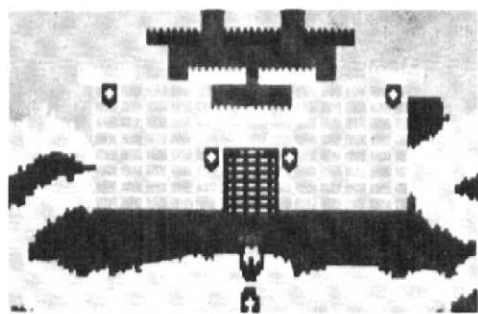
OPINIONS:

ALAN: I liked **ICE TREK**. It's not a high-action arcade thriller, but Imagic designer Patrick Schmitz is to be congratulated for outstanding graphics and a game concept that incorporates elements of an adventure game with arcade action -- and a bit of variety. The first level of play is fairly easy, once the art of putting a bridge together is figured out, but things do heat up in each successive round as you continue to play, with things getting down right interesting about the third time through all three screens.

Not everyone is going to enjoy this game because it does seem to move a bit slow, until you get to the Ice Palace. Here the action is as fast and furious as any of the best slide-and-shoots.

I think what I liked most, besides Imagic's usual graphic excellence, is the fact that **ICE TREK** is really three completely different games in one, and the bridge-building sequence is completely unique. I recommend this game -- after you've taken a look for yourself, to see if it's the kind of action you are looking for.

MIKE: I really can't recommend this one as Alan just



did. It's three entirely different games, all right, but I didn't find any of them all that intriguing. In the caribou scene, avoiding the Wildlife Goddess's arrows was the most exciting part. I found myself killing a caribou often, just to bring her out for another round.

Building the ice bridge was the most challenging part of the game. This could have been exciting, too, if I wanted to be an engineer, but even this segment can be easily mastered with only a little practice. The bridge doesn't really get any harder to complete in the higher levels of play, it only takes longer to finish building it. The trouble is, it takes so long that I finally gave up and shut the machine off after I got bored with trying.

Once you have built your bridge, you come face to face with the evil Ice Prince. Considering the worst that he has to throw at you, however, he can hardly be called evil. I must admit that this last segment of the game appears to be the most exciting, but it is easier to overcome than it first appears, and the game is over before you know it.

The graphics here are definitely up to Imagic's usual high standards, but the play doesn't live up to the display. If you must have a game that is basically non-violent and requires little strategic thinking, this one might be for you, but I think you'd be better off looking elsewhere.

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty:
Novice - Student
Interest:
One Week - One Month

KANGAROO

From Atari, for their 5200 "Super System" video game console.

KANGAROO is a home version of the arcade game of the same name, for one or two players at a time using the joystick/keypad controllers. Mother kangaroo's baby has been captured by a bunch of troublesome monkeys and is being held captive. Mommy must run and jump her way through four different game screens, saving her baby in each of them, while avoiding the monkeys and apples they throw, before time runs out.

The players control Mother Kangaroo with the joystick. She hops left or right when the joystick is pushed to the

left or right, jumps when the joystick is pushed up and ducks when it is pulled down. To make the kangaroo take a super-jump, the stick must be pushed up and to the left or right.

As mommy makes her way to her baby, the monkeys try to stop her, dropping apples down from the top and throwing them in from the sides. She must duck or jump over the apples, and avoid touching a monkey, or one life will be lost. The player can also make her punch apples and monkeys by pressing on any side fire button at just the right moment.

The action all takes place in the trees, on four different screens, each more difficult than the one before it. The first screen is a simple array of branches and ladders. The second features wide gaps in a stairway of logs, requiring super-leaps to bridge them without falling. The third screen has baby monkey held captive atop a column of monkeys. In this one, mom must either punch the monkeys out from under the column, one at a time, or climb up ladders to a branch that will allow her to reach her baby. The fourth screen is a complex path of ladders and logs, with menacing monkeys dropping down all around her.

Tasty fruit is also hanging from the branches in each screen. Mom can eat these for strength -- and points -- along the way. She can also jump up and ring a bell, to replenish the fruit supply. Each replacement fruit is different and worth more points than the ones before. Points are also scored for punching monkeys and their apples. A bonus timer at the top of the screen starts at 2000 and counts down as the play continues. Remaining timer points are also added to a player's score each time the baby is rescued.

The play continues, from one screen to the next, each time the baby is rescued. When a player has made it through all four screens, he or she begins again at the first, in a more difficult level of play, with more monkeys that move faster and throw more apples. More fruit appears on the tree in the higher levels of play, too.

One or two players can play, with a choice of "Novice" or "Advanced" beginning levels. One life is lost each time the kangaroo is knocked or falls from the tree, or if the timer runs out before the baby is saved. Gamers each begin with three kangaroos and can earn bonus lives for 10,000 points, 30,000 points and then for every 30,000 points thereafter. The game is over when all the kangaroos have been lost.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: I really liked this game. I know a lot of serious arcaders who might laugh, because of the "cute" theme here, but I think **KANGAROO** is an excellent example of a cute game that works. Except for the unique theme, the overall concept is very fam-

iliar. A lot like **DONKEY KONG JR.**, to be exact, and a lot of other climbing games that have come along since. But the action keeps you moving, the bonus fruit adds to the fun and those danged monkeys are not easy to avoid.

The graphics on this one are superb in every detail, very close to those employed in the original arcade game, and the music is a joy. I was especially pleased to see all four screens present and accounted for, and all the details and challenge left intact.

Despite the cuteness of it all, my young son probably couldn't manage the controls and have much fun doing so. The challenge is just too great for the very young. But I enjoyed the game, and will continue to play it long into the night for many nights to come. It's especially good for parties because most anyone over the age of ten will be willing to give it a try -- and might even make it through the first couple of screens without too much practice. But the third and fourth screens present a more serious challenge, and practice will be required to make it beyond them into the second and third and fourth game waves. Then things really get hopping -- if you'll pardon the obvious pun.

Seriously, though, I found **KANGAROO** to be an unmitigated delight the whole family should enjoy. I am now fully impressed with the 5200 and think this game is just the beginning of what it's capable of doing. Get it. You won't be sorry you did.

MIKE: **KANGAROO** is a very pretty home arcade game that is faithful to the arcade version, with most of the play action that is to be found there. This doesn't necessarily make for a good or bad game in and of itself -- it just means that if you liked the arcade version you will most likely enjoy this one, too. The case with **KANGAROO** isn't quite as simple as that, however. There's a bit more to the story here.

I personally did not like the arcade version of this game. It could be a flaw in my personality, I don't know. Anyway, I found the 5200 home arcade version to be a lot more likeable on several counts. The younger set is going to like the game for the excellent graphics and the fun of playing it, and the hard-cores out there are going to be pleased with its faithfulness to the arcade original, especially in the upper levels of difficulty. Since it didn't cost me a quarter every time I wanted to play it, I got to enjoying the action myself after a while, because of the overall simplicity of the game more than anything else. This isn't to say that it's easy to master. It's just a basically uncomplicated game.

I had a hard time rating the interest level of this one, however, because I'm still not really certain how long it will take a serious

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gamer to tire of it, or even if that is possible. The best way to judge it might be to go down to the arcade and play that version. If you like it and want to play more, get the cartridge. If you don't, try it out on somebody else's 5200 first. The home version might surprise you.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Novice - Student
Interest: One Year

VANGUARD

From Atari, for their 5200 "Super System" video game console.

VANGUARD is a space action arcade game for one or two players. The game is already well-known in the video gaming world, but the details below are provided for those who are fairly new to the scene.

Players must guide a ship through seven different tunnel zones without smashing into a variety of wall configurations or a number of alien enemies, while avoiding their weapons fire. The object of the game is to make it to the City of Mystery at the end of the giant space tunnel and destroy Gond.

The gamer's ship travels constantly, and can be moved up, down, left or right on the screen by pushing on the joystick. When any side fire button is pressed, the ship's lasers shoot out from its nose. The guns fire to the rear, straight up or down when the joystick is pushed in the corresponding direction while the button is depressed. The ship flies slower when the guns are firing.

A number of Energy Pods appear throughout the tunnel. If the player can touch one of these with his or her ship, it will become temporarily invulnerable and can fly through the tunnel unharmed and unhampered, destroying any enemy or obstacle it touches, until it returns to normal.

A small map at the top of the screen shows the entire tunnel through which the player must travel, and the present location of the player's ship. Tunnel zones include the Mountain Zone, a horizontally-scrolling section of mountainous terrain, three Rainbow Zones, which scroll vertically while circus-style music plays, the Striped Zone, another horizontally-scrolling screen, this one with more than one path through which the player can fly, the Bleak Zone, another vertical pathway that leads to the City of Mystery, and the City of Mystery itself, where the gamer must battle Gond.

The player must battle Mist Copters and missile-firing Harley Rockets in the Mountain and Styx Zones. The Mists fly an erratic course, trying to collide with the player's ship, and firing missiles in the Styx Zone. Harley rockets, although more straightforward, are equally deadly because of their missiles. Floating Helm Balloons try to bump off the player's vessel in the Rainbow zones, flying all over the screen in their attempts. The Striped zone is filled with a variety of alien defense installations, bouncing Garime monsters, Floating Paynes that pump up and down like pistons and Barriers that must be blasted out of the way if the player is to pass. In the Bleak Zone, the player can "dock" with Kalmus Snakes that will carry him or her along and add bonus points, then he or she must dodge a rain of arrow-like Romeda ships, to enter the City of Mystery.

In the City of Mystery, the player's ship becomes trapped in a very limited area. The player must look for a moving opening in Gond's shield, dodging missiles that come in from the sides while the lower barrier creeps ever closer, restricting the player's airspace even more. If the player can escape from the City of Mystery with ships remaining, the action moves on to a new tougher tunnel. Hitting Gond scores bonus points.

Available play options allow a choice of continuous fire or missiles that leave the ship one at a time, for one or two players. Two players take turns whenever an opponent loses a ship.

Each player begins with five lives. Various points are earned for shooting all of the enemy objects but the Floating Paynes, which can't be destroyed. The longer the player waits before shooting Gond, the more points he or she will earn. An on-screen gauge monitors the ship's fuel supply, which is replenished whenever an enemy object is destroyed. If the fuel runs out, a ship is lost. Bonus ships are awarded at 10,000 and 50,000 points. When all the ships are gone, the game is over, but a special feature of the game allows the player to continue the game from the tunnel location where the last ship was lost, at a score that goes back to "0."

OPINIONS:

ALAN: I'm not a great fan of pure space shooting matches, but I love **VANGUARD**. I thought Atari's VCS version of this game was their best release in a long time, and this version is about five times better. Really.

The graphics here are rich and varied, some of the best I've seen on my screen yet, and the action is non-stop

—CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE—

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—CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE—

but engrossing. If it weren't for the "continue-play" feature, I might have given up trying to get clear through the tunnel but, instead, I love to pull this one out and try and try again, taking off where I left if necessary, but always hoping to get a little farther through the tunnel without help.

5200 **VANGUARD** is even truer to the arcade original than Atari's excellent VCS version is, with some important differences from their earlier home release. For one thing, the Styx zone is horizontal, rather than vertical, and features a lot more targets and obstacles. I was pleasantly surprised and was encouraged to try even harder to make it to that portion of the tunnel again and again. You will be too. Get **VANGUARD** for your 5200. It won't be the same without it.

MIKE: Now the deluxe version

of **VANGUARD** is available for your 5200 and I must agree with Alan that this is the best I've seen so far. The graphics are super and the game is very much like the arcade original. The main difference is you get to see the whole tunnel on this one without actually flying all the way through it with your allotted ships. This is great, especially for people like me, who have to spend a lot of time trying to get to the upper levels of a multiple-screen game.

Unfortunately, **VANGUARD** still isn't one of my favorite home games to play. This probably stems from the fact that I didn't really care for it in the arcades. However, it is a really respectable shoot-em-up that adds variety to the usual space battle that we've seen all too often in other games released by the truckload lately.

If you like a shoot-em-up that is hard to play and gives you a good challenge,

this is the game for you. If you have any doubts, check out the game in a local arcade. It's a cheap way to learn whether you'll like the overall style of the play on this version or not.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty:
 Student - Graduate
Interest:
 One Year - Infinity

KILLER BEES

From N.A.P. Consumer Electronics, for their Odyssey-2 video game system.

KILLER BEES is a one-player arcade action game. The object of the game is to wipe out all of the on-screen "Beebots" and eliminate or avoid the enemy killer bees, before they wipe out the

player's own swarm.

Odyssey gamers control a swarm of bees, displayed as a small mass of moving dots. They are moved around the screen by pushing the joystick in the desired direction. The player uses his or her swarm to attack and eliminate a number of "Beebots," or robots, who try to stay away as long as they can. Beebots are eliminated by touching them several times with the player's bees. The first few times the robots are touched, they slow down, then stop. Once a Beebot has stopped, the next time the player touches it, it will be eliminated. The longer it takes to eliminate the Beebots, the faster they run.

As the player chases the robots down his or her swarm is chased by enemy swarms of bees. These enter one at a time, and there can be several swarms of them on-screen at the same time. They chase the player's swarm and eliminate a number of bees from it every time they get close enough to touch it. The player can eliminate enemy swarms with a deadly ray, activated by pressing on the red controller button. The ray travels horizontally across the screen, from wherever the player's swarm is located at the time the button is pressed, but the player only gets one "zap" at a time, earned whenever a Beebot has been eliminated.

If all the beebots in a screen are eliminated, the game progresses to a new one, with faster-moving Beebots and more enemy swarms in each new screen encountered. Players start with only one swarm of bees. The game ends when all of a player's bees are gone.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: I have mixed emotions about this game. I like the way it moves, the graphics are an interesting departure for N.A.P. and the overall concept is different. I didn't care for the fact that the game could end so quickly, or the way it was sometimes hard to tell my swarm of bees from the enemy swarms.

Still, **KILLER BEES** is something really new for the Odyssey-2, and I found myself punching the reset button again and again, eager to try for a higher score, but rarely getting there. Things aren't all bad with this one, are they?

KILLER BEES isn't another **K.C. MUNCHKIN** or **UFO**, but it does warrant your attention. It beats the heck out of **ACROBATS** and **SMITHEREENS** for fast arcade action and responds well to the controllers. I give it my thumbs up.

MIKE: I think **KILLER BEES** presents Odyssey owners with some of the best graphics N.A.P. has turned out so far. The game play is also up to the same standards set for other systems, and presents Odyssey gamers with a refreshing new challenge for their system. As you can already tell, I liked this game a lot.

—CONTINUED ON PAGE 22—

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—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20—

KILLER BEES isn't a complex game. The play is extremely simple. I liked the action and the alternatives I was given for staying out of the way from those pesky enemy bees that were constantly trying to eliminate my swarm. I didn't care for the fact that, like so many other Odyssey games, I was given only one swarm with which to eliminate the Bee-bots. Having only one chance keeps me from getting very far into the game and I have a problem with my concentration when I know one good "zap" will be my last. Still, this fact might help here, because it makes it easier to beat your last score. Practice makes perfect.

I want to congratulate Odyssey's designers for producing a very fine game. **KILLER BEES** is a credit to the Odyssey library of games and will put new life into a system that I thought was

getting a bit neglected this past year or so. Odyssey fans should get this one.

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Good - Excellent
Difficulty: Student
Interest: Three Months - One Year

COMING SOON:

Next month is another news-packed CES Special, featuring all the latest upcoming game and hardware releases shown at the June Chicago Consumer Electronics Show. **PLUS:** An interview with the designer of Telesys' **STARGUNNER**, AT LEAST 15 more games reviewed, more letters and Microquips and a lot more! **DON'T MISS IT.**

IN AUGUST: Our gala First Birthday issue, with a lot more game reviews, a look back at the games we've reviewed, and our usual monthly batch of editorial goodies.

—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5—

IN-WATS (800-number) service will be used in areas without multiplexors and will also serve as a back-up system for multiplexor markets.

CVC's GameLine and **Master Module** have been designed for use with the Atari 2600 and Sears Tele-Games Video Arcade. It may also be used in connection with Colecovision units equipped with Expansion Module #1 or with the Colecovision Gemini system. It is also expected to be compatible with the Intellivision Master Component equipped with a System Changer (VCS emulator) or other systems which have VCS adaptors. A standard joystick and telephone outlet are also required.

BRIEFS —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3—

regular single games from other companies -- or less.

*****Watch for a new radio show, called "The Screen Fiend."** It's a series of shorts, running about 60 seconds apiece, including news and views about the latest in games, home systems, accessories and new technological developments -- and a 30-second commercial. Qualified stations will receive the shows free. Write to Audio Inventions, P.O. Box 240, Mount Ephraim, New Jersey 08059 for more information.

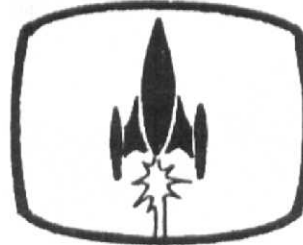
*****EVOLUTION**, from Sydney Development Corporation, will soon be coming for Colecovision, as well as for the Texas Instruments, Spectra Video, Apple II and Atari computers. The company is the first major games software supplier from Canada to enter the market. Sydney Development has also licensed rights to the comic strip characters from "B.C." and "Wizard of Id" for home and arcade releases. **QUEST FOR TIRES**, utilizing the characters from "B.C.," should be out soon.

*****A new voice-recognition and synthesis module will be available soon for the Atari VCS and 5200.** The plug-in device will be produced by Milton Bradley, under agreement with Atari. Slated for release in time for Christmas, it should retail for \$50. Atari and MB will also produce 18 new games which utilize the device. Milton Bradley has already announced production of a similar unit for use with the Texas Instruments TI-99 4-A.

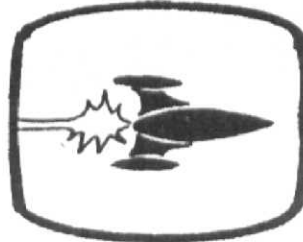
*****A recent AP wire story states that Mattel Electronics has filed suit against Atari, Incorporated.** The suit claims that Atari is attempting to produce games for the Intellivision game systems by obtaining trade secrets from former Mattel employees, now under Atari's employ. The \$40 million suit has been filed against Atari and the three former Mattel employees, Eric S. Weis, Russell A. Haft and Michael S. Winans, who have also been named as defendants in the action.

-- HOW THEY ALL STACKED UP --

The following is a list of all the games reviewed this issue, grouped according to our reviewers' combined opinions. Mike and Alan both liked the games next to the shooting rocket. Games with a horizontal rocket were only liked by one of our reviewers. Games with the crashed rocket didn't appeal to either of our reviewers.



**KILLER BEES ** VANGUARD ** KANGAROO
HAPPY TRAILS ** PEPPER II ** SPACE PANIC
TENNIS ** CENTIPEDE**



**MIKE LIKED -- ALAN DIDN'T
SPACE FURY**

**ALAN LIKED -- MIKE DIDN'T
ICE TREK ** TROPICAL TROUBLE
MASTER BUILDER ** KILLER SATELLITES
JUNGLE HUNT**



**DRACULA ** LOOPING ** GOLF
SUB SCAN ** SKY SKIPPER
G.I. JOE COBRA STRIKE ** PLAQUE ATTACK
DOLPHIN ** GALAXIAN**

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micro quips

Here's this month's winner of our \$10 award for the best mini-review (or reviews) for our new Microquips section. Send us your comments on all the new games -- or your favorite old ones, whether we've already covered them or not. Send one or several, but keep them short and to the point. We'll run all we can every issue, giving everyone

who gets a review published a free one-issue subscription extension -- and the best each month a \$10 check. **LET US HEAR FROM YOU!!!** The Logical Gamer believes that more opinions are better opinions.

FOR THE 5200:

PAC-MAN: The controllers wreck it. The game is as much frustration as it is fun. It's like owning a broken arcade **PAC-MAN** machine.

MISSILE COMMAND: Not the identical copy of the coin-op it should have been. Still, it's loads of fun, but good players will score a million points every time if the trac ball controller is any good.

DEFENDER: A triumph. Has just about everything the arcade game has to offer.

STAR RAIDERS: The controllers made it impossible to steer through hyperspace. I returned it for a refund.

CENTIPEDE: Impossible to enjoy with the joystick. If the trac ball is any good, this will be the greatest arcade-to-home translation ever. (Take THAT, Colecovision owners!)

SOCCER: A magnificent game for two players; a bust in the one-player mode. The controllers work great for Atari sports games.

FOOTBALL: A fine game that gets lots of two-player use. Still, after **SOCCER**, this one was mildly disappointing.

---TJC
(Name withheld by request)
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(FOR ATARI)

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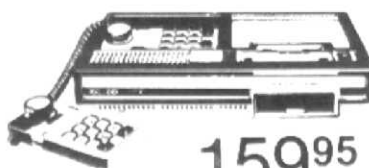
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