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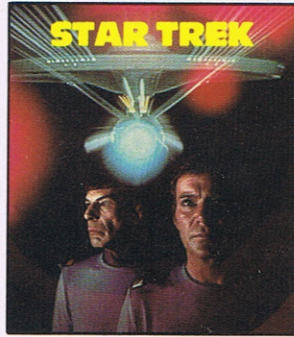
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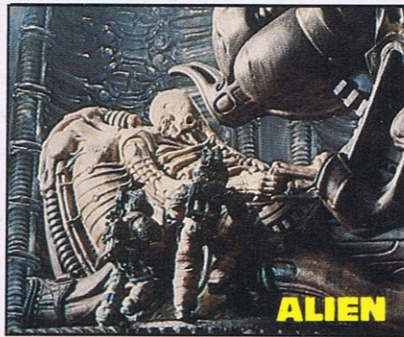
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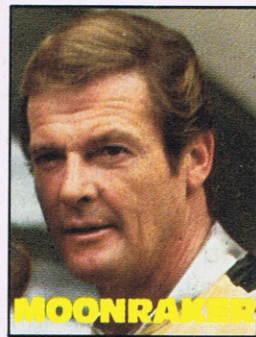
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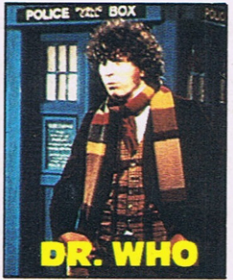
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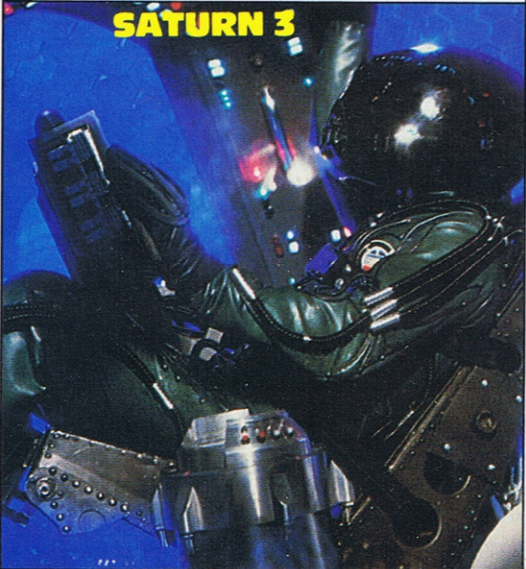
THE BLACK HOLE



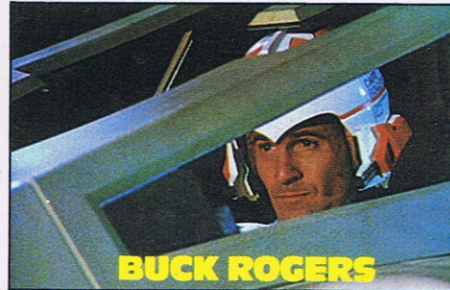
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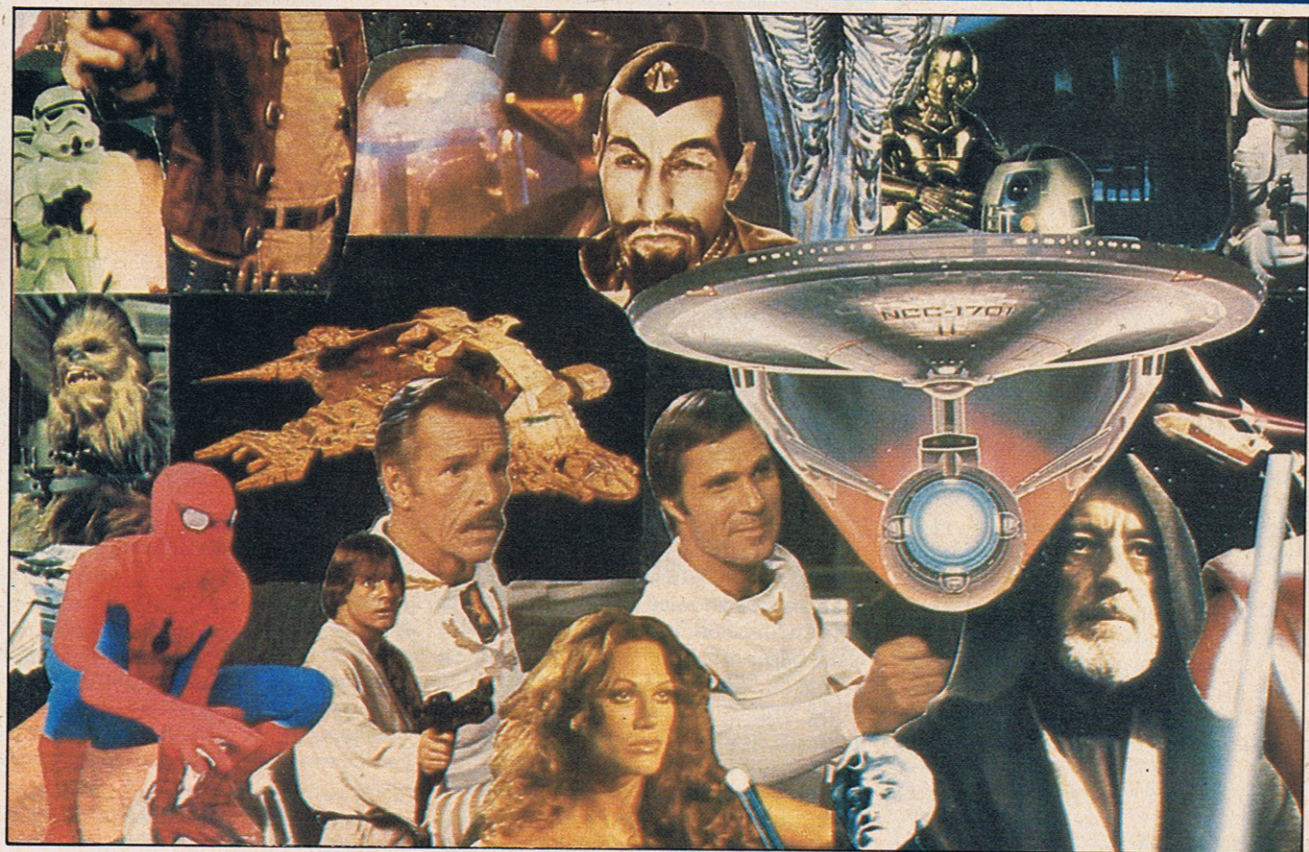


**AND
MUCH
MORE!**

STARLOG

JULY 1980
NUMBER 36

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FUTURE



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(Science Fiction)

The Games People Play

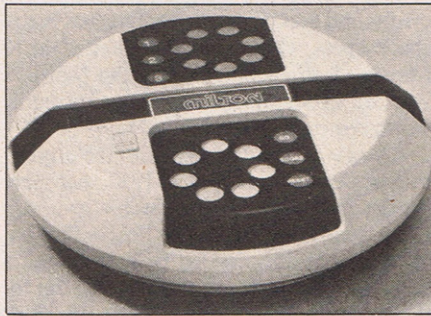
Every February, the Toy Manufacturers of America (TMA) hold their annual New York Toy Fair to unveil the new toy lines for the coming year. With the rapidly rising interest in electronic games and the science-fiction boom offering manufacturers enormous licensing potentials, this year's 77th Toy Fair was by far one of the most exciting in several years.

Rising fuel costs have convinced many toy manufacturers that people are looking into the myriad home entertainments, especially the latest rash of electronic and video games. The recent introduction of the microprocessor chip has resulted in literally hundreds of innovative and exciting games and toys.

MB Electronics, which introduced the popular "Simon" in 1978 and "Big Track" in 1979, has now developed two electronic games that promise to again capture the public's fancy. "Milton" is a talking game with a voice not created by a conventional record or tape recording. An electronic "speech chip" synthesizes an uncanny robot-like speech. "Milton" is also programmed to insult you should you make a wrong move. MB Electronics also offers the "Omni Entertainment System," a quiz game in which prerecorded 8-track tapes provide the questions and two to four players must spell out the answers on their keyboards. MB is also adding "Super Simon" and "Pocket Simon" to the popular memory-game line.

Entex Industries is releasing the "M.A.C. Mini Computer." The Multi-functional Advanced Computer is designed for games, music composition and recording and complex math calculations and can be programmed for games invented by the operator. Entex also markets more than 15 pocket games on subjects ranging from sports to pinball to cards.

Programmable trucks and cars are another popular area for various toy companies.



MB Electronic's talking "Milton" game.

Mego produces two superhero vehicles, the "Spider-Man Spidertrax" and "Batman's Battrax," both scaled to fit all of Mego's 3 3/4" superhero figures. Entex has the "Dan Van" and "Chuck Truck" which act on verbal commands.

One of the most popular games in amusement arcades today is the "Space Invaders" electronic machine. No less than three toy manufacturers are introducing home editions for those who can't get enough. Atari, the leader in television video games, has not only added a "Space Invaders" cartridge to their video computer system library, but they are kicking off a new line of hand-held "Space Invaders" games. Entex and Mego have released similar games under the names of "Alien Invader" and "Invasion from Space."

Ever since the release of *Star Wars*, more and more toy manufacturers have jumped on the licensing bandwagon. Toy makers realize that with exposure garnered by major films and TV series, consumer interest in a licensed item is year 'round. While other toys may only be purchased as gifts for Christmas or birthdays, licensed items retain marketability among the fans of a particular SF movie or TV show. For instance, Kenner Toys has enjoyed three years of success with their *Star*

Wars line. This year, Mego has introduced three licensed lines based on *Star Trek*, *The Black Hole* and the *Buck Rogers* TV series. Each line consists of the major characters, in 3 3/4" and 12" sizes, playsets featuring spaceship models and electronic toys such as walkie-talkies and radio-controlled robots (*The Black Hole*'s V.I.N.CENT and *Buck Roger*'s pal Twikki). Mego also offers additional figures and vehicles in their popular "Micronaut" line.

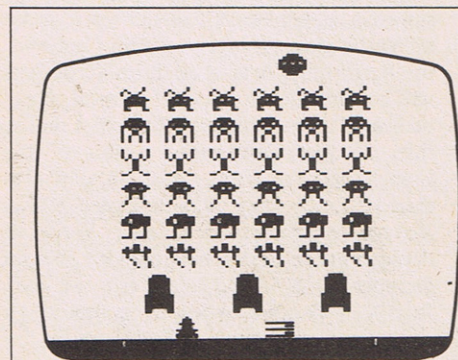
Plastic assembly kits are also lining the store shelves with favorite spacecraft and robots. Entex is offering colorful models from the popular Japanese productions *Message from Space* and *Battle of the Planets*. All eight models feature precolored parts for those who aren't too handy with a brush! MPC, which introduced its *Black Hole* line last December, is adding two new kits to their successful *Star Wars* line based on the sequel, *The Empire Strikes Back*. A 17"-long version of the Imperial stardestroyer, flown by Darth Vader to chase the rebels across the galaxy, and a model of the Rebel snow speeder, which engages Imperial forces on the ice planet Hoth, will be issued in an 8" version.

AMT has already released versions of the *Star Trek*—*The Motion Picture Enterprise*, Klingon battlecruiser and Mr. Spock's Vulcan shuttle. AMT also announces a revised version of its popular Mr. Spock figure dressed in his new uniform from the movie. Rumor has it that AMT will temporarily discontinue *Star Trek* items based on the TV series. There are no immediate plans to produce more TV kits when the ones presently on the shelves sell out. However, this doesn't mean the kits will not be available sometime in the future.

From the people who brought *Dungeons & Dragons* to the world, TSR Hobbies, come several entries destined to hook all age groups to the world of role-playing games. One of these, "The Awful Green Things from Outer Space," sets crew members of the spaceship *Znutar* against the menacing Green Things. When the Robot Leadfoot meets up with an awful Green Thing say, in the captain's chambers, he might use a fire extinguisher in defense. That might shrink the Green Thing down or it may have the adverse effect of making the dang thing multiply.

In "Snit's Revenge," another game for two players or teams, the vengeful little Snits invade the body of the gigantic Bolotomi. The Bolotomi sends Runnungitms (white corpuscles) to the counter-attack hoping to rid itself of the Snits before it's too late.

There's definitely more than one game in town, so whether your fancy is electronic games, board games, figures or models, it seems that there's quite a crop for picking.



Atari introduces two versions of the popular arcade game "Space Invaders." Left: A program cartridge for the video computer system already in release. Right: One of a new series of hand-held games.

