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Kim Basinger as Domino

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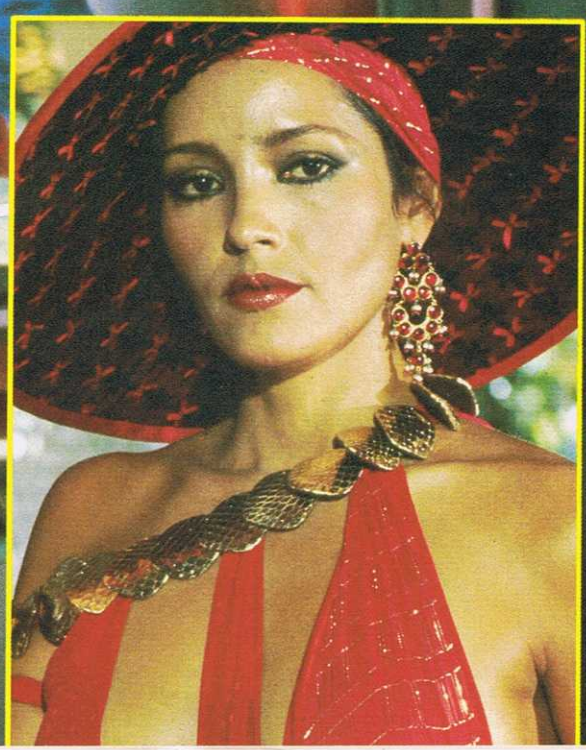

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I Remember SUPERMAN— The Life & Times of George Reeves

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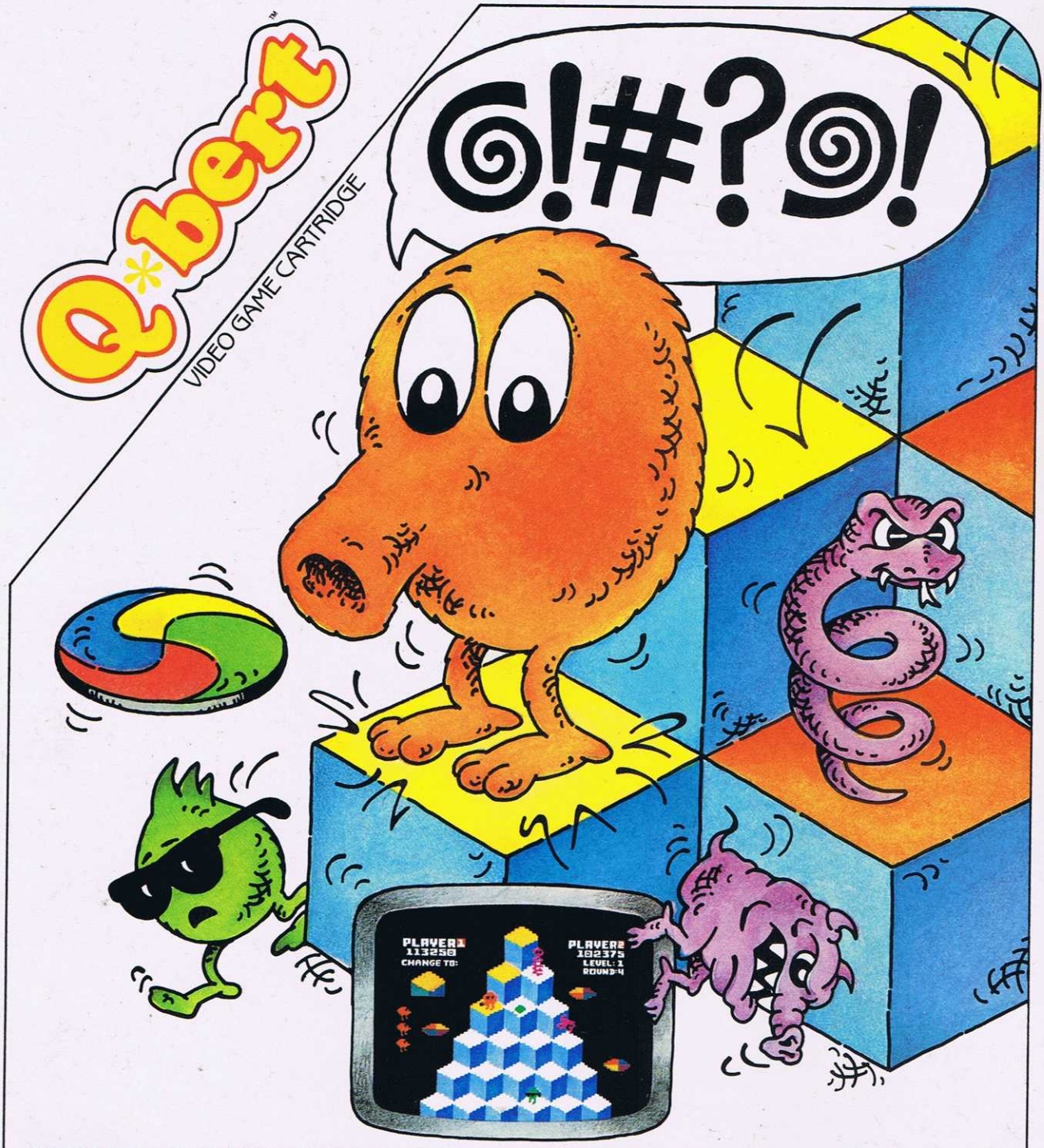

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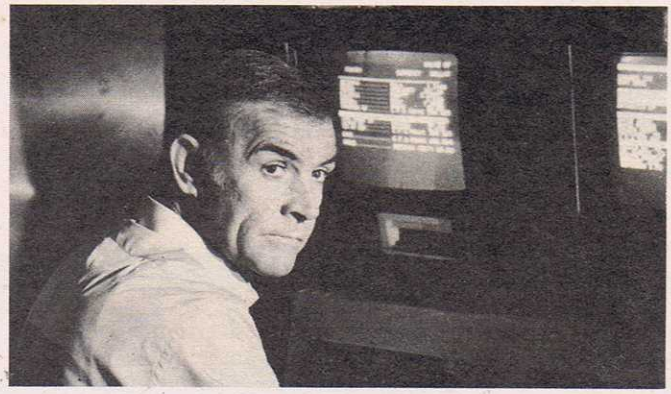

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LOG ENTRIES

LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION & FACT

PORTRAIT OF A SAVAGE

This is Tarzan.

Half-civilized, half-wild, this is John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, the legendary apeman created by Edgar Rice Burroughs in 1912 in the *first* of a series of novels, which would be followed by countless movies, comics and even a TV series.

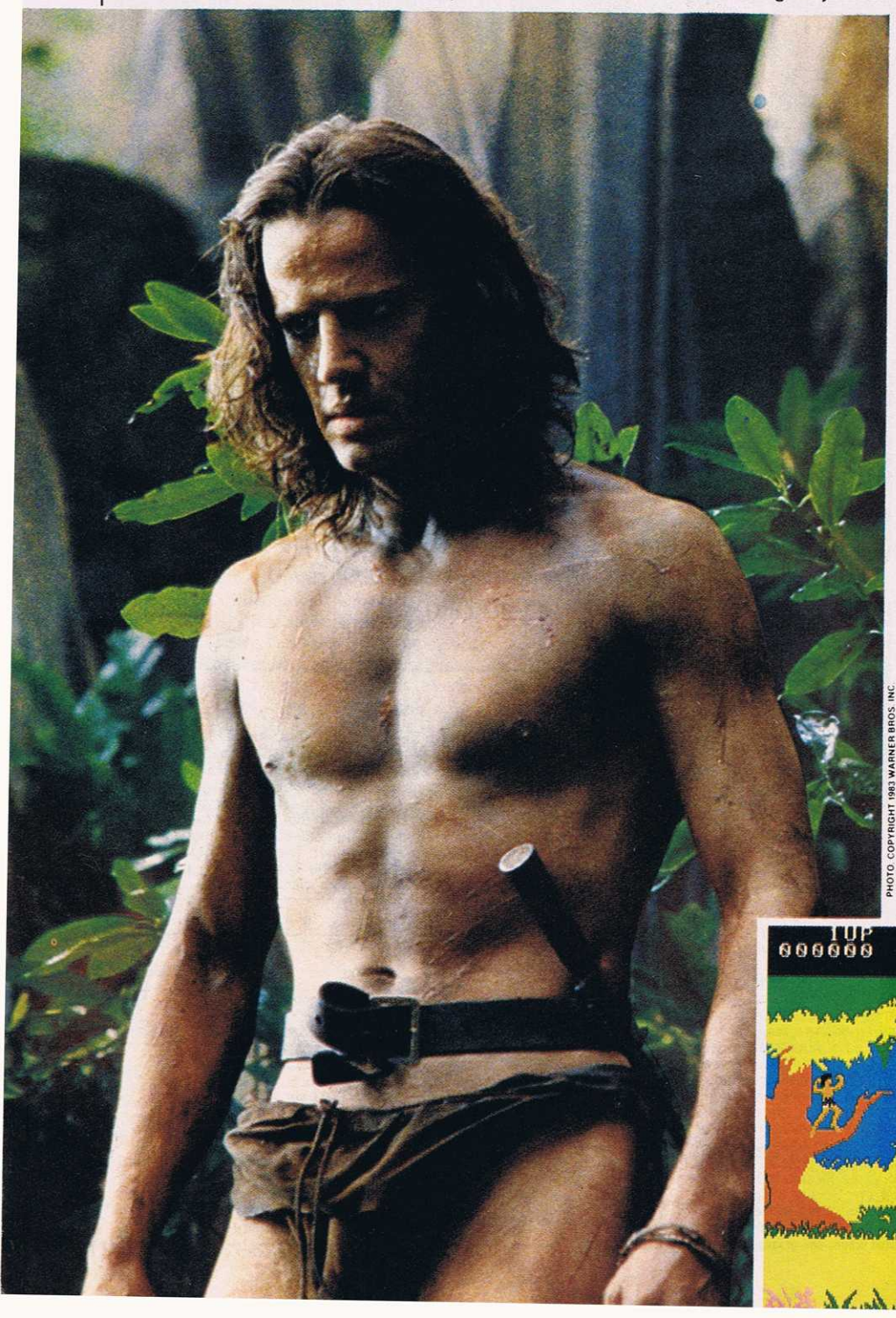
Yet, none has truly captured the savagery and the spirit of the untamed jungle king, nor remained faithful to Burroughs' original conception of this mythic character...until, *perhaps,* now.

Currently in post-production is the first "definitive" motion picture version of *Tarzan of the Apes,* as scripted by Michael Austin and "P.H. Vazak" (a pseudonym for *Chinatown* writer Robert Towne) and directed by Hugh (*Chariots of Fire*) Hudson. Ian (*ALIEN*) Holm is the apeman's friend, D'Arnot. Calvin Klein Jeans model Andie McDowell is his Jane.

And this is Tarzan.

He is 25-year-old French actor Christopher Lambert. And he stars as the noble savage in the forthcoming *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes.* ☆

Christopher Lambert, as Tarzan, surveys the African veldt in the forthcoming *Greystoke.*



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APEMAN SWINGS INTO VIDEOGAMES

This autumn, just before *Greystoke's* premiere, ColecoVision will journey into the jungle of video games once again, accompanied this time by *Tarzan*, the video game.

In early 1983, ColecoVision and Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. completed a long-term contract granting the popular game manufacturer exclusive rights to the Lord of the Apes until 1987. The first Tarzan cartridge will be available originally only in the ColecoVision format, though Atari VCS and Intellivision variations will follow.

Unlike previous ersatz apeman arcade species, this game involves Tarzan and his African friends. The beasts of Tarzan are in danger. Hunters are searching for wall decorations, stalking their prey with ease until the animals warn Tarzan, their lord and protector.

To stop the hunters, the jungle hero is forced to gather the animals, freeing them from a number of traps and dangers. Then *en masse,* they can drive the enemies away. Assisting Tarzan, warning him of impending doom, is Nkima, his monkey friend from the Burroughs books—no cinematic Cheetahs allowed.

Tarzan will swing from treetops and use his acrobatic skills and trusty knife to aid his animal allies, but he mustn't fall into a trap himself or the game ends. As usual, there are varying levels of player difficulty featuring more elaborate traps and shorter time spans to complete Tarzan's jungle mission. ☆

The jungle lord gets into the swing of things with Colecovision.

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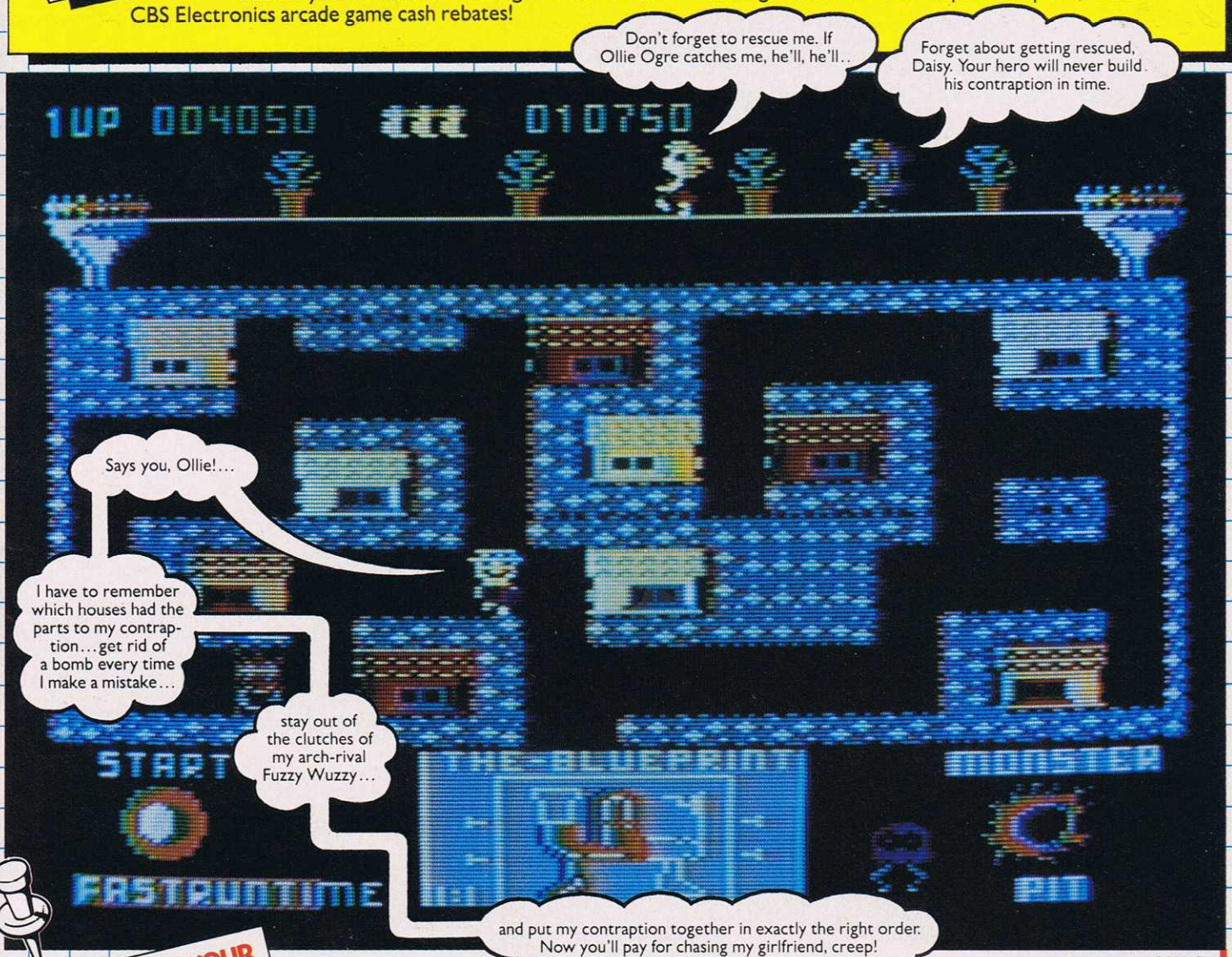

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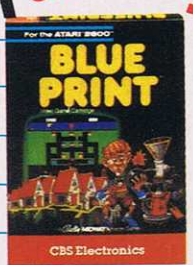

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Inside Noah's Ark-ade II

V For Vector-y

How about Global Thermonuclear War?" posits young David Lightman (Matthew Broderick) to his computer in *WarGames*, the hit movie about the ultimate video experience (STARLOG #74). The computer spins out a tracery of lines signifying the U.S. and U.S.S.R., asking the youth to choose his side. These vector symbols, for such they are, mean that this particular computer pastime will be challenging on many levels, ornate and intricate in actual play, and geometrically pleasing to the mind's eye.

Of the two types of computer graphics currently available, the first, raster, is responsible for those realistic nigh-paintings which decorate a range of games from *Jungle King* to *Zaxxon*. The visuals are often so beautiful that you're inclined to forget just how limited the actual on-screen movements are at any one time. Put simply, too much of the program's memory is occupied by scenery.

Vector graphics, the second, give a game greater flexibility as well as possibility, making up for strictly line drawings by allowing more things to happen during a round. The first successful vector creation, *Asteroids*, embodied this principle, creating a tactile thrust and parry for the spaceship while continuously breaking down those pesky asteroids into ever-smaller—though equally dangerous—chunks. By the time color came to vector graphics, most notably with the divine *Tempest*, an enterprising gamester could count on a fireworking experience with an imaginative abstract perspective.

This experience could be enhanced by the closest sense of depth perception yet developed, barring the theoretical use of holography. A trip down *Tempest*'s tube was a breathtaking teleportation. Atari's 1980 *Battlezone* advanced the illusion by creating a desolate post-20th century landscape around which you wheeled your mechanical marvel. Using Dali-esque cubes and pyramids as shields, enemy tanks loomed out of the distance and grew larger in your viewfinder; when destroyed, their explosive pieces would fly in all angles. Suffering a hit, you actually saw the shell roaring at you, your tank's "windshield" splintering as you thudded to a halt.

Atari has continued its investigation into vector possibilities with three new games, each highlighting one of the system's categories. *Gravitar* evolves *Asteroids* to the extent that the piloting abilities required to guide your spaceship become almost as important as what it does once it gets there. Navigation is the key, traveling around the perimeters of a series of planets, securing points by blasting enemy aircraft while docking at fuel depots to keep your own supply substantial. The craft is as skittish and temperamental as *Joust*'s ostriches, but the careful player will develop a delicate control which goes far beyond trigger mashing.

Quantum bears a slight resemblance to *Tempest* in its Etch-a-Sketch vector look and feel. The object is to draw a circle (or more likely a squiggle) around your chosen target. For those who like *Qix* (a Taito coin-op most recently welcomed to Atari's 5200 library), here's another design game which doesn't stop kicking.

Black Widow is at once the most obvious and unique of Atari's new games: obvious in the sense that the very nature of vector graphics lends itself to spinning a web; unique in that the insect kingdom has never been treated as sympathetically or interactively as here. Forget blasting anything that moves as in *Centipede* and *Millipede*. Your spider does indeed scrag her share of grenade bugs, but she also tags grubsteaks, pushes eggs off the web, and in short, creates her own eco-system by the time the first screen is finished.

Sega has remained close to the outer space front in its two vector entries, *Tac-Scan* and *Star Trek*. The first, now available in a home version for the Atari 2600, places you at the helm of a squadron of ships madly hurtling through hyperspace. When you enter the "space warp tunnel" which transports you from screen to screen in *Tac-Scan*, the dizzying effect is something akin to an interstellar roller coaster. Watch out as you steer your six (or less) ships unscathed through a variety of laser dangers.

Star Trek, of course, should immediately interest STARLOG readers, and in recognition, Sega has given us the most challenging and intriguing game of the year, if you can call it a game. Sega refers to it, quite rightly, as a Strategic Operations Simulator. It simulates "actual battle conditions encountered by Federation Starships while on patrol, enabling Cadet Trainees to learn Federation tactics in combating the Klingon threat."

This goal is accomplished by a tactical realism which requires not only lightning reflexes but decision-making powers as well. You choose your own weapons: phasers which endlessly pick off one Klingon battle cruiser at a time or photon torpedoes, which destroy many ships but on a more limited basis. The burden of defense is borne by shields which, if not sustained by periodic visits to a Starbase repair station, leave the *Enterprise* open to attack.

By the time you reach the Nomad round, with a robot ship depositing unstable chain reaction space mines around your quadrant, you should be worth every one of your Strategic Training Units (called 'points' on Olde Earth). What makes *Star Trek* work far beyond most media spin-off games (*Tron* excluded) are its vector graphics, which instead of attempting to caricature the TV show, provide a re-creation every bit as thought-provoking as the original. Well, almost. The great Trekkian metaphysical puzzle—Vulcan logic versus human emotion, and how the two needs must intermingle—is *never* addressed. That's a job which lies far beyond vector graphics, out where no man has gone before.

Completing the triple crown of vector entrepreneurs is Cinematronics, an underrated company which seems committed to balancing on the cutting edge of game technology. Its earlier vector entries, 1978's *Starhawk* and 1979's *Sundance*, exhibit a sense of rhythm as hypnotic to watch as juggling. This statement is particularly true of *Sundance*, an extremely rare, hard-to-find game in which you bounce miniature suns between two trampoline-like grids. The object is to press one of nine buttons, each representing a square in the grid, opening and catching the suns or exploding them with novas. You also have the option of playing with *no* grids, finding holes in the very fabric of the universe. E equals mc^2 to be sure.

This year's Cinematronics game is *Cosmic Chasm*, based around the *Asteroids* principle. You move from polygon to polygon along a chain which resembles a chemical equation: your ship enters each nucleus, shoots the various enemies, and then powers its way into the next. It might seem conservative compared with *Starhawk's* rotating planet, but then Cinematronics has been preoccupied with waging its own real-life struggle lately with a particularly nasty game called *Chapter 11*. I wish Cinematronics luck.

Notwithstanding, the company seems more enthusiastic than ever and has recently begun investigating the use of laserdisc technology, recognizing a restless player generation hungry for new sensations. "We may or may not continue to build conven-

By Lenny Kaye

tional high-speed vector games," Tom Campbell of Cinematronics said recently, but his interest obviously lies in this new blend of filmed action and computer movement. Sega has already tested an *Astron Belt* laserdisc cockpit game, where players dodge footage of dogfighting combat rocketships. Using similar Disney-type cartoon visuals, Cinematronics recently unveiled *Dragon's Lair*, an interactive sword-and-sorcery collaboration with Advanced Microcomputer Systems and animation master Don Bluth (see STARLOG #74).

As a computer tongue, vector graphics are here to stay. Outside the arcades, GCE's Vectrex system, which provides its own stand-alone monitor and games like *Berzerk*, *Clean Sweep*, and yes, *Cosmic Chasm*, produces a product truly unique in the home gaming world. In a future issue, we'll take a closer look at the myriad marvels of Vectrex and its games, a use of language which shows us a different way to view our new video world.

* * *

For an epilogue to our two-part arcade survey, let's take a moment to gaze longingly at Atari's *Star Wars* game. The movie, profiled profusely in these pages, was perhaps the *single* greatest influence on gaming evolution when it soared into theaters in 1977, and it's no coincidence that the video sonic boom followed closely on the heels of the Death Star's destruction.

Star Wars is the first full-blown result of an agreement between Atari and Lucasfilm announced in June 1982 at the Chicago Consumer Electronics Show, not counting the ill-fated *Raiders of the Lost Ark* 2600 cartridge which debuted last Christmas. Perhaps because of this crisis in expectation (was the game *that* bad?), Atari has kept the wraps on its *Star Wars* blockbuster until the last possible moment.

Available in both cockpit and upright versions, the game contains three different screens per difficulty level. You hear snatches of the John Williams score along with the actual voices of Luke Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi, and are cheerily advised by R2-D2. The first sequence features a space chase against the minions of Darth Vader; the second requires the player to destroy stationary towers and bunkers; and the third reprises the film's finale by swooping down a narrow tunnel to fire photon torpedoes into the Death Star's exhaust port.

You've played variations on this theme *many* times before, but that's only because *Star Wars* was there first. When the Death Star explodes at game's end, Obi-Wan nods approvingly and says "Remember, The Force will be with you always." In a galaxy far, far away, he might have been referring to video games as well. ★

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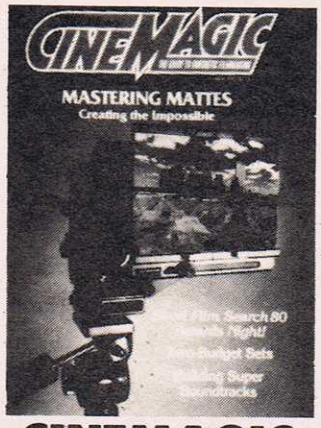

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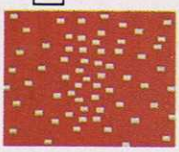
☐ 

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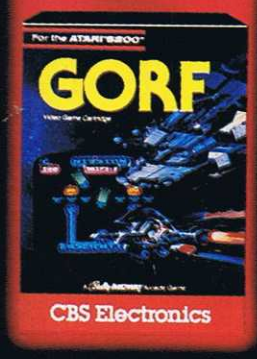

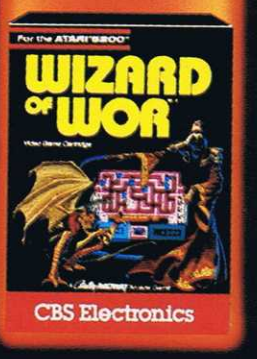

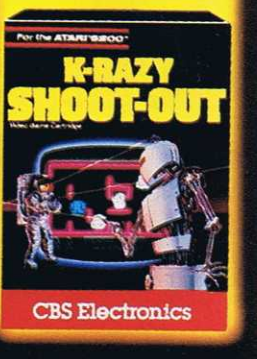

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