

# Video Review

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THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON HOME VIDEO

## COLOR CAMERAS

**SPECIAL SUMMERTIME GUIDE  
TO ALL THE LATEST MODELS**

**CBS Labs Test  
First Portable  
Projection  
TV Set**

**Reviews by  
Schlesinger,  
Westheimer**



JUNE 1983

# CONTENTS



## SPECIAL REPORT

**Atari's Falcon Project—What's the Big 'Secret'?** By Barry Jacobs. When Atari took the wraps off its top-secret project, there was more—and less—than met the eye. An investigation of what Atari did—and didn't—disclose.....22

## FEATURE ARTICLES

**Color Cameras: Special Summer Shopper's Guide** By Abigail Reitsnyder. This year's cameras are lighter yet more feature-laden than ever. Some features are worth paying extra for—but some others aren't.....24

**Who's Got What in Cameras** A comparative chart.....24

**Transferring Film to Tape—By Mail** By Robert Angus. How to have those old slides and home movies changed to videocassettes, without all the bother of doing it yourself.....31

**Are You a Video Criminal?** By Marcy Fessler. A quiz to help you find out if you're actually breaking the law when you use your home video equipment.....36

**The History of Home Videogames** By Frank Lovece. The first encompassing look at the beginnings of the '80s biggest video phenomenon.....40

## CONTINUING SERIES

**Direct It: Robert Wise Tells You How** Tips from the director of *Star Trek*, *West Side Story* and *The Sound of Music*.....44

**Critic's Choice: The Outer Limits** Expert Reed Hall picks the 10 most topable episodes from the spooky '60s series. With a taping guide to all 47 episodes.....46

## EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

The CBS Technology Center and technical editor Leonard Feldman report of their in-depth lab tests of:

**Quasar Videocassette Recorder** A low-cost tabletop VCR, model 5125, in the VHS format.....51

**Kloss Portable Projection Monitor** The Novabeam Model Two, a video projector that fits in a closet.....53

**Canon Videocamera** A low-light, high-resolution camera from the photographic equipment company.....56

**Sears Video Monitor and TV Tuner** The first component system from the nation's largest chain store.....59

**Product Previews** News on this month's equipment.....61

**On the Drawing Boards** Coming next in video gear.....62

## VIDEOGAME REVIEWS

The champs and the experts review the latest in videogames on carts, cassettes and discs: Ken Uston on **X-Man**... Mark Trast on **Flash Point**... Phil Wiswell on **River Raid**... Frank Lovece on **Qix**... Michael Blanchet on **Truckin'** and **Frankenstein's Monster**... Dan Gutman on **Dolphin**... Sheldon Leemon on **Fort Apocalypse**.....64

**Game Previews** News on this month's carts, cassettes, discs.....72

**Game Plans** Coming next in home videogames.....72

## TAPE & DISC REVIEWS

Feature reviews of new releases: Arthur Schlesinger Jr. on **Americans Courageous** and **Colonial America**... Leonard Malton on **An Evening with Robin Williams**... Ed Levine on **The Who Rocks America—'82 American Tour**... Jon Pareles on **Daylight Again**... Steve Simels on **Road Warrior** and **Blade Runner**... William K. Everson on **Pennies from Heaven**... Molly Haskell on **Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid**... Andrew Sarris on **A Night at the Movies: 1959**... Ruth Westheimer on **Am I Normal?**... Genevieve Kazdin on **Johnny Woodchuck's Adventures**... Al Goldstein on **Dirty Looks**... Roy Hemming on **The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas**... plus more **In Brief**... plus **Music Singles**.....74

**Tape & Disc Previews** News on this month's programs.....93

**In the Works** Coming next on tape and disc.....96

## TELEVISION REVIEWS

Reviews of major programs this month on cable and broadcast TV: William K. Everson on the new **Fantomas**... Genevieve Kazdin on **Against the Odds**... Roy Hemming on **Music Is My Future** and **Kiss Me, Petruchio**... Marjorie Rosen on **Northern Lights**... Jim Farber on **MTV's** music shorts... Nelson George on **BET's** music shorts... plus capsule reviews of movies coming on TV.....99

**TV Previews** Coming up on cable and broadcast TV.....115



64



46



24

## DEPARTMENTS

**Letters** Readers' comments, boos and bouquets.....6

**Questions** Experts help solve your video problems.....8

**Freeze-Frames** A potpourri of video tidbits.....12

**Newsbreaks** Late-breaking news on the video front.....15

**Top Ten Games** This month's bestselling carts.....68

**Top Ten Tapes & Discs** This month's bestsellers.....80

**Game Room** Michael Blanchet on computing odd-ons.....122

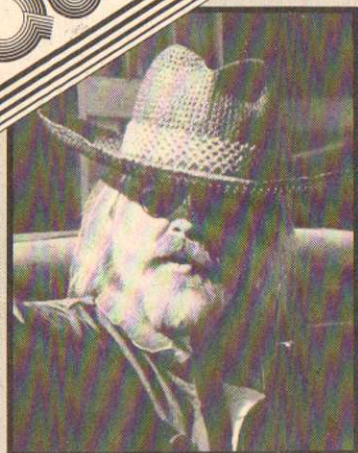
**Looking Ahead** Bob Gerson on seeing-eye robots.....126

**Video Classifieds** The curious and the collectible.....128

**Backspace** Allen Funt: 35 years behind the camera.....132

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## Hal Ashby: Can video kill film?



**FOR HAL ASHBY**

**Q** I've heard you and other directors talk about video eventually replacing film in movie theaters. Is this possible? And if so, how soon?

Stewart Siegel  
New York, NY

**A** It's very likely that, even with the new high-definition video technology, people will still go to the theater rather than stay home to watch a movie on a small screen. Researchers are very close to high-definition now, although it still can't give you what you can get with 70mm film. The resolution is still not yet perfected, but there's no question in my mind that it will be.

A video theater will have some advantages. If the feed could come out of one central place, it could eliminate the high cost of prints, and the picture could be projected at the proper ratio. Directors won't have to worry about the picture being cut off the top or the bottom, or the prints being scratched or broken, or any of those problems.

—Hal Ashby

### THE HOT SEAT

#### BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

**Q** I'm in the market for a second VCR. My current recorder is Beta, and I'm very satisfied with it, but I'm considering a VHS recorder as my second machine. What I want to know is: Are there any problems in having a Beta-VHS system? I don't want to dub my library of Beta tapes to VHS, but I don't mind having to remember which cassettes fit which VCR. Any comments or warnings?

Bob Smith  
Phoenix, AZ

**A** Nothing that we can see. Both formats use standard RCA phono plugs, so, if you decide to, dubbing from one to the other is simple. In all, it sounds like an excellent plan, given your circumstances.

#### COMPUTER GRAPHICS

**Q** Is it possible to record computer graphics from a home computer onto my videocassette recorder? If so, is there a loss of resolution?

Tere Miller  
Kearney, NE

**A** If your computer has a video output (so that you can connect it to a display screen), there's no reason why not. Simply connect the video output into the antenna input of the VCR and turn to channel 3. No, there's no apparent loss of resolution.

#### STICK FIX

**Q** The joysticks of my son's Odyssey<sup>2</sup> videogame console broke after one year of use (not abuse). I'd like to replace the joysticks, but I don't want to spend \$51.60 for Odyssey<sup>2</sup> to do the job. (The joysticks are wired right into the console.) Does another manufacturer make joysticks that can be adapted to the Odyssey<sup>2</sup>?

Samuel Levine  
Valley Stream, NY

**A** At this time, no. However, it only costs \$34.95 to trade in your broken Odyssey<sup>2</sup> for a refurbished one with a 90-day warranty. Send your game console to the nearest NAP

Consumer Electronics (the parent company) service center—in your case, at 180 Manor Road, East Rutherford, NJ 07073, attn: Parts Department—with a check made out to NAP. The cost includes return postage.

#### THREE'S A CLOUD

**Q** I own a three-year-old Panasonic 19-inch TV set, and I have it connected to an RCA VGT200 VCR, a Sanyo VCR5000 and a Mattel Intellivision game console. In my area, channel 3 is the clear channel. Lately, however, I noticed that my TV set won't clearly tune in anything on channel 3. I had to switch everything over to channel 4. Is there any way I can get my TV set to clearly tune in channel 3?

Philip DeLuccia  
White Plains, NY

**A** If your problem is recent, there may be a couple of causes. Perhaps a nearby station (2 or 4, say) has increased the strength of its broadcast signal. In that case, you'll probably have to get a switcher with a signal enhancer, to make sure your set is receiving a strong, clear signal.

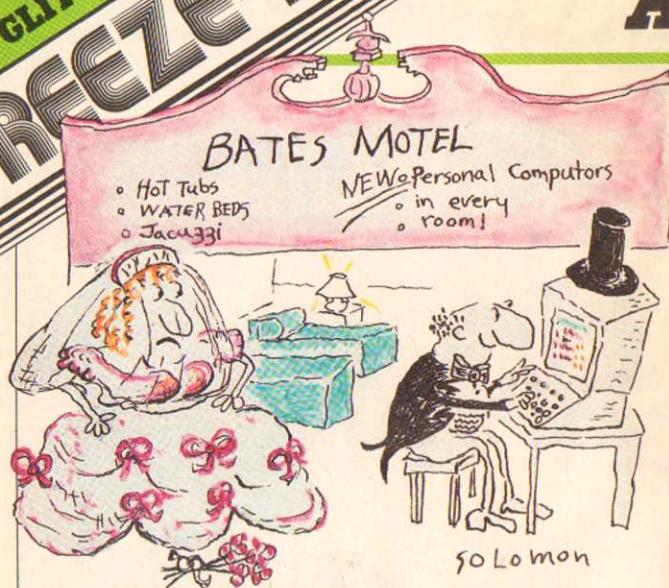
If you're already using a switcher, it may be that the isolation between inputs and outputs is not good enough. See if a video store will let you try out two or three other brands.

A third possibility is that some interference is being created among your video equipment. Perhaps you've moved a stereo system with an antenna inside the power cord, or moved your audio speakers too close to the TV set (the magnets inside will distort a picture). Move these things around and see if your picture improves before investing in new switchers—it's a lot cheaper.

#### SHOWING THE FLAG

**Q** I own a JVC HR7650 VCR and a 10-year-old Zenith color TV set. My problem is that pre-recorded tapes I rent from a video club frequently exhibit a wave to the right in the top two inches of the picture. New tapes don't show this distortion—it's usually just on popular titles which I assume have been rented many times. When these same tapes are played back at the store, the waviness is gone.

# Docudance, Rev. Apple and Game U.



## Room and Circuit Board

Used to be a traveling salesperson could always count on relaxing in a hotel room with a color TV, a small bar, maybe even a bed equipped with Magic Fingers. Then, just as these itinerant businesspeople got used to having special movie channels, some hotels and motels got the idea of putting videogames in each room. It seems, though, that the Travel Host chain has been stricken with a case of the Puritan Work Ethic. It's installing computer terminals in the once relaxing rooms.

Just what will these terminals—linked to an IBM in Dallas—do? For about \$7 an hour, they'll allow patrons to book airline and hotel reservations (whatever happened to telephones?), keep up with stock quotations (whatever happened to newspapers?) and even check the menus at local restaurants (whatever happened to room service?). They will offer videogames, too, thank goodness. (F.L.)□

## The Golden Age Of Videogames

Found in the brochure between "Vocabulary Workshop" and "The Philosophy of Carlos Castaneda," and a little to the

left of "Wine Tasting," is a blurb on the latest in adult-education courses: "Designing and Selling a Video Game." Westwinds, a New York City adult-ed center, is one of the first to offer classes on "this exciting career opportunity."

Videogames have already invaded Wall Street, so why not the ivory tower? We can see it now.

After the first few progressive schools have set the pace, videogame art and history will become mandatory. Antioch and Hampshire colleges will offer a whole curriculum in videogames, with spillover courses in the philosophy department.

The '80s will be thought of as The Golden Age of Videogames, and in the '90s, colleges will hold conventions and

retrospectives honoring the era's pioneers. A museum will be founded in New York City. And the children of today's players will hear their parents reflect nostalgically on "the good old games."

Of course, the alumni clubs should be a lot more fun. (F.L.)□

## X-Rated Glitches

While sitting back watching the Auburn-U. Miss basketball game on ESPN not long ago, viewers in Connecticut got a little more than they paid for. Suddenly the game would go out and be replaced by a few minutes of X-rated fare, including "a leather-clad woman presiding over an orgy," according to one surprised viewer.

Not surprisingly, lots of viewers called their cable operators of ESPN. But they weren't complaining. In fact, by-and-large the calls were from people who wanted to find out how to subscribe.

What happened was that, at the studio shared by eight cable systems (for the purpose of inserting local ads in satellite programming), an operator decided to take a look at some of the tapes sent by cable programmer Eros for the Bridgeport cable system. Well, anyone can make a mistake. Especially when, as in this case, it was the guy's first day on the job. This

also happened to be his last.

Has anything like this happened before? We called a spokesperson for Eros, who said there used to be a few problems when it was sharing a satellite transponder with another national cable service.

One night, according to the spokesperson, the man monitoring the cablecasts woke up about 3 o'clock in the morning to *Pussycat Ranch* after falling asleep to what was supposed to be on—(are you ready?) Sister Theresa on The Christian Network. (D.C.)□



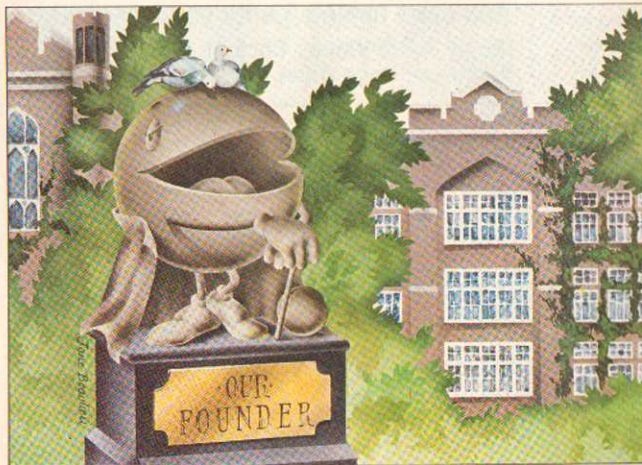
## Update: Apple Fruitcake

We swallowed hard when we reported in Freeze-Frames a few years ago that Rev. Apple, a computer ordained by The Universal Life Church, was performing weddings in California. Hey, we knew all about the electronic ministry, Silicon Valley and such things. But to hear now that there's a portable Rev. Apple—which performs weddings anywhere in the world via an Axilon data link—well, that's a little hard to stomach.

It's true, though, says Ron Jaenisch, Rev. Apple's owner and creator of the marriage ceremony. It's popular, too, he says, although he won't say just how popular.

The couples waiting on-line for the plug-in Padre's blessing may be waiting for other things, too. Now the Rev. even offers a 103-item menu of sexual encounters for almost any appetite. Couples just punch in the variables and the computer prescribes the pose.

That's not all. Rev. Apple offers an "unwedding ceremony," as well, for when the chips are down. We shudder to think what the computer will provide

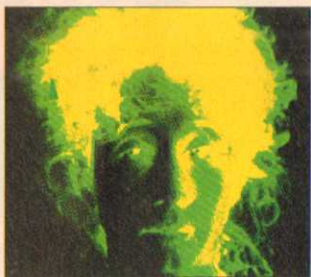




next, but we know already it won't be a Rev. Apple funeral. Why not? Old computers never die—they just fade to terminal remission. (M.R.)□

### Back to the Source

In a way, you could call this Videogame Roots. See, games have been (loosely) based on movies, on cartoons and on stories. In its search for a new area to exploit, one game company has gone back to the video grandparents of the current games: TV games (as in the art above). You know, the kind Richard Dawson and Art Flem-



ming tend to host.

The Great Game Company of Hollywood, FL, plans to bring videogames full circle with VCS-compatible carts based on *The Price Is Right*, *Tic Tac Dough*, *Jeopardy*, *The Joker's Wild*, *Wheel of Fortune* and *Family Feud*.

Brings new meaning to getting the "home version," doesn't it? (F.L.)□



### Really Modern Dance

Whether art reflects society or society reflects art, it seems natural that the art of dance and the phenomenon of videogames would one day wind up looking in the same mirror. Well, that day has come.

Liz Lerman, dancer and choreographer with the Washington Dance Exchange, has put on her dancing shoes for a half-hour performance about videogames. Titled "Video Arcane" (photo left), the piece includes 14 segments, representing such games as *Frogger*, *Galaga*, *Centipede* and *Donkey Kong*. The dancers even groove to *Pac-Man*, a piece which Lerman describes as "pretty abstract—they just end up chewing."

For several years, Lerman has tripped the light fantastic to political and military themes. She incorporates military movements in the videogames dance, she says, "because the games are as technological as the military, and equally seductive."

It must be those little yellow monsters. (M.R.)□

### Stranger Than Fiction

"Outrageous!" read the headline in the *Weekly World News* (the grocery gazette that makes the feats in *Ripley's*

*Believe It or Not* seem workaday). Well, grisly is a lot more like it.

The story itself said, "When times got tough, a couple who chose welfare over work refused to give up luxuries like a car, color television set, giant aquarium, stereo or cases of beer—instead they gave away their children."

It was too strange a story to be true, and, in fact, it wasn't. Well, not entirely.

The Toronto couple spotlighted in the *News* had in fact turned over two of its three children to the Toronto Children's Aid Society, citing the high costs of maintaining a comfortable lifestyle.

But the real story, says a spokesperson at the couple's social service agency, had little to do with economics.

"We wouldn't have taken the children in if that were the sole problem," she says. "We didn't



feel the mother was able to care for her children."

The latest reports indicate the father wasn't exactly Ozzie Nelson, either. In the wake of all the publicity, the Toronto couple received numerous offers from concerned neighbors. One woman was even generous enough to give the two of them a free black-and-white TV set if they reclaimed the kids.

According to the *Weekly World News*, the offer was rejected. "I thanked her very much, but there's no point in a guy giving everything up. I want color," the father reportedly said.

Makes you wonder what he'd trade for a videocassette recorder. Or a projection TV set. (M.R.)□

### Crime Doesn't Play

Videogames are making life difficult for law enforcement officials in Georgia.

Not long ago, a child robbed an Avon Lady of \$50 because he needed money for videogames. In another incident, a 13-year-old boy committed seven burglaries to get quarters for game machines. It seems he left expensive equipment untouched, but ran off with every quarter in sight.

Prosecutor David Flower recognized this dire trend, and in the case of 18-year-old Eric McGill, accused of setting fire to his house, he argued that there could be only one motive for the crime: videogames. Flower painted the youth as a "Pac-Maniac," whose incendiary actions were meant to forestall his family's planned move to the country, away from the video-

game arcades.

The jury—and the judge—bought it. A convicted McGill was sentenced to 10 years probation on the condition that he enroll in an adult-education program, find a job, pay for the fire damage—and avoid videogame arcades for 10 years.

"It's mind-boggling to me," says McGill's lawyer, who nonetheless termed the sentence "fair and innovative. In all the hours we talked," he says, "the youth never said anything about being crazed by *Pac-Man*. It's certainly not the case that he spent every waking minute jerking sticks and playing levers."

Whatever. At least it seems as if Prosecutor Flower got himself a good game, and played it for all it was worth. (M.R.)□

# Videogames to Players: See Me, Feel Me, Touch Me

By Carl S. Kaplan

NEW YORK—To better simulate the fantasy of videogames, the Amiga Corporation will soon offer a "joyboard" that you stand on to control the action on your videogame monitor. Simply insert an Amiga videogame called *Skiing* into your Atari 2600 and you're shussing down a hill; lean to the left on the balance-sensitive joyboard and you avoid that tree. Another joyboard-designed game from Amiga is *Surfing*. Both games come in cassette versions to be used with Amiga's Power Module adaptor.

Activision, with its new *Dolphin* game designed by Matthew Hubbard (see review, page 69), also seeks to enhance the games' environmental aspects. While most game designers employ sound effects as background noise, Hubbard, a musician and leader of a punk band, uses sounds in his game as a means of presenting information to the player. A high-pitched tone cues

a player to move a dolphin to the top of the screen where an escape hatch lies. A low-pitched

tone tells the player to move down on the screen to avoid imminent danger. □



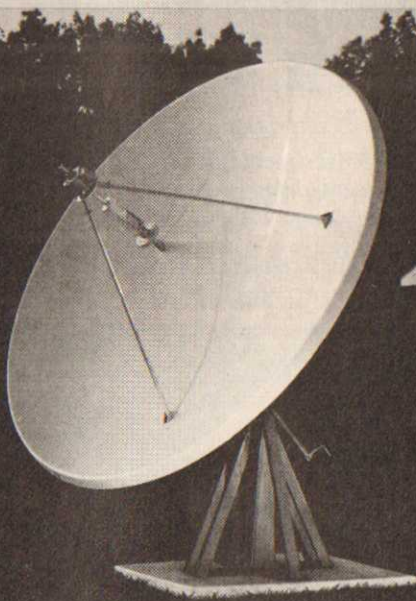
Feet first: Videogames get physical.

## TEX TALKS TAKE OFF

Negotiations are underway for a worldwide unified videotex standard (WWUVS), which will make it easier for users to plug into videotex services around the world. Technocrats from a dozen countries have come up with proposals that call for the creation of three regional standards, based on existing videotex technology in North America, Europe and Japan. If WWUVS is adopted, these regional formats could easily be interlinked.

More importantly, future videotex enhancements such as animation, three-dimensional video and audio services, would have common technical coding—assuring that videotex subscribers in any country could take advantage of material developed elsewhere in the world. Currently, the Japanese system has the most sophisticated graphics, while the North American system, potentially, has the widest use. The international agency overseeing videotex activities hopes to complete its planning in the fall. (G.A.) □

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## PAY TV DOESN'T

The future of subscription TV seems increasingly uncertain, following the recent closings of three STV services.

First Cox Broadcasting pulled the plug on its St. Louis system; then STAR of Boston did the same. But when Detroit's ON-TV—primarily owned and oper-

ated by producers Norman Lear and Bud Yorkin—couldn't make it, people began wondering who could.

Many of the problems are due to the fact that STV offers just one channel, while cable offers anywhere from 12 to 100. Apparently, viewers with a choice are deciding to pay an average \$10 a month for cable-TV service, as opposed to \$35 for subscription-TV service. (J.G.)□

## Big Bucks for Hi-Fi

You can expect to spend big bucks for VCRs equipped with super fidelity stereo sound this year. Not that hi-fi for video adds that much to the machines' actual cost, but for a while it will only be included in the most deluxe VCR models.

The first formal announcement of a Beta Hi-Fi-equipped VCR for sale in the US is from Sanyo, which plans to offer a portable model this summer for \$1,000. The video recorder weighs 15 pounds, has a built-in tuner/timer and a five-function wired remote control. Sony has followed its introduction of the tabletop model

VCR (\$950) with news of a deluxe hi-fi VCR which will cost \$1,500 when it arrives this June.

In Beta Hi-Fi VCRs, and in VHS models expected to be demonstrated soon, the stereo audio signal is FM and put on the tape by the video heads. The result is sound reproduction at least equal in quality to that obtainable from the best open-reel audio recorders. The VCRs also have the usual separate audio record-playback head to keep compatibility between standard and Hi-Fi models. That head plays the longitudinal audio track along the tape's edge. (B.G.)□

## Game Fans Wait On Line for 5200s

Atari's suped-up videogame system, the Atari 5200, may be losing its race against Coleco's ColecoVision and Mattel's Intellivision because of delivery problems.

The 5200 console and accompanying game cartridges, which the company started shipping on a limited basis last October at \$270, are still scarce as hen's teeth, even at some major retail chains. So potential Atari customers are buying Coleco and Mattel

game systems instead, according to retailers.

The surge in demand for the 5200 console and games caught Atari by surprise, says one retail store executive. Atari, however, is moving quickly to make amends.

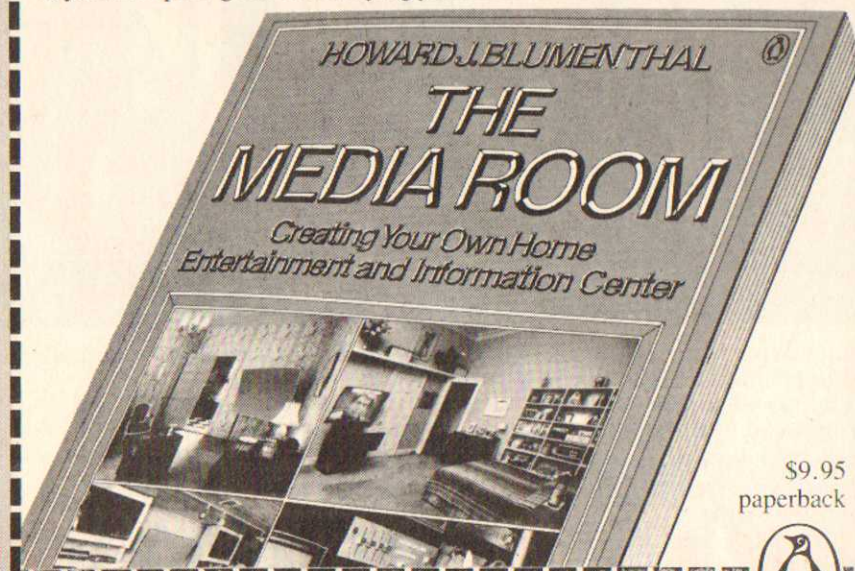
Atari sales vice president Win Weber confirms the 5200's delivery problems. But, Weber points out, "We are increasing our production capacity significantly." (C.S.K.)□



Where have all the Atari 5200s gone?

## Now you've got it. What do you do with it?

So you've already made major investments in video equipment. Before you buy more, you need one essential item—the unique new book that not only tells you what and how to buy, but how to put it all together for the most efficient, comfortable, and flexible use of whatever space you have available. *The Media Room* covers personal needs, tastes and budgets—and is your complete guide to satisfying your most ambitious fantasies!



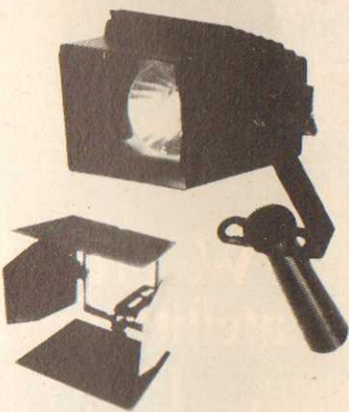
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# ATARI'S PRO

## Special Report by Barry Jacobs

**I**t's a classic *Maltese Falcon*-style yarn—one of a mysterious new Atari "treasure" and super-sleuthing videophiles hopping to get it. The treasure has been known as Project Falcon, and until recently Atari was telling little more about it. Lately, the company has tossed in a few clues—but not enough for the experts to solve the case. That is, until now.

Atari has said that Project Falcon is the company's first thrust into telecommunications—the introduction of a line of products combining computer capabilities with telephones. But *VR* has learned—after dozens of interviews with former Atari employees, electronics insiders and Wall Street analysts—that the products involved will be centered upon a microprocessor-driver module and a video screen to be connected to a telephone.

### Show and Ataritel

The products will have multiple functions. Similar to the GE Home Control System (April '83 *VR*), Atari's equipment (likely to be called Ataritel) will allow you to operate and adjust any home electrical appliance connected to it—from thermostats to burglar alarms to porch lights—with a phone call.

What will separate the Atari system from GE's, according to a stock analyst with close ties to Atari, is the ability to access "telesoftware"—a major (if not necessarily initial) function of the phone modules. Handling videotex will be one important use. Transmitted over phone lines, videotex service is to start up in several cities by the end of the year. In receiving and unscrambling videotex data, Ataritel will display the incoming information on an approximately 5½-inch screen built into the module.

The information that will be available with various teletext and videotex services is broad in nature. Up-to-date news, weather information and stock reports are but a few examples of the kind of data that will be sent out over the phone lines from central computers and which the module will be able to receive. More important are the interactive capabilities of a videotex system. For instance, by using a videotex banking service, you can make bank transactions by punching your account number into your phone module, giving you immediate access to the bank's computer. Or you can shop from your home via videotex by punching in the name of a particular product and ordering it from one of the stores whose name will appear on your screen. One other possible function of a phone module that can act as a video-

**What's Atari's game? Its fight to keep its Falcon Project a secret is over—now. And what it turned out to be is a lot less than some investigators expected, but a lot more than just videogames.**

tex terminal: electronic mail. You'll be able to instantly send business or personal messages to others who have a module that they'll be able to "pick up" and read on their screens at their convenience.

In all these instances, Atari's module would simply be the equipment with which the information can be received and transactions can be made; other companies would provide the actual videotex service or information data you'd be receiving. But according to several videogame designers at other companies, Atari is also working on actual programming to be received via the phone lines by the modules. Not surprisingly, it's clear the programs will be videogames.

While this is likely to be a later phase in the Ataritel plan, it may be the clincher to interest video fans in the phone modules. Instead of having to purchase a videogame system and game cartridges, you'll be able to simply "access" a central Atari videogame computer via the phone lines and receive the games through your module (probably for some fee). According to the research of one analyst, Lee Isgur of Paine Webber, you'll be able to take further advantage of the phone tie-in by playing the game with someone in another location. The computer would "download" the game over the phone lines into modules in different homes, but the players would still compete as if they were in the same room.

### Multi-User Games

There will be an interesting further twist to this. According to Mark Turmell, a game designer for CBS Video Games, Atari is working on multi-user games—ones that any number of people can play simultaneously. In other words, 50 people in 50 different cities, each with a phone module, could play a single game. The games could require the players to cooperate with one another in order to achieve a particular goal, or they may be every-man-for-himself mass shoot-'em-ups. Almost any kind of game is possible, because the computer will be transmitting over phone lines while players are using their telephone modules.

Unfortunately, you won't be able to receive video programs or movies—not even *The Maltese Falcon*—with the modules. The bandwidth of telephone lines in this country is, by and large, too narrow to carry transmission of color, full-motion pictures. Researchers at a number of companies are currently working on compressing video signals so that they can be carried by phone lines. For now, though, the phone modules are limited to receiving data and simple-image games.

Atari is expected to fully unveil Project Falcon and display its modules at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago this June. Many stock analysts are anticipating that the first models will appear in stores by the end of the year.

Atari's leap into telecommunications is the kind of breakthrough Sam Spade would have loved. A convenient way to dig up the facts—never mind securing things at home while you're out on the case. □

# **JECT FALCON: WHAT'S THE BIG SECRET?**



# ARE YOU A HOME VIDEO CRIMINAL?

By Marcy Ressler

**W**ith home video so young, few laws are specifically designed to separate its abuses from its uses. Yet that doesn't mean you can use your video gear with reckless abandon, taping whatever you want, wherever you want, whenever you want.

To help understand the little-known legal ramifications of some common video activities, we asked a group of

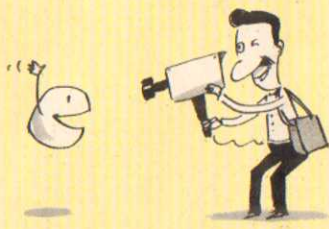
lawyers and experts to assess the legality of the 20 different situations in the following quiz. Each answer reflects the opinions of several lawyers or experts, even if only one expert is quoted by name. Their opinions are meant to be informative, not definitive, especially because many of these laws vary from state to state. As in many areas of law—particularly in one so young as video—the fine lines must ultimately be drawn by the courts. (Answers follow on page 38.)



## SELLING BOOTLEGS

You've decided to upgrade your tape library by selling old titles to friends. After selling your tape of *Saturday Night Fever*, you learn that it was a pirated copy.

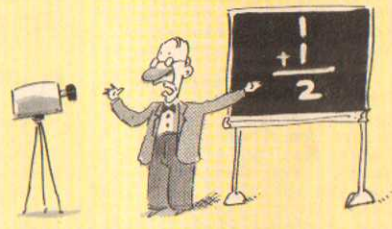
**TRUE OR FALSE:** You have broken the law by unknowingly selling a bootleg tape.



## COPYING A VIDEOGAME

When you play *Pac-Man* by yourself at home, you're a brilliant player. But when others watch, you never play very well. To prove your *Pac-Man* prowess to friends, you videotape a game by connecting your VCR with the game console and a TV set.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are violating copyright laws by copying a videogame.



## TAPING A CLASS

You've enrolled in an accounting course at the local community college. Believing your friends would benefit from the course, too, you bring your video equipment to the lectures and tape them.

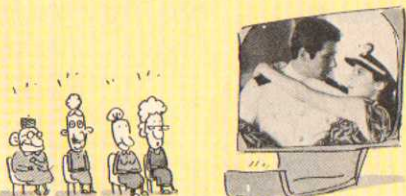
**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are violating the law by taping the classes without permission.



## TAPING AT A CONCERT

You have purchased a ticket to the Hall and Oates concert at the Universal Amphitheater in Los Angeles. You bring your videocamera and recorder with you and tape the entire concert for your home library.

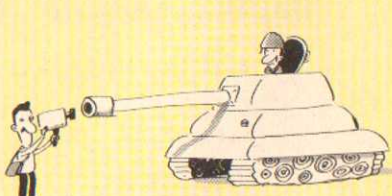
**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are violating copyright laws by recording the performance without the permission of the hall or of the artists.



## FUND-RAISING

The Men's Club at your church, in need of money to donate to a worthy cause, decides to sponsor a "movie night" fundraiser. The group rents a videotape of *An Officer and a Gentleman*, members bake cakes and cookies, and everyone pays \$10 for the evening.

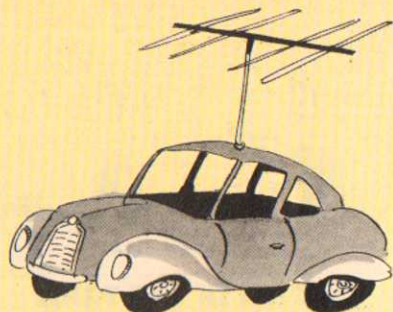
**TRUE OR FALSE:** Because you are a non-profit organization, your actions do not violate copyright laws.



## MILITARY SITE-SEEING

One sunny Sunday, you decide to visit a relative or friend at Fort Benning, an army post outside of Columbus, GA. You bring your videocamera and VCR with you and shoot a tape of life on the post to show the folks back home.

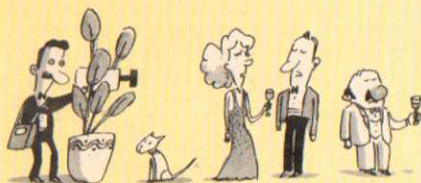
**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are violating the law by videotaping at a military base such as Fort Benning without permission of the army.



### CAR VIDEO

Tired of the long commute from the Chicago suburbs to the city's central business district, you install a portable television set in your dashboard to make the trip to the office a little easier. (You plug the set into your car's cigarette lighter.)

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are violating a state law by driving with front-seat TV.



### PLAYING CANDID VIDEOCAMERA

Once guests arrive at your party, you activate a videocamera and a VCR hidden in the closet. You tape the guests drinking and smoking marijuana, and show the tape the next week in your video class.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are violating privacy laws by taping your guests without their consent.



### GAMBLING

You've invited friends to your house for a social gathering. In the course of the evening, one of your guests challenges you to a game of *Donkey Kong* on your home videogame console. The rest of the guests bet a dollar each that you will outscore your opponent.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** Your friends are violating state gambling laws by placing bets on the contest.



### BREAKING SHRINK-WRAPPING

You're in a video store shopping for a VCR and deciding between several different brands. There are no samples opened, so you break the shrink-wrap on several different boxes to compare their contents. You then buy one VCR, leaving the others opened on the shelf.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You have broken the law by opening a sealed package without permission.



### 25¢ FOR DONKEY KONG

Your 10-year-old son, tired of selling lemonade, invites his friends over to the house to play *Donkey Kong*. To make some candy money, he charges them 25 cents to play each game.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** He is breaking the law by charging his friends for playing home videogames.



### TAPING IN A MUSEUM

You love the paintings in Boston's Museum of Fine Art and would love to have a record of the museum's collection on videotape. You think other art lovers would also, and you bring your VCR and camera to the museum one day and tape the museum's entire holdings.

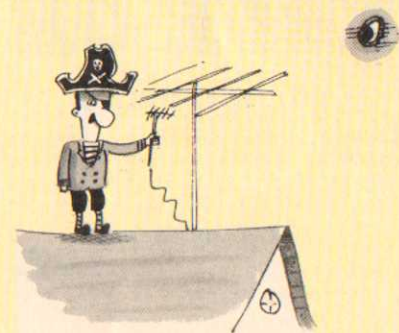
**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are violating the copyright law by taping the museum's holdings without permission.



### MAILING EROTICA

You recently purchased a videocassette of *Emmanuelle*, an X-rated movie. After watching it, you call your friend in Oregon to tell him about it. He wants to see the tape, so you wrap it up and mail it to him.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are breaking the law by sending X-rated material through the US mails.



### TV PIRACY

One day, while reading the newspaper, you spot an ad for a microwave antenna that will draw in pay-TV programs—for free—when installed on your roof. You buy the antenna, put it on your roof and use it to watch HBO programs on TV.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are violating a federal law.



### FOLLOWING HOW-TO TAPES

As a joke, a friend gives you a tape entitled, *How to Pick a Lock*. You learn the tricks of the tape and, just to get a little bit of hands-on experience, break into a neighbor's home.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You cannot be found guilty of breaking and entering because you were following the instructions on a prerecorded videotape made for educational purposes.

(Cont.)



### USING A TRIPOD

It's a beautiful day in New York City, and you, your video gear, your friend and a frisbee go into Central Park for some fun. You arrange your VCR and video-camera on a tripod and set it to tape your frisbee game as well as other activities going on in the park.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are violating a city law by setting up video equipment and associated gear in a public place.



### BUYING BOOTLEGS

You purchase a copy of *E.T., The Extra-Terrestrial* at your local video store, only to read in the newspaper the next month that the store has been closed down because it sold only pirated tapes.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are in violation of the law by owning a pirated tape.



### TAPING IN THE PARK

You bring your camera and VCR to a nearby park and, for the rest of the afternoon, tape the scenes around you. When you get home, you discover that your tape is an excellent portrayal of life in your city and you put it on display in the town library.

**TRUE OR FALSE:** You are breaking the law by taping and displaying other citizens without their permission.

## TRUE OR FALSE? THE LAWS...

### SELLING BOOTLEGS

**TRUE:** According to Alan Latman, law professor at New York University Law School and executive director of the Copyright Society of America, you could be held liable, even though you didn't know the tape was illegally made. He says criminal actions have been brought against persons who unknowingly sold stolen materials, including pirated tapes.

### TAPING AT A CONCERT

**TRUE:** According to NYU's Latman, recording a concert without permission is a violation of the Copyright Act of 1976. He says music already recorded and/or scored is protected under federal copyright laws. The performance, or interpretation, of the music is protected by common law copyright, he says.

To prevent violations, tickets to concerts often contain specific warnings against bringing recording equipment. Additional signs banning recordings may also be posted. Even at outdoor concerts, which are often free and held in public places, you cannot record an entire concert without the permission of the copyright holders, Latman says.

### COPYING A VIDEOGAME

**FALSE:** Ken Nussbacher, associate general counsel at Atari, says there is no copyright or trademark infringement if you videotape *Pac-Man* or other home games—as long as the copy is for personal use, such as showing to friends.

But Ron Goldman, chief patent counsel at Mattel, is less certain. "It's not necessarily an infringement," he says, "but it's a wrong without any real remedy." In other words, copying a game isn't right, but as long as the copies are for personal use, your chances of being prosecuted are slim. "I don't think it's anything a company such as Mattel would regard as reason to go to court," Goldman says. He says there might be grounds for legal action if the tapper sought to profit from the copy of the game by making a "how-to-beat-the-game" tape or by showing it to competitors, who could figure out patterns and copy graphics through studying the tape frame by frame.

### FUND-RAISING

**FALSE:** The federal Copyright Act of 1976 requires that you secure permission from the owner of a movie or other copyrighted program before showing a public performance of it for profit, says Richard Chused, law professor at Georgetown Law School. He says there are exemptions in the law for non-profit groups, as well as for educational and religious uses, but they do not extend to public performance fund-raisers.

### TAPING A CLASS

**TRUE:** According to Latman, a classroom lecture is considered a copyrighted public performance and cannot be taped without the instructor's permission. If the teacher reads from prepared notes (a fixed, tangible medium of expression), Latman says the lecture is protected by federal copyright laws. If it is spontaneously delivered and there are no notes, he says the lecture is protected by common law copyright, set by states. Of course, it's pretty hard to be inconspicuous when videotaping in a classroom, so common sense would dictate getting the instructor's permission.

### MILITARY SITE-SEEING

**FALSE:** Ft. Benning, where 75,000 army recruits are trained each year, is an "open" army post, so you don't need permission to tape there during normal hours, according to Lt. Col. Russell Andrews, a Ft. Benning spokesperson. If you want to tape a training class, he says, you should first introduce yourself to the instructor, to be courteous. "There are virtually no restricted areas here, and you're welcome to bring it [video gear] along," he says. "Matter of fact, we encourage it. We especially see a lot of VCRs at graduation exercises."

The story is different at other military facilities. At Fort McLellan in Arkansas, spokesperson Ross Atkins says taping is discouraged because it's considered disruptive. At Fort McPherson, near Atlanta, spokesperson Russell Wisekircher says you'll need a military escort and permission, which is given on a case-by-case basis.

Bill Hudson, a Defense Department spokes-

person, says there is no federal policy or law concerning making videotapes at military facilities. Each commanding officer, he says, sets the policy for the site. He says federal law prohibits copying documents or activities of any sort specifically labeled classified, but adds that it is highly unlikely that a visitor to a military installation carrying a videocamera and VCR would be able to walk into an unattended classified area—where there were no posted warning signs—and begin shooting. To avoid being disappointed or embarrassed, Hudson suggests you call the public affairs office or local military police where you want to tape before arriving there with your video equipment.

### CAR VIDEO

**TRUE:** According to attorney Marc Loro of the Illinois Secretary of State's office, the Illinois Revised Statutes say that "... no motor vehicle operating on the highways of this state (any public street) shall be equipped with television or television-type receiving equipment located so the viewer or screen is visible from the driver's seat." Loro says a violator could be fined between \$35 and \$500, the penalty for a misdemeanor in Illinois.

While there is no federal law specifically against car video, a survey conducted last fall by the Electronic Industry Association found that it's currently illegal in 30 states to operate a TV in a motor vehicle within the driver's view. Three other states don't specifically ban front-seat TV, the study found, but consider it in reckless driving cases. So before installing a TV set or a VCR and monitor in your car, check the traffic laws of your state. And remember: The laws may change when you cross state lines.

### PLAYING CANDID VIDEOCAMERA

**TRUE:** According to Victor A. Kovner, a lawyer in private practice in New York, surreptitious surveillance without the consent or knowledge of those being taped is an invasion of privacy. The fact that the party is in your house makes no difference, adds Georgetown's Richard Chused. "You don't become someone's

property by walking into his house," he says.

While Chused says any secret taping is illegal, he says the case against you in this instance would be particularly strong since you secretly taped your guests in an illegal activity—possessing and using marijuana—and then showed the tape in public. Since the party is in your house, he says, you too could be implicated in the illicit activity. In fact, even if your guests stand around sipping milk and talking about their good deeds of the week, you have to get their consent before showing that tape in public.

## GAMBLING

**TRUE:** If your house is in a state with strict gambling laws—Massachusetts, for example—you could be in trouble. Lt. Richard Duffy of the crime prevention bureau in Springfield, MA, says betting of any kind is considered illegal. "Playing bridge for a penny a point is technically a violation of the state statutes," he says. The penalty for a conviction under the statute is a fine of \$2,000 or one year in jail.

In other states, the law excludes such private betting. According to Sgt. Larry Peters of the Denver Vice and Narcotics bureau, informal betting in a social context in a private house is legal throughout the state of Colorado as long as no one takes a cut of the pot and no strangers are brought in from the street to participate. The same is true in Atlantic City, NJ, according to Det. Michael Cohen, and in Cleveland, OH, according to Lt. Don Sobacki.

## BREAKING SHRINK-WRAPPING

**TRUE:** John Lehrer, a lawyer at Sears, says that to the extent that you're destroying store property, your actions would be illegal. But, he says, "as a practical matter, I couldn't see anyone doing anything about it." Stealing the products altogether is a more serious problem, he says.

To prevent shoppers from handling and damaging merchandise, stores often put warning signs, notes Gary Shapiro, a lawyer with the consumer electronics group of the Electronic Industry Association. He says a sign such as "Pretty to touch/Lovely to hold/But if you break it/Consider it sold" creates a contract with a customer that, if violated, could ultimately be resolved in small claims court. Herbert Hellman, a lawyer for Macy's, says that healthy customer relations usually prevent stores from taking legal action against negligent shoppers. "In the real world, we don't use strong-arm tactics," he says.

## 25¢ FOR DONKEY KONG

**FALSE:** According to Ron Goldman, chief patent counsel at Mattel, "Anyone who buys our game and plays it at home is entitled to do so. Mattel is not going out prosecuting little kids." He says the 25-cent charge could be for admittance to the home, rather than for actually playing the games. Georgetown's Richard Chused agrees that the child entrepreneur is acting legally. "If he owns a game that he bought legitimately, he can do whatever he wants with that game," in accordance with zoning and other local laws, Chused says.

Yet lawyers at some videogame companies disagree. "My gut reaction is to say no, he can't do it, because the use of the copyright is for the home, not for commercial purposes," says Mike Schwefel, an attorney at Coleco. Atari lawyer Ken Nussbacher says the company, as a copyright holder, retains exclusive rights to profit from the games. He says he does not know, though, whether Atari would go to court to stop your son's 25-cent *Donkey Kong* racket.

## TAPING IN A MUSEUM

**TRUE:** Victor A. Kovner explains that paintings can be copyrighted, and you need the permission of the copyright holder before taping them. For those works of art made before the copyright laws were enacted—those in the public domain—he says you need the museum's permission first. But to protect a museum's market for posters, book covers and the like, he says, museum officials often deny access for photographing or videotaping.

Janice Sarkow, manager of photography services at the Museum of Fine Art, says videotaping is not allowed in the museum's galleries. "If you bring your videotaping equipment into the museum, you would have to check it, just like a large umbrella," she says. The policy is designed to protect museum visitors as well as the paintings themselves, she says.

## MAILING EROTICA

**FALSE:** According to postal inspector Wayne Kidd, you are breaking the law only if the X-rated tape is obscene, a determination that a jury would have to make. If the tape were deemed obscene by a jury, he says both you and your friend could be prosecuted.

Ten years ago, postal inspector John Taylor says, there were numerous statutes that regulated the contents of the mails. But the Supreme Court has found most of these statutes unconstitutional, he says, pointing out that now the FBI and US attorneys, rather than postal officials, investigate cases of mail obscenity. According to Taylor, obscenity standards vary from location to location, and it is almost impossible for law enforcement officials to find out about X-rated tapes mailed between friends.

## TV PIRACY

**TRUE:** Unauthorized reception and use of a signal other than broadcast TV is prohibited by Section 605 of the Communications Act of 1934. According to FCC lawyer Sharon Kelly, the violation occurs not in owning the microwave receiving equipment, but in using it to get a pay-TV signal not intended for your use (because you haven't paid for it).

A federal judge in Minnesota agrees. In *Movie Systems Inc. vs. Heller*, the first TV-signal piracy case filed against an individual in a federal court, the judge found that Heller, a local resident, had violated Section 605 by using a microwave receiver to watch pay-TV programs without paying for them.

Movie Systems, which brought the suit, has cases pending against alleged pirates in other states, also, says Raymond Conley, the pay-TV company's general counsel. "We're charting the course," he says. "We're not calling these people pirates anymore, either. They're thieves. That's all there is to it." In the past, cases against microwave receiver manufacturers and distributors—who promote the equipment for pay-TV reception—have been more common. Tom Woodbury, HBO's associate counsel, says that since '81, HBO and its affiliates have sued more than 60 retailers just in the New York area for selling or advertising microwave equipment for piracy purposes. But the precedent in the Heller case could shift the focus of prosecutions to include more equipment buyers.

## FOLLOWING HOW-TO TAPES

**FALSE:** If you break into somebody's home, you can be found guilty of violating whatever local breaking and entering laws are on the books, regardless of where you learned your

lock-picking skills, says Richard Chused.

The person who commits the unlawful act is guilty, and the person who makes the videotape with the how-to instructions may also be guilty, he says, depending on the circumstances. The penalties depend on the specific laws you break, he notes.

## USING A TRIPOD

**TRUE:** A permit is necessary in New York City to set up a tripod in a public place, such as Central Park, says Meredith Anthony in the Mayor's Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting. The reasons are twofold: to keep people from disturbing you and to protect the city against damage liability, says an office spokesperson.

According to the spokesperson, the city requires proof that you have at least \$300,000 of general liability insurance—in case you damage public property, hurt yourself or injure passersby—before giving you the permit, which is free. He says thousands of permits are given out each year, both to commercial and non-commercial tapers.

In many cities, including Cedar Rapids, IA, for instance, no permit is necessary for taping in public. But if you plan to take your video gear and tripod to a national monument in Washington, DC, remember that videotaping is governed by the same rules that cover photography. Park Ranger F.E. Giarrh points out that a permit is required for videotaping inside any of the national monuments. She says "lawyers were involved" a few years ago when *Playboy* magazine photographers tried to take "indecent exposure shots" in front of a national memorial without a permit.

## BUYING BOOTLEGS

**FALSE:** If you purchase an illegally made tape without knowing it's a pirated copy, you cannot be held liable for owning (or buying) the illicit item, says Chused. If law enforcement agents were investigating the store owner, however, they could impound your tape of *E.T.* without paying you for it, he says.

If you want to recover the money you paid for the videotape, he says, you could file a case against the store owner who sold you the pirated tape in the first place.

## TAPING IN THE PARK

**FALSE:** According to Gary Shapiro, a lawyer with the consumer electronics group of the Electronic Industry Association, people must assume the risk of being taped when they walk out in public. Any tape made in a public place, he says, can be used for personal or commercial purposes.

While public taping is permissible, Victor A. Kovner, a New York attorney in private practice, says there are times when even public taping could result in successful invasion of privacy claims. If two people are becoming intimate under a tree, for instance, and you zoom in and tape their activities, he says you could be held liable for surreptitious surveillance, an invasion of privacy.

Ordinarily, Kovner says, you don't need people's permission to tape them in public. But, he says, you cannot use the videotape to defame a person or to cast that person in a false light (to say in a voice-over that someone is a murderer, if that's not true, for instance).

Both Shapiro and Kovner agree that the invasion of privacy issue becomes murkier when famous people are involved. If you videotape Dolly Parton strolling through the park, for instance, then sell the tape you made for promotional purposes, you could wind up with an invasion of privacy lawsuit. □

**By Frank Lovece**

**I**n the beginning, Nolan Bushnell created *Pong*. And he looked out over the laboratory floor and saw that it was good. And he begat videogames, which begat arcade games, which begat home videogame consoles and home-computer games.

All myths.

This year, videogames are 25 years old. Yet their history seems to have been distorted by more errors than the New York Mets ever made. Statements such as "Nolan Bushnell is the man who invented *Pong*" proliferate in essays on the subject, but ignore the actual patent-holders—and the videogame pioneers before them.

Bushnell and the company he co-founded, Atari, may indeed have turned stodgy "TV games" into futuristic "videogames." But, in fact, Bushnell's greatest contribution to home games was to put the inventions of others—together with a couple of his own—into one practical and eminently successful package. That combination of creativity and foresight certainly helped catapult videogames into the incredibly popular items they've become. But there were others whose contributions were pivotal to the development of videogames, and there were events and coincidences which helped the inventors progress.

Here is the first complete history of one of the biggest video phenomena since TV itself.

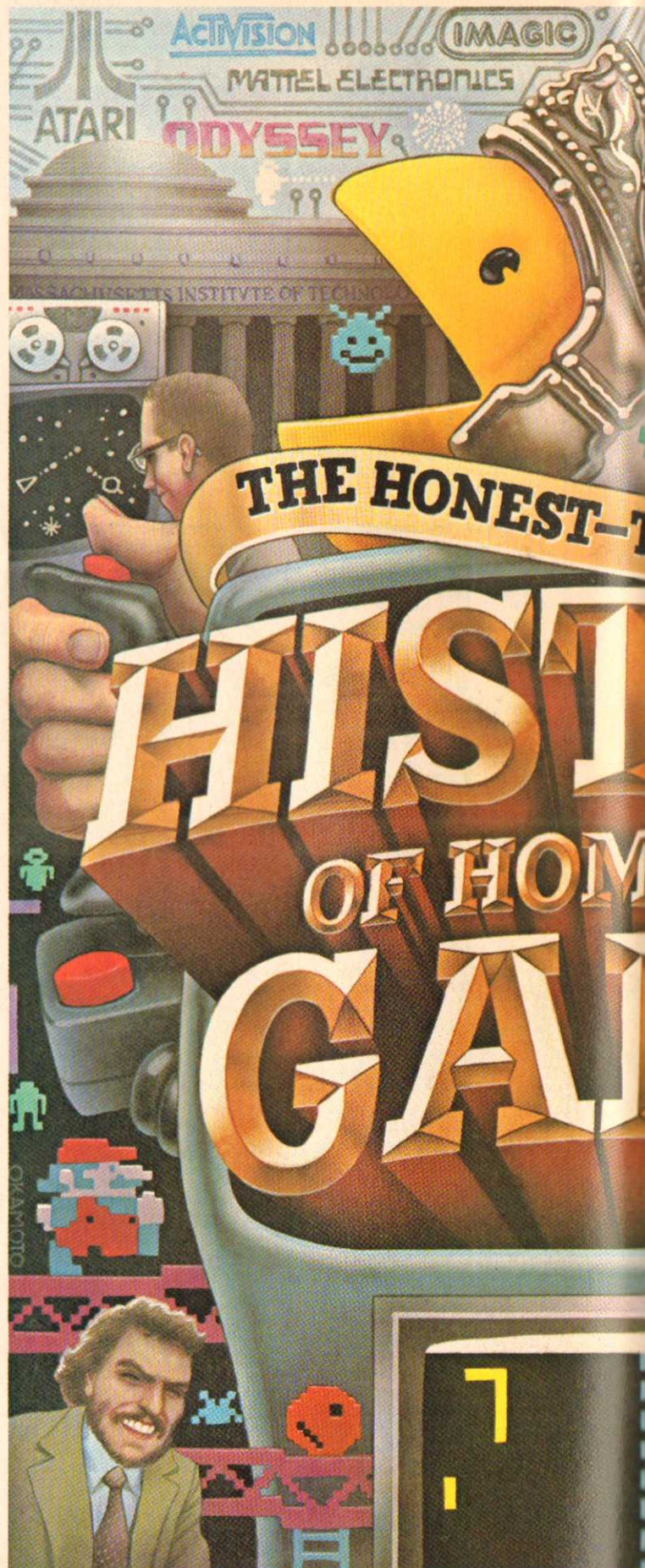
### 1953-1957

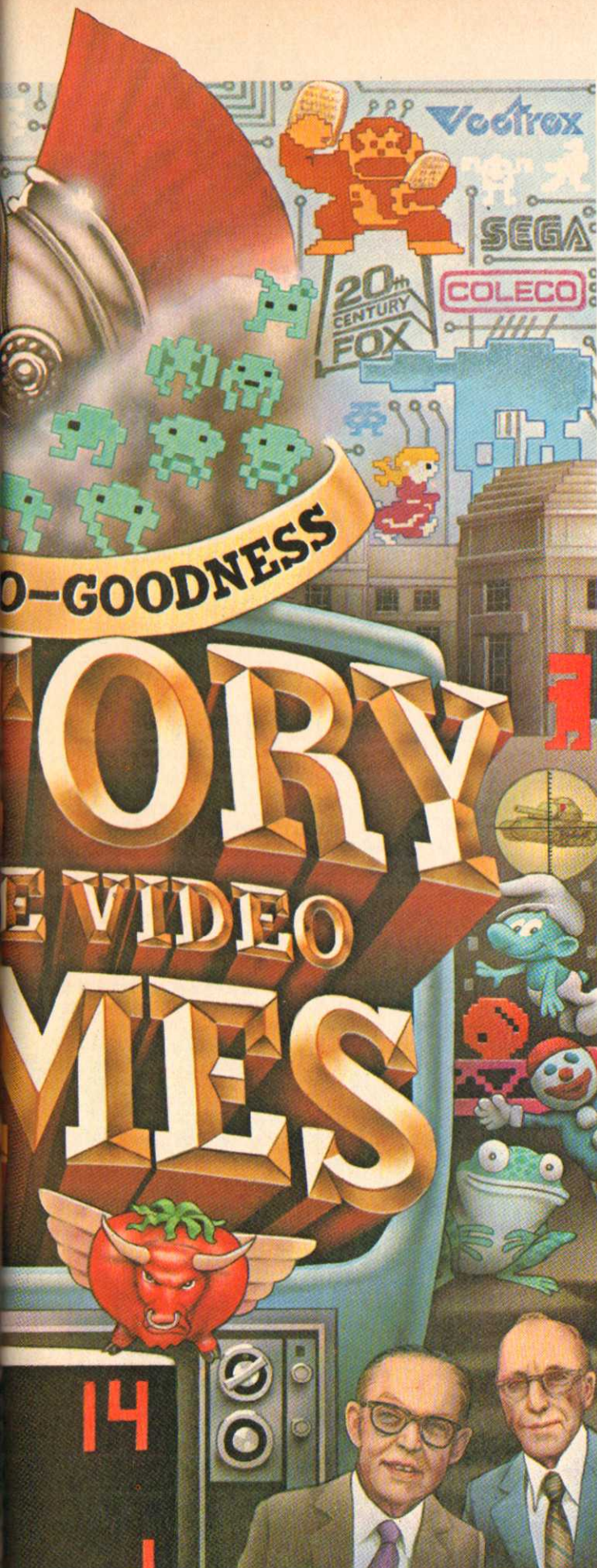
The precursor of videogames is on the air: *Winky Dink and You*, a half-hour children's show on CBS-TV. Kids at home send away for a "magic transparent screen" overlay, a crayon and a "magic cloth." *Winky Dink* host Jack Barry instructs viewers to draw life-saving essentials on the overlay, such as a bridge that Woofer can cross. It's probably the first example of interactive television.

### 1958

While most research centers regear to catch up with Sputnik, one government lab becomes the incubator for the birth of videogames. During an October open-house at Brookhaven National Laboratory in Long Island, a physicist named Willy Higinbotham demonstrates a tennis game on the oscilloscope of a large computer. On a five-inch-diameter screen is a horizontal line (the "court") with a "net" perpendicular to it and a "ball" bouncing from one side to the other. There are no paddles on the screen; ball action is controlled through wired modules with a fire button and, to control shot angle, a knob.

"The instruction book that came with the computer described how to plot trajectories and bouncing shapes, for research," remembers Higinbotham. "I thought, 'Hell, this would make a good game.'" Working with colleague Dave Potter, "It took me four hours to design one and a technician a couple of weeks to put it together." The game is a hit through three open-houses that autumn. "Everybody stood in line to play. The other exhibits were pretty static, obviously." Higinbotham shows the game the next year on a 15-inch screen. He never applied for a patent, however. "The game seemed to me sort of an obvious thing. Even if I had," he reflects, "the game would've belonged to the government."





## 1962

At MIT, an engineering graduate student named Steve R. Russell is playing hookey—or, more specifically, *Spacewar*. He is playing this seminal videogame on the monitor of an 88 x 69 x 26-inch PDP-1 computer costing about \$120,000. By most accounts, Russell himself originated and did much of the initial programming for the game. Computer-networked throughout the country, *Spacewar* is soon an underground fad among the community of computer-users. Programmers adapt and change the game through the years, though it remains fundamentally a two-player battle between torpedo-firing spaceships.

## 1965

Nolan K. Bushnell is introduced by a college friend to *Spacewar*. Until the university eventually clamps down on the use of its million-dollar-plus computer for playing games, Bushnell plays *Spacewar* regularly and even modifies the program to make it faster.

## 1966

While waiting for a bus one day, Ralph Baer decides to invent home videogames.

Baer is chief engineer and manager of the Equipment Design Division of Sanders Associates, a New Hampshire company whose primary work is to design military equipment. At the bus-stop, Baer is thinking back to an assignment given him in '51 by his employer at the time, Loral Electronics. A military-electronics manufacturer, Loral wanted to branch out by making and selling nothing less than the world's most advanced TV set, and chose Ralph Baer to design it. Baer built a prototype and suggested numerous features the company might want to add. Among them: "TV games." Nothing came of it—the set was deemed too expensive to produce.

On this August day, however, Baer writes up, in an engineer's meticulous fashion, several pages of notes. By September 1, Baer has fleshed out his idea. By September 6, Baer and engineer Robert Solomon complete a conceptual schematic. By December, Baer recalls, "I had a couple of spots moving on the screen. It became obvious this was reasonably important."

## 1967

Early in the year, several more developments take place at Sanders. Baer meets with Herbert Chapman, director of research and development, and Louis Etlinger, director of patents. "Herb Chapman was responsible for funding activities such as this," says Baer, "and so I asked that some research and development money we already had in the division get supplemented for the express purpose of creating a small group to work on TV games." The group is formed.

In February, engineer William L. Harrison joins that group. By May, another engineer, William T. Rusch, is part of it as well. Working in secret, the group completes a videogame apparatus within about a month. For this extension of his original work, Baer will eventually receive the first of several related patents.

From September 28 to October 1, at a silver anniver-

sary celebration of the RCA Laboratories in Princeton, NJ, RCA engineers demonstrate a computer-generated game of pool. The computer used is an RCA Spectra 70/25. Cost: about \$90,000. The game is crude—there isn't even a cue-stick symbol—and RCA doesn't envision any commercial potential.

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## 1968

The videogame gathers momentum. By January, the Sanders group has an operating prototype based on Rusch's work. The spot that Baer first put on the screen is now being batted back and forth by two players—and the ball even has a little English on it—thanks to Rusch.

In December, the group begins to woo consumer-electronics firms, including General Electric, Magnavox, Motorola, RCA, Warwick Electronics and Zenith.

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## 1970

Bushnell, now working for Ampex, and co-worker S. Fred (Ted) Dabney form the Syzygy Company. Inspired by the computer game *Spacewar*, Bushnell begins rough design work on a videogame that will eventually be christened *Computer Space*.

---

## 1971

In March, after a deal between Sanders and RCA falls through, Magnavox takes an option on an exclusive license for Sanders' game technology. Meanwhile, on March 15, Bushnell joins coin-op game maker Nutting Associates. At night, Bushnell works on the half-finished *Computer Space* with Dabney. A month or two later, a prototype of *Computer Space* is more or less complete.

On August 23, 1971, Bushnell signs an agreement with Nutting licensing *Computer Space* from Syzygy. About 1,500 will be sold during '71 and '72.

Bill Pitts, a scientist at Stanford University, completes a prototype videogame based on *Spacewar*.

---

## 1972

After 14 years, the first public videogames arrive.

On January 27, Magnavox exercises its Sanders option and begins production of a consumer videogame console dubbed the Magnavox Odyssey 100 (model ITL 200).

On May 23-25, the Odyssey game is demonstrated in Burlingame, CA. On May 24, Nutting engineer Nolan Bushnell is present. He witnesses a demonstration of Odyssey's Ping-Pong game and plays it.

In June, Bushnell and Dabney leave Nutting and change "Syzygy" to "Atari."

Ampex engineer Allen Alcorn joins Atari, and one of the first assignments Bushnell gives him is to design a tennis-type videogame not unlike the one he saw. Bushnell and Alcorn confer often on salient points, and around June 27, Alcorn finishes work on the game that will later be known as *Pong*. "My goal was to keep it as small and economical as possible," Alcorn recalls. "I couldn't design it cheaply enough, though," so *Pong* became a coin-op game.

Bushnell demonstrates *Pong* to Bally. Bally turns him down.

The temporarily dejected Bushnell places a *Pong* coin-op game in a Sunnyvale, CA, bar called Andy Capp's. After two days, the machine apparently breaks down.

The problem: The coin box is jammed with quarters.

Magnavox, meanwhile, begins producing Odyssey consoles with a slot for interchangeable game "cards," making the Odyssey the first programmable console as well as the first home console. 100,000 Odyssey consoles are sold by the end of the year.

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## 1973

*Pong*'s popularity leads to *Space Race*, *Pong Doubles* and *Gotcha* coin-op games. The first copycat versions begin to appear. Odyssey sales are sluggish.

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## 1974

Atari brings out *Tank*, its first hit since *Pong*, and the violent-game syndrome begun with *Spacewar* continues. New Atari engineer Bob Brown convinces the company to produce a home version of *Pong*.

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## 1975

Atari strikes a distribution deal with Sears, Roebuck & Co., making it exclusive distributor of the home version of *Pong*. A dedicated (*Pong*-only) home console is developed and in Sears stores by fall. *Pong* is the runaway hit of the Christmas shopping season.

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## 1976

Videogames come home in force, thanks to a new integrated circuit (the AY-3-8500) designed in Scotland by General Instrument engineer Gilbert Duncan Harrower.

Magnavox introduces its Odyssey 300, 400, 500 and 3000 game consoles and the model BG 4305 TV set with a game console built in. In August, Fairchild introduces its Channel F Video Entertainment System, the first to offer interchangeable games in cartridge form.

In September, RCA announces the development of a programmable game system; later that fall, National Semiconductor's programmable Adversary goes on sale.

In October, Warner Communications buys Atari for a reported \$32 million.

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## 1977 to the Present

Thanks to General Instrument's chip, the floodgates open. RCA has its Studio II programmable console, which soon disappears. Bally's console evolves into the Astrocade, which is gone by '83. Atari's VCS is introduced in '77.

In '78, *Space Invaders* becomes an arcade-game hit. Atari's *Asteroids* outdoes it a year later. Then, in '80, *Pac-Man* becomes a monster smash, igniting the videogame explosion. Also in '80, Activision and Imagic form to produce VCS games. (By '82, almost a dozen other companies will join them.) Meanwhile, the Odyssey<sup>2</sup> and Mattel Intellivision appear, with voice-synthesis modules developed for them by '82, by which time Coleco's ColecoVision and GCE's Vectrex are also on store shelves. With add-ons, the line between home computers and game consoles vanishes. In the latest development, interactive videodisc games are introduced.

On October 1, '83, Bushnell's non-competition contract with Atari will run out. He and Alcorn vow to have a "revolutionary" game on the streets by 10 a.m. If they fulfill that promise, it could become the first chapter in *The History of Videogames*, Vol. II. □

# NEW PRODUCT PREVIEWS

## Coming next in video equipment



### NEC Receiver/Monitor Model CT-1901A \$700

Here's the first all-in-one receiver/monitor from NEC. It has a 19-inch (diagonally measured) screen and 134-channel tuning,

a full-function wireless remote control and stereo sound.

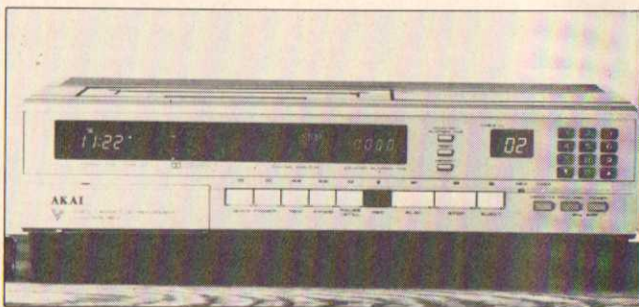
It's also got two RF inputs and one RF output.  
*NEC, 1401 W. Estes Ave.,  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
(312) 228-5900*

### MITSUBISHI Projection TV Model VS-400R

Now you can see the big picture with Mitsubishi's new 40-inch (diagonally measured) rear-projection TV set. It has a

120° viewing angle, stereo sound and two video inputs. It's got 139-channel tuning, random access and channel scan.

*Mitsubishi, 3030 E. Victoria St.,  
Rancho Domingus, CA 90221  
(213) 537-7132*



### AKAI Videocassette Recorder Model VS-6 \$1,095

This four-head VCR is for the armchair viewer: Its 18-function

*Unless otherwise noted,  
all New Products specifications are manufacturers' data—not results of Video Review tests. All listed prices are manufacturers' suggested retail. Availability varies.*

wireless remote lets you control all functions, including special effects, from your seat.

This VHS-format tabletop is cable-ready, can receive 105 channels and has eight-event/14-day programming.

It also has a built-in lock to ensure that programming instructions aren't erased by meddling fingers, as well as a fine-editing control.

*Akai, 800 W. Artesia Blvd.,  
Compton, CA 90224  
(213) 537-3880*

### NEWPORT CONTROLS Joystick

#### Prostick II \$24.95

Response time is improved with this replacement joystick, say its makers. It's compatible with Atari's VCS 2600 and 400 and 800 home computers, Commodore's VIC-20 home computer and Sears' Arcade Games, and can be set for four- or eight-position action.

An arcade-style roller ball on top is designed for faster and more precise action. Two firing

buttons allow for either right- or left-hand play.

*Newport Controls, 15425 Los  
Gatos Blvd., Los Gatos, CA  
95030 (408) 538-3439*



### EXP RESEARCH Pocket TV/Radio Model XTV-2000 \$250

You'll walk with the stars with this one-pound TV set AM/FM radio.

The black-and-white TV set has a 1½-inch recessed LCD tube, for viewing in bright light. It also has built-in speakers and stereo headphones.

*EXP Research, 20445 Gramercy Place, Suite 203, Torrance, CA 90501 (213) 533-5877*

### SEARS Flat Square Color TV Model 4263 \$789.99

They've squared the corners on this 20-inch (diagonally measured) color TV, and the result is a fuller, flatter picture.

The cable-ready set can receive 105 channels, and is video-ready, with three separate

audio/video inputs. It has a tinted faceplate to reduce glare.

This model comes with a detachable remote which lets you switch between video components from your seat. It'll be in stores by late June and in Sears catalogues this fall.

*Sears, Sears Tower, Chicago, IL 60684 (312) 875-2500*



## SONY

### Videocassette Recorder Model SL 2700 \$1,500

This front-loading VCR ushers in a new generation of Beta Hi-Fi machines—already.

Besides more video features than the first Beta Hi-Fi model (including fast scan), this VCR has a jack for a PCM adaptor. With it, the helical-scan stereo audio tracks, the longitudinal

audio track and the two video tracks used as audio tracks, there are a total of five possible audio recording techniques on half-inch videotapes.

The 25-pound model can receive 107 channels and has four-event/14 programming. It also has a jack for a possible broadcast stereo-TV adaptor.

Sony, Sony Drive, Park Ridge, NJ 07656 (201) 930-1000



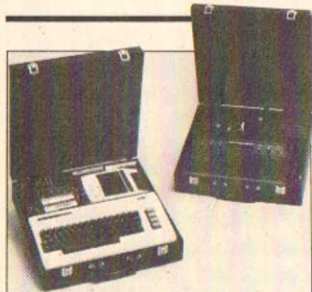
### GENERAL ELECTRIC Color Videocamera Model 1CVC4035E

You can shoot in deeper, darker places with this color videocamera that has low-light sensitivity (10 lux).

The 5½-pound model contains a ⅝-inch Newvicon tube with an f1.6 (12mm-96mm) 8:1 power zoom lens with a macro lens for close-ups. It features infrared auto focus, a stereo microphone, a character generator switch and a positive to



negative switch for transferring 35mm negatives to videotape. General Electric, Portsmouth, VA 23705 (804) 483-5000



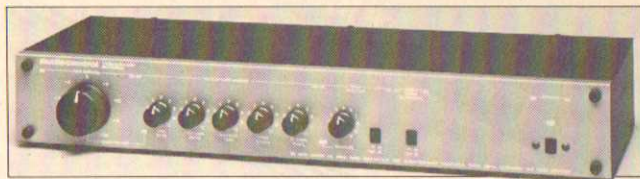
### CASES INC. Carrying Cases Model EGC-500 \$36.50 Model EGC-400 \$31.50

Here's one way—maybe about the only way—to get

videogamers out of the house.

The model EGC-500 accommodates the Atari 400 and 800 and the Texas Instruments TI 99/4A game and home computer systems. The model EGC-400 accommodates all others. Both simulated leather cases leave room for basic accessories, such as paddles, joysticks, cassettes or cartridges and a power supply. They come in black or brown.

Cases Inc. of California, 1745 W. 134 St., Gardena, CA 90249 (213) 770-4444



### AUDIO CONTROL Audio Processor Video Soundtracker-1 \$149

A three-in-one combo of audio add-ons, this black box is said to improve the quality of video soundtracks.

The company says this device

synthesizes stereo, increases frequency response and cuts hiss on video soundtracks when connected to a VCR or TV and hi-fi receiver.

Audio Control, 6520 212th St., S.W., Lynnwood, WA (206) 775-8461

### TIMEX-SINCLAIR Personal Computer TS2000 \$199.95

Memory comes cheap with this first 48K RAM computer that sells for less than \$200.

The 20-ounce machine has a range of eight colors and a display area of 24 lines with 32 characters each. Programs come in mini cartridges.



A 16K version of the computer is available for \$149.95.

Timex, PO Box 2655, Waterbury, CT 06725 (203) 573-5000

### PROTON Color TV Set Model 619 \$790

The newest arrival in the color TV ranks is this 19-inch (diagonally measured) receiver/monitor.

It has separate video and audio inputs, bass and treble

controls and a built-in speaker.

The set has 127-channel tuning, more than 350 lines of resolution, according to the manufacturer, and a full-function wireless remote.

Proton, 19600 Magellan Dr., Torrance, CA 90502 (213) 323-5010



## ON THE DRAWING BOARDS

**SHACKING UP WITH VIDEO?** The national chain **Radio Shack** is finally coming out with a whole line of video equipment—including VCRs—maybe as early as the summer. No word yet on VCR format or price, but company says it's adding VCR, tape, color processor, audio processor, switcher and amplifier to its September catalogue. Last year, Radio Shack, owned by Tandy Corp., introduced its first full line of television sets.

**TALE OF TWO TAPES: BASF** and **TDK** add a chapter to the blank Beta videocassette saga this summer, with the arrival of standard-grade

L-830 tapes. **3M** ends the tale—begun by **Sony** in '79—with its standard grade L-830 tape coming out at the end of the year. But fear not, there's a high-grade sequel. Sony's L-830 high-grade is due out in late summer, BASF's in late fall and 3M's in early '84.

**DISC TRICKS: Matsushita** has put together the first erasable optical disc system that uses lasers to record and erase information. **Philips**, **RCA**, **Sony** and **Xerox** are reportedly working on their own models, too, designed first for office users.

—Marcy Ressler

EXTRA! ★ ★ ★ THE STAR ★ ★ ★ EXTRA!

# KEYSTONE KELLY NABS KROOKS!

## Harry Hooligan in Hoosegow After Madcap Slapstick Chase

Video game history takes a hilarious step forward with Keystone Kapers™ by Activision.

It's more than a game, it's a slapstick adventure, with you as the star.

Lead Keystone Kelly on a comical chase through a chaotic department store, in pursuit of the notorious Harry Hooligan.

With feet flying and baton swinging, you'll have to jump over and

duck under all the obstacles Harry's left in your path: runaway shopping carts, low-flying model airplanes and bouncing beach balls. Dash from floor to floor on elevators and escalators. Locate Harry on the security system, then reach out with the long arm of

the law and bring that evil-doer to justice! Keystone Kapers™ designed by Garry Kitchen. This game is so funny, it's a crime!

For use with the Atari® 2600™ Video Computer System™. Atari®, 2600™ and Video Computer System™ are trademarks of Atari, Inc. Also for use with Sears Tele Games™ Video Arcade™. Tele Games and Video Arcade™ are trademarks of Sears, Roebuck and Co. © 1983 Activision, Inc.



ACTIVISION  
**KEYSTONE KAPERS™**

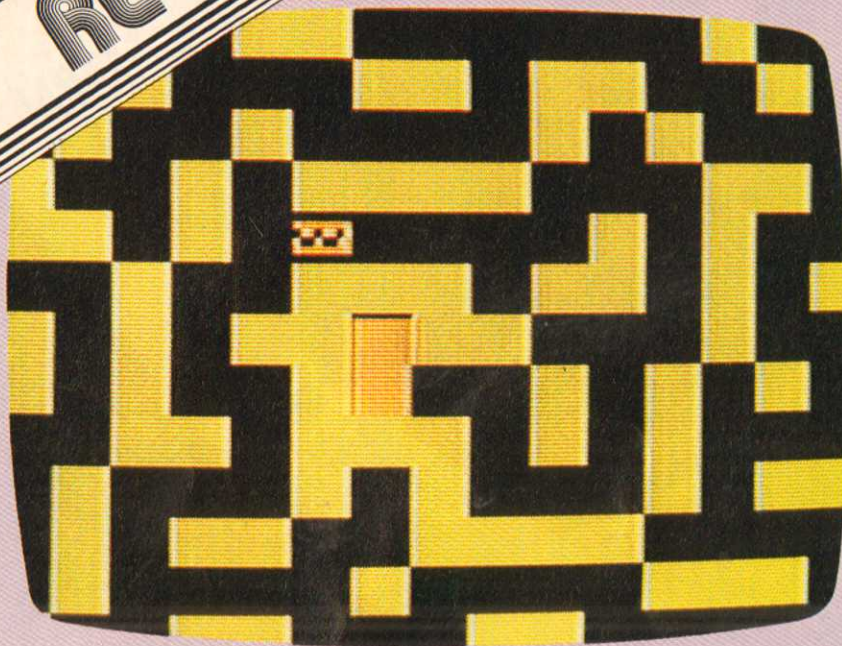
VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGE



FOR USE WITH THE  
ATARI® VIDEO COMPUTER SYSTEM™

**ACTIVISION**  
We put you in the game.

# Flashers and kicks from Qix



Girl-chasing in "X-rated" X-Man: Scissors can cut you short.

## Cartridge

### X-MAN ★

Designed by H.K. Poon, graphics by Miguel Castillo. From an idea by Alan Roberts. (Universal Gamex, VCS-compatible cartridge, \$39.95)

By Ken Uston

*X-Man*, one of the first "adult," sexually oriented videogames and the first release from Universal Gamex, is a maze chase. Your screen persona is X-Man, a little character who is stark naked except for a little red hat. To establish the theme of the game, the designers have made one of his appendages a bit overwhelming in size. As he negotiates a labyrinth, he's pursued by crabs, scissors and a large set of teeth. If they catch him, he meets a humiliating demise. If he successfully eludes them and reaches the door at the maze's end, he's entitled to a sexual interlude with a naked blonde maiden.

Though he makes it with her, he doesn't make it with me. First, this unexciting game offers little challenge after you've played it a half-dozen times or so. The pursuers all follow the same path when traveling away from the center of the board; they take a similarly predictable route when heading toward it. Throughout the labyrinth, there are hiding spots where X-Man can hang out until the predator has passed. Once you've learned these spots, the game becomes

trivial. Your cumulative score isn't displayed, either. The score is re-set after each board. Thus, you can progress through many boards with absolutely no measure of accomplishment.

Presumably the sexual interludes are the primary motivation for doing well at this game. But, alas, the interludes simply aren't worth it. The figures look about as stimulating as two roughly hewn blocks of wood. The first two interludes show the naked figures attempting some form of sexual activity without touching. They apparently enjoy it, because at the end we hear sound effects which remind me of a blast-off at Cape Canaveral. Oral sex is the theme of the third interlude. The fourth is more imaginative, at least in comparison. The couple comes in contact, the man actually moves and the woman squeals—I suppose either in agony or delight, though it's hard to tell which.

Initially, you'll probably keep playing out of curiosity to see what the next interlude is. Disappointingly, after the fourth interlude they re-cycle. I played 20 boards, watching the same four scenes repeat themselves over and over before quitting out of sheer boredom.

The strategy for *X-Man* is straightforward. There are three different maze configurations. Note each of the hiding places, areas the pursuers do not enter when they're heading toward the entrance of the maze and when they're traveling inward. Once you've memorized these, you'll be able to

complete board after board if, for some reason, you want to.

Should curiosity get the best of you and you must check out this game, I'd strongly suggest you borrow or rent the cart rather than buy it. A "party" game it may be, but *X-Man* is definitely a one-joke effort. □

### FLASH POINT ★ ★ ★ ★

Designed by Rexford A. Battenberg. (Odyssey, Odyssey Command Center-compatible cartridge, \$32 approx.)

By Mark Trest

Like a video phoenix rising from the ashes, *Flash Point*, a third generation Odyssey game designed for play on the company's new Command Center system, shows the company is ready to go joystick-to-joystick against Atari, Coleco and Mattel for videogame supremacy.

The Command Center's graphic capabilities, for example, are good enough that *Flash Point* should impress even the most jaded home gamer. The dual screen/dual joystick game quickly brings the arcade game *Robotron* to mind, but with some nice embellishments.

You're presented with a grid map of a city which has been invaded by Earth-craving aliens—called Invaders, naturally enough—bent on destroying it block by block. Thankfully, the Invaders are not inconspicuous, as they constantly flash their positions. As the city's Protector, your screen persona must race to the "flash points" to do battle with these destructive aliens.

After moving to a flashpoint, your Protector is transported to a city block and quickly set upon by anywhere from 12 to 32 invaders. Using the right joystick to fire and the left to move in any of eight directions, your Protector must destroy all the Invaders before they kill it or manage to eat away all the blue and green squares which represent the besieged territory.

Like most home games, the aliens invariably win the encounter since the game ends only when all your defenders are destroyed or the aliens finally blow up the entire city. There is, however, a victory of sorts here. Each round consists of 32 flash points; if you manage to do away with all 32 alien infestations (or manage to destroy a majority of aliens before the whole city is

### RATINGS

- ★★★★ OUTSTANDING
- ★★★ GOOD
- ★★ AVERAGE
- ★ BELOW AVERAGE

decimated), you receive a protection bonus and a new, yet still alien-filled, cityscape.

Those familiar with one-joystick video games will need a bit of practice to get used to the two used simultaneously in *Flash Point*, but the rewards are great. I'd advise beginners to seek out the slow-pulsating, flash points first, since these indicate slower-moving aliens. Effective alien fighting is best practiced from the side of a screen. By backing your Protector into a corner, one less side is open to attack, although you'll miss out on the lucrative green squares.

As one of the first games for this new generation of Odyssey—the granddaddy, after all, of home videogames—*Flash Point* promises good things. If designer Battenberg—an alumnus of Taito America, the US branch of the company that gave us *Space Invaders*—does as well with successive games, Odyssey may well become a name to watch closely. □

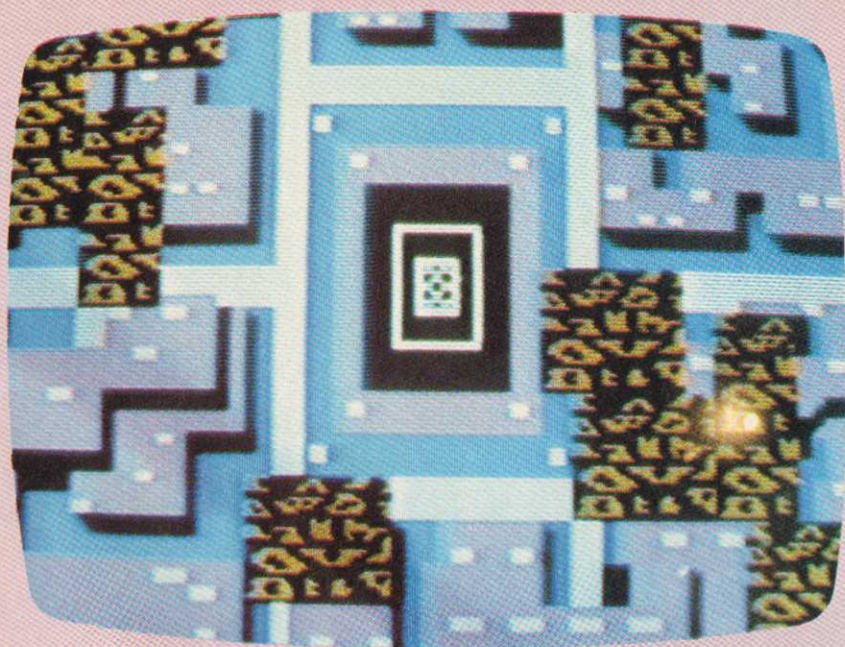
#### **RIVER RAID ★ ★ ★**

**Designed by Carol Shaw. (Activision. VCS-compatible cartridge. \$31.95)**

**By Phil Wiswell**

Everyone talks about the realistic detail of Activision's game graphics, and well they should. Such games as *Dragster*, *Barnstorming* and *Pitfall* display objects and human figures that are about as detailed as the VCS allows. *River Raid* certainly offers realistic graphics. But has anyone examined the realism of the *River Raid* scenario?

The object of this game is to pilot a "B-1 strato-wing assault jet" through a constantly changing course made up of 48 different river scenes that scroll from top to bottom, while shooting helicopters, tanker ships, jets, bridges and fuel depots for points. According to several aeronautics publications I checked with, there is no such thing as a "B-1 strato-wing assault jet." There are B-1s, the large bombers. And there are small



*Grid-map in new-generation Odyssey Flash Point: Get the points.*

assault jets. But strato-wing? It sounds nice, but realistic terms with the same ring could just as easily have been used. (I'm nit-picking, but with most Activision games one has to pick the few nits one finds.)

This assault jet is small and unimpressive graphically, but the scenes through which it flies are attractive mazes of blue river and green landscape. A push north on the joystick accelerates the jet and a pull south decelerates, creating many strategic decisions for the player. (Most videogames keep your screen persona at a constant speed, of course.) Furthermore, the river splits into two channels, each with its obstacles and rewards.

Two of your enemies will be in almost every scene; helicopters and tanker ships that patrol back and forth across your path

from shore to shore. Enemy jets also fly across your path, but they come from the sides of the screen, over the land. None of these three enemies shoots back, and all can be eliminated for points with your jet's laser. Now and then a bridge will have to be blown up—your jet cannot maneuver below or above it. Your tracking missiles are steerable, but since you're simultaneously steering the on-screen jet, you have to be careful not to crash while guiding one.

Fuel depots are the only friendly things on the screen, adding to your fuel supply as you hover over them. Fuel is monitored by a gauge at the bottom of the screen and by an audible warning when it drops below one-quarter capacity. The problem with fuel depots is that they can also be shot and are worth more points than either helicopters or tankers. The solution is to both refuel and shoot depots. Slow down the jet and maneuver directly over the depot. As the jet's nose reaches the letter F in FUEL, fire a shot that will blow up the depot. Meanwhile, you've refueled your jet.

There's a lot to look forward to in *River Raid*. With 48 scenes, you never know what's coming around the next bend. □

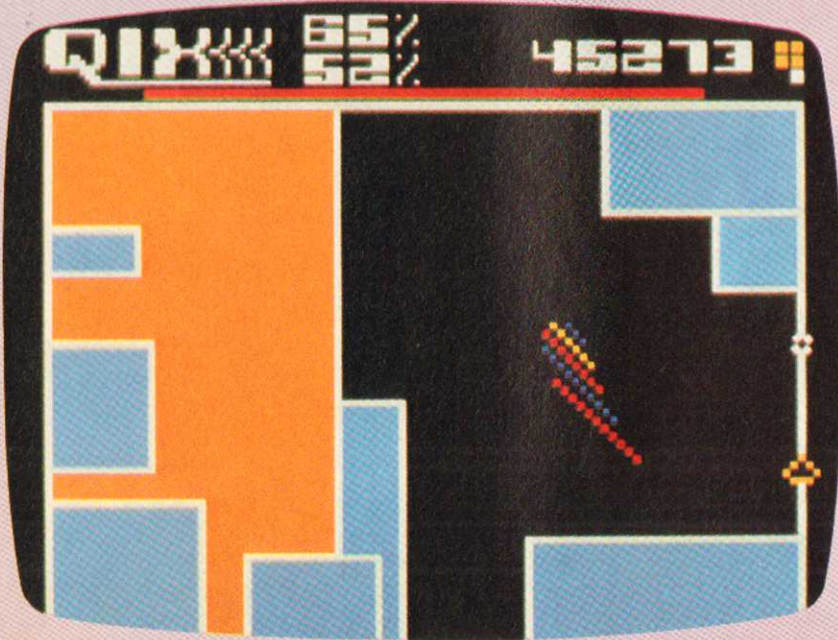
#### **QIX ★ ★ ★ ★**

**Designer uncredited. Adapted from the Taito arcade game. (Atari, 5200-compatible cartridge. \$31.95)**

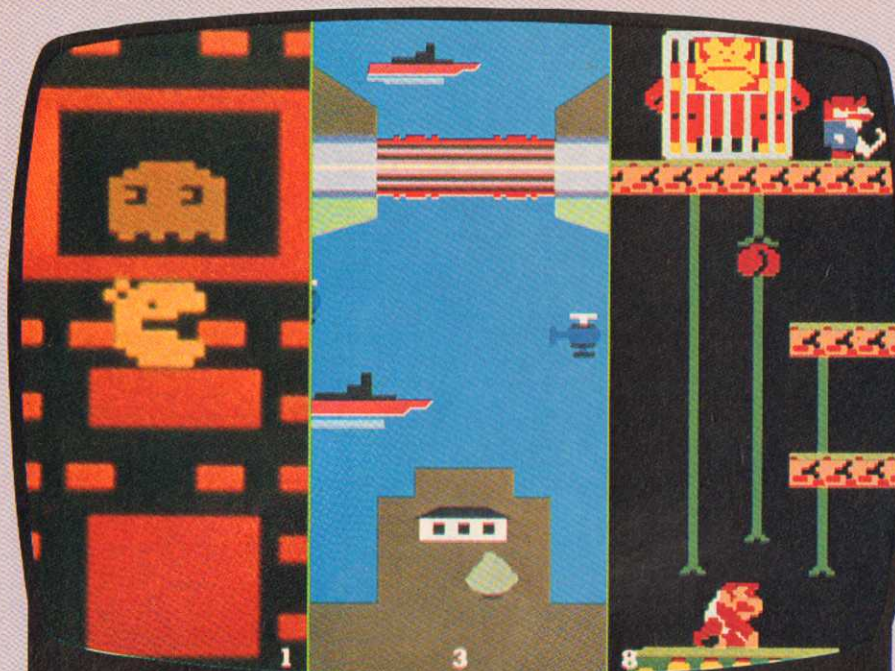
**By Frank Lovece**

I get no *Qix* from champagne. I did get it from Atari, though, and considering how hard 5200 games are to find, I'm very lucky. *Qix* is not only a kick, but one of the purest videogames that's ever been.

*Qix* was moderately popular as an arcade game last year, though many critics claimed it was too abstract for most people. Personally, I find its simplicity and lack of adornment dazzling. The object is to claim a



*Atari's 5200 Qix: defining the boundaries of videogames.*



Last Month This Month

## Top Carts \*

—	<b>1</b>	<b>MS. PAC-MAN</b> Designer uncredited. Adapted from the Bally/Midway arcade game. (Atari, VCS-compatible, \$29.95)
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>PITFALL</b> Designed by David Crane. (Activision, VCS- and Intellivision-compatible, \$31.95)
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>RIVER RAID</b> Designed by Carol Shaw. (Activision, VCS-compatible, \$31.95)
<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>SPIDER FIGHTER</b> Designed by Larry Miller. (Activision, VCS-compatible, \$31.95)
<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>VANGUARD</b> Designer uncredited. Adapted from the Centuri arcade game. (Atari, VCS-compatible, \$29.95)
<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>DONKEY KONG</b> Adapted by Eric Bromley and team from the Nintendo arcade game. (Coleco, VCS- and Intellivision-compatible, \$30)
—	<b>7</b>	<b>PHOENIX</b> Designer uncredited. Adapted from the Centuri arcade game. (Atari, VCS-compatible, \$29.95)
—	<b>8</b>	<b>DONKEY KONG, JR.</b> Designer uncredited. Adapted from the Nintendo arcade game. (Coleco, ColecoVision-compatible, \$30)
<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>FROGGER</b> Adapted by Ed English from the Sega arcade game. (Parker Brothers, VCS-compatible, \$30)
—	<b>10</b>	<b>CENTIPEDE</b> Designer uncredited. Adapted from the Atari arcade game. (Atari, VCS- and 5200-compatible, \$34.95/\$39.95)

**Behind the Top 10 Carts:** Atari strikes back with a series of arcade adaptations: *Ms. Pac-Man*, *Vanguard*, *Phoenix* and *Centipede* for its VCS and 5200 consoles.

Although Activision's *Pitfall*, *River Raid* and *Spider Fighter* continue to receive critical acclaim, it appears Atari may well maintain its top slot in the upcoming months as it adapts such popular arcade titles as *Dig Dug*, *Kangaroo*, *Jungle Hunt* and *Galaxian*. In the meantime, Coleco is gathering its own. Already *Donkey Kong, Jr.* is sold out in many areas of the country, and upcoming Coleco titles include adaptations of *Buck Rogers on the Planet of Zoom*, *Looping* and *Slither*, the latter complete with trackball controllers. (M.T.)

\*Based on a nationwide survey of sales and rentals at presstime. All games are in cartridge format unless otherwise noted. Suggested retail prices are approximate.

percentage of screen territory by sealing off portions with your line-drawing "tracer." Complicating matters is the Qix, a colorful bolt that floats and strikes like a marauding barracuda, whose touch at any point on your tracing means your tracer's demise. In the three most advanced of the four skill levels, there are also two Sparx, which follow your tracer's path and, reaching it, destroy it, and the Fuse, which behaves likewise should your tracer stop in mid-trace. There's also a time factor.

It's a terrific game, practically the sole example of its own genre—neither a shoot-'em-up, nor a maze game nor an adventure game. Traditional games of territorial possession have existed before—chess, *Monopoly* and *Risk*, for example—but not in videogames until the arcade Qix and never so purely since. This purity extends even beyond the fact that Qix is the quintessence of a new videogame genre. It's pure video, using abstract symbols that represent nothing but themselves. No ping-pong paddles. No spaceships. No whimsical Pac-people with human-like faces.

Atari's 5200 version is a faithful adaptation of the arcade Qix. (Too bad we don't know who to thank, since Atari no longer credits its designers.) The playfield has been crunched to accommodate the TV screen, but this is less bothersome than in 5200 *Pac-Man*, where the altered playfield kills whole schools of game techniques. Interestingly, and in a supremely logical fashion other games should emulate, the third skill level is the echo of the arcade game, and the fourth is even faster—perfect for an arcade-based home videogame, with which leisurely practice can lead to a taste for more expert challenges.

About the only things I don't like about Atari's Qix is the maddening buzzing of the Qix itself and the fact there's no way to instantly re-set the game. If you've had a bad first round and want to start fresh, you can't right away. Either you play through all five rounds or turn the console off and on and wait for the attract mode to end.

Regardless, Qix is a masterpiece. The husband-and-wife team of Randy and Sandy Pfeiffer who designed the arcade game (with the resources of *Space Invaders*-originator Taito, of course) are to be commended for arriving at a new idea in videogames and executing it brilliantly. □

### TRUCKIN' ★★

Designed by Rick Levine. (Imagic, Intellivision-compatible cartridge, \$34.95)

By Michael Blanchet

I was a trucker once. Well, not a real trucker. My rig only had six wheels and I never drove more than a hundred miles at a clip. I never felt that romance of the road so many C&W singers croon about. I never used a CB, never dined at a greasy spoon and certainly never happened upon a shapely hitchhiker. Imagic's *Truckin'* is a lot like my experiences—you

do all the work but miss out on all the fun.

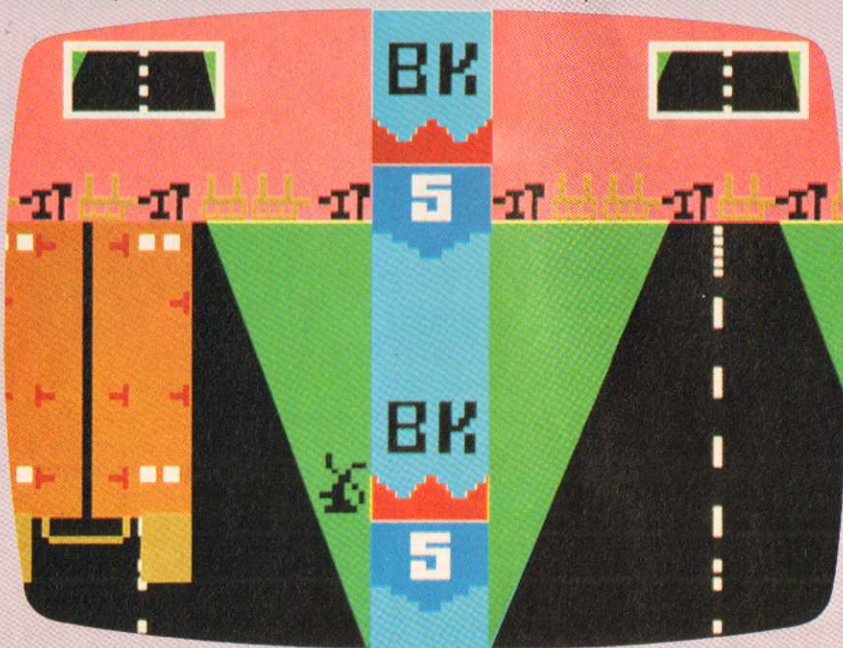
The object of *Truckin'* is to fill your fictional coffers with as much cash as possible before the game ends. (A game can last from five to 60 "days.") To do this, you must pull your on-screen rig into a city, pick up a load (corn, gravel, cattle or milk) and haul it to its destination.

*Truckin'* is one of the very few "simulation" videogames. Its story line is not routed in fantasy. You view the passing world sitting on your rump looking out of a windshield, just as real truckers do. All the essential elements are here. But the game fails to capture the essence of life on the road. And visually, it's a lot like the stretch of Route 80 that rolls through the Midwest—boring and bleak.

Although *Truckin'* misses all the romance, it does succeed at recreating the dollars and cents side of the trucking industry. You pay the gas stations for gas and repairs, and pay the piper if you're nabbed for speeding.

At least half a dozen times a minute, another truck will appear in the distance. As it approaches, it shifts from lane to lane and almost always comes to rest on your side of the road just seconds before impact. The instruction booklet recommends blowing your horn, but this seldom remedies the problem. The only alternative is to pull into the left lane, but in this situation, you're at the mercy of the less-than-responsive Intellivision disc controller.

Fashioning games after real-life situations is a clever idea, but I fear many gamers carry expectations on the topic a bit too far. Hitting a 25-foot jumper in real-life basketball gives me a thrill that a videogame could never duplicate. This may sound obvious, but it's something anyone playing videogames should remember. As a simulation, *Truckin'* lacks the thrill of real trucking—which simply leaves us with a videogame left to stand or fall (or drive or break down) on its own. □



On the road in Imagic's *Truckin'*: an interstate of mind.



Dolphin from Activision: Believe everything you hear.

#### DOLPHIN ★★★★★

Designed by Matthew Hubbard.  
(Activision, VCS-compatible cartridge. \$32 approx.)

By Dan Gutman

Videogames are often criticized for the allegedly low level of intelligence required to play them—often, eye-hand coordination is all that's needed. But games are games, of course, and nobody ever said they have to teach. I think the only requirement of a good game is that it be fun, with any other benefit being simply frosting. Nevertheless, videogame designers are now moving beyond "twitch" games to more subtle, complicated ones that demand either intellectual decision-making or that players use more than just one of their senses.

*Dolphin* is probably the first game based on ear-hand coordination. Your on-screen dolphin is being chased by an ugly squid and is swimming for its life. Every few yards is a vertical column of seahorses that slows the dolphin down. There is always one seahorse missing, giving your dolphin an opening, but you see it too late to rely on eye-hand coordination. Fortunately, your dolphin communicates with you by sending out a sonar echo that tells you where the next opening is: high frequency—the next opening will be high on the screen; low frequency—the next opening will be low on the screen. You earn points by having your dolphin swim through the openings.

You earn big points, however, by having your dolphin leap out of the water to catch seagulls, which also signal their arrival with a tone. After touching one, your dolphin has three seconds to chase the squid and rack up thousands by nailing it.

Another factor is the presence of "good waves" and "bad waves." (Designer Hubbard must be a California boy.) Catch a good wave, signaled by a "greater than" mathematical sign, and your dolphin moves faster. Bad waves ("less than" signs) slow him down and allow the squid to move closer.

*Dolphin* is a challenging, addictive game that is intellectual as well as fun. In addition to a dynamite soundtrack, it also has Activision's hallmark of excellent graphics. My only gripe, in fact, is that you have to wait too long between seagulls.

*Dolphin* is a first step in multi-sensory games. Someday, videogames may well demand that all the senses collaborate. Already, a company called Amiga has developed the "Joyboard," a device you stand on to manipulate videogame action by shifting your weight left, right, forward or backward. In this way, vision and hearing as well as kinesthetic cues interact for such games as video surfing and skiing—as well

as total videogame "environments."

Me, I'm waiting for the *Jane Fonda Videogame Workout*. □

**FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER ★★**  
Designer uncredited. (Data Age,  
VCS-compatible cartridge. \$31.95)

By Michael Blanchet

Many of us are guilty of "coaching" an actor or actress in a movie we might be watching. I've often found myself thinking, "Run!" or "Look out!" as the boogeyman creeps up on yet another unsuspecting victim. The unsuspecting victims never listen and end up meeting some form of grisly demise. That's probably why I liked *Frankenstein's Monster* at first glance. Instead of merely watching the pathetic weaklings in the movie try to stop the creature, you, as the player, can get in there and keep "Frankie" from wreaking havoc on the townsfolk.

To stop the initially dormant monster from becoming activated, your screen persona must scale a *Donkey Kong*ish playfield strewn with *Pitfall*-like hazards. Our hero begins his trek on the third tier of a multi-level grid and must descend to the bottom of the screen. Resting in the lower left-hand corner of the playfield is a brick which your persona must retrieve and carry back to the top of the castle. To completely contain the monster, it's necessary to repeat this process five more times before he gets fully energized.

Your score is tabulated according to an add and subtract formula first seen in Activision's *Pitfall*. You begin with 500 points. Each time your hero encounters a spider, ghost or bat, you lose points. Your tally also drops if your persona falls through a trap door or accidentally stumbles into an acid pool. On the plus side, you get 500 points for each stone your person places around the monster. If the wall is completed before the monster becomes energized, you are further rewarded with 100 points for each remaining time unit.

If *Frankenstein's Monster* had come out a year ago, I would have applauded it as an original effort. But since it follows in the footsteps of both *Donkey Kong* and *Pitfall* (and, I might add, borrows heavily in concept from both), *Frankenstein's Monster* is just another me-too game.

Take, for example, your screen persona. He looks just like a jungle adventurer I met in a Activision game once—moves and jumps just like him, too. The bat's movement is also borrowed, this time from another Data Age game, *Journey/Escape*.

The add and subtract scoring is a good idea, but, as in *Journey/Escape*, it is poorly executed. It simply isn't an accurate indication of how well you've played. In one of my better games, I managed to move four bricks to the top of the screen. After unloading the fourth stone, I noticed that my score was a big, fat zero. In the eyes of the electronic scorekeeper, I had accomplished nothing. All the points I had accumulated

were sucked away by spider bites and dips into the acid. Maybe my persona could've been less klutzy, but the monster was being sealed off and the townsfolk saved.

Visually, *Frankenstein's Monster* is nothing fancy, but it does show marked improvement over past Data Age games. Screen space is fully utilized. The colors and figures are sharp, clear and very neat.

*Frankenstein's Monster* is a fair game with a great title. I neither recommend it nor speak against it. I will say this, though—if you already own *Pitfall* or *Donkey Kong*, don't expect anything new. □

## Computer

**FORT APOCALYPSE ★★ ★★**

Designed by Steve Hales. (Synapse Software, cassette or disk for the Atari 400/800/1200XL with 32K RAM. \$34.95)

By Sheldon Leemon

Combine the tension of *Fort Apache: The Bronx* with the force of *Apocalypse Now* and build a computer game around the latter's helicopter sequence. Make it a multi-level, fine-scrolling extravaganza, successfully combining elements of many different types of computer games, and you may wind up with something as exciting as *Fort Apocalypse*. The premise is similar to

robot-helicopters and "smart" missiles. The idea is to navigate through a network of caves to rescue languishing prisoners.

Your first objective is to bomb the access doors which lead to the uppermost level of caves. Once through the doors, your helicopter must scour the caves for prisoners. Strategically placed lasers fire at your craft intermittently. Rotating-field envelopes—similar to moving walls—require your 'copter to carefully follow them. To add to the confusion, there are "hyper-chambers" where beams transport your chopper to other levels of the cave. When all the prisoners have been found, your craft must land them on a special pad, which gives access to the next set of caves. All told, you must get through two sets of caves, blow up Fort Apocalypse and fly through yet another set of caves to freedom.

Although this is complex, it's enjoyably so. The basic game play of flying the chopper and firing at enemies is very simple to learn. But the strategy involved in picking the best route through the cave layouts is sophisticated enough to keep the game interesting for a long, long time. There is a definite goal, which can be attained only after considerable exploration and planning. The player is perfectly free to move his or her chopper through the caves in any direction. But because the prisoners and the enemy mines and missiles are randomly placed, each game's paths are slightly different, adding an element of chance.



Fort Apocalypse, now: The chopper game is a cut above most.

that of *Choplifter*, in that you use a helicopter to rescue prisoners. But there the comparison ends. Although *Choplifter* was a breakthrough when it was released a few months ago, *Fort Apocalypse* demonstrates how far computer games have evolved.

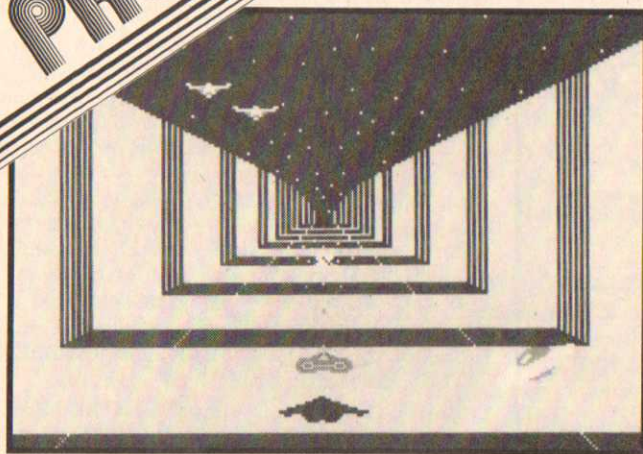
You begin by landing your on-screen helicopter at a fuel depot, and then using the joystick to fly your armed 'copter through a defense system consisting of floating mines,

Since much of the fun is in discovering winning strategies, I won't give out playing hints, but will emphasize that gamers should follow the many tips given in the manual.

*Fort Apocalypse* hasn't *Choplifter's* non-violent attitude, but similarly sophisticated computer games with *Choplifter's* wonderfully refreshing viewpoint are likely due in short order. Until then, this is in many ways computer-game state-of-the-art. □

# VIDEOGAME PREVIEW

## Coming next in cart, cassette, disc



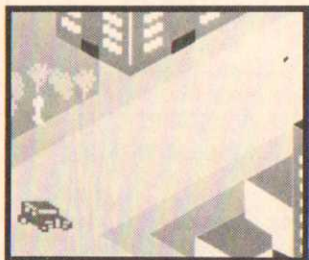
ColecoVision Buck Rogers: a Zoom at the top.

### CARTRIDGE

**BUCK ROGERS ON THE PLANET OF ZOOM** Adaptation of the Sega arcade game. Outer-space earthling Buck must guide his rocket ship past missiles and saucers to attack an alien mothership over the planet Zoom. (Coleco, ColecoVision-compatible)

**THE FALL GUY** A stunt man must climb up the side of 48-story building and grab a suitcase on the top floor. Brick-throwing monsters try to dislodge him. Based on the TV series. (Fox, VCS-compatible)

**GALAXIAN** Adaptation of the Bally/Midway/Namco arcade game. Your on-screen cannon must fire at advancing waves of space creatures, who can break ranks to dive toward your weapon. First time in this format. (Atari, VCS-compatible)



SafeCracker: auto pilots.

**JUNGLE HUNT** Adaptation of the Taito arcade game. A jungle hero must traverse the jungle in pursuit of natives who have kidnapped his girlfriend. Gorillas, sharks, alligators and an avalanche all threaten his progress. With three game screens. (Atari, VCS-compatible)

**9 TO 5** The on-screen secretary must perform her daily chores while taking

time to get coffee for the boss, all under a time limit. Based on the movie. (Fox, ColecoVision, Intellivision- and VCS-compatible)

**REVENGE OF THE JEDI I** First of two games based on the new George Lucas movie in the *Star Wars* series. Your screen persona combats the forces of Darth Vader. (Parker Brothers, VCS-compatible)

**SAFECRACKER** An urban criminal in a big sedan must elude a police car on the streets of a city. Simulated 3-D graphics. (Imagic, Intellivision-compatible)

**SCRAMBLE** You must guide your on-screen aircraft over mountains, through caves and a city, then out of a maze. Danger takes the forms of missiles, UFOs and fiery Flamoids. First time in this format. (GCE, VCS-compatible)

**SKY PATROL** On a World War I spy mission, an observation-balloon pilot must guide his craft safely on wind currents. Fast currents help complete the mission quickly, but entail more danger. (Imagic, VCS-compatible)

**SPACE DUNGEON** Adaptation of the Taito arcade game. Your screen persona must explore 36 chambers of a planet's labyrinthine dungeon in order to escape with a treasure hidden somewhere within the maze. (Atari, 5200-compatible)

**SMURF: RESCUE AT GARGAMEL'S CASTLE** Your cute little Smurf must make his way to the castle of the evil but bumbling wizard Gargamel and free Smurfette. Based on the cartoon creations of French artist Peyo. First time in this format. (Coleco, Intellivision-compatible)

**STAR TREK** As pilot of the United Federation of Planets starship *Enterprise*, you must battle hordes of Klingon warships and eventually reach and nullify the mothership. Based on the TV show/movie. (GCE, VCS-compatible)

**TUNNEL RUNNER** A first-person game, with your screen persona trying to find its way through five maze levels inhabited by a monster. An enhanced, 12K cartridge. (CBS, VCS-compatible)

**TURBO** Adaptation of the Sega arcade game. Your on-screen race car navigates a Grand Prix-type course, avoiding obstacles and other drivers. First time in this format. (Coleco, Intellivision-compatible)

**WHITE WATER** A jungle adventurer rides the rapids in search of hidden gold. (Imagic, Intellivision-compatible)

**WINGS** A flight-simulation game. Your screen persona controls three types of weapons, uses radar to detect enemy missiles and relies on gauges for fuel, speed, altitude,

heading, pitch and roll. Comes with an accessory joystick. An enhanced, 12K cartridge. (CBS, VCS-compatible)

### COMPUTER

**GOLD FEVER** In a multi-level mine, a miner must collect nuggets

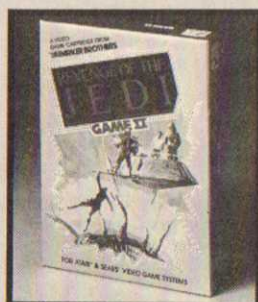


Gold Fever: miner details.

while avoiding obstacles and claim jumpers—all before his oxygen runs out. (Tronix, Commodore VIC-20-compatible)

**JUMPMAN** Your screen persona climbs ropes, leaps obstacles and dodges enemies, protecting his headquarters from alien bombs. First time in this format. (Epyx, Commodore 64-compatible) □

### GAME PLANS



Revenge canceled.

**RECYCLING OF THE JEDI:** Parker Brothers (and apparently Lucasfilms, too) leaned toward offering *Revenge of the Jedi*, and even made up the box for it (left). Instead, though, the company will bring out *Return of the Jedi*. Parker Bros. may have a second game based on George Lucas' space opus by September, but as of now it won't be *Revenge*. Columbia and the Moe Howard estate are readying to negotiate with a third party for a *Three Stooges* videogame. . . . Sega has grounded its *Airplane!* game, along with *Marathon Man* and *48 Hrs.*

**K-TEL ME ABOUT IT:** Late-night TV-commercial king K-Tel plans on introducing its own line of VCS-compatible games in June. . . . At the same time, Coleco will unveil its ColecoVision computer add-ons—probably a keyboard and an enhanced-memory module. Also expect ColecoVision "Roller Controller" trackball packed with *Slither* and fancy "Super Action" handgrip-controllers with *Baseball... Super Sub Roc, Super Turbo* and *Super Gorf* are among the first five "water" games compatible with Coleco's new "Super Game Module."

**GRIN AND BARON IT:** Atari's first *Peanuts* game, set for fall, pits Snoopy against his arch foe *The Red Baron*. Looks as if *Charlie Brown* game should be second. . . . Atari brings down the mouse with Disney-based *Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy, Dumbo* and *Snow White* games, first for the VCS, later for the 5200 console. . . . Sega's second *Star Trek II* cart has had a title change from *In Search of Spock* to *Return to Genesis*. Sega's *Friday the 13th* game has been changed from a movie-based game to one about bad-luck-day pitfalls.

—Frank Lovece

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your sides as she interprets *Romeo and Juliet*. So will Annie Sprinkle as she participates as a contestant in an X-rated "What's My Line?"—one of the funniest things (straight or X-rated) I have ever seen in a movie. On the strictly erotic side of the coin, we have Kelly Nichols' orgasmic extravaganza from *Roommates*, complete with strobe lighting.

In some ways *Dirty Looks* is like a 60 Minutes look at the X-rated industry of the last 10 or so years. It presents itself in a slick, hopped-up format that is sure to please even the most critical home viewer. □

## In Brief

**THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS (1982) ★**  
 With Burt Reynolds, Dolly Parton, Dom DeLuise. Directed by Colin Higgins. (MCA cassette, color, 111 min., \$79.95)

By Roy Hemming

For all its "daring" theme and title, this has to be one of the dumbest musical comedies ever made on a perfectly good subject for contemporary spoofing: the moral hypocrisy of certain American attitudes about sex and the way media manipulators can influence it.

There's just no bite to this movie adaptation of the original Broadway show, nor to Colin Higgins' heavy-handed direction, nor to the ho-hum musical numbers, nor to most of the performances (notable exception: Charles Durning's slyly wicked turn as a "sidestepping" governor).

There are a few warm, honestly human moments here and there, but even these are fatally undercut by some unforgivably inept religious "talk" (mostly from Parton). The cop-out ending is the final insult.

Tape quality is excellent, but the soundtrack has the mushy, distant quality too typical of Hollywood arrangers who think they're still living in the '60s.

**SWAMP THING (1981) ★ ★**  
 With Louis Jourdan, Adrienne Barbeau. Directed by Wes Craven. (Embassy cassette, color, 91 min., \$59.95)

Comic-book buffs (like me) may be able to sit through this low-budget retelling of the DC Comics character's origin, but those who prefer superheroes surrounded by multimillion-dollar productions will certainly be dozing off long before the title character appears.

True to its four-color roots (pun intended), the story follows Dr. Alex Holland's government-subsidized quest for the ultimate fertilizer, a formula that mixes animal and vegetable cells to create a superplant. Archvillain Arcane (Louis Jourdan) dispatches his private army to steal the formula. During the mini war, Holland gets himself drenched in the solution and—

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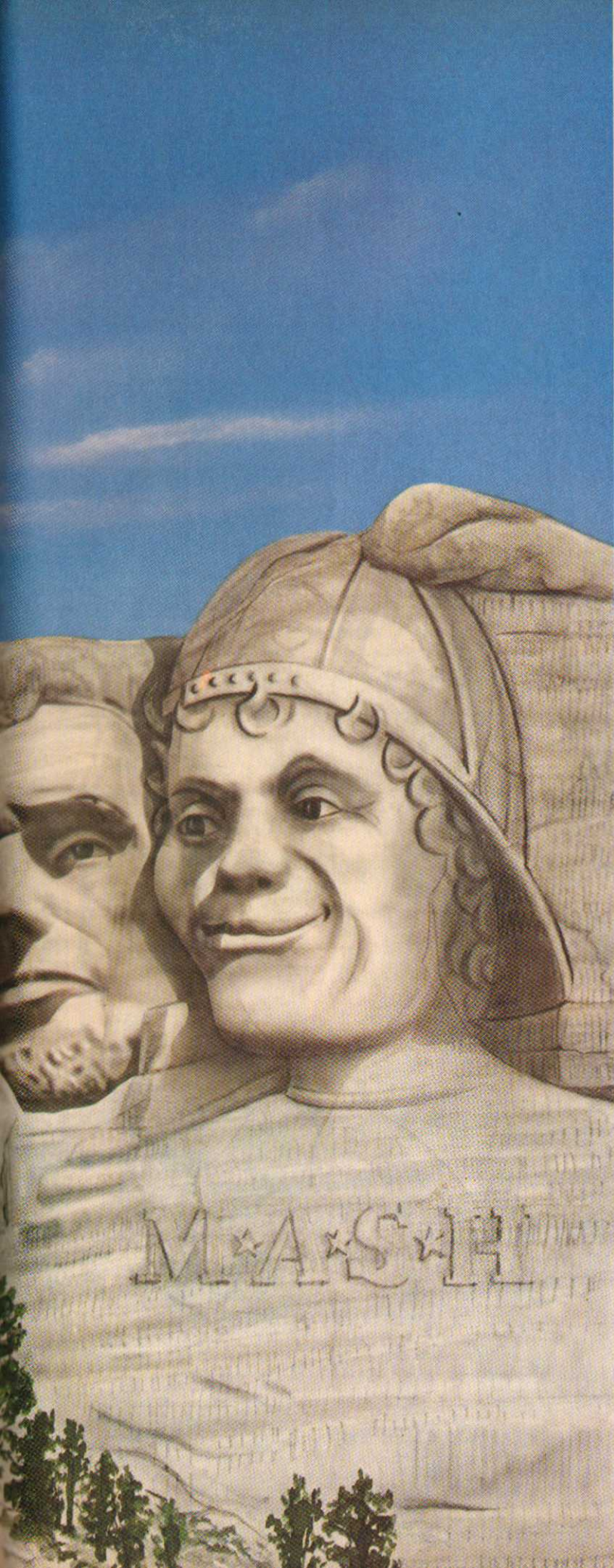
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## COMEDY

**KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE** (1977) The Los Angeles comedy troupe, Kentucky Fried Theatre, in vignettes satirizing movies, television and TV commercials. With Bill Bixby, Donald Sutherland. (Media)

**MONTY PYTHON LIVE AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL** (1982) The British wackos in a live performance of some of their well-known routines, including "The Argument

Clinic," "Crunchy Frog" and "The Lumberjack Song." (RCA, CED)

## ADULT

**CONFESSIONS OF A BLUE MOVIE STAR** (1979) A behind-the-scenes look at hardcore moviemaking from auditions to finished product. Introduced by Roman Polanski. (Imperial)

**I AM CURIOUS YELLOW** (1968) The controversial Swedish movie that was first declared obscene by a US court in '68, although the ruling was later overturned. With Lena Lyman, Peter Lindgren. (American Video Tape)

## HORROR

**FROGS** (1972) Snakes, frogs, toads, turtles, lizards, spiders and leeches take over. With Ray Milland, Sam Elliott. (Warner)

**PEOPLE THAT TIME FORGOT** (1970) Prehistoric monsters meet primitive savages. Based on a novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs. (Emcassy)

**PIRANHA** (1978) There's terror deep in the heart of Texas when deadly piranhas are accidentally let loose. Directed by Joe Dante, with Bradford Dillman, Heather Menzies, Kevin McCarthy. (Warner) □

## IN THE WORKS

**SATURDAY NIGHT TAPED:** Broadway Video, company of former *Saturday Night Live* producer Lorne Michaels, has made deal to bring out eight video programs with many of *SNL*'s original cast, with first release slated for late summer. Programs to include **Mr. Mike's Mondo Video**—controversial special never aired because of objections of NBC brass—and other Michaels-produced programs.

**WELK-OMEN:** At opposite end of TV universe from *SNL*, **Lawrence Welk** has added a video division to his music publishing and syndication company. Division will produce "wonderful" discs and cassettes. It's looking for distribution deals for tapes of a Welk New Year's special and his last live performance before he retired, is negotiating to produce tapes of **Mayport Jazz Festival**, and is developing **Sneak Previews**—inspired music and video criticism program (possibly for home vid) with *VR* contributor **Robert Christgau** as one of the hosts.

**I SEE A SYMPHONY:** Motown Productions is considering producing a documentary (a la *The Compleat Beatles*) on the 25-year history of **Motown Records**. . . . Speaking of anniversaries, Fat Lady Productions will put together, for possible home release, show commemorating 50th of the **Village Vanguard**, with many of the jazz stars and comedians who've graced its stage. . . . Gary Legon-George Wein collaboration to produce five jazz-pop programs, mentioned here last month, now slated to include the likes of **Ray Charles, Carla Bley, B.B. King, Mel Torme, David Sanborn, Fats Domino** and many others.

**FRUIT OF THE LOUVRE:** Leo Gutman, Inc. will likely seek distribution deal for **The Louvre Collection**, 13 one-hour programs on the famed museum's art pieces (including works of **Da Vinci, Van Gogh, Cezanne**) for possible late '84 release. . . . RKO will bring out almost 30 programs on video, starting latter half of this year, including such Broadway shows as **Sweeney Todd** and **The Gln Game** and musical specials including **To Basie With Love**. . . . MGM/UA considering releasing **Heaven's Gate**, much-publicized Michael Cimino-directed bust. . . . Forsee Video considering follow-up to **Film Gore**, its compilation of horror movie slicings and dicing. (B.J.)

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This isn't a big-budget, cast-of-thousands effort. Each episode is introduced in a low-key manner by host Bill Bixby. Different techniques are used to illustrate each biography, including animation, dramatization and special effects.

Mark Leit's scripts are historically accurate and fascinating. Most important, he doesn't talk down to young people; there is no sense of "lecture."

To give you an idea of what to expect from this series, the episode on Walt Whitman is told through a series of old photographs of America in his lifetime. Faces, places, buildings, landscapes, activities of the period all help us to visualize Whitman's world. Under the narration, we hear the music of Copland and Gershwin, both influenced by Whitman's aesthetics.

The series encompasses people as varied as John Glenn, Pele, Bessie Smith, Winston Churchill and 47 others. Adults will be impressed by the quality of these programs. Children may begin to understand what is truly exciting about the human condition. □

## Drama

**NORTHERN LIGHTS (1979) ★ ★ ★**  
With Robert Behling, Susan Lynch, Joe Spano. Directed by John Hanson, Rob Nilsson. (American Playhouse, PBS, Tues., May 31, 9 p.m., B&W, 89 min.)

By Marjorie Rosen

This stark, earnest drama is a fictionalized account of the 1915 struggles of North Dakota's homesteaders, mostly first- and second-generation Scandinavians, trying to survive nature's cruel elements and also do battle with those Eastern price-fixing and foreclosure schemes that were killing them just as surely as the harsh snows and bitter winters.

In short, *Northern Lights* is the story of the birth of a union, in this case the agrarian Nonpartisan's League. Yet it mercifully avoids the rabble-rousing overstatement that's often characteristic of union stories. Instead, it provides a thoughtful, exquisitely detailed recreation of the rigors, the isolation and the disappointments of farm life during that period. It's given lovely particularity and structure through the bittersweet romance of a young wheat farmer (Robert Behling) and his sweetheart (Susan Lynch)—and how that romance is affected by the farmer's growing commitment to his recruitment work for the union.

The most breathtaking aspect of *Northern Lights* is the way it captures the bleak, insulated reality of North Dakota circa 1915. The look of the picture is so strong that we can forgive *Northern Lights* its flaws—chiefly, it slow pace and a lack of tension within scenes—and treasure it for providing such an extraordinary time tunnel back to the past. Viewers especially in-

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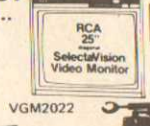
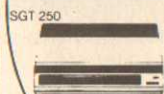
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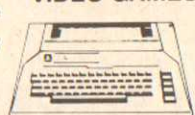
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work in MGM's *Pete Smith Specialties*) lends some good action to the proceedings. Traditionalists may be thrown at first to find the heroine serenading the hero, but that's life. (B&W, 59 min.) (M.T.)

## SONG OF THE GRINGO

(1936) ★★  
Nashville Network. Sat., May 21, 5:30 p.m.

It's appropriate that Nashville Network kicks off its Tumbleweed Theatre presentations with Tex Ritter's first western. The competently made oater has Tex teaming up with bungling bank-robber Fuzzy Knight to thwart a band of thieves. Ritter's music career always fared better than his screen efforts, although many feel his inability to find the right studio (he bounced from Grand National to Columbia to Universal and ultimately to PRC) doomed him to second-string status. Western buffs will also note famed western badman Al Jennings, who puts in an appearance as a veteran heavy. (B&W, 57 min.) (M.T.)

## A STOLEN FACE (1952) ★★

SPN, Wed., May 25, 1:30 a.m.

Paul Henreid plays a somewhat warped plastic surgeon who decides that having a copy is the next best thing to owning the original. He takes a female convict and molds her face into that of the woman he loves (Elizabeth Scott). An interesting premise becomes just muddled soap opera despite Henreid's obsessed performance and Scott's throaty voice. (B&W, 72 min.) (J.M.)

## THE THING (1951) ★★ ★

WTBS, Sat., June 25, TBA

The original version of this sci-fi chiller still has the power to leave you with an uneasy feeling about the intentions of the carrots in your refrigerator crispier. It's about a vegetable-based



Stolen Face's Scott: throaty dupe.

alien who feeds on human flesh, lands in the Arctic and wreaks havoc on the world. With a pre-*Guns* James Amess, Kenneth Tobey, Margaret Sheridan. Directed by Christian Nyby. (B&W, 87 min.) (H.H.)

## TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT (1944) ★★ ★

WTBS, Sat., June 11, TBA

Ernest Hemingway scoffed when Howard Hawks wagered that he could make a good movie out of the world of the novelist's stories. Pay up, Ernest. With the help of another novelist, William Faulkner, Hawks took plenty of liberties with the story and came up with a classic, witty,

loosely paced wartime adventure—with room for even a few musical spots featuring Hoagy Carmichael. Hawks' shrewdest move, of course, was his teaming of Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. The future Mrs. Bogart's debut lines instructing Bogart how to whistle are justly immortal. Bacall's singing voice was dubbed by a teenaged Andy Williams. (B&W, 100 min.) (W.S.)

## TORRID ZONE (1940) ★★ ★

WGN, Sun., May 29, 11:30 p.m.

Much more than the geography is torrid. You'll probably have to tape this one to make sure you don't miss any of the breakneck dialogue that rips back and forth between James Cagney, Ann Sheridan, Pat O'Brien and Helen Vinson as they scheme their ways in and out of some very dramatic and funny situations. This one runs a close second to *Casablanca* among '40s Warner classics for taking a fairly routine story and immortalizing it with memorable dialogue, fast pacing and sharp acting. It all takes place in an unnamed Central American banana republic, in an era when Yanqui imperialism was viewed somewhat differently than it is today. With Andy Devine. Directed by William Keighley. (B&W, 88 min.) (R.H.)

## USED CARS (1980) ★★ ★

SelectTV, Sat., June 4, 4 a.m.

A brash, nifty comedy with as much *chutzpah* as the man who murdered his parents and then threw himself on the mercy of the court because he

was an orphan. Nearly everybody in this picture is greedy, amoral or just plain corrupt. Robert Zemeckis cowrote the screenplay with Bob Gale, and they took a lot of risks—most of which pay off uproariously. Their thoroughly cynical comedy comes from the tradition of Voltaire's *Candide*. It won't be to everyone's taste, but taken on its own terms it's quite a farce. With Kurt Russell, Gerrit Graham, Jack Warden, Deborah Harmon. (Color, 103 min.) (D.C.)

## THE VERDICT (1946) ★★ ★

WTBS, Tues., June 14, 9 a.m.

No relation to the current Paul Newman hit. This is a highly atmospheric adaptation of Israel Zangwill's classic "locked room" whodunit, *The Big Bow Mystery*. Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre, the villainous duo of *The Maltese Falcon*, are re-teamed for the story of a brilliant Scotland Yard inspector (Greenstreet) whose "infallible" methods of deduction lead to the conviction of an innocent man. Superb playing and evocative Victorian London settings make Don Siegel's first directorial effort a most auspicious one. With Joan Loring, George Coulouris, Arthur Shields. (B&W, 86 min.) (E.H.) □

Capsule movie reviews this month by: David Cohen, Roy Hemming, Hope Heyman, Ed Hulse, James Link, Jeff Menell, William Sites and Mark Trost.

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## From Dr. Game to Mr. Computer



Atari's Video Computer System is a video computer system—finally.

In addition to Atari, at least three companies will have VCS-compatible keyboards and expansion modules in American stores by the beginning of the holiday shopping season. The idea is that if you got your child (or yourself) a VCS over the last few years, this year you can turn it into a small computer. The prices of the keyboards, ranging from \$90 to \$130, may be low enough to tempt those who've been thinking of buying a home computer despite already having a VCS.

All the new instant-computer components have a lot in common. Besides being designed for the VCS (and Sears Video Arcade, the ColecoVision with Expansion Module One and Coleco's new version of the VCS, the Gemini System), they all have built-in BASIC and accept programs and games stored on audiocassettes. In addition, they're all more powerful than low-cost computers such as Commodore's VIC-20, Texas Instruments' 99/4A and Timex-Sinclair's 1000. Still, they don't have the sophistication of most personal computers.

### Component Computers

The Atari rig, with 8K RAM, is actually about the least powerful. Standard equipment includes raised, though unsculptured, keys and an expansion port for peripherals of additional memory modules, printers and disc drives. With the new keyboard, you can continue to play regular Atari VCS games, and play a new library of enhanced carts as well. Atari has also announced plans to introduce a similar device to upgrade its model 5200 game console later this year.

The Unitronics Expander System comes in two parts—an audiocas-

sette tape player that plugs into the VCS cartridge slot and the keyboard. Unitronics plans to offer 16K videogames on cassette, and game "albums", a series of four 4K games on single cassettes. One advantage of this set-up is that audiocassette games retail for about \$15, half the going rate of a typical ROM cartridge. Another is that standard, VCS-compatible carts will interface with the Expander's cartridge slot.

The Expander II is the 60-key keyboard, which plugs into the Expander module. Other add-ons, according to Unitronics, will include a speech synthesizer, a four-color printer and a phone modem.

### Finger-Painting

The Entex 2000 Piggyback Color Computer is, at \$130, the most expensive of the bunch. The keypad has 70 keys, including nine for special functions and four for moving the cursor. Entex plans to offer a variety of compatible cartridges, including programs for home finance, computer typing, speed reading, beginners' math and algebra, BASIC, sports statistics and word and number games. Proposed peripherals include the Peripheral Expansion Module 1, with a 16K memory, a cassette interface, parallel input/output expansion jacks and dual cartridge ports. You can add a

printer, a phone modem and an additional 16K memory cartridge, bringing the total RAM of the system up to a respectable 34K.

The final entry and the most diverse of the group is Spectravideo's CompuMate Computer Converter. It's the only add-on keyboard to offer two built-in programs. The first is a music program which allows you to compose and play songs in two octaves. The other is the "Magic Easel" program, which lets you use the joystick to draw pictures with up to 10 colors.

Keyboard add-ons are part of the program for the ColecoVision and Intellivision consoles, too. Like the Atari-compatible models, they'll be for computer neophytes who're tired of just blasting aliens. □

*Atari's 2600 keyboard (below right) snaps on the VCS; Spectravideo's (below left) plugs in.*

