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THE MAGAZINE OF VIDEO LUNACY!

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HOME GAMES '83
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Good going, pol. Only o dope would believe that kind of stuff. VIDYOT is here to tell you there's on electronic world out there waiting to be explored and we just want to be your guide. Anything else and we'd be talking too much. So take o look, and tell us what you think.

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A WORLD WHERE VIDEO GAME BATTLES ARE REAL.

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CONTENTS

VOL. 1
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FEATURES

- MICK RONSON IS A VIDIOT**6
THE ROCKETS ARE VIDIOTS!11
LOOK OUT FOR THE CHEATER:
Video Gaming Without Scruples by P. Gregory Springer13
**WHAT'S ROUND & YELLOW & LAUGHS
 ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK?**
Pac-Man Merchandise by Rick Johnson20
VIDIOT OF THE MONTH: DAVID JOHANSEN24
ARCADE ACTION: THE TOP 10 ARCADE GAMES
 1) Joust, 2) Jungle King, 3) Donkey Kong Junior, 4) Moon Patrol,
 5) Tutankham, 6) Tron, 7) Ms. Pac-Man, 8) Galaga, 9) Turbo,
 10) Dig Dug by P. Gregory Springer30
ARCADE ACTION CLOSE-UP: PENGO by P. Gregory Springer ...30
VIDIOT'S E.T. PULL-OUT POSTER32
VIDIOT'S CONSUMER GUIDE TO HOME GAMES
*Atari's 2600 and 5200 systems, Colecovision and Intellivision—Where
 They're At by Annene Koye with Simon Fellowes and Steve Kenyon*.....34
E.T. PHONES HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
Inside Atari's E.T. Game by Kevin Christopher41
ARCADE INJURIES: A PICTORIAL
Ze Doktor Vill See You Now, Yo!44
HUNKA HUNKA FLYING SHARDS OF GLASS
Olfing The Tube by J. Kardosh46
ROCK VIDIOCY: FORCED TO WATCH MTV!
*Vidclips by Peter Gabriel, Billy Joel, Thomas Dolby, Adam Ant,
 Psychedelic Furs, and more by Dave DiMartino*52
WHY I HATE ARCADES
One Man's Opinion by John Richardson59

DEPARTMENTS

- LETTERS FROM VIDIOTS**7
VIDIOTS IN THE NEWS8
SOFTWARE/HARDWARE by Richard Robinson16
EYE/HAND: WHAT'S NEW FOR VIDIOTS?
*Pitfall, Riddle Of The Sphinx, B-17 Bomber, Beany Bopper, Megomania, Demons To
 Diamonds reviewed & more!*48
CAPT. VIDIOT: Questions & Answers57

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MICK RONSON IS A **VIDIOT!**

Extraordinary guitarist Mick Ronson has played with both Bob Dylan and David Bowie, the pop culture icons of the '60s and '70s, respectively. Not wanting to lose any of his momentum, Mick plays here with one of the pop culture icons of the '80s!



Letters from VIDIOTS!

PLUG INTO THE VIDIOT CULTURE

Please address correspondence to:
LETTERS FROM VIDIOTS
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This may be VIDIOT's letters page, but we don't have any letters yet—which makes this a perfect opportunity to let you in on what VIDIOT is all about.

First of all, let's get one thing straight; we're new, and we're trying to put our finger on something we know is out there. It's young, it's obviously fun, and it's mystifying as hell to those who aren't plugged into it—but what it is, we can't put a name to. Yet.

VIDIOT knows there's a revolutionary force out there now that's as powerful to the "youth culture" as borebones rock 'n' roll was to the same back in the '60s. The New Technology: it's electronic, it's cheaper every day, and its symptoms include Sony Walkmans, home videogames, MTV, cable TV, home computers, disposable LED clocks you throw away when they lose power or don't ever have to throw away because they're run by solar power...and haven't things changed awfully fast? VIDIOT realizes the New Technology is bringing people together in the unlikeliest places and, at the same time, keeping them further apart than ever. Ever walk in downtown Manhattan during lunch hour? Hundreds of people bumping into each other, oblivious to everything but what they hear coming out of their own tiny headphones, living in their own tiny world and apparently not missing a thing.

VIDIOT does not worship at the Church Of The New Technology but instead will document its unravelling. In *Wild In The Streets*, '60s kids were brandishing their don't-trust-anyone-over-30 slogans as if they were Meaningful Ways Of Existence;

now all those kids are over or approaching 30 and the tables are turned. The cliché is that parents couldn't help kids with "new math" in the '60s and they *certainly* can't help Johnny construct his own computer program in the '80s. If Johnny can't read, he'll probably be able to devise a program to make reading unnecessary. Which makes VIDIOT a meaningless excursion, ultimately—but *wan't it be fun?*

Go to an arcade, lose five bucks worth



of quarters until you've learned Donkey Kong Junior, get bored with it until the designers make a new game even more interesting, and continue the cycle. Those who really know their stuff might go on to design their own arcade game later and continue stumping future champs, who'll do likewise. The Home Game explosion—responsible for this mag, among other things, and every single commercial you've seen in the last month or two—is bringing such a competition to fore that Coleco/Atari/Mattel and everybody else out there may soon render the arcade totally obsolete. If enough people want the software, they'll make home systems so sophisticated you won't need to go arcing to be challenged.

Those frightened adults who see their children's brains evaporating like so much electronic mush are ignoring the fact that, for a quarter and a few minutes of their time, their children's lives won't be boring—their motor skills will be honed, their stimulus/response systems strengthened to new thresholds. While adults fret about where their children put their quarters, they buy new video recorders to escape the boring wasteland network television has become and continue the electronic cycle at a higher level. Adult and child alike "plug in," yet only the child *participates*.

What would you like to see in VIDIOT? Why did you pick this magazine up in the first place? Did you like the cover? You think there's anything to all this stuff, or what? One of the reasons these words are here is to invite as many responses as possible from all of our readership—what kind of lifestyle do you lead?

Da You:

- 1) Play arcade games?
- 2) Play home games?
- 3) Like music?
- 4) Watch MTV?
- 5) Design computer programs?
- 6) Go to Harvard?
- 7) Come from Lincoln, Nebraska?

We need to get a finer tuning on the plugged-in ones. We call this magazine VIDIOT not only because it's catchy but because it implies a commitment to the New Technology and leaves room for the Essential Stupidity Of It All. If the *Communist Mutants From Outer Space* home game didn't exist, we probably wouldn't either. Think about it.

We here at VIDIOT want to make this magazine exactly what you want—basically so you'll buy a bundle of 'em, tell your friends to do likewise and eventually make us so rich we won't have to work here anymore. It makes sense to us, so why shouldn't it to you?

Please write, OK?

—The Editors

VIDIOTS IN THE NEWS



NO ESCAPING ESCAPE

CAMPBELL, CA—The world's first rock 'n' roll video game, featuring the members of Journey, ships on Jan. 1, '83.

Name of the game is Journey's Escape. It goes something like this: You, the player, gets to be one of the guys in the group. Sorry, but somebody *has* to be the duck. To get the big points, the musicianly blip has eight minutes to go from concert stage to a scarab limo parked nearby.

The catch? First, you have to navigate a mass of groupies, promo flaks, promoters, roadies, paternity lawyers and even some plain-old fans to reach the Escape. We can't wait to see a teeny-weeny electronic groupie. A big red O, right?

Snatches of two popular Journey tracks, "Escape" and "Don't Stop Believing," are also included to open and close the contest. So you Journey fons will want the game to be over with, pronto.

SAME TIME, NEXT YEAR

DALLAS—Ben Gold may have set a new arcade record. Playing in Dollos's Provideo Game Center, the 10th grader began a game of Stargate at the age of 15 and—

Become a member of Journey with Data Age's new game Escape—if you dare!

unbelievably—finished when he was 16!

Gold is no stranger to high going; in November 1981, he competed in the Atari World Championships in Chicago on Centipede, and, in April, in the Seven-Eleven Quarterfinals on Defender. Pac-Man, we're told, is "no challenge" to Ben.

The Stargate spree raked in over 40 million points for Gold, who started playing a few hours before his birthday.

Get it?

YOO HOO!

SAN JOSE, CA—"I just stumbled on it!" admits 25-year-old Randeë McQueen.

Seems the young woman, who works for her father's telecommunications company in San Jose, was switching from satellite to satellite and suddenly cought...vain newscasters!

Howzat? Randeë found a random, private satellite line that the networks routinely keep open as they prepare their nightly news, and saw the network faves preening, primping and essentially doing things they wouldn't do in

public!

Guilty so far, says Randeë, are Roger Mudd, who mugged a few times, Tom Brokaw, who straightened his tie and wiped his nose, and her fave, ABC's Max Robinson.

"He must have had a cold one night I was watching him," quipped McQueen, "He kept picking his nose and coughing and spitting." Summarizes she: "He just sits there waiting to go on, drinking a glass of iced V-8 juice and talking to the camera guys about where he buys his clothes cheap."

No truth to rumors that 60 Minutes plans a special report on her dad's previous Communist activities "just to get even"!

YOU THOUGHT BEN CARTWRIGHT WAS RICH...

NEW YORK—It's every slovenly idiot's dream-come-true: to receive royalties for some game while sipping Perrier and lime and watching another Bonanza re-run. Now Magnovox has one-upped that fantasy, Hoss.

Magnovox has filed suit against Mattel, claiming that the patent on the original computer video games is Magnavox's—to license to the

highest bidder.

That patent—which covers any circuit that controls a moving blip on a TV screen—was first issued to a defense contractor in the late '60s. Magnavox purchased that patent and has already convinced some courts that it applies to all the old Pong-type games.

In a bid to get royalties from every video game played and sold in the world, Magnavox has set its legal sights on one of the top three video manufacturers on the planet. Magnavox claims they own the rights to Intellivision.

George Plimpton is holding all calls.

PORN SI, VIDEO NO

NEW YORK—Sex shows are OK, but videogames aren't, or so sez New York Supreme Court Justice Thomas Galligan.

The case of the city vs. the owners of 50 local peep shows and video arcades was no landmark, let's hope. Prosecution claimed the peepers and bleepers violated zoning laws by attracting too much traffic, vehicular and otherwise. Judge Galligan said the sex shows were protected by everybody's pal, the First Amendment. Not so for the arcades, however, which are considered mere business.

Said defense attorney Sheldon Gamby, "A teenager can't play Poc-Mon, but he can watch dirty movies." Not such a bad consolation, we guess.

WATCH OUT, SUPERBOWL!!

NEW YORK—As if baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn didn't have enough problems with looking for a new job and all, he's taking video games to task—and to court—for trademark infringement.

Before the 1982 World Series was even a memory, Major League Baseball brought suit against a California company to block their merchandising a home video game titled "World Series," and is involved in

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Dec.

VIDIOTS IN THE NEWS

"unfair competition."

The Major League Baseball Promotions Corporation, an arm of professional baseball, filed suit in late October in U.S. District Court here. Baseball charges that Datamost, Inc., of Chatworth, California, is making unauthorized use of the term "World Series," and is involved in "unfair competition."

"Since 1911, major league clubs and the commissioner's office have expanded substantial sums in developing the 'World Series' mark," the complaint says.

It is the trademark infringement that is at issue. VIDIOT was told. "Any potential earnings (from video games) don't really enter into the decision to sue," said Chuck Adams, a spokesman with the Commissioner's office. "We simply want to protect the trademark of Major League Baseball."

The suit requests an injunction to remove Datamost's game from the market and "delivered up for

destruction." It also asks for \$10,000 in actual damages and \$100,000 in punitive damages.

Other arcade games have used the "World Series" trademark, most notably Chicago Coin's pinball machine, but Adams says that "anyone can license the trademark. Datamost didn't."

MORE MOVIES TO PLAY HOLLYWOOD—Four more popular flicks are being made into video games as the movie-to-game explosion continues.

On Golden Pond, Interiors, Grapes Of Wrath and I Dood It, right?

Bad guesses, comrade. The films are Megaforce, Six-Pack, 9 to 5 and—get ready—Porky's, that industry standard of pinhead peekaboo so many of us should be ashamed of for seeing, much less liking.

No game details yet, but you don't have to overwork your imagination to picture some of the possibilities.

No, that isn't a bicycle. It's Dolly Parton.

Glenn Barr



Ann Clifford/Dart

It doesn't take a "Jeannie" to pick up girls who play video games—but it might help!



THINGS GO BETTER WITH TRON?

ATLANTA—Coca-Cola is hoping that the lure of videogames will draw thirsty people to their machines. The company's new 1983 line of pop dispensers includes two that feature free small-screen video games.

In the first game, a cute little monkey throws Coke cans at an unsuspecting delivery man. If he catches the

can, Cheeta wings another one at him. If he misses, the beast gives off an amused electronic cackle.

Game two isn't quite as exciting. The customer is faced with lines of moving letters from which to spell the word "Coke." Not to mention cone, cake, fire and pirn.

Sorry, no prizes other than fun itself. Cost to the vendor is slightly under \$200, which means selling a lot of pop.

NOLAN STILL ROLLIN'

LOS ANGELES—The genius behind Pizza Time Theatre—Nolan Bushnell, also known slightly as the founder of Atari and pod daddy of Pong—is going beyond games far his next project.

Pizzavision? Diet life? No, this time he's hot on the trail of a cost effective household robot. Not one of these masters of the universe like Robby in *Forbidden Planet*, but just a downhome, everyday drone that can handle basics like waxing the windows, changing kitty's litterbox or roising those tiresome quints.

No name yet for Bushnell's latest brainstorm, but we like Pat Benatar, Jr.

WANTED: GIRL GAMERS

Want to know what the number one extracurricular interest of arcaders is? According to a survey compiled by one videogame

magazine, they most want to know "how to pick up girls who play video games."

STICK IN A QUARTER

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, CA—As if bawdy "X-rated" game cartridges weren't silly enough, one enterprising California firm is test-marketing two "X-rated" coin-operated games.

X-Hot Stuff and *Stripper* are maze-type games offered by Computer Kinetics of California. Although they're currently confined to the Sunbelt's finer toproom emporiums, Computer Kinetics hopes for national distribution of the moachines in 1983.

"They're a hot ticket," laughed one spokeswoman for the company. "And it's all just good fun."

Computer Kinetics also manufacturers *Stop The IATOLA*, but declined to say if it was a game of mazes. ■



Small text on the machine screen, likely instructions or game details.

MIDWAY

Galago
LICENCED FROM NAMCO LTD
Bally

20000

820

INSTRUCTIONS

- SEE SCREEN FOR SCORING AND BONUS INFORMATION
- INSERT COIN.
- TO START PRESS 1 OR 2 PLAYER BUTTON.
- CONTROL STICK MOVES SHIPS RIGHT OR LEFT.
- TO FIRE: PRESS BUTTON

THE ROCKETS ARE VIDIOTS!

Hey, these Motor City bad boys know a good thing when they see it. When these guys aren't rackin' up a storm at the local arena, you can usually find 'em at the nearest arcade, playing games like Galago, and just havin' a hell of a time—which, after all, is what the Rackets have always been about!

photo by Omar Newman



WIDDIOT

THE MAGAZINE OF VIDEO GAME LUNACY!

BRANDTNER

LOOK OUT FOR THE CHEATER:

VIDEO GAMING WITHOUT SCRUPLES

BY P. GREGORY SPRINGER

AT the Mall, Milton plunks a quarter into Pac-Man while his mother shops for spinach linguini at Gourmet Grub and Grocery. This happens on a regular basis. Without going into the Freudian aspect of it, the Ritual of the Mall has become something which satisfies the customer impulse in both of them. Milton plays while his mother pays.

Today, however, midway through the first Pineapple level, Milton realizes that the rut of his pattern playing has grown deeper than the dent on his favorite playing stool. Having taken the game far beyond the manufacturer's six-minute margin of profitability, he has "won" the game. Having reached the point of boredom, he has beaten his game of Pac-Man.

How do you cheat a video game? The ways are legion, but first you must understand the psychology and superstructure of the system you are up against. Video games are built upon the premise

that losers—like gamblers and junkies—will always come back for more. We never learn that we always lose. We never see that the omnipotent destroyers will hold the winning hand up unto the umpteenth level.

For this reason, video games may very well be an immoral formula: a model of cynicism, fatalism, and capitalist greed. But by the same token (and with just one more token, please), the real challenge of video games comes not from saving the planet from destruction, rescuing humanoids from the Grunts and Gorillas, or eluding the Mummy's Emissaries and Sno-Bees. No, the real purpose of video games lies in our ability to outmaneuver manufacturer's programs, BY TAKING WHATEVER MEANS NECESSARY.

This is the tacit truth and irony behind the nefarious video game cosmology: every quarter plunked into the machines strikes up a finger race against capitalist enterprise. We are the ones who determine which games will survive longer than the average four-month obsolescence. We vote for our visitors with coins. We lose willingly, repeatedly, and quickly to the mightiest, while quoshing those machines destined for a quick mortality.

The argument also is given—among technophobes—that the Games are, in effect, programming us all for a computerized totalitarian future. That may be—but it's another story.

For now, by hook or crook or patterns book, we will have you almighty Blip!

WHY WE CHEAT

Milton, bored with his proficiency, moves the gobbling spitball into a "safe zone"—to the right and up from the starting point—under the armpit of the "T" which at times holds the fruit atop it. Blinky and the other ghosts scurry busily about in search of their jaundiced prey, never bothering to peek in this corner. Milton, bravely defying the allure of the game, gets off his cushioned stool, not bothering to continue on to inevitable death, and he walks away from his unfinished symphony, searching for new worlds to conquer. Tonight, he'll probably even enjoy the linguini.

The home video game of Atari Adventure (versions One or Two) features an aggressor bat which flies across the board. An intrepid gamer named "Woody" announced over the PLATO computer network system that he had found a way to halt the movement of this bat, trapping it for keeps in the gold castle, and forcing it to fly in certain directions at will.

Immediately, the Videodog file was filled with queries and demands for the solution to this trick.

"So tell us," one note read. "You're SUPPOSED to tell us how to cheat at games."

(The solution to the Adventure bat

secret—too detailed to include in this deadline and adrenalin-driven article—can be yours for a self-addressed stamped envelope, sent to "CHEAT, P.O. Box 2502-A, Champaign, IL 61820.)

Cheating, more than just one required part of the game playing, actually IS the game playing.

As John Barth wrote in his revision of the Greek myths, *Chimera*, "The key to the treasure is the treasure." Playing video games is a form of computer research, in which we must unlock the puzzle of programming in order to extend time with the machine, or to find some hidden mistake, or to prove our worth against technology.

Most games have bugs in the program as well as on the screen. Since real "winning" is impossible, outsmarting the manufacturers—finding their loopholes—makes the contest a competition of capitalism. If one can hold on to a game machine beyond the six minute margin—slightly longer than it takes the average animal to enoch his most basic physical impulses—we have screwed up the system. We have taken the hands of the manufacturers out of our pockets and have begun to dig into theirs.

Because it only takes less than half a year for consumers to tire of games or figure them out, manufacturers deliberately stay evasive about the rules for their games, hoping that it will take a profitable amount of quarters before the boredom of mastery and understanding arrives. Only a very select few games—Pac-Man being the greatest example—live beyond a third of their first year, then they're retired to the sleazy silicon graveyard.



Books on video game strategies become obsolete just as quickly. They may provide rules, but rarely do they convey the tips and necessary visual clues needed to conquer a game. Advice such as "play this one repeatedly until you

know the pattern well" can often be seen on the pages of the manuals. They promise the world but deliver only pep talk.

But there is another reason for scouring over the patterns and tips books. Just as trying to read and follow Rubik's Cube how-to books became more fascinating than wasting one's time on the square cluster itself, so do video games books become arcane blueprints of the computer contest.

Drug books—reading about mystical experiences—totally replaced LSD in the '70s, and Castaneda's crazy inventions still rate on the bestseller's list.

The '80s are doing this to us. Separateness and distance comprise a good chunk of the decade's aesthetic, just as relevance was a '60s snag. Nowadays, the idea of something can be more important than the thing itself. I think that I see a poem lavier than a tree.

We cheat video games in order to write that poem in three-letter signatures at the top of the board.

HOW WE CHEAT

Stretch time. Get the most for your money. Vote for machines. Keep manufacturers on the tips of their technological toes. Make gaming cost-effective and intelligent without wrecking havoc on the industry or in your brain. Here's how.

1) **Tokens:** Many, if not most, cities have tokenized games parlors. As many as nine tokens can be had for a dollar, thereby greatly increasing one's ability to experiment with games and their limits. Perhaps your favorite game isn't available at the bargain token store? Not to worry. More likely than not, the tokens (even though they differ in shape and design) may fit into the game slots of the most expensive shop. If not, the token slides back out and you try another play. Since you aren't using American money anyway, this is not illegal. Some stores have token specials. Stock up then.

2) **Perversion and Pacifism:** You can avoid the feeling of being programmed by a game if you refuse to play by its rules. Bezerk and Frenzy offer a chance to escape a deadly maze while shooting against killer robots. You are expected to fight back, but what happens if you just run from maze to maze without trying to get points? You learn a new game, that's what. Try simply to escape without firing a shot. This will rarely be possible, big points won't be racked up, but you will speed into the upper levels of play where more interesting activity always occurs quickly. You will also baffle observers.

A timed game like Frogger may be played ridiculously, even jumping backwards off the board, but when your time is up, the frog dies. Tempest gives you the option to begin play in the upper levels, where boringly firing from o



fixed single spot can rack up the most points. Finally, you will learn more by experimenting with games than you ever will trying to beat them.

3) **Go shopping:** To coin a cliché, look before you leap. By choosing a game which suits your temperament and style rather than just a place to plunk your quarter, you avoid the impulse moves which cause so many to think of the games as frivolous in the first place. You should never play a game that you don't at least read the available rules, watch the pre-game boards a few times through, and if possible observe another player manage on it first.

4) **Retire gracefully:** When you feel you have reached the pinnacle of your abilities on a particular game, move on to another. You should always quit a game when you've peaked on it. Not only will this help "retire" the game for the manufacturer, it will keep them on their toes about making games state-of-the-art. Compulsiveness is not to be confused with fine-honing a real talent. Don't let the word "addiction" describe your behavior in the arcade.

5) **Your Name Here:** It's a rare game, like Ladybug or the superscorer on Stargate, which will allow top winners to inscribe seven-letter names. The temptation in cases like these is to go porno, but trying your hand at literature can be even better incentive than winning. On Space Duel, call yourself OLD and your partner HAT. Or BIG and MEN. Or, as an admonition to others, GRO and-UP. Especially cute are inscribing sequential notes if you become capable of rocking up wins in order. ONE, TWO, ETC. looks good in a row at the top of the screen. So does -I-, DID, IT. It's not Hemingway, but it's more fun than getting frustrated.

3.) **Fifty Percent Off:** Some arcades offer more ships per quarter, some even offer three games for 50 cents, with lower required minimums to receive an extra shooter. Newspaper coupons sometimes allow free games, and papers cost less than tokens in many

cases. On those days, buy out the newsstand. One arcade I know gives a free game if you bring in a church bulletin on Sunday.

7) **Backstage:** Make friends with your friendly local arcade operator, and arrange for after-hours bouts with rigged machines that play forever. If that's not possible, he or she might be able to tell you about the new games, what the playing strategies and rules are, and enable you to test out machines before committing yourself to the expensive challenge of trial and error.

8) **Be friendly:** The best way to get the most for your video game money is to play with a friend or date. The game always goes on longer when the play shifts between partners. Playing both parts by one's self also stretches things out, but is much less sociable. Some games, Space Duel or Joust as examples, actually allow you to compete against the machine together within a single play, rather than be two competing adversaries against the third enemy of technology. That's the biggest advance in the games since Roman days. Join forces, and discover your humanity. Save money.

9) **Watching:** As Milton discovered, staring at a snagged program on the screen takes up time on a game. You can observe a lonely bee looping down in Galaga indefinitely while your ship recuperates in a corner. You don't lose this way (until the arcade closes at night), but it's a very boring way to spend your time. If you have a vendetta against a game or a manufacturer, it's one way to insure that you get more than your money's worth from a game.

On the other hand, watching others play is a great method of learning and excitement. What the games makers would rather we not realize is that video games are truly spectator sports as well as player sports.

Kids hardly old enough to reach the controls love to play without inserting a quarter, and they never know the difference.

10) **Hustling:** A last resort for the desperate. Bet you can outplay an unwary opponent at Pac-Man, Dig Dug, Galaga, or some another game in which there is a longevity loophole. (Play for time, not points.) This really goes against the stated principle of cheating the manufacturers—and is therefore unethical—other than the fact that the game is tied up for hours while the Dig Dugger watches moles run around doing nothing, and you win the bet from the exasperated patsy.

☆☆☆

Finally, after all the buzzing disappears from your ears and the dazzle melts into nightly dreams, is your conscience clear for tomorrow's bout? Or is it as empty as your pockets? ■



THE BIRTH OF VIDIOT!

Hey, video freaks and vidiots everywhere!! If you enjoyed this second edition of VIDIOT Magazine, catch up on what you've missed by ordering the special premiere collector's issue of VIDIOT—"The Magazine Of Video Lunacy!"

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V-2-83

HARDWARE / SOFTWARE



BY RICHARD ROBINSON

The wiring of the Republic and its citizens is coming along at an astounding rate, real time, with the help of the Japanese, the game program writers, the multi-billion dollar electronics corporations, the people who keep fresh batteries on the shelves, the electronic discount houses, and you—with your pocket full of quarters.

Not only is it possible to indulge in just about every form of video screen distraction, but even in this depression it gets cheaper to do so everyday. In New York the discount wars are providing the consumer with one bargain after another; CED video disc players can be had for \$179; T-120 VHS cassettes are going for \$9.75; the Timex-Sinclair home computer is already down to \$78; the Vic-20 is discounting at \$179.87; and VHS video machines can be had for \$425.

So those dedicated or inspired to get the latest in video hardware can indulge in the future now at a minimal expense, all things considered.

•**Video Tape Recorders:** The latest news in the video recording biz is the new 8-hour VHS. Actually, it isn't a new recorder, but a new tape

Do your computing at home with your Timex Sinclair 1000.

introduced by Panasonic that allows VHS owners to record an extra two hours of programming using the SLP mode on their VHS machines.

There are plenty of VHS machines available, the

cheapest having mechanical tuners, the more expensive having electronic tuning and all sorts of electronic extras. If you're getting a VHS and planning to use it with your cable TV feed, all the extras aren't really going to do you much good. You won't use the built-in VHS tuner since it must be set to the one channel the cable box feeds to the TV set.

Two of the latest VHS recorders—from Hitachi and Panasonic.

The ability to record seven days or 14 days in the future is also of little help, unless you plan to leave the whole thing on and running while you're away from home. And naturally you can't use the computer circuit that allows you to choose various channels to record at various



PLAY IT AGAIN, SHARP

•It's doubtful that the record companies are aware of it yet, but the Japanese may have come up with a method of making records popular again. **Sharp** and other Japanese manufacturers have come up with a computer controlled record player that is not at all like the conventional turntable we're familiar with.

These new record players are thin, upright plastic boxes.

The record is dropped into a slot in the top of the box, and from there on the computer controls take over. The user programs the computer to play the first side, second side, or both sides one after the other, repeating as often as desired. The user doesn't have to turn to see the record inside this new player.

There are several models of this player getting to the stores right now, including a player that can replace the old turntable you're now using with your hi-fi system, a

player that includes a cassette machine so you can drop in a record and make a copy on a cassette with barely the flick of a finger on the controls, and the most intriguing of all, a "ghetto blaster" type one-piece stereo system with handle play, plus AM/FM stereo radio, a cassette recorder with Dolby and auto search, and a pair of multi-speaker systems. A complete stereo system capable of just about everything in a plastic silver box 29" X 18" X 7". See it to believe it!

HARDWARE / SOFTWARE



times on the same tape without passing your cable box completely—which can be done, but not if you want to record any pay movie channels.

But don't jump to the conclusion that just because VHS has settled in as the home video standard that the Japanese and RCA are happy to sit back on their profits and just sell you the occasional tape. Within the next year or so we can expect to see a new video standard, using smaller tape, with smaller more compact video recorders—of course, all being not at all compatible with VHS or Beta or anything else currently on the market.

In the meantime, VHS remains the best bet for home video fans, especially now with stereo VHS machines and some cable channels cable-casting in stereo.

As for Betamax: Sony does have part of the market, but if you're planning to get your first video recorder, VHS is far and away the more generally accepted standard.

•**Video Games:** There's about to be a huge explosion in the home game market and it will probably have begun as you read this. Atari and the other home game companies are going to introduce newer, more sophisticated game machines with sound effects, better controls, smarter computers and everything else upgraded as well. Home games will have more of an

arcade look—and, needless to say, the cost will be going up, too.

Besides the improvement in screen graphics detail these new model game computers and programs will provide, the most important "plus" they'll have is in their controllers. Anyone who's ever gotten handcramps trying to get on Atari joystick to go in directions it just won't will be delighted to learn that Atari and everybody else has improved their controllers—



making them more sensitive, and adding extra contacts so that the player controls will seem nearly omni-directional.

•**Home Computers:** The big

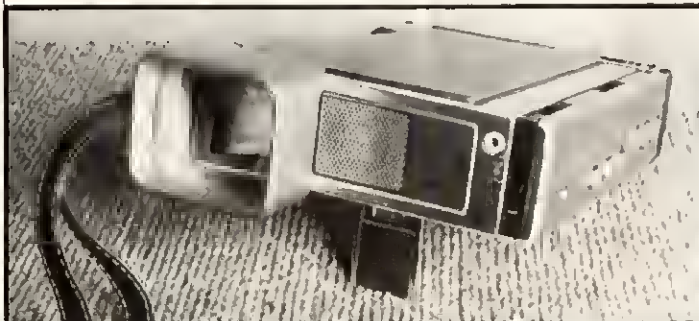
Build your video system up piece by piece with Panasonic's latest!

news here is price—home computers are now cheaper than ever before.

The big problem is how to choose between the various home computers now selling for \$80 to \$200.

There are two factors to consider. First, the size of the keyboards. Unless the computer keyboard is the size of a full-sized typewriter keyboard, it is going to be very difficult to use as a computer keyboard, even if you have very tiny fingers. A quick check of the new home computers will tell you that this condition of purchase leaves out quite a few of the \$100 "wonders." Just take a look at the Vic-20 next to the Timex-Sinclair and you'll see what I mean.

Second consideration is how much the computer you buy cheap can be expanded to do the kind of things you're going to want it to do. Most \$100 to \$200 computers only come with a small memory, 2K to 5K. To have a useful



TV PALM?

•**Palm-sized television sets** should be on the market soon. At the moment there are two competing principles involved. Many of the small TVs now on the market, such as the **Panasonic Travelvision** units (about \$200 retail), use a very small TV picture tube and come with a magnifier to put in front of the screen to enlarge it slightly. Sort of like looking at a moving postage stamp under a magnifying glass. But in the near future

this type of mini-TV will be replaced by a flat liquid crystal TV screen, a screen that will look like a larger version of the liquid crystal displays used on pocket calculators and digital wristwatches. The advantage of the liquid crystal screen over the TV tube is that it takes up much less space, allowing for a TV set no larger than a deck of playing cards. Naturally, you'll listen to the sound through headphones as you walk down the street looking at the TV picture in the palm of your hand.

HARDWARE / SOFTWARE



The Apple II—far those who like sophistication at home.

computer you need at least 32K of memory, 64K being ideal. So if your computer can't expand past 6K, you're going to be very unhappy some time in the future. Also, are there disc drives and printers available for your computer? If not, you're buying a game machine, not a home computer.

Third, and perhaps most important to the non-computer freak, is what programs are available for your computer. Don't plan on sitting down at your new computer and writing your own programs. It's fun to play at that, and as you get experience you may well write programs—but in most cases, if you can't buy the program pre-written on cassette or discs you're not going to get much use out of your computer.

Many companies, from Atari to Apple, offer a wide range of programs for their home computers—some more expensive than others, some more practical than others. By programs I also mean computer games as well as "how to balance your check-book." If you plan to use your computer to play computer games as well as to function as a home business organizational computer, make sure the computer you buy offers the kinds of games

and the level of sophistication you're looking for. Check out the games at the store. Just because the salesman says the

SPY vs SPY

•**Maxon Easy Talk'r:** No more shouting, or even talking loud. You and your friends can whisper in each other's ears no matter where you are: riding bikes, lost in the crowd at a football game, seated miles apart at a rock concert, tramping through the woods, or just walking down the street. No wires, just hands-free personal communications with the Maxon Easy Talk'r.

This module consists of a three-ounce headphone with a tiny wire that swings around in front of your face to hold a microphone element (like sportscasters wear on TV except smaller) and a six-ounce body pack that's smaller than a Sony Walkman. Slip it on, and you and any of your friends who are also wearing one are in instant electronic contact. The circuits are activated by your voice, so all you have to do is talk and your friends will hear you in their headphones, when they talk back you'll hear them. Hands free.

The Maxon Easy Talk'r retails for \$49 per unit, and unless you spend a lot of time talking to yourself, you'll need at least two units to get

started communicating.

It seems as if several companies have decided that we all need to be invisibly whispering to each other, as there are several personal communicators now in the stores, although the Maxon Easy Talk'r seems to be the least expensive. Edmunds Scientific (101 East Gloucester Pike, Barrington, NJ 08007) has an Easy Talk system in their latest catalog,

the Easy Talk communicators selling for \$89.95 each or \$179 a pair. I've also seen some more sophisticated versions of this system in professional audio stores. There's no doubt that this will be a hot item, at least on the way in to the stores, and that with discounting, personal communicators would be available for \$39.95 or so within the next few months.



computer will play "space wars" doesn't mean the actual program is more than a joke. Try before you buy.

•**Cassettes:** Home audio is keeping up with home video. Prices are down, sophistication is up, and the audio cassette has all but replaced the record. High quality cassette decks for your stereo system now cost less

Mattel's Action Arcade series includes Speed Freak—far those slow days.

than \$200. If you've got the money, try the new metal tapes for recordings you want to be of the best fidelity.

Walkman-type cassette players have pretty much gone as far as they can go for the moment. So the new thing is extras to lure you to buy one brand over another. Some now feature auto-reverse, others have radios with pre-selected FM station tuning.

There are lots of little mini-speaker systems that will sort of turn your Walkman into a stereo system at home. These start at \$7 and go up to about \$50. The sound of some of them may put you on edge, but the idea is good, and in certain situations you may well get some use out of them.

•**TV Sets:** Sony, Panasonic, and other firms have come up with a new line of TV sets where you buy the components one at a time and put together a TV set system the way you would a stereo system. The result is higher cost, the picture is the same, but the sound is dramatically improved with larger, stereo-set-up speakers, and the look is real "pro." Recommended only if you have money to burn.

•**Hand Games:** There are any number of new hand-held and wrist-watch games now on the market, using computer video technology and liquid crystal displays. None of them are going to replace Zaxxon in your heart, but some of them are fun. The only way to decide if they're up to your skill level is to try them out. ■

THE MAGAZINE OF VIDEO LUNACY!

VIDIOT

WANTS YOU!

...to let us borrow your fevered brains for a minute! We want to know what our favorite readers think about video games in general and VIDIOT in particular! If you can put down that over-heated joystick for a minute, would you answer these E-Z questions for us? We'd be most appreciative! In fact, the first 100 readers who send in their surveys will receive a surprise gift from VIDIOT!

Thanks in advance for your time and effort!



1. How often do you go to video arcades?
 More than once a day
 Once a day Once every 2 weeks
 3 times a week Once a month
 Twice a week Less than once a month
 Once a week Never
2. Do you play of more than one arcade?
 Yes No
3. How long do you spend of the arcade, on the average, each time you go?
 More than 4 hours
 3-4 hours ½ to 1 hour
 2-3 hours less than ½ hour
 1-2 hours Don't go
4. On the average how much money do you spend a week on video games?
5. How many different video games do you usually play each time you go to an arcade?
 1 only 5 or 6
 1 or 2 7 or more
 3 or 4
6. What is your favorite video game?

7. What do you especially like about them?
(Check as many as apply)
 Killing aliens

- Cute video characters
 - Team sport similarity
 - Adventure story format
 - Calculating strategies
 - Electronic sounds
 - Outer space simulation
8. How do you find out about new video games? (Check as many as apply)
 Newspaper ads or reviews
 Magazine ads or reviews
 Hearing about them from friends
 Seeing them in an arcade
 9. Do you have a Home Video Game system?
 Yes No
 10. Which system do you have—or plan to get soon?
 Atari VCS Colecovision
 Mattel Intellivision Other:

11. Do you have MTV cabled into your home?
 Yes No
12. If not, do you want it? Yes No
13. Is rock music played at your arcade?
 Yes No
14. In order to play video games, do you spend less of your entertainment dollars on other items/events? Yes No
15. If yes, please indicate those items/events which receive less of your dollars (mark a, b, c, in order of those receiving less of your \$\$)
 Records/pre-recorded tapes
 Magazines
 Concerts
 Movies
 Sport events
16. What would you like to see in future issues of VIDIOT?

Enclose in envelope and mail to: VIDIOT Readers Survey,
P. O. Box P-1064, Birmingham, MI 48012

NAME _____ Age _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

What's Round & Yellow & Laughs All The Way To The Bank?



How much do you love Pac-Man? I mean *love*, like you want to have his baby or something. Enough to wear his face all over your clothes? Enough to wash your actual private body with his gnawing yaw? Have you even considered cosmetic surgery?

Avoiding the omnipresent eye of Pac Brother is like trying to go through an entire day without being exposed to a Dick Van Patten commercial on TV. You see him stuck all over traffic signs, bus windows, aircraft carriers, passing street gangs, you name it. Coming soon, the P.M. model kit, made with the Canadian in mind. It's only got one piece.

Us stick-wits here at **VIDIOT** certainly don't object. Of course, somebody shot out our collective porch light years ago. P.M.'s bit-eating grin is plastered all over the office, from floor

to crawspace. We consider him as big a star as Treat Williams.

It could be worse. The selling of Pac-Man kinda/sorta generated *itself* from unending waves of popularity, racking up 10 million dollars this year from licensing alone. Of course, this was calculated before the U.S. switched from the gold standard to the Rip Repulski baseball card standard, but that's still a lot of Repulskis one way or the other.

Concerned consumer advocates that we at **VIDIOT** are, the time seemed right for a thoughtful examination of America's electronic best friend. After all, if *people* were as interesting as P.M., we'd all have people plugged into the back of our TV sets, right?

Not to mention the human animal's crucial lock of coin slot.



BY RICK JOHNSON

CHALKBOARD (Manton):: The sticker on the package screams BUY ME! I'M A CHALKBOARD! If this works, we'll soon be seeing these stickers on day-old bakery products, new brands of gum and American cars. Seriously though, would you buy a Nazi riding outfit if it said it was a

chalkboard?
TUB PET (Playskool):: Did you by any chance catch the *People's Court* case concerning the Negligent Use of a Hose? Just imagine how you can adapt it to the wiggly Tub Pet. Case adjourned!
FRUIT SCENTED ERASERS (Empire):: All your favorite flavors are represented in these non-food items. Chili, lard, snake cud and even

mung-stained tonette. The unspoken question: Who wants to erase fruit?
BALL DARTS (Synergistics Research):: "They're safe! They're fun!" says the package and who can argue? Nasty pointy darts have been replaced with Velcro® -covered balls that are to Nurf what surgical cotton is to stove panels. You also get a poster-sized target to whip 'em at,

free game ideas and "Bonus Fruit!" What game idea does that give you?
REAR VIEW MIRROR HANG-UP (Kent):: Modeled after our ghostly pals Inky, Dinky, Mojo and Clyde, this is the '80s answer to fuzzy dice. Hang 'em up and pretend that other vehicles are cute but-vicious monsters that want to eat your auto. Alternate use: dreadnought bean-

bags.

FUN PAD (Prestige):: I just don't get this one. What exactly is fun? And why does it need padding?

AUTOMATIC BUBBLE PIPE (Chemtoy):: It's doubtful whether items this questionable

should be covered in an All-American, Sugar Free Dr. Pepper-drinking mag like this. Read the instructions and decide for yourself: "Blow an pipe, Pac-Man rises and pours out thousands of bubbles." Feeling his Cheerios, I guess.

PUNCH BALL (National Latex):: Now here's something I can relate to. When those unmerciful attacks of Nervous Vowel Syndrome strike, I take this nitrous birthday coke and pound th' muthuh. Beats the scorched earth policy, doncha think?

CRIB AND PLAYPEN ANIMAL GRABBER (Fisher-Price):: Although these "soft handfuls of fun" bring up frightening anatomical possibilities, they're great for assigning your pet iguana as Animal Grabbee. "Perfect for play," indeed.

SHOWER CURTAIN (Hygiene) :: This is really getting out of hand, but how can you pass up a wrapper that promises "fiber content: 100% vinyl?" Plunk it on your turntable and it makes great music, as long as you like "skreeddddmmnnnktkch-sss."

THINGS YOU STICK ON THE END OF A PEN (Empire):: I'm consumer testing the timeless obsolescence of this unnamed product as I write. Guaranteed by the author to be more fun than a bake-off and a bloodbath combined!

MAGIC SLATE PAPER SAVER (Whitmon):: KID TESTED, the package claims. Bull! Us kids at VIDIOT have been performing some tests of our own. So far, we've established it cannot 1) swim, 2) stifle yawns, or 3) reduce speed to avoid an accident.

shadow of his former self!), blank joysticks to color and even the recipe for an Energy Shake. Orange juice, eggs, honey and milk buds...mmm-mmm!

BUMPER STICKERS (Video Babies):: Just what you'd expect—"I broke for Pac-Man," "Have you hugged your left controller jack today?" and the inevitable "If power pills are outlawed, only outlaws will show up at IHOP."

BALL POINT PEN (Empire):: Sorry, not cost effective. Price is \$1.50 and—no matter how you hold it—it won't point off even one ball.



PILLOW (Orton House):: Almost the size of a sofa cushion, this makes excellent knee padding for vid-kickers and can also be used to feign pregnancy!

THEME BOOK (Plymouth):: There's a real, licensed theme book and a fake one with pseudo-ghosts, pseudo-space invaders and pseudo-Italian carpenters. The punishment for such trademark infringement? Life imprisonment in the supermarket Jello aisle.

VIDEO CHAMP SWITCHBOARD (Transcriber):: Not an actual P.M. item but definitely a must. Hang it on your wall "to record names, dates and high scores. Establish the champion of your family or neighborhood!" Champion of what, lack of sales resistance?

HALLOWEEN OUTFIT (Ben Cooper):: A little late for this, I know, but honestly—how can you pass up anything with "extra-large eyeholes?"

BOARD GAME (Milton Bradley):: Says on the box this is as much fun as the arcade game. Sure. You dump a couple thousand white marbles on the board and your cardboard Pac-Man "gobles" them. About as big a



TWERP-FACTOR UP!

THE PAC-MAN CARTOON SHOW

Hanna-Barbera Productions (ABC)

This is the first new cartoon show I've gotten any real enjoyment out of since the last Presidential Election. After all, considering the way cartoons are cranked-out these days, a combination of the worst aspects of *Gilligan's Space Doggies* and *Brady Kids Meet and Ridicule Yogi Show* seemed the most likely product.

The sight of decent visuals was as shocking to me as the free pantyhose offer on my last box of plastic forks. Not full animation, of course, but truly interesting backgrounds that look something like the Bizarro World (in *Superman* comics) redrawn by the old crew of Warner Bros. Fine color too, none of these flat turquoise backdrops and leaden lips.

Morty Ingels, the voice of Pac-Man, is a veteran mouth-piece of such cartoon characters as Auto Cat on *Catanooga Cats* and good ol' Beagle from *The Tom & Jerry/Grape Ape Show*. As if I've really

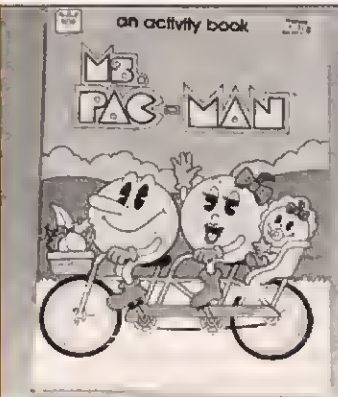
seen them! Yellowlips is a big wimp, naturally, but at least he's got a vague sense of humor. Top chuckle on the first show was dot-face busting somebody for "chomping without a license."

Bad guys are played by the usual ghosts—including a female sheet!—who wear derbies, porkpie belts and motorcycle gear to denote badness. Then there was the evil Pacula, a predictably dum dum take off on Dracula. This was the morning after I'd caught Jack Palance as that wacky historical bloodsucker, making the whole idea that much funnier. I mean, Jack Palance? What next, George Kennedy as Bride of Frankenstein?

It wouldn't be that surprising, considering the rest of the cast. Ms. Pac is twice as ridiculous as P.M. himself, and Baby Pac must be considered a serious evolutionary mistake. They're just plain boring, and magnify Pac Daddy's twerp-factor tenfold.

Like Pacula said just before his incarceration, "Nothing worse than a dull champ!"

Rick Johnson



ACTIVITY BOOK (Whitmon):: The single most useful invention since gyroscopic hubcaps, this 50-page collection is ideal for rainy days or just decomposing. Includes Tic Pac Toe, ghost bow ties to make, humor (Q: Why is Blinky so blue? A: He's just a

deal as the second worst helicopter crash in West German history, I'd say.

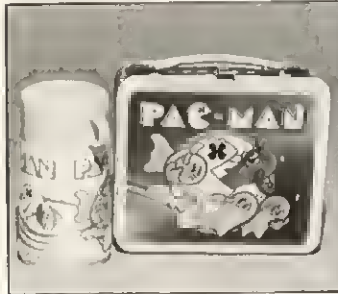
THERMAL UNDERWEAR (Union):: Despite the heat-resistant waistband, this item still is not mentioned in "Fun, Fun, Fun."



GUMBALL MACHINE COIN BANK (Superior)::

Who needs a cure for cancer when you've got a technological development like this? 100 Pac-Man gumballs yours for mere pennies, nickles and dimes! I couldn't locate any gumball refills, though, so chew slowly.

CANDY (Ragnar):: Currently available only in sucker form



LUNCHBOX (Kedco):: Between the paint and the metal, this is a real toxic chemical waste dump of a container. Looks cute, but makes your food taste like the sweatband in on old motorcycle helmet.

PORTABLE RADIO (Norelco):: Looks like a hollow-bodied bathroom scale and sounds like it too.

CLOTHES (Various Brands):: Every possible item of clothing can now be purchased with our little buddy's snoot on it. Shoes, socks, ties, t-shirts, undies, bathrobes, sweat-pants, gloves, etc. That's democracy, I s'pose, but if you wear too many of these you'll look like a waterbed with a dead horse in it.

JEWELRY (Josten):: For the sophisticated set, these adorable 14K gold-filled (i.e. worthless) charms, earrings and pendants are easily the next best thing to canoe practice in the rain.

COLORING BOOK (Whitman):: For that special brat with the room-temperature creativity, these pix require a yellow crayon and a flexible sense of the absurd.

STICKERS (Fleer):: Unlike their baseball cards, which are so fuzzy you can't tell John Stupor from his mitt, these have been a frankly unbearable success for Fleer. I keep seeing 'em stuck on everything from mirrors to fishballs. In fact, I'm gonna start wearing 'em to the office instead of a garbage bag.



TV BED 'N' PLAY TRAY (Marsh Allan)::

From the blip-eating fool to the folding legs, this is just what the world needed. That doesn't, however, clear up the controversy of whether this is for bed or play or both? And what do folding legs imply to you?

SOAP (Exclusive) :: The carcinogenicity of this electronic byproduct has yet to be determined, so don't wash everywhere!

PUPPET (Meco):: Real hi-tech manufacturing job here. Take one of your old socks, sew a toothless smile to it then use it to gum the Theragran delivery boy to death for me. Pleez!

CARD GAME (Milton Bradley):: Fun level of this creation? Well, it's like what the guy on *Joker's Wild* said about skydiving: "It's a lot like falling."

SHOELACES (Kenco):: Shoelaces, that's what was missing.

DISPOSABLE BUTANE LIGHTER (Scripto):: Here's my own personal recommendation. Take all the Pac-Man merchandise you can find, arrange it neatly in a heap and apply this product. Pretend they're books or records! ■



SEGA
TURBO™



IUA



VIDIOT
OF THE MONTH
DAVID JOHANSEN

If you don't believe that David Johansen is a bona fide vidiot, just turn an MTV any hour of the day or night. Dove's performance of the Animals Medley from his *Live It Up* LP is one the music channel's ten most played videos. On top of that, when he isn't onstage or in the studio making music that's funky but chic, you can usually find him clowning around with any number of gadgets at his local arcade. What a doll, eh?

photo by Larry Kaplan

ARCADE ACTION

ARCADE

ARCADE

ARCADE

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

As a regular feature, VIDIOT will be examining the 10 hottest arcade video games as we go to press—telling you what's hot, what's not, and why. Each issue we'll also be focusing on a new game we at VIDIOT feel will become popular within a matter of weeks. This month's close-up is PEN-GO. Next ish? Stay tuned..

BY P. GREGORY SPRINGER

THIS MONTH'S WINNERS

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. JOUST | 6. TRON |
| 2. JUNGLE KING | 7. MS. PAC-MAN |
| 3. DONKEY KONG JR. | 8. GALAGA |
| 4. MOON PATROL | 9. TURBO |
| 5. TUTANKHAM | 10. DIG DUG |

(Statistics based on reported Arcade Game Popularity Ratings by Ploy Meter magazine, Coin Operated Entertainment Industry publication. Ratings calculated November 1 for December 15 release.)



MS. PAC-MAN—In the sit-down cocktail bar and airport versions, no way MS. PAC-MAN is going to slow down for some time to come. Those bouncing fruits, that hair ribbon, those lovemaking

blobs, the nasty ghosts... The game has perfect packaging for cute lovers everywhere who want na more than a joystick between them and happiness.



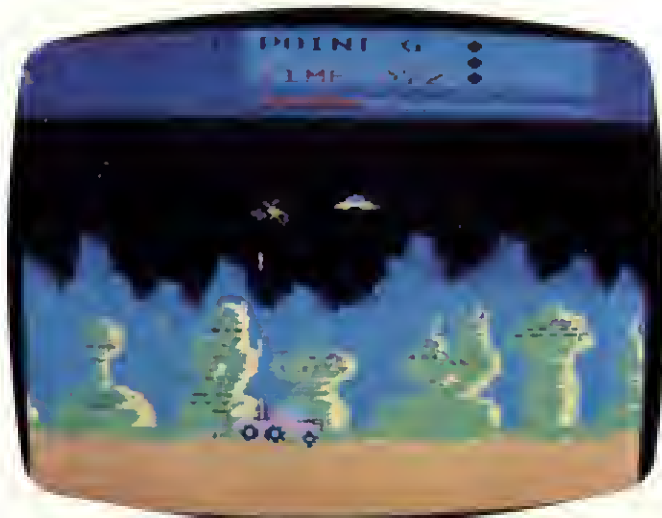
GALAGA—Of all the base-bound upshooting games since SPACE INVADERS, GALAGA has more variety to count upon. The musical announcements and challenging stages (even when the player learns

how to shoot with double guns, fighting from a single infallible center spot) also have helped make the game a winner. Some call it GAL-uh-guh, some say Guh-LA-guh.



DIG DUG—Highly advertised and touted, DIG DUG's orcone story is hard to understand. A digger is attacked by little monsters who are trapped in his tunnels, until they turn into floating ghosts passing through the untravelled gravel. Drop two rocks into your

tunnels and a veggie—carrot, eggplant, etc.—appears in the center of the maze. Oh, well. Don't try to understand it, just play it for now, because when conquered it can be played for over half an hour on just one quarter. That spells doom.



MOON PATROL—Williams acquired this Japanese game which is quite unlike their others. A landbound rover shoots in two directions against attacking spaceships and roadblock rocks. This

magic jeep also has bounce copacity to avoid those treacherous potholes we all know so well. Like SCRAMBLE or ZAXXON or the other destination games, getting there is all the fun.



JOUST—An endless quest by Williams Corporation for unique motion graphics and challenging effects began with DEFENDER, STARGATE, and ROBOTRON. Now, the age-old art of mythical jousting has been brought to the 20th Century, and apparently the ostrich warriors who battle pterodactyls and egg-laying beasts have captured the imagination of arcade players. More likely, the ability to fly these battling birds by punch-

ing a flop button gives the game its special feeling. Controlling direction of these storks is no easy matter. They walk, skid, and can fly out of control by over-eager floppers. Tip: team up with a jousting partner against the beasts. Too few games allow the privilege, and JOUST is perhaps the only game in which a "team player" risks eliminating his partner with a poorly aimed attack.



JUNGLE KING—Why JUNGLE KING swung into a high rating when other movie genre games (i.e., spy and western games) haven't is a mystery. With Tarzan's yodel announcing victory against alligators under water, or against native cannibals, or in leaping bounding rocks, the thrill is in living out the primitive urge. The romantic interboard smooching gets a little embarrassing, but MS. PAC-MAN or

DONKEY KONG both benefited from exploiting similar romance instead of the usual astral conquest. But rarely has there been a game where waiting, and waiting, and waiting, has played such an important part in winning, winning, winning. Waiting for those vines to swing into leaping range can be completely boring, or challenging, depending on how desperately you want to save Jane.



TUTANKHAM—After that tricky second round which requires going back for a second key to carry, Tut's horizontally scrolling maze provides a narrative action—a sense of mystery with its

claustrophobic story space—that keeps interest going. What's beyond the puzzle? For that reason, TUTANKHAM could hang around mummified on the chart for a while to come.



TURBO—Sego's colorful graphics have made TURBO the road race to believe in, whether you take it for a leisurely country drive, a race through the tunnel, or the

horrifying rush hour in Metropolis. Likely to spin-out in the last laps if replaced soon by a more complicated track. Otherwise, the race continues...





DONKEY KONG JR.—

Spin-off games continue to gain popularity off the reputation of their predecessors. Little Kong climbing and scratching his way up the vines, after fruit and away from the munchers, is as cute as the bugs, and everybody has to try to save the lug. As an indicator of the fair play and temperament found in video games, DONKEY KONG

JR. is probably the only follow-up game to switch protagonists, making the villain of the first become the hero of the second. Can you imagine a DEFENDER sequel in which we tried to move landers and mutants in a fight AGAINST the humanoids?? Forecast: DKJ will continue to climb up the chart, perhaps hitting #1 in the next survey.

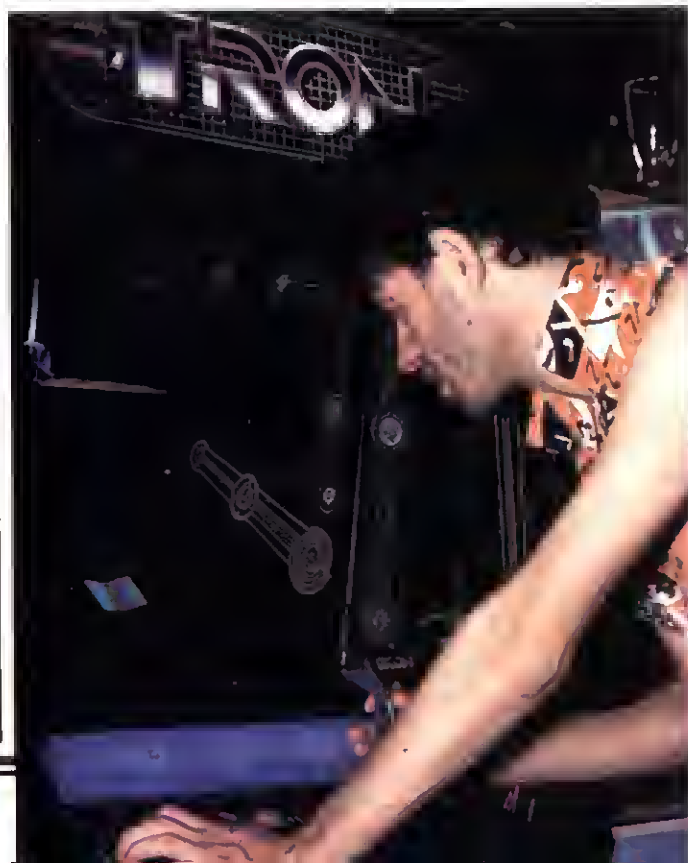


TRON—

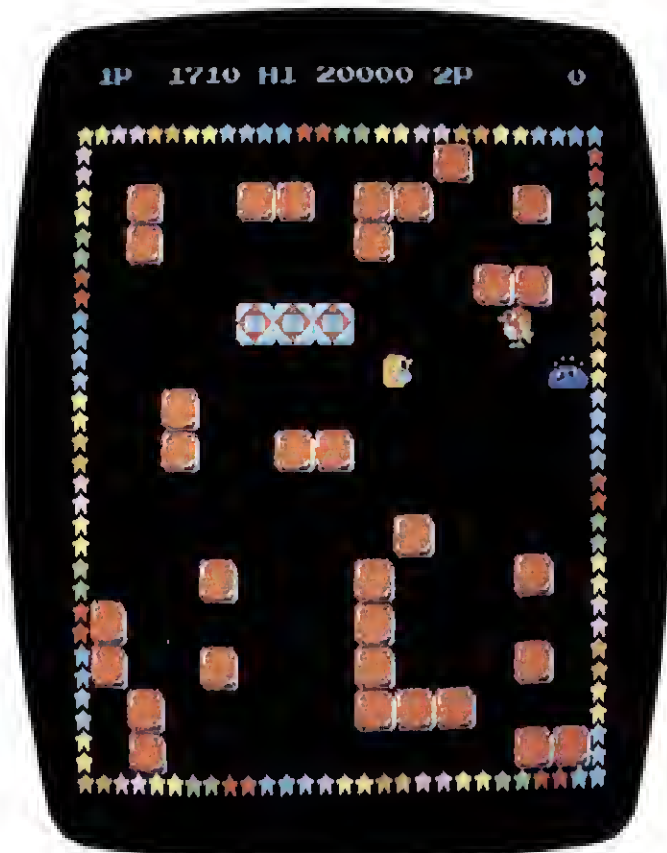
Initially, the Disney spin-off game drew more support than the movie itself. Even the electronic music on the TRON game is based on the theme soundtrack written by Wendy Carlos. The slick black-light look and quad

game capacity has kept the game totally unique in the field. By now, TRON is probably on a slight downswing, but may be revived from time to time with re-releases of the mindblowing movie.

Bob Geldof, Boomtown Rat and star of Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, often plays Tron to save the free world!



ARCADE ACTION CLOSE-UP



THE ICE CAPADE: PENGO



Neat and nice and so precise, Sega's *PENGO* has a cool shot at the big time. With the surprisingly long-lived *FROGGER* and now *PENGO*, Sega has become the company of little critters with big appetites for quarters and tokens. Their high popularity indicates that someone has obviously found the soft spot in gamer's hearts.

Only the penguins and Sno-Bees have anything soft about them in *PENGO*. The landscape shown in the pre-game boards is a color-filled frozen terrain, larded over by the endlessly shifting sky of reflected light. The penguins toboggan across the ice, coming up to greet the player in their gregarious fashion.

The penguins of *PENGO* try to move blocks of ice across the board, melting some and just shifting others. The board is a grid of 165 square spaces, most of which are filled by slippery blocks of hard ice. The random moze of blocks can be altered by pushing the blocks around. When two ice blocks are up against each other, a push by the penguin's control button "melts" it, disintegrating it into little pieces.

In addition to these cubes, every level of play has three diamond blocks randomly positioned on the board. The penguin must try to re-arrange his glacial living room to put the diamond blocks (which cannot be disintegrated) in a row. When he manages to do so, a star explosion illuminates and encircles his space, flashing with the intensity of a Las Vegas morquee.

Working against the penguin's retentive neatness are the Sno-Bees. These creatures also can melt ice blocks, but they aren't strong enough to push them around. Because the Bees can sting the penguin, he must try to smosh them all with the slippery ice

cubes or his diamonds before he's stung. Once the penguin has smoshed the Bees, he advances to a new level of play, with or without having lined up the diamonds.

Between boards, the penguins march across the screen, sometimes affectionately tripping over their tails, peeping out of a barrel, or dancing in unison to Beethoven's "Song of Joy." The game operates in efficient maneuvers all around, espousing many values that computers sometimes inspire: the square, the neat, the clean and perfect.

MOVING: The penguin operator has two function tools. The joystick moves his penguin in four directions in much the same way that *Pac-Man* can turn only in right angles. Even when all the ice blocks in an area of the screen have been melted, the penguin still will only move within the invisible, prescribed maze. A kick button enables the player to shove blocks of ice or diamonds across the screen when they aren't backed up by other blocks.

The penguin can never shove two blocks at the same time: they stabilize each other. If he attempts to kick a block that is backed by another block, it melts—thus providing passageway for him to move. Sno-Bees eat through ice blocks with relish and can clear a board in short order.

There's a third function of the kick button. Whenever a Sno-Bee is walking along the outside edge of the game, the penguin can kick the wall to "freeze" the bee, temporarily rendering him immobile and harmless. If the penguin walks over the Bee while frozen, the Bee is destroyed (although for less points than if crushed.)

SCORING: A Sno-Bee that is crushed by ice earns the penguin 400 points, probably the single most regular way of getting ahead. The quicker all

the Bees are eliminated, the bigger the bonus.

When a board is finished a time chart is shown with the bonus announced. A minute or over earns no bonus. Fifty to 59 seconds earns only 10 points, but if done in less than 20 seconds a whopping 5,000 points is given.

There are at least three Sno-Bees originating in the corners of the grid when the game begins. The penguin is in the middle. In addition to these living Bees, a number of the ice blocks contain Sno-Bee eggs which will hatch if the game goes on too long. These ice blocks flash at the beginning of the round and when they are about to hatch. (The total number of Bees per round ranges from seven to 12 or more. One can keep track of how many Bees are left by observing a little row of eggs at the top of the board.) If the penguin can quickly observe the location of the flashing blocks and memorize them, he will earn 500 points for each one he crushes before it hatches.

Two Bees crushed by one well-aimed sliding ice block earns 1,600 points. Three goes 3,200.

A Bee frozen by the wall and walked over gets the player 100 points.

Every block of ice the penguin melts earns 30 points. Though this is a slow way of accumulating points, it eliminates the "ommunion" of sliding blocks, and it makes the penguin more vulnerable to the advances of the approaching Bees.

If the line of diamonds is achieved, 5,000 or 10,000 points are awarded, depending upon whether the line was created within the playing space rather than up against the outer wall. Also, the Bees are all temporarily frozen for a time following this monumental event, and can be crushed or walked over without danger.

STRATEGIES: Frozen Bees should be crushed (400 points) rather than walked over (100 points) whenever it's at all possible. To do this, freeze the Bee (or Bees) by kicking the wall, walk away from the wall to push a convenient block up against

the wall, then return behind the block and push it to smother the Bees. They remain frozen for several seconds, usually long enough to get the job done.

You can even freeze a Bee when a block is already in the path between the Bee and the penguin. Then, a crush is readymade for the extra points.

Usually it makes more sense to melt egg blocks at the start of the round, when their location is fresh in the mind and the living Bees are still at a distance. However, to get the big 5,000 bonus in the early rounds, the best strategy can be to crush the few Bees as quickly as possible, ignoring both the unhatched eggs and the diamond line.

Be careful how you shove your diamonds. Try to keep them within the playing field by lining up support blocks of ice. If you try to get the lesser bonus by lining up diamonds, be careful. Two diamonds together on the wall can't be moved in any direction, and a diamond in the corner can't be moved either. They are stuck there.

When only one Bee is left uncrushed, it will attempt to run away to a corner and disappear. You should crush it before it gets there. A little musical tune informs you of its intention to flee, so you have some time to crush blocks, arrange the diamonds, or try to crush the little stinger first.

After the last Bee is gone, a few seconds remain before the board is cleared. That gives the penguin time to melt some ice blocks—perhaps three or so—for thirty extra points each. Remember that in order for a block to melt, it must be placed up against a wall or another block. You may still have time to move around blocks to melt them, but be quick.

CONCLUSIONS: The Sno-Bees come out in various colors, numbers and speeds: green, red, yellow, white, ice blue, yellow #2, etc. New penguins are added when 30,000 points are won, although this may vary from machine to machine.

PENGO is a simple game to comprehend, yet it has more than enough unique facets to

make it interesting for both casual and hardcore players. Played on a basic level (crush into the Bees), you get a good run for your money. Played for high scoring, there are opportunities for multiple concentration tasks: memorizing the eggs, timing multiple crushs, freeze capacity for fancy footwork, and the architecture and geometry of organizing a special line.

Because there's more than one way to skin the frozen Bee, different routes of action

will work for different people. Patterns of play will be determined in time, but they'll have to be employed in spontaneous configurations. No rote pattern books are going to help here.

Pac-Man won popularity by being the first game simplified enough for anyone to play, even a one-armed midget. PENGO isn't that revolutionary, or that problematic, but it's a good slide on the ice that's bound to attract players for a while, like Bees to ice.



THE MAGAZINE OF VIDEO LUNACY!

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VIDIOT'S CONSUMER



STEVEN BISHOP IS A **VIDIOT!**

Maybe he ain't got such pretty legs, but you don't need 'em to spank ghosts and blast alien vermin. Putting Steven in a room full of video games is like leaving the key to the Ladies Room in charge of Donkey Kong, Sr. He'll play on and on until his leg hair vaporizes as from a crooked Tickle Bee!

photo by Lynn Goldsmith

GUIDE

to Home Games

BY ANNENE KAYE
WITH SIMON FELLOWES

Pardon my cheek in presuming to do any kind of summation, however I find myself here under duress (I know, I know...that's the very worst neighborhood to be in; sort of the Avenue D of your mind), assigned to write a guide to the bulk of the Atari Video Computer System. I feel I owe you some kind of explanation as to why I'm doing this, so here it is.

About two years ago, my father the doctor (you can call him Herbert Kaye, Developmental Psychologist At Large) became interested in researching the value of the application of computer games to aid the learning disabled in overcoming sensory motor problems. After a year of impassioned pleas/hard-sell missives, Atari had a representative contact him to express their interest. When he inquired into the possibility of acquiring some literature he was asked if he owned any of the games. As he did not (us being a semi-academic household), they saved me from the embarrassment of running into Dad and his notebook crouching in the corner of Playland. They sent us a little black Atari VCS console and eight games, two days after the initial phone contact. Sometime later we were the recipients of a huge box containing the rest of the catalog, approximately 35 games of the time. So we all sat around stock-jawed pushing buttons for a couple of weeks.

About two days after the first eight games had arrived, Channel 5 called and said that Atari had recommended that my dad appear on a show as an "expert" on computer games in education. Suffice to say he was rather amused to find out that he had become the World's Fastest Expert, having only played arcade games "about twice" before receiving the home set. He told them that no, he could not come down and tape the show tomorrow; he would have to do some research. Taping was delayed for a week.

I got to stay home from work to watch my dad on Bill Boggs' *Midday*, not one of my favorite shows by any stretch of the imagination. For those not in the know, Bill is a combination of Donahue and Merv, trapped in the body of someone you might run into at a singles bar uptown; y'know, part of that "new breed" of talk show hosts (yes, they're breeding them now). My poor unsuspecting pater thought he was to be given the floor for a few moments to rationally discuss his project. No one had bothered to inform him that he would be participating in a sensationalist debate designed to hook the housewives called something like "Are Video Arcodes



Earthworld is the first of four games planned in the Sward Quest series. If you win all four first—you could win big!



For many people the first video game they've ever played, Space Invaders can invade your living room now.

Turning Our Children Into Homosexual Mass Murderers?"

Look, Look! There's my dad, in one of his best suits! On one side of him sits a rather intelligent man who seems terribly put upon by all this banality. He is the owner of a plush arcade. He is wearing LOTS of jewelry, not a habit that inspires much confidence for your average mom unless the wearer's Liberace. On the other side is another man who owns a regular arcade, who, sad to say, is a bit shifty-eyed. The appalling panel? A mother, a school principal, and a psychiatrist, all who claim that video parlors are breeding grounds for Kiddy Porn, Dope, Thievery, and "Chicken Hawks." The audience is full of horrible kids from some cushy private school who know as much about video games as Fred MacMurray does. The kids earn my eternal hatred by getting up one by one and asking the same two stupid questions over and over. The mealy-mouthed little creeps should be roasted alive for going on television and trying to ruin the fun for the rest of their peer group. We can't all have summers in the Hamptons playing mixed doubles with Candy, Biff and Raddy after all. I don't even know which side won the debate, since no one but Bill got a chance to talk for more than 10 seconds at any one time.

When Atari finally stopped being the bogeyman and became a way of life, they didn't need to legitimize themselves and Dr. Dad saan last touch with them. However, we were left with uno petite reminder of the whole experience...

ADVENTURE

Simon and I are propped up in my parents' living room after a ridiculous weekend of too many nightclubs and drink and not enough sleep, surrounded by cartridges and cansales. Since I had the rougher weekend, I get to lie prone on the floor with the notebook, my motor

control having abandoned me days ago when it realized that the ship was sinking, leaving me as a prime candidate for my father's research. My co-ouhar, who hails from the mother country, is facing a home system for the first time, struggling through the "adventure" of finding a color-coded key to some mythical door on a black and white TV. So don't buy this game if you don't have a color set—in fact, don't buy this game at all, especially if your attention span is as short as the hair on your palms. The instructions are not very instructive and the cartoon psychedelic castle and its occupants are but a poor man's Dungeons & Dragons.

AIR-SEA BATTLE

For nuclear enthusiasts everywhere: now you can relive the utter pointlessness of the Falklands without making on

The VCS system: has it got the market cornered?



international spectacle of yourself (by the way, did you know that if the war had gone on for another day Britain would have surrendered?).

Twenty-seven games... sometimes you shoot at targets, sometimes at each other. Your ships pass in the night and occasionally blow each other up, just like in real life! So much for politics and metaphors.

ASTEROIDS

A classic, whatever that means. Actually Asteroids is one of the most functional games, even though the joystick has little relationship with the insides of the TV, causing the illusions produced by the vacuum of space to be much more realistic, as your projectile leisurely saunters over to its target. Maybe they ought to make the wires shorter.

BACKGAMMON

Guess what *this* is, folks! Anyone who would play this on a TV is missing the whole point of the game, which is to have a slick expensive version carved out of ivory or something. All you swinging bachelors out there know the impact you make on a chick as you whisper "Hey baby, wonno...play?" Romantic, eh? Get out your paddles, bays, as you huddle 'round the TV with the gals to play this sexy thong to the tune of whistles and beeps. For tedious couples everywhere.

BASKETBALL

As it was in my high school gym class, I don't care enough to figure out what's going on. Keep in mind that on the basic skill levels it's all one-on-one. Players run by moving one leg, resembling monkeys that have accidentally soiled themselves. For stupid seven footers.

BOWLING

On the other hand, this one is for 3-year-olds, blind 8-year-olds, and fat people under 5 feet tall. Your little man jumps up and down when he gets a strike



Yar's Revenge has proven to be one of Atari's hottest selling vid games to date—and it's getting bigger.



One of the more significant film-to-vid screen home games, Raiders Of The Last Ark brings the thrills of that film home.

or a spare, leaving you free to sit and yawn. Almost as exciting as the press release I got from Billy Idol's record company revealing how many pins he had racked up the previous Friday in

Alan Platt's fashionable alternative club located in the BowlMor lanes! The catalog says, "This is one of the most exciting and challenging ways to go howling." There goes Atari, lying again.

BREAKOUT and SUPER BREAKOUT

We'll just stick with Super, shall we? The concept, or motivation behind this

As you all know by now, Atari's new 5200 system is hot stuff. El sleeko design, screen graphics improved to a point almost Faygoesque and a universal controller featuring a joystick so sensitive, you should have it checked out by explosives-sniffing dogs before you touch it.

Adjusting to the new format is actually quite enjoyable. It's so easy on the eyes, not to mention the pleasure of doubling your score every couple of games as you improve. And if you slip? Hey—just abort screen! This too is satisfying.

With the above stipulated, let's take a quick peek at some of the popular cartridges upgraded for the 5200.

Super Breakout is included with the new set-up. The flashy colored bricks look good enough to drink, and when they're hit, they crack up like little Pac-Men screaming in pain.

There are three new variations of the big B.O. In Progressive, the bricks march toward you like crunched Space Invaders. In Double mode, you must deal with two bouncing balls, and in Cavity the two balls are socked away so that they don't come tearing out until you throw 'em some chin music.

The sensitivity of the joystick

ATARI 5200



is ideal for my favorite move, the Blind Swipe. I need it too, because the computer loves to throw you a ball just like the last one you missed.

Let's get two minor complaints out of the way quickly. The cable from the console to the controller is a bit too short

and gets in the way. And those plastic overlays for the keyboard aren't going to last through many hard-fought contests.

Another solid update for the 52' is **Space Invaders**. Not only are the pics and sound much better than the VCS

version, but you now must tangle with 48 uncooperative aliens. The absence of the dreaded invisible invaders is more than made up for by 12 levels of difficulty designed to turn your reflexes into vibrating mush.

Pac-Man is finally available now in its true arcade form, an indescribable improvement over the VCS layout. The fluid run-and-gun style of the original is reproduced intact. No more of the static, presumed-dead "action" of the previous cart. Plus, the zany intermissions of the big boy.

Another startling improvement is the new **Missile Command**. There's just no comparison to the 2600 contest of the same name. Smooth-running but deadly missiles spring out of a considerably more menacing sky to wipe out cities that look like cities and not crooked little blue houses.

These 5200 updates are all somewhat more difficult than the VCS versions, making them that much more rewarding to stomp. You know the old Challenge Theory and its "more fun to compete" corollary. All true this time, so treat your eye/hand skills to some new reflex chow.

—Steve Kenyon

The 5200 versions of Pac-Man and Space Invaders—how arcade-like can Atari get?



INTELLIVISION UPDATE

Mattel's Intellivision system has an awful lot going for it. Measurably improved graphics are the biggest plus. Some controversy surrounds the controller, which features a disc instead of a joystick. It performs beautifully in games like Major League Baseball and NFL Football, but can be troublesome in hot-action contests. Intellivision continues to evolve, however—the new Intellivoice module provides for computerized talk-talk and the second expansion module will allow I-tell to play all Atari VCS carts as well.



Intellivision's expandable console.



UTOPIA

Highly innovative strategy contest that might shut up the Surgeon General for a couple minutes. You get your own banana republic with an electronic populace that cannot impeach you. Better yet is a free supply of gold bars, although they're supposed to go for feeding and educating your countrymen instead of computer generated M&M Pounder bags. Ho hum. I especially liked buying mercenaries to attack the neighboring isle.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

This is one amazing cartridge. You control all nine players on your team and can indulge in stealing bases, double plays, swinging "inside out" and experiencing the emotion of being on the hour away from second base. The directional disc must have been invented with this game in mind. Running, pitching and fielding are accomplished with minute, touch-typing like moves. Locks only the squirt of tobacco juice.

NFL FOOTBALL

Vastly superior to other football games. Only five men per team but you get over

150 different plays. Strategic complexities of the game and actual footlife complement each other to stunning degree. Me, I want some cheerleaders to carry me off on their shoulders after the game.

PBA BOWLING

More realistic than one would expect. Besides the standard elements of heaving that ball down the alley, you'll find variations like ball weight and lane slickness built in. The scope and dimensions of bowling seem more adoptable to cartridge play than sports like lacrosse and Yahtzee.

SPACE BATTLE

A hard case here. While you're busy defending the Mother Ship on one screen, you also must take it to the enemy on a second screen. Engrossing once you get the hang of it, but you'll be vehemently cursing your cur-

sor the first few times you press Return To Base when you meant to press KILL.

ASTROSMASH

The usual Space Invaders and Asteroids influences are combined here in a graphically excellent strategic game. Devise your own Rhythm Method and stick to it. Autofire is always a nice feature.



STAR STRIKE

A great looking effort. You buzz around a somewhat suggestive Launch Trench, shooting at "Hot Targets" and trying to protect Earth

Mattel's new Intellivoice module adds new dimensions to verbal warfare.



from conversion to Endust. Takes a while to learn and it's worth it.

NIGHT STALKER

Another fine looking moze contest. Dim-witted spiders, personable bats and a series of killer robots chase an actually human-looking player who must go grab a new weapon every few shots. Appears slow in the early going, but the speed creates great ambush opportunities.



LOCK 'N' CHASE

One of Mattel's less complicated, strictly-for-fun games. You're a thief in a maze full of goofy-looking cops trying to nail you. You steal gold coins, antique hairnets and other treasure, then try to lock the police in the janitor's closet or fungo storage facility.

SPACE HAWK

Here you are, lost in space without so much as a snapshot of Angelo Cortwright. It's just you, your backpack jet and an always-charged Gas Bloster. Intriguing action joined to very 20th Century attitude is perfect for the very essence of space games. I mean, you can put yourself in Drift Mode without having to worry about that tiresome inertia.

MICRO SURGEON

Silly but fun for toddler Operation fans. Using the Fantastic Voyage method of healing, you zip into the patient's body and take off after various diseases and physical complaints. Super colors and 200 different patients. Best touch is the bill you give the poor sucker at the end.

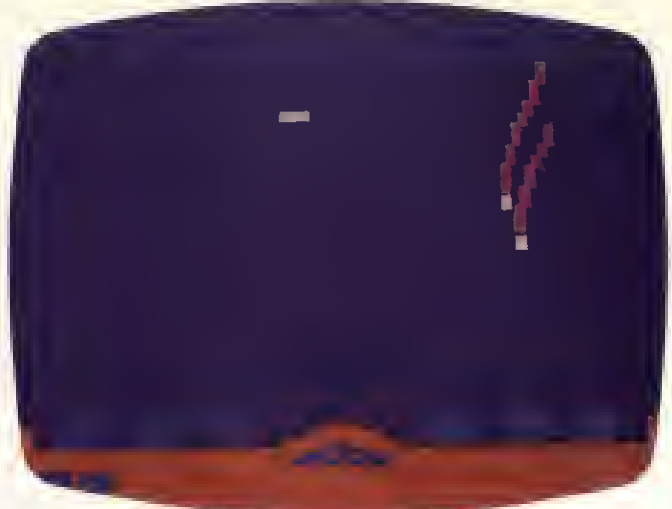
SPACE ARMADA

Uncomfortably derivative of Space Invaders, this will at least keep you off the streets for awhile. Exterminating aliens is always rewarding and they go "poot!" and vanish in a cloud of scorlet particulates when you hit 'em.

—Steve Kenyon



Lang an arcade game favorite, Defender comes home and becomes a whole new game.



All that's missing from Missile Command is the white rotary ball—and that's coming soon!

one is that you're breaking out of jail by playing raquetball with cannon ammo. When you dispose of one wall, another appears. Didn't Pink Floyd make a movie using the same concept? Didn't it stink?

CANYON BOMBER

You know that come you've wanted to sink into but just didn't have the time for? Well, here's your chance. We ripped into this virgin box and found a combination of Breakout and Air-Sea Battle that practically played by itself to a running soundtrack of wet, very personal noises.

CASINO

I like Casino—it's one of the only games you can play without moving your hand much. In these hard times, though, it's a strain to throw around money even if it's theoretical. Simon sez: "More mindless than Vegas. Strictly for Libby and Boober."

CIRCUS ATARI

The thing I can't figure out about this particular game is why anyone would want to play it. Can you imagine saying to yourself, "I think I'll go play a few rounds of Circus Atari"? Especially when it consists of bouncing a clown off a trampoline head-first into square balloons. To top it off, if you don't catch your clown on the rebound he plummets to earth, splots all over, and lays kicking and dying for a few seconds only to be reincarnated in time to bounce off the next line of balloons. Might give children funny ideas. More likely not to give anyone any ideas.

COMBAT

Wombat? I put down my joystick to take a note and it took Simon about 90 seconds to realize that I wasn't playing anymore. Some amusing games, the invisible tanks and rebounding bullets are OK. The airplane games are nothing but dogfights with real dogs.

DODGE 'EM!

Dodge WHAT? Dodgey! A chance to show your driving "skill."

FOOTBALL

First of all, playing American football with a Brit makes about as much sense as sticking your head in a blender. You have to program and memorize plays. The little beetle-like players keep scurrying into the corner for a pick-me-up. All you have to do is push the button once and the pre-programmed plays send the boys through their moves. You can control this about as much as real football on TV. Buy it if the strike is upsetting you. Simon says: "They probably already have."

FUN WITH NUMBERS

This one is educational. So they forgot to send it.

GOLF

Akin to banging your head into the wall repeatedly. More complicated than real golf. Joystick really fails on this one. As played by Swahili warriors. (Simon: "And the Ramones.")

HANGMAN

Or in this case, hang the monkey—with all the obvious implications. Another troublesome mini-mind maneuver. Simon became upset at the computer's pro-American stance when I pointed out that according to the clue he had just got (_ O _ O _), the word in question was probably "color" (anglo spelling: *colour*) and I wasn't going to sit around all night while he flailed around with it.

HOMERUN

Simon: "Why do all the players have such big noses?"

"That's their caps, you moron!"

Simon: "Can I go yet?"

HUMAN CANNONBALL

Propel the little man out of the cannon and into the vat of split pea soup. If you miss, the word "ouch" appears as his crumpled body. Not for those with weak hearts. Good practice for throwing cats across the room at precisely the correct angle.

INDY 500

The "special Paddles" that come with the cartridge look the same as the regular paddles, except they have "driving" written on them. Every game must have its gimmick. Nothing to do with Poul Newman's Salad Dressing at all. (Simon: "And nothing to do with fun, either.")

MAZE CRAZE

Not for the intelligent/sensitive/inspired/sensual. But good for a laugh or two. Has one of the best soundtracks, plus—you get to run away from policemen and actually win...

MISSILE COMMAND

I had been waiting all day for it: Simon's diatribe against video games. He spoke at some length about the anti-social violent aspects of the games, the games' insultingly low I.Q. level, ego falsification and the fact that the games themselves were such poor imitations of the real things. One of the aspects of it that mildly bothered him was the appearance of arcade games in various nightclubs, giving people even more of an excuse not to talk to each other. I remain unconcerned with these aspects because I can see what the next big fad is going to be when Video bites the dust. It's not going to be holograms—it's going to be Random Poisonings. So if Atari wants to stay on top of things they'd better make up a Tylenol Terror game quick. Oh, Missile Command has the best soundtrack.

NIGHT DRIVER

Simon's fave: "This is the one, lads. Turn off your brain and follow the dots, put on your Steppenwolf and get smashed." The closest you'll ever come to being James Dean.

OTHELLO

Another kind of "skill." You can actually figure it out by reading the instructions, which usually only manage to confuse and annoy.

OUTLAW

Your chance to knock cowboys on their buns and blow up cacti. Pretend you're John Hinckley!

PELE'S SOCCER

This also produced a rant from Simon that was quite funny but impossible for you to understand, seeing how it was all about English football. More tiring than the real thing.

SKY DIVER

Another "miss the target and see 'em go spplatt" game. Kids that watch Tom and Jerry cartoons religiously will love these.

SLOT RACERS STREET RACERS

Two boring car/crash/smash groovethangs. (Simon: "Really, really boring.")

SPACE INVADERS

The great granddaddy. "Interesting" variations, more shoot-'em-up mentality. At this point we were both cross-eyed with fatigue. There is nothing that can be said about this that hasn't been said before, and besides—I'm tired of these silly things.

SUPERMAN

Does anyone out there know how to play this? If you have managed to figure it out, WHY did you manage to figure it out? Frighteningly useless. (Simon: "The first excuse to hurl kryptonite at your TV set.")

3-D TIC TAC TOE VIDEO CHECKERS VIDEO CHESS

Yeah, yeah, this is the stuff that dreams are made of... Simon, who is

proofreading the first half of all this, stops to query us to the possibility that Atari is actually run by Vietnam War vets. Yup yup yup.

VIDEO OLYMPICS

On the level of the original PONG. You need a hell of an imagination to think anything is going on here. Boxes and more boxes.

VIDEO PINBALL

Played without me, as I took notes. Definitely not as exciting as real pinball: by the time the little ball gets down to your flippers, you really don't care anymore. Slower than chess. "Foster than a dead rat," adds Simon.

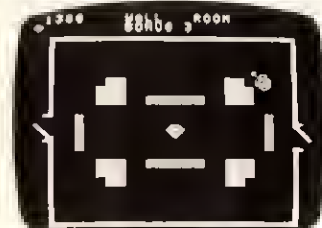
WARLORDS

What, ultimately, is the meaning of life? ■

At present, ColecoVision possesses the very finest visual elements of any home console. Juicy colors and sharp detail make for great eye candy. The controller is less complicated than Intellivision's but the paunchy joystick is frustrating at times.

Current expansion plans include an Atari Emulator. Not to forget the console interface, which will soon allow for home computer usage.

COLECOVISION '83



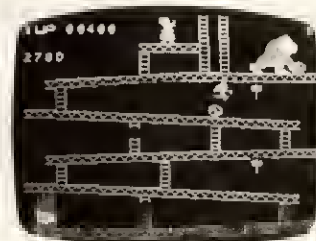
VENTURE

Superior maze game. A bow-and-arrow armed protagonist with the unlikely name of Winky searches twelve different rooms in the attempted "search and seizure" of treasure. Music fans please note each room has its own theme song! Ah, creation! Avoid the monsters to earn Bonus Winkies. Only problem is stifling laughter at the very concept of a Bonus Winky.

MOUSETRAP

The most endearing derivation of Pac-Man yet. Maze, mice, cheese and fascist kitty cats: you get the picture. In fact, this is almost more like the arcade P.M. than the Atari VCS version.

TURBO
The best driving game ever, Turbo is included with Coleco's Expansion Module 2 and should be out by "now." No brakes and the intoxication of imminent death keep you glued to the screen. After all, one wrong move and *splat*, you're Jayne Mansfield. The tunnel passage is the most exciting auto screen ever, and it's followed by *ice*.



DONKEY KONG

Classic arcader becomes class home act. Everybody seems to love the high-resolution graphics and similarity to

the original. Multiple screens and accessible early strategy hook the player from the start. If you're still wondering, "Donkey Kong" is Japanese for "massive trade imbalance." And for you mopey romantics, you can never get the girl.



SMURF—RESCUE IN GARGAMEL'S CASTLE

Darling Smurfette has been captured! Do you care? If you can read, probably not. Still fairly likeable, as you smurf around swatting hawks, jumping stalagmites and trying to pronounce Gorgamel.

LADY BUG

Faithful reproduction of an easy-learning arcade game. You find your Lady Bug in a moze inhabited by dots, hearts, skulls, predatory insects and several of your favorite garden vegetables. Turnstiles allow you to go through walls and leave the boddies behind. Also score points by spelling the words "extra" and "special." Sorry, "paclips" doesn't count.



ZAXXON

Simply the best looking home cartridge now available. The 3-D slant is imposing at first, but once you get the hang of the controls, you become quickly competitive. Fun kills include fighters, fuel tanks and scurrying hi-tech rats called Mobots. Soon you'll become—in the words of Lorne Green—"a connoisseur of rodents."

COSMIC AVENGER

Another coin game makes a successful transition to cart. You, the pilot, must deal with three scenarios: a futuristic city, a tonk landscape and an underwater playground. Sez the Coach, "keep it low."

Steve Kenyon



Even singer Michael Jackson's getting into the act—check out who narrates MCA's new E.T. album.

It had to happen, so it did. *E.T.*, this year's Most Popular Film Ever Made, is now on its way to being Most Popular Home Video Game ever made—thanks to Atari.

Seemingly just one more part of the pre-holiday *E.T.* porophernolio blitz, Atari's *E.T.* game has lots more going for it than just its name. Steven Spielberg, the boy wonder director whose streak of success never seems to end, actually took part in the planning of the game itself. A game enthusiast himself, Spielberg actively helped make *E.T.*, what he calls "the first emotionally oriented video game ever produced." And he may be right.

"Marketing" has always been a significant word in the *E.T.* book of strategy. One of the most interesting bits of *E.T.* marketing, if you don't know already, is that the *E.T.* commercial Atari has been blasting out at you every night on the tube—assuming you're watching it instead of playing it—was produced by none other than Spielberg himself. He picked its director, and a cinematographer and camera operator involved in the original film have also been utilized. So when you see that finger moving toward that Atari joystick... you'll know why it looks so real.

THE PLOT

No intelligent life in the universe of this point can be ignorant of *E.T.*'s basic premise—that of the space traveler left behind on Earth, seeking his way home. While on the planet he befriends Elliott, avoids humans, scientists and anything else that frightens him until, finally, he monoges to "phone home." After a spellbinding climax, the perky little alien is picked up and gone forever. Or at least until the sequel—it was, after all, *E.T.*—*And His Adventure On Earth*, and Spielberg is no dummy.

The premise of Atari's *E.T.*, as you

PHONES HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The game begins and E.T.'s cute little face grins until you decide of which Game Level you want to play.



E.T. is dropped off by his ship in the middle of the forest screen—and now the search starts.



might've figured, is that you—the player have the responsibility of guiding your favorite lost extraterrestrial to the landing site where his alien pals will return to pick him up.

As the game begins, E.T. is accidentally "dropped off" by his ship in the middle of a forest screen. Move your joystick and E.T. moves with it, and, however long it takes, you help E.T. phone home. Or, you make him run out of energy as he searches until his actual space death is on your hands. Atari wasn't kidding with this interactive stuff!

Major characters in this mini-epic include E.T. himself—and Atari has done a bang-up job in creating a figure that stumbles around grotesquely—but-cutely, with a neck that stretches and a hand that heals. Anyone who loved the movie will get a kick out of him. Elliott, of course, is the second major character. And, lastly, a mysterious, white-clad Scientist along with a trench-coated FBI man do their worst to keep E.T. on Earth—and thus unwittingly pull his plug.

E.T. the game has six actual screens. First is the forest, where he lands and eventually must return; secondly, "suburbia," where Elliott's house sits next to the FBI Building and the Institute of Science; the remaining screens are various sites in which E.T. must search for various phone parts. It takes three phone parts for him to manufacture his communications system, and these parts are located at the bottom of various wells that cover the sites he explores.

All of these sites have various "power zones." As E.T. walks through each one, the top of the screen shows specifically what these power zones are. By pressing the red button on the joystick controller, E.T. can utilize the various power zones and help himself get back home.

But there's more. Remember Reese's Pieces? The candy that increased its sales volume by 65 percent since it was used



Computer Horizons

in E.T.? Well, it's here too. In fact, it plays a dual role. First, tiny pieces are scattered along all the sites E.T. explores. By walking over them, he picks each one up and can eventually "eat" them for instant energy or save them for later use.

THE POWER ZONES

We here at VIDUOT got a preview package of E.T. from Atari, so imagine when the most important part of the game—exactly what each Power Zone was symbolized by—was unexpectedly missing from the xeroxed game instructions we received. Granted, it was more fun—it's always more fun to play a game without being told precisely what everything means, at least when you're not shoving quarters or tokens down the slot—but it took a lot of effort to make the distinctions. Here's what we found:

Find Phone Piece Zone—This shows up as a question mark (which made a whole lot of sense initially, if you know what we mean) at the top of the screen. By pressing the red button—as you do

when you want to utilize *all* the power zones—you'll make E.T.'s neck extend and hear a sound from your TV speaker like that of a cow munching on your front lawn. Cute stuff. Should a phone piece be in the site you're exploring, it'll appear as a flashing, small white rectangle at the base of one of the wells. How do you get the phone piece? *Jump in!*

Send Humans Back Zone—While Elliott seems the sort of fellow you'd like to have around, sometimes, when power is low and E.T.'d really rather just go home than deal with scoring points, he'd prefer Elliott to just *split the scene*. And don't forget—the men in the coats, white or yellow, are never up to any good either. Once E.T. finds *this* zone, which appears at the screen top and resembles the White House (or A Roman numeral "3", depending on how much sleep you need), he can just invade the zone power and it's ta-ta for all three hominids. A handy zone to have around; everyone should have one.

Eat Candy Zone—Which, of course, all humans would like to see in *real life*, resembles a small donut or one of those pieces of candy that are made of nougat on the outside and chewy caramel on the inside. Whenever E.T. passes over one of the specks of candy, he stores them up—the tally appears at the foot of the screen to the left of E.T.'s Energy Count figure. E.T. and you-the-player have your choice. You can find an Eat Candy Zone whenever you're really low in energy and convert the sucrose 'n' glucose to more energy, thus prolonging your life, or you can accumulate the candy and *not* eat it, for later benefit. You'll see why in a minute. Anyway, it's up to you.

Call Elliott Zone—This is why. We figured this symbol out easily: it's an "e" that looks like it's screaming. You can use that zone for the obvious reason. If you accumulate nine pieces of candy, by summoning Elliott you'll trade him the

E.T. takes a walk to Elliott's house, directly below the FBI and Institute of Science buildings.



E.T.'s got three phone pieces and is in the Coll Ship Zone, so the top-screen indicotes. He'd better get to the forest!



candy—all nine pieces—for bonus points and one of the three missing phone pieces. As an added convenience, he chases away the dangerous humans that want to carve him up, the Scientist and FBI man. In any case, if E.T. has less than nine pieces-o'-Reese's, Elliot takes 'em anyway and you-the-player rack up points in the end. But remember—you might need those pieces of candy for energy later.

Move To A New Site Zone—There are actually four different symbols for this zone: arrows that point up, down, left and right. When we first attempted the game, sans instructions, it seemed to simply be telling us which way to take E.T. to find the phone pieces, which in retrospect would have made things pretty dull. As it is, when E.T. stands in one of these many power zones, your invoking the red-button-power will immediately move him to a different site in the direction that the arrow points.

Call Ship Zone—This isn't the easiest zone to find. More often than not you're going to be spending a lot of time warding off humans and running E.T. around trying to locate it. Once you finally do, press your indicator's red button and hightail it back to the forest site—because a countdown clock will appear at the top of the screen and you've got limited time to find the landing zone.

Landing Zone—In the original forest where he landed, E.T. has to make it back here pronto after phoning home from the Call Ship zone. If, though, one of those pesky humans comes around and is actually on the screen when the ship arrives, well, hey—you think they're dummies or something? E.T. is stranded once again, and it's all your fault.

INS AND OUTS

E.T. doesn't exactly have it easy. First of all, it's no picnic keeping all his phone pieces when the FBI character starts popping up to take one away and stick it



Computer Horizons

down the well again. And if E.T.'s out of them, then his candy's gone, and his chance to croak increases accordingly. The Scientist is no hero either; he keeps trying to take E.T. to the lab for Honors Vivisection, making chances equally good for yet another power outage.

Things aren't quite as bad as they appear, though. Just like in the movie, Elliott can merge with E.T. when his energy level is down, which is going to happen a lot at first. Furthermore, in one of the wells there's a wilted flower, which E.T. can heal—and thereby get one more chance to be revived by Elliott.

END OF THE GAME

If you haven't figured it out, a round ends when you've got E.T. back safely on his ship, and a game ends when E.T. runs out of power. Or "when you decide to quit playing," as Atari helpfully notes. At the end of each round your bonus points appear at the bottom of the screen; thus you can compete with another player if the simple joy of helping E.T. get home wasn't sufficient.

ANALYSIS

There aren't a tremendous amount of

shortcomings in this game, though a few bothersome wrinkles could probably have been smoothed out had Atari had some more time—or if *Christmas was in May*, if you catch my drift. As they themselves point out in the instructions, "sometimes E.T. will fall back into a well after he has levitated up to the planet surface." Well, no kidding, guys! Newcomers may get more than a little frustrated with the number of times they find themselves helplessly killing E.T. by repeatedly making him zoom up and down inside the wells until his power runs out. Eventually you'll gain some sort of feel for moving the joystick in a specific direction, right or left, when you pop E.T. out of the well—but don't expect instant miracles.

That seems to be about the only flaw with an otherwise A-1 game. It doesn't allow for more than one player at a time, though, which seems surprising—you'll have to keep track of your score if you want to get a few people together to play. If you do play with someone else, you're best advised to play with someone at the same skill level, or you'll be yawning while your opponent tries his or her hardest to levitate out of those wells.

One final thing that makes the game worthwhile is the Game Level situation. Game 1, the hardest, puts all humans in there with E.T.; Game 2 bumps out the Scientist, and Game 3 leaves only Elliott, which is an excellent level at which to learn the game. Once you've acquainted yourself with the game's basic premise, you can make things harder as your skill increases. So the game seems to have a good degree of longevity—but we'll probably have to just wait and see.

But for now, it's a sure bet that Atari's version of Spielberg's latest phenomenon will be the best—and longest lasting—bit of E.T. paraphernalia under our tree this holiday season. After that? Well... E.T. could always meet *Jaws*...or at least Richard Dreyfuss...or... ■

Oops! He's lost a phone piece and all power! Here comes Elliot to the rescue!



1,500 more points didn't do much, though. E.T. couldn't make it in time!



ARCADE INJURIES

Ze Doktor Viii
See You
NOW, Ya!

Hallo, Vi iots, I am ze Doktor Omar Van Elmo, here to explain ta concern—i players ze world over chust vot can happen ta you if you not careful, by gally!

As you must realize, zese video games are sweeping your America, ya, ya, and chust as I predicted, zey are causing oomphs and awws to ze crazy kids. chust like it vas bock in ze old days, ya. In ze old country, ya! Dat it vy!—Doktor Omar Van Elmo—haf dedicated my life ta zese kids and zese oomphs and owwws! Ze dangers of ze video games must be explained, ze warning signs must be wotched lar, ar else—aaohhhh! Like ze old days, ya!

BRAINLOCK

Chust like ze old days, ya, young Otis here hast played his last game, ya, because he's vasted his life in front of ze big screen, ya! Ze Dark Planet ist all zat Otis will see forever, ya—and vill he haf a hard time buying ze sunglasses, ya bet!

VIDEO SUICIDE

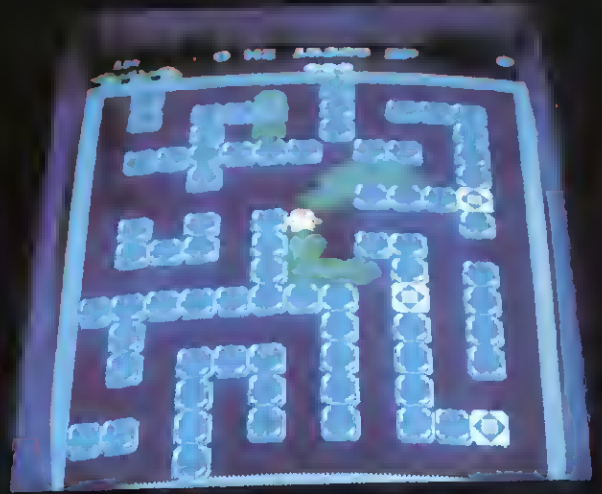
Alas, ya. Zere ist no cure for zis, the saddest al maladies of ze arcade. Here, young Otis ist truly played out, ya! He hast giffen his life ta ze Machines, ya—and they have found it wanting! Zis ist one of the most dangerous aspects of zis rough-and-tumble electronic age, ya—so be careful, ya! Remember—Doktor Omar Van Elmo ist no miracle vorker—and each game may be your last! Until later then—WATCH THE SKIES, YA!

Ze poor Vidiot ist on his last legs, Ly gally, and hast already begun losing muscle control and many, many hours of sleep. Ya—he can think al nothing but ze orcode, of getting ze tokens und more tokens, ya, und ze treatment ist indeed a difficult one! Vill he offer be happy und goy agoin? Vell, Doktor Van Elmo promises he can do half ze job but as lar ze rest—vell, even I om no miracle vorker, ya bet!



FIRE BUTTON FREAKOUT!

Dooh, ya, yo, zis ist von of ze leading molodies affecting ze arcade players, by gally, as ve can see mit zis paar Penga player. He ist deformed, yo, mit ze bad hand und stuff, you bet! Zis defarmity getzen vorse ond ze player eventually can not open ze battle of pills he must take, yo, to get his mitt back to normal! Is bad!



Photos by Omar Newman
 Make-up & Styling by
 Lindo Costilla
 Special Thanks to Mr. Honk
 Henser of Bally Midway Midwest
 for his cooperation and the use of
 his facility.



T.T.'S (TOKEN TREMORS)

ARCADE PAT OR VIDEO PINCH

Ya, ya, zis looks like no big deal but vor! is big trouble, you bet, to arcade players mit ze vives or husbands, yo! In ze old days zis vas a sign of ze "camaraderie" ze sport players vance shared smong themselves, yo! Ze arcade player today, through, he targets ze old days are no more, ya, and his gesture is misunderstood by ze other player und ze injured resulting zen make ze player vish for ze simple case ol brainlock ar heh heh -ze regained masculinity! Yo ya, like in ze old days, ze proof iz in ze pudding, so votch out, yo!



OFFING THE TUBE:

The Plasmatics' Wendy O. Williams hated her appearance on the *Tomorrow* show; and rarely lets audiences forget it.



HUNKA HUNKA FLYING SHARDS OF GLASS

BY J. KORDOSH

Even though TV sets breed everywhere throughout the world, it's almost impossible to find a practical treatise on destroying the things. Blowing 'em up. Smashing 'em into miniscule bits of flotsam and george jetsam.

Surely there are ample reasons to want to bash the tube, even if you've never seen a John Denver special. After all, there's always Lynda Carter specials, episodes of *The Real McCoys* without Pipino, *Challenge Match Fishing*, and a new season every fall. Not to mention video games, MTV, and all the *Marcus Welbys* after Kiley got married. We're talking about a mountain of frustration here, piling up year after year. Do you know how many Chicago Cubs games have been televised in the history of mankind?? Make that an Everest of frustration. Don't forget, the first successful television pickup devices were invented way back in nineteen-and-twenty-three, by the "American" (hah) inventor, Vladimir Zworykin. No kidding, that was really his name. When another bozo, Philo Farnsworth, invented the image dissector tube a few commercial breaks later, it was all over, gang. (That was really *his* name, too; look it up. Sixty years of sludge and oozing on.

Oh yeah, the reason no one wants to tell you how to murder the malevolent eye: it's *extremely dangerous*. Like, you could kill *yourself* in the act of righteous passion. As ace tube fix-it man Tim Thorn told me: "It's almost like a bomb," and I mean the thing wasn't even on. Yipes!

Despite all this, of course, the monster has been successfully destroyed by far-seeing (or pissed-off or doped-up or any combination of all three) men. Foremost on the list is the late Elvis Presley. Despite his wide renown as a singer and ersatz actor, Tupelo's favorite son enjoyed his finest moments wreaking havoc on TVs, which was (along with eating) his favorite hobby. According to Albert Goldman's "shocking" (check the price) biography, *Elvis*, the King was wont to

Drummer Carmine Appice has broken many sets merely by being broadcast on them.

quickdraw on a set "that offended him with a malfunction or a bad program." Like the 33rd rerun of *Girls, Girls, Girls?* Well, no harm done...Galdman goes on to note that El's entourage would "cover for their boss by buying all the sets he blew out, saying that Elvis had taken such a liking to the set he couldn't bear to leave without it. You could judge what Elvis's mood had been on a tour by counting the number of mechanical corpses being schlepped off the plane at Memphis."

The Big E's choice of weapons in his endless duel with the tube was apparently that all-American equalizer, the hondgun. Take *that*, Zworykin and Farnsworth! Hard to imagine that Elvis was sharp-shootin' every offensive show he saw, though...I mean, you blow up Mike Douglas 10 or 11 times, it might be fun, but after that...

Some might even doubt that Elvis reallyuffed that many sets altogether. Tim Thorn explains what happens when El Toobo meets flying lead: "It would implode first, and then explode. What I mean is that it sucks itself in and then it blows itself up. There's a neon-type gas in there (albeit in a near-vacuum); it's enough to cause quite an explosion. I've seen a picture tube drop and watched the glass explode and shoot sixty feet high." Hey, I don't care how fat Elvis was, that guy must've been one helluva fast ducker.

Better ways to bump off the beast? "There's a quarter-to-a-half-inch of glass at the front of the tube," says in-the-know Thorn. "So if you try kicking it, you'll break your foot first. Even with a baseball bat it would take a pretty good strike." But talk about long blasts! If you're hellbent an videocide, though,

Michael N. Malks



Thorn very reluctantly recommends "a good rifle and plenty of distance." Regarding Elvis' alleged shoot-first-and-change-the-station-later exploits, Thorn is dubious. "If he did it, I guarantee you he did it from a distance." Aw.

Take heart, though: TVs have been destroyed, and by regular-type people just like you and Opie Taylor. Mike Duffy, who's spent the last two-and-a-half years as the TV critic for the *Detroit Free Press*, is one such renegade. "The fact that I once destroyed a TV set was probably an inkling of what was to come in my future," explains Bad-Karma Mike. "Strapped to a set forever..." Well, the cat's gotta make a living.

"We did it at college, for fun," he explains. Hey, we didn't figure it was was homework, Mikey. "We took it up to the top of the frat house and heaved it—I think it was an RCA console model, a really big set—it had to drop 35 or 40

feet. It really made a great, loud, ka-boom!"

Now an established journalist, Duff's battles with the tube have become more sedate. "I threw a shoe at one once, during an Ohio State/Michigan game," he candidly admits, but no damage was done. "I was given a rubber brick a couple of years ago," he adds. The critic fesses up to using the rubber brick to keep himself out of the rubber room, having it especially handy for *Three's Company*, *Different Strokes*, Jerry Falwell, and *The Jeffersons*. "Duck, Wee-zee!"

And who but a TV critic is better qualified to ponder the moral value of set-destruction? Come to think of it, who else would even answer such a stupid question? "I can get into it as a sort of personal psychodrama, but I'm too much of a materialist to destroy one," Mr. Duffy says. "However, if they've blown some tubes and aren't in use, I don't see much of a problem." He does confess to having his eye on a set slated for possible future assassination; stay tuned.

You're probably wondering by now how in the world o God-fearing punk musician can add that necessary touch of showbiz pizzazz and droll social commentary by performing chain-saw surgery on a set...without *really* blowing the audience away. The secret, natch, is to render the Twonky impotent. A steady diet of PBS and *P.M. Bimidi*? Nope—the trick is to gently crack the neck of the tube (that's the part in the back), eliminating the vacuum and, thus, the blooey potential. Watch out, though: even then the big fellow will, to an extent shatter, but—hopefully—not explode.

Better to go the rubber brick route, it says here. Or be like the Elvis imitators, who only shoot radios. Better yet, forget the tube altogether and devote your life to listing the English words you can make out of Vladimir Zworykin. ■

VIEW FROM THE COUCH

What kind of person would destroy a television set? What's going on in the miscreant's mind during the heinous act? Why was *Owen Marshall* taken off the air??

To answer some of these puzzlers, we went to Chris Thomas, a psychologist who—although not professionally absorbed in the ramifications of tube-bashing—was able to shed some light on the rarely-discussed phenomenon.

"Externalized anger," Thomas said, after mulling it over for a moment. "A person with poor impulse-control (who'll do) the first thing that comes across his

mind. 'Gee, I hate the machine!' Zoom, they blow it up."

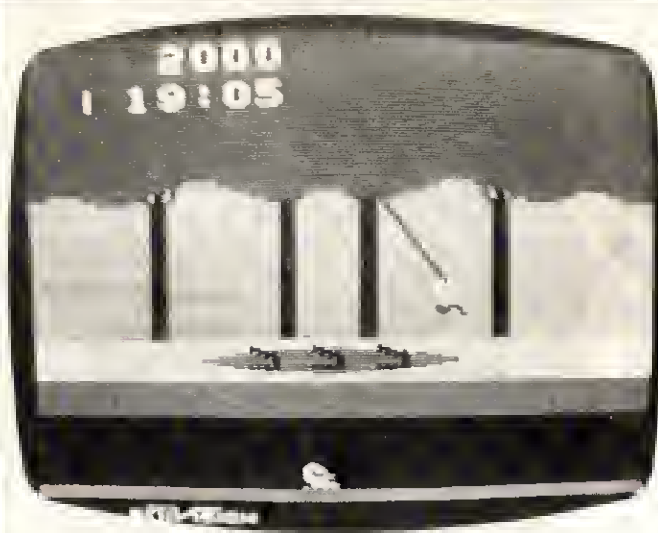
Hmm, sure sounds like Elvis so far, huh? Thomas continued: "They tend to not look beyond the moment in this type of hysterical behavior." Boy, I'd like to get him tickets to the Rush concert of his choice.

On a cheery note—and forgetting about the possibilities of being blown up or electrocuted, just for argument's sake—Thomas concluded, "I don't see where they're harming anyone. They're taking it out on an inanimate object—and have you seen some of the programs on television lately?

EVERY

WHAT'S NEW FOR VIDIOTS

HAND



PITFALL **Activision** (Atari VCS)

You've seen commercials for this one every day on the tube, and they've pretty much summed up what Pitfall is all about. "Hapless" Harry The Hero explores the Amazon in search of lost treasure and stands to get nipped in his booty unless he's quick on his feet.

What's he looking for? A diamond ring, bars of gold and silver, and your standard lost-in-the-Amazon bag o' money, far starters. Every time Harry nabs one of these goodies, points roll up and you're on your way to Big Fun in Buenos Aires.

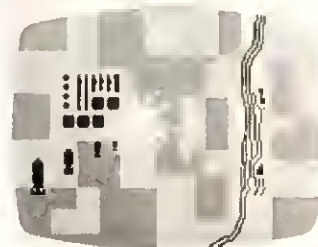
Only problem, though, is The Jungle. As Harry goes for the gusto he encounters cobras, scorpions, tar pits, quicksand, fires and crocodiles—all of which kill him *real good*, sir, yes they do. But it's OK! Harry's got *three* lives!

Harry starts his jungle jog with points (2,000 of 'em) and time (20 minutes) and it's up to you to put him through his paces. Taking his cue from another jungle king, Harry isn't beneath swinging on a few vines, and there's plenty available to carry him across the tar pits, quicksand and hungry crocodiles. Minor threats such as rolling logs are easily leaped over, and even when Harry forgets to jump, he doesn't lose his life. Just his points, and only a few at that.

There's a good bit of variety here, 255 jungle scenes in all,

and I have few complaints. Harry's three lives may not be enough for initial players; it's infuriating that, after mastering the art of crocodile head-jumping a few minutes into the game, a single slip from a vine will shoot poor Harry right back where he—and you—started from. But hey, those commercials aren't wrong. It is a good buy—or, in Harry's case, inevitably, good-bye. Life is sad, but Pitfall isn't.

Kevin Christopher



B-17 BOMBER **Mattel**

(Intellivision with
Intellivoice module)

Intellivision's new voice module is an excellent addition to an already fine system. It has to be, because the games are really difficult early on and you need all the info you can get.

B-17 kicks in with a drawling voice highly reminiscent of Andy Devine that announces "Beee 17 Baaaah-muh." I like this guy. Hope he doesn't get killed right away.

In Phase I, you press a button and on comes a strategic map of Europe displaying airfields, factories, refineries, hostile weenie stands and

other targets. Then you can whip up a preview closeup of any target to decide what you want to bomb first. The VIDIOT office? Wrong game!

Take-off can be a problem until you get the hang of the gauges. You have to adjust for speed, pitch, altitude and the bomb/fuel ratio.

Once you're in the air, the game really starts to go. The voices of your crew are all-important. They holler warnings like "Bandits, three o'clock" and "Fighters, six o'clock." These are not job applicants for you to interview, they're warnings of incoming enemy planes. They also inform you of flak in a country auctioneer's deadpan voice that sounds like Little Luke being strangled by Grandpoppy Amos.

When you reach the destination, you press for another map that shows a separate close-up of your target. Then you slam the button and it's "Bombs away!" announced in a really excited voice, as if somebody's handing out free money in the toil section.

Your score is a function of planes shot down, hits on your B-17, and targets destroyed. The only drawback is the absence of a final victory. You just complete as many missions as you can before your plane finally crashes.

These games get more life-like all the time.

John Hack



BEANY BOPPER **20th Century** (Atari VCS)

No trouble here. Just plug in the cart and there it is: flying Beans and a Bopper to bop them with. No maps of the universe, no lady computer saying she wants to lick your retina, just Beansies.

Despite the beauty of simplicity, you're going to need some live eyes and ongel

fingers. These are flying Beanies, remember. They sound like a herd of commuter helicopters trying to pollinate a microwave dish. They've got great personalities and they're really fun to kill as they zoom around the screen, bouncing randomly off an ever-changing landscape of computer-nerf threats.

Object of the game is to earn points by stunning and devouring Beanies and other flying objects with your Bopper. This can be a problem, because the big Bop can fire its stun gun only in the direction it's facing. Makes for a lot of

mad activity as you work them Beanies for a seeing-eye hit.

Once you get the hang of boppin', there ain't no stoppin'. You get to wipe out frog-bombs, tweety-planes, parachuting Drano personnel and "Faces." It's a riot, a "trendy atrocity" as Mike Davis would say.

Top bops are the benign-looking Bouncing Orange Eyes, which dance all over the screen like a follow-the-dot cartoon of "Send In The Clowns." Great sound effects too, particularly the stunning of a Beanie. *Hum-splat.*

Rick Johnson



NIGHT STALKER
Mattel
(Intellivision)

Playing Night Stalker for the first time was the most excitement I've experienced since the night Detroit reached the one-millionth pound of weenies for the poor.

The instructions look as imposing as a math textbook in Slavic Braille on first examination, but it's actually a fairly easy learn.

The story is the usual little man running around in a maze overrun with spiders, bats and several different types of evil robots. None of them are James Garner's baby.

The goal is to rack up points by gunning down the aforementioned bad acts. But watch it, because the higher your score gets, the less sense of humor displayed by the mechanical villains. They start out glad-to-be-gone and run

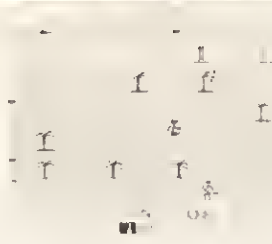
through a wacky series of blue, white, black and finally invisible color schemes. Only the bullets can be seen on that last one.

Intellivision's smooth control disc adapts well to this game. The whole controller checks in at about the weight of Maud Aimee's brain, and the disc itself can be driven with the force of a mere thumbnail.

One minor quibble (yes, quibble). Although the maze has a high ambush factor, it could stand a little enlarging. The characters are also kinda pokey. They will never be billed for speed.

And to answer all the little campers who've asked, Night Stalker has nothing to do with the movie or television show of the same name. Too bad, Darren McGavin's ears would've made great on-screen characters.

Steve Kenyon



RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX
Imagic
(Atari VCS)

The trend for more complicated games is getting a little ridiculous if you ask me. Some are fun, but others can put you to sleep even faster than the 38% quicker knockout rate claimed by new Sominex 2.

Riddle of the Sphinx is one of those. "These are dark times," the program instructions begin. Darker than you think, guys. For starters, the player—as Son of Pharaoh—must learn to recognize over 30 different symbols ranging from nomad hodads to sacred treasures such as the gilded goblet and a paper towel personally touched by Rosemary Clooney.

First, S.O.P. looks around, checking out the scene and proceeds to "gird his loins." Girds, no kidding. He doesn't like computer hieroglyphics any better than me.

Are you all girded? OK, here we go. S.O.P., AKA Prince—in his frankly adorable red trunks—wants to reach the Temple of Ra. Ra, ra, ra—that's the spirit we have here!

Naturally, he's gonna run into some trouble. He has to fight off all kinds of thieves and worse, armed only with a sling shot. All the while, you have to keep an eye on his inner-strength score as well as thirst and wound ratings. Thirst and wounds, how life itself!

Prince has to pick up a few items along the way. No hamburgers in this one. He needs stuff like a shield, staff, tannis leaf and of course, The Jug. Also on his shopping list are big spades and ankhs. All he needs is a bumper sticker that says Ankh If You Love Pharaoh.

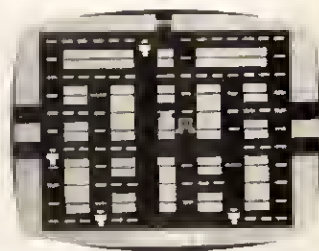
Our pal Prince eventually runs into the Astrologer. "Avoid youthful folly," he intones.

Yank out the cartridge? No such luck. Instead, he gives S.O.P. a few riddles about pyramids, temples and Isis' opinion on cheap TV shows for children.

Eventually, Prince hits fun city, Ra. Here he makes offerings of the junk he's picked up along the way and hopes the Big Guy is in a good mood. The game ends when the hero croaks or the riddle is solved.

If you can't figure out the riddle, Imagic provides an address you can write to ("Son Of Toth," CA.) for the right answer. Ask 'em what the hell's going on while you're at it.

Rick Johnson



LOCK 'N' CHASE
Mattel
(Intellivision)
&
(M Network/Atari VCS)

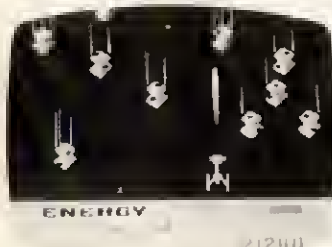
Maybe I'm nuts, but it looks like Mattel designed a better game for the Atari System than they did for their own. M Network's figures here are a little sharper, movement a bit easier and the screen itself a lot more arcade-like than Intellivision's, a surprise, because I'd usually vote for Intellivision hands down.

Anyway, in either format, Lock 'n' Chase is Basic Variation 81-B of your standard Pac-Maze: you move a thief through the corridor of a bank as police dart after you and try to walk away with as much loot as possible, avoiding the cops at all costs. In Mattel's own words: "KEEP ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE LAW! LOCK DOORS AND THROW COPS OFF YOUR TRAIL!" Admirable sentiments, guys, and it brings up the only interesting deviation in this version of Mazeness—you actually have the power to slam a door in a cop's face and get away with it!

Too bad the novelty wears thin. While Lock 'n' Chose may at first seem very fast-moving, when you finally get the hang of dorting in and out of the corridors (which shouldn't take too long if you're well-mazed) and easily eat the gold coins (Intellivision) or bars (M Network) while avoiding the cops, you leave the empty moze through the top door and find...that you're exactly where you started again, though things move a tiny bit faster. There's no real sense of motion or achievement, in other words, so it's kind of like playing Pac-Man without ever moving from the First Pattern.

No big deal of a game. M Network seems to be pretty hot so far, though, and it should be interesting to see what they'll cook up next. But if it's Space Invaders...I'm leaving...

Kevin Christopher



MEGAMANIA
Activision
(Atari VCS)

Here's a recent graduate of the Space Invaders school that's considerably more difficult but has a much better sense of humor.

Megamania demands the popular hit-and-run style of play. Anticipation is the key and the attacking objects move in no predictable manner, at least at first. They charge down at different angles and often jerk out of place without warning, like Arlene Golonko's features.

The attackers are even more fun to blast than usual: retinous hamburgers, monster cookies, insidious radiol tires, accelerating steam irons and the ever-deadly flying bow ties.

Wickedest feature of Megomania is the "MegoCycle."

When a brutal slice of meat loaf or flaming deathburger drops off the bottom or side of the screen, you're not done with it. Why do I think you already know that? It reappears in an orbital path that continuously increases its speed. You might think it's hard to get worked up over a bow tie at first—even one with a cruel sense of the absurd—but by the second or third attock, you hate 'em.

"Don't Panic" soy the unin-

tentionally funny instructions. I'm sorry, but when assaulted senselessly by a lurid coven of radiol tires, I get a little nervous. But if you're one of the non-ponicking variety and can rock up 45,000 points or more, you get to join Activision's MegoMoniocs fan club. Simply send them a picture of your score and you get an official M.M. emblem.

Big deal, it's probably a disabled burger in chains.

Steve Kenyon



**SMURF:
RESCUE IN
GARGAMEL'S CASTLE**
Coleco
(Colecovision)

All right! Here's your chance to participate in the utter glory of the Smurf Kingdom!

Here's what you've gotta do: leave your house, jump around and duck a lot, walk through a field, in a cove, through another field until you're in Evil Gargamel's actual castle—and then, when you're there, you must risk the demons, skulls and spiders and rescue Smurfette from Gargamel's evil clutches! What a deal!

This game is great! First of all, it's fun to watch—you get to be Smurf and can make him walk around, which is undeniably great, plus you can make him jump up and down or duck. The reason he's gotta jump is that there's all these

white fences blocking his path—and then, after that, there's a bunch of hills and actual clumps of grass too high for the lovable Smurf! So he's gotta jump over all those, and then—well, you'll find out!

The point is, though, this game is great because you don't have to make him jump or duck if you don't want to! It's great! When you play this game at the highest level, birds come after Smurf, and if you just walk him right into 'em, it's hilarious! POW! THUD! OW! If you really want fun, he can be impaled on the spiked fence! Imagine poor Smurfette in treacherous Gargamel's castle—she's in terror, and meanwhile you could care less! Look out for that fence, Smurf! AIEEE!!!! Oh no, a bird! POW!! Watch out for that spike!! AAAGH!!!

You can get tired of this game real fast, but otherwise it's great.

Louis Sleagle



DEMONS TO DIAMONDS
Atari
(Atari VCS)

They said this game is for kids, but that makes it sound dumb and it isn't. It's the sort of game you'd want to give any beginner in home vid games—it's simple, you get immediate results, and the satisfaction of blowing demons up can hardly be overestimated.

The objective here is life itself's—"score as many points as possible while losing as few lives as possible." Easier said than done, but it isn't exactly difficult to score big with this game. At least at first.

Premise: you're at the bottom of the screen in your laser base, and above you appear floating demons. Hit your color and get points—hit the other color and get skulls. The skulls, you see, shoot back—and therein lies the danger. Whenever your own colored demon is hit by your own laser it changes into a bright diamond—hit that and you score bonus points.

Two players are no problem. Each person's paddle controls their own loser base, one at the top and one at the bottom of the screen and each shoots for his or her own colored demons. Either player gets points for shooting diamonds, and whoever is fittest on the drow wins biggest.

The foster you get, the foster they come. It's a variation of Space Invaders of course—what isn't, if it doesn't eat dots—and it's probably easier for smaller hands than larger ones. But then so are lots of other things, too.

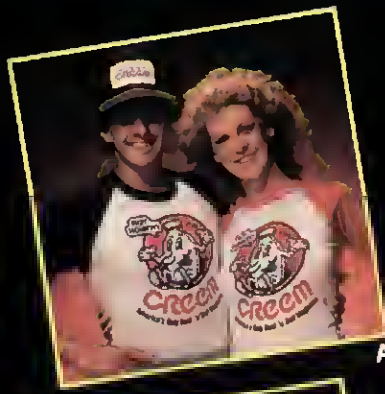
If I had two kids, I'd buy it in a minute. And one of 'em would have to wait to play.

Kevin Christopher

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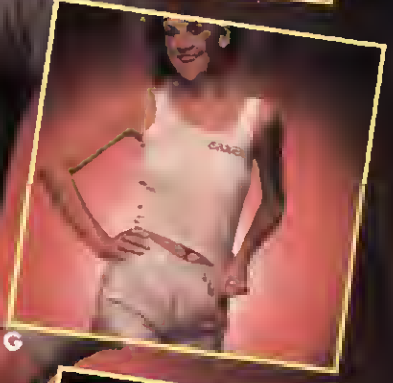
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ROCK VIDIOLCY

A group of young people are dancing in a dark, dimly lit club or bar. The scene is captured in a candid, slightly blurred style, suggesting movement and energy. The lighting is low, with some blue and red spotlights visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is that of a lively, late-night social gathering.

But what would Marshall McLuhan say?



FORCED TO WATCH MTV!

BY DAVE DIMARTINO

The rapid acceptance of MTV throughout wired-up America proves three things. First, that there's Big Bucks at stake in the rock 'n' roll biz no matter what the record companies are sabbing about. Secondly, whoever gets on the bandwagon first with the most (which is what MTV has done) does best, at least initially. And, thirdly, most rock 'n' roll bands are made up of morons—which you probably already knew—and their videos are proving it faster than their records do.

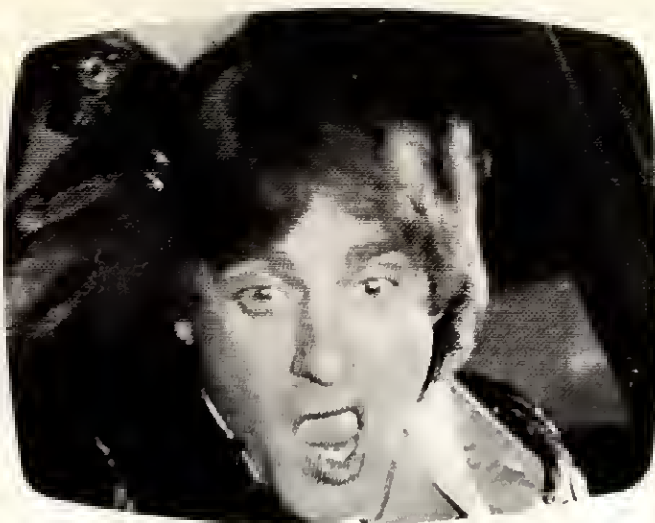
Aside from the few intelligent bands who were video-conscious way back when—Blondie is high on the list—most groups have finally realized that there's a vast untapped audience out there in TV-land, in places where they can't afford to perform. And if these bands can't get their music played on America's horrendous FM "rock" stations, they can at least shoot for a video sufficiently clever enough to be cabled in to those places.

Which is exactly what's been happening. When enough retail stores in Smalltown, USA reported to the trades that they were selling a

lot more Adam Ant, Missing Persons or Shoes albums than they were hearing on the radio, and when it was deduced that these same Smalltowns were wired in for MTV, Big Biz stepped in and was finally officially interested.

What's ironic about watching the major record companies' attempts to muscle in is the inescapable fact that their largest selling acts—and thus the newer acts they've groomed for stardom in the exact same image—are BOZOS, and if ever in a million years I might have wanted to buy an album by .38 Special, all I had to do was watch the awful video of "Caught Up In You" to be instantly cured. Nick Lowe once said you can't shine shit, and he should know.

To drive the point home to me even farther, I sat down and watched six consecutive hours of MTV programming recently and was amazed at what I saw. Bands I like (Squeeze) had disappointing videos ("Black Coffee In Bed"). People I don't like (Billy Joel) actually had pretty nifty ones ("Pressure"), and bands I don't care about one iota (Hughes-Thrall)(?) I care even less about. For all the "hip" complaining of how terrible



Eddie Maney's "Shakin'"—Only later would he realize the tremendous influence Mr. Weatherbee held.



Squeeze's "Black Coffee In Bed"—a good song and a boring video aren't the greatest combination.



Wall of Voodoo's "Mexican Radio"—pass that *Who Sell Out* cover; where's Ann Margret when we need her?

MTV's programming is, in Detroit at least, there's no FM station that'll touch Altered Images or Thomas Dolby, and in six hours I saw them, along with the Clash, Roxy Music, the Fixx, Duran Duran, Joe Jackson, Adam Ant, Peter Gabriel, Spandau Ballet, Bow Wow Wow and a whole bunch of other well known "wave" bands that AOR rarely touch, at this point. The format's still loose enough where they actually need video filler, and in the six hours I watched, promo videos of nobodies like Duke Jupiter, the Producers, the Torney-Spencer Band and Randy Meisner certainly qualified.

As more videos are produced, of course, there'll be no more room for filler videos. Or, more importantly, boring ones, of which MTV now has more than its share. Do you think Holl & Oates' "Man-eater" will be a hit solely on the basis of its ho-hum video? No way. It fills the need for a new video from Holl & Oates, and in a year or so that simply won't be enough. Not when there's better videos by David Bowie or Wall Of Voodoo to look at instead. And the opposite extreme is choreographer Toni Basil, so firmly entrenched in the video-is-all sentiment that her first record overseas was a video album, with its vinyl counterpart seemingly released as an afterthought. She needn't have bothered. It may look great, but it sounds like it can't be shined.

But is that the point? Does it even matter if the music is good? It might not—image has always been central to rock 'n' roll, which is why rock mags write more about the Stroy Cats, the Clash and Go-Go's than about the Johnny Van Zant Band or Konsos. Rack Video will make the point that yes, the Go-Go's are an all-woman rock 'n' roll band, the Stroy Cats do have tattoos, aren't they funny looking?—and Joe Strummer had better realize his new Mohawk haircut is not viewed as a temporary aberration as far as the new, MTV-cobled fans are concerned.

I remember, though, a friend of mine who once saw a Nino Hagen video at a

Detroit club. He told me "it looked like she was in hell," thought it was great, but couldn't remember the name of the song. The implication was he could care less about the music but liked the pictures, which meant he'd happily videotape the tune if he could, but would never buy the record. Which I'm not too sure CBS Records would be thrilled about, though Toni Basil might give it a grin.

Anyway, so far I've spotted five approaches to making rock videos, each of varying success, depending on the artists involved:

1) EXCITING LIVE FOOTAGE—This is ultimately going to backfire on those bands dumb enough to think live clips are *all they need* in the rock-vid medium. I never had any opinion whatsoever about April Wine, for example, until I saw them perform on TV twice in one month. Not only are they very ugly—but now, I wouldn't blink an eye if they were suddenly run over by a fleet of Canadian buses. **Bad move, guys.**

2) OBVIOUSLY FAKED LIVE FOOTAGE—Take the Police running through "Don't Stand So Close To Me," the one where they're dressed like schoolteachers and cutely mouthing the words. As it happens, I like the band, so at least at first I found the video interesting. Unfortunately, by the third run or so I started to realize that the whole thing looked pretty shoddy and wasn't being taken seriously by anybody. If the joke were thin for the Police, you think Styx has *any chance at all* when they pull the same stunt?

3) POSSIBLY RELATED, OBVIOUSLY FAKED FOOTAGE—I've watched the Fixx's "Stand Or Fall" video six or seven times and all I know is a) some horse keeps falling, b) some guy keeps looking at this picture of a woman and c) occasionally he starts singing to *nobody at all*. Plus, it looks like he's wearing a World War I outfit, which would be great if it made any sort of sense, but it doesn't. Reaction: huh?

4) ART PUT TO MUSIC—Most tastefully represented by Jim Rizzi's great "Genius Of Love" video by the Tom Tom

Club, this type of video shows style, class and a thorough understanding of the new rock-vid medium.

5) **UTTER NONSENSE**—Twice in six hours I watched Carlos Santana walk around a Mardi Gras while "Hold On" played in the background. If you want to ignore the fact that the lead singer is never seen during the entire proceeding even though his voice dominates the song more than his boss's guitar, or that Carlos Santana won't keep Richard Gere or Richard Dreyfuss out of work, can you deny that the entire video only lacks someone announcing "It's Miller time!" when it's all over? Blech.

BEST

PETER GABRIEL: "Shock The Monkey"—Gabriel's flair for theatrics was evident since his Genesis days, but this vid absolutely takes the cake—it's totally stunning, right up there with David Bowie's "Ashes To Ashes." With an atmosphere that evokes *The Avengers*, that *Twilight Zone* voodoo episode you must remember and lots more, it's worth watching over and over.

THOMAS DOLBY: "Rodlo Silence"—Tastefully done, with a cameo appearance by friend Lene Lovich, this vid will probably generate Dolby a hell of a lot more record sales than Capitol Records has.

BILLY JOEL: "Pressure"—Though it's safe to say BJ is low on the list of charismatic personalities, this heavily Poltergeist-influenced vid is peculiar enough to belong in the permanent collection. It raises the point that a "bad" song can have a "good" video and thus be worth watching repeatedly. Only complaints: in one interlude, Billy Boy is a quiz show panelist and a computer screen gives out Personal Data about all three panelists. If BJ is such an egomaniac he's compelled to list his age as "29," you'd think he would've noticed his computer screen misspelled the word "INTERESTS" twice. Chalk up another 50 grand...

ADAM ANT: Goody Two Shoes—Like him or not, his Antness thinks visually more

often than not, which means his vids are always pretty hot. This one offers a bonus appearance of the restaurant owner from *Victor/Victoria* and Adam's own statement of sexual purpose. Simple, not confusing, and very effective.

PSYCHEDELIC FURS: "Love My Woy"—Another one simply done, this is a tasteful presentation of the band performing amid a background of swirling clouds. Slightly anachronistic—if the Strawberry Alarm Clock had thought of it, they would've done it too—it gets points for not detracting from the song at all, and in fact complementing it superbly. Good stuff.

WORST

FLEETWOOD MAC: "Hold Me"—Very arty—the band is out there in the desert somewhere—but aside from offering Stevie Nicks a chance to fret about her newest chiffon skirt, it doesn't do much for anybody. A waste, and boring.

JOHNNY VAN ZANT: "It's You"—You could give these guys Beatle haircuts and this song would sound like the Raspberries; too bad the band deserves raspberries for being the ugliest critters in need of euthanasia in six whole hours of MTV programming. Unimaginative, dull, and Barfus Maximus.

EDDIE MONEY: "I Think I'm In Love" and "Shakin'"—At first Eddie looks like Archie Andrews, but midway through "Shakin'," Eddie's "girl" suddenly looks like Vanessa Del Rio and Eddie himself could pass for a member of the Beagle Boys, if he'd only keep his cheeks full...

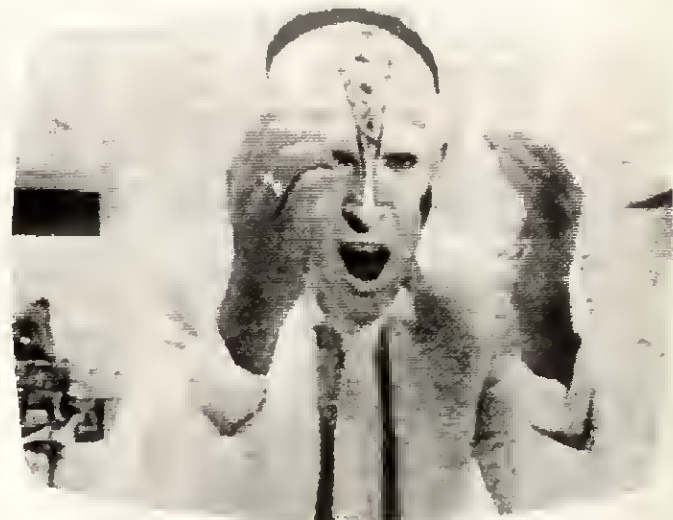
TRIUMPH: "Magic Power"—I suppose if you liked Triumph, this might be good. But I don't.

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH: "Southern Cross"—Aside from the fact that this is the worst song they've ever done, this video stinks because a) it's another reason for rapidly-balding Steve Stills to wear a hat and b) I don't like big sailboats. And someone tell Crosby to lay off the fruit pies... ■



WILLIAM JOEL
AGE: 29
OCCUPATION:
COMPUTER
SOFTWARE
INTERESTS:
fast bikes,
cooking, water
sports, satellite

Billy Joel's "Pressure"—The name of his next album? *Sleeping Thru Spelling.*



Peter Gabriel's "Shock The Monkey"—The best video of the bunch, and we want more...



Adam Ant's "Goody Two Shoes"—why do their mothers all dress them so funny?



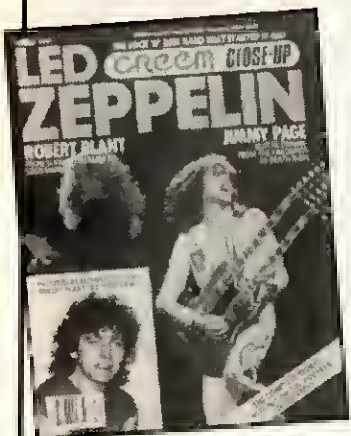
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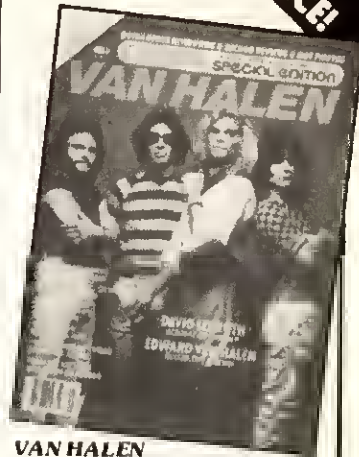
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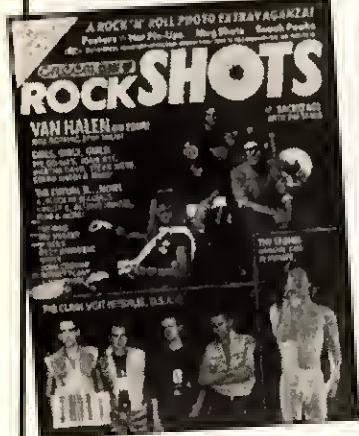
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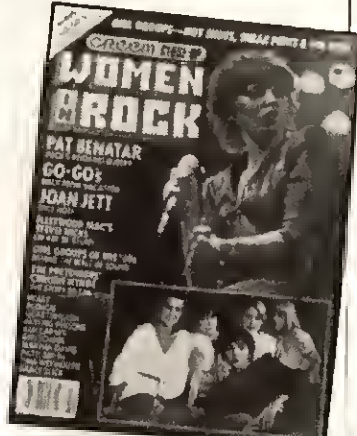
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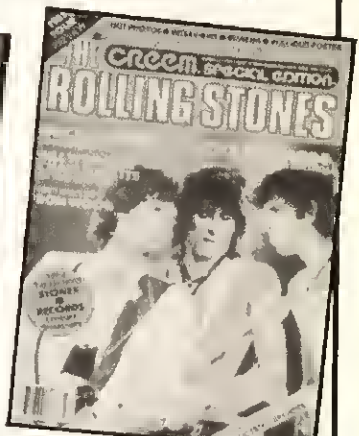
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CAPT. VIDEO

I have an Atari Video Game System, my best friend has an Intellivision System. He says that while most game carts are made for either one system or the other, there are some that will play on either system. He's usually wrong about everything else, could he be right about this?

—Alex Lee, Memphis, TN

•Your friend is about one-third right. There are no actual game carts that can plug into both the Intellivision and Atari home game systems. But there are some games that are available for both systems on their respective cartridge configurations. For instance, Caleca makes two versions for Donkey Kong, one for the Intellivision computer, the other for Atari. Like VHS and Beta in the video tape field, the video game manufacturers have created their own standardizations, which means that your favorite home game and your favorite home machine may not be compatible.

Several years ago I bought a Sony Betamax SL-7200 video tape recorder. I want to buy a new Betamax machine, but want to make sure that I can still play back my Beta I tapes on the new machine. Is this possible?

—John Simpson, Brooklyn, NY

•Most new Betamax machines will play back Beta I tapes, none of them will record in the Beta I mode. Both the Sony SL-5100 and SL-2500 will play Beta I, II and III recording speeds. The Sony SL-5000 will not play back Beta I. If you have any doubts about the ability of the new machine to play back Beta I, bring in one of your old tapes to the store and check to see that it plays before you buy.

I listen to most of my music on audio cassettes. Recently I've seen some new cassette recorders with two cassette decks built-in and a "high speed dubbing" mode. Does this work?

—Carol Anderson, Sonto Monica, CA

•Sure it works, everything the Japanese make works for at least a week after you buy it. High speed dubbing in these cassette machines isn't really "high" speed, by the way. What it usually means is that the machine will make cassette copies

twice as fast as normal in the high speed mode. So if you have a 60-minute cassette, you can make a copy in 30 minutes. Real high speed machines, as found in tape dubbing studios, make copies in three or four minutes. The quality of any high speed cassette copy is never as good as a copy made from one machine to another in "real time." But if you play high speed copies on a portable cassette player, you'll most likely never notice the difference.

When I bought my Sony Walkman II, the man at the store said I could play it through my stereo system. How do I go about doing that?

—John Jacowski, Maitland, FL

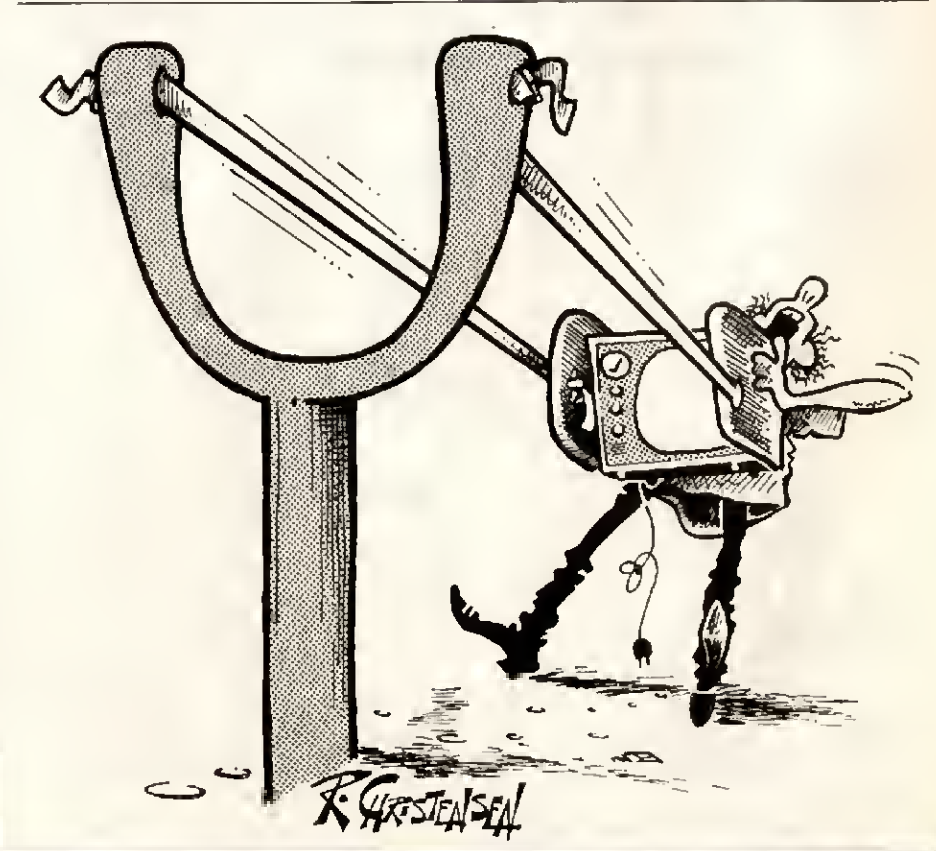
•All you need to play tapes on your Walkman, or any other cassette portable, through your stereo is the proper connecting cable. In the case of the Walkman II, you'll need a cable with a stereo mini-plug on one end and two RCA phono plugs on the other end (assuming your stereo has phono plug inputs). Be sure that you plug the red phono plug into the

right input and the other into the left input so that the stereo image is correct. You may have to check several stores before you find this cable, but it is available at most well-stocked electronic stores. By the way, you'll find that the Walkman II sound through a stereo system is quite good. If by any chance you get a hum when playing tapes through this set-up, it's either because you're using the AC adaptor or you haven't set it up right. The hum will go away if you use the Walkman on batteries.

The batteries ran out on my Casio CA-90 digital watch. The store where I bought it doesn't replace batteries in the watches they sell. What do I do now?

—Robert Holmes, New York, NY

•Throw the watch away and buy a new one. At least that's what I had to do with my lost Casio. This is a real problem that some consumer group, or the Federal government, or somebody should follow up on. If you spend enough time searching around you will probably find someone with the machine (yup, machine) to replace the watch batteries. That is, if they know how to do it right. I once spent a good deal of time trying to get a new battery for my Casio, including calling the Casio company (not at all helpful), finally found somebody to replace the battery, they did it, and presto, the watch wasn't working at all three



days later. This, I think, is why Timex is still in business.

I want to make copies from one VHS video recorder to another. The video in and out ports on both machines look like normal phono inputs/outputs on my stereo, can I use a regular phono to phono cable to interconnect the two video recorders?

—Alan Dawson, Lenox, MA

•You could, but the picture will not be very good on the copy. Even though the input and output terminals are phanos on many VHS machines, you need a special dubbing cable to ensure that the picture doesn't fall apart as you make copies. These cables are shielded and of the proper ohmage to ensure that the video signal is carried from machine A to machine B. They only cost a few dollars and can be purchased at most video stores. If you can't get the cables, you can make copies by going out of machine A on the coaxial cable output that normally goes from the machine to the TV set and instead of plugging that output into the VHF in of your TV set plug it into the VHF in of the second machine. The picture won't be quite as good on the copy as if you went video to video from machine, but in most cases you

won't be able to tell the difference.

My dad is thinking of buying a home computer. I'd be happier if he'd get a video system, but he says that video games are available for most home computers. What do you think?

—M. Wickmon, Derby, PA

•I'd rather have a home computer than a video game system any day. But your dad isn't exactly right. While most home computer companies do offer some video games for their computers, the games are not necessarily going to be terrific. It depends on what computer he buys. If he gets the Atari 800 for instance, you can plan on being able to get a wide array of games, including many of your arcade favorites. If he's spending big bucks and getting on Apple, you'll find that there are really complex, slightly incredible games that will dump into the Apple. If, on the other hand, he gets a Timex/Sinclair or Vic Commodore, the games available aren't all that many. But frankly, once you've got a computer on-line in your house, you'll find that game playing isn't half the fun of a computer, and that you'll spend more time working out programs for the computer. So I'd say your dad is making the right choice.

What's the difference between having a disc drive or a cassette recorder for information storage with a home computer?

—Morcio Wiseman, Detroit, MI

•A disc drive holds more information and works faster than a cassette storage system. But keep in mind that the memory capacity of the computer itself can only handle 8K or 16K of memory; it doesn't matter if the disc drive can handle 64K. But if you have a choice when getting a computer system, you'll find that a disc drive (or actually two of them, ideally) is going to give you much more flexibility. Many home computer systems can function with either a disc drive or cassette recorder, and it's possible to upgrade from the cassette to the disc when you can afford it by buying an add-on disc drive. Check the specs on any home computer before you buy.

I see ads for new color TV sets that claim to have "105 channels—cable ready." Does this mean I won't need my cable box and that I'll be able to get the Home Box Office channel without the cable box?

—Richard Manno, Hartford, CT

•Sorry, but no free movies. The new generation of "cable ready" TVs will eliminate the need for the cable box on all channels except for the scrambled pay channels like HBO, Cinemax, or Showtime. These channels still require the decoding circuits found inside the cable control box.

I keep seeing ads for "stereo" TV. Is there such a thing?

—Jennifer Gatson, Dallas, TX

•Yes and no—how's that far on answer? Some cable channels now offer stereo sound, such as The Movie Channel and MTV. But in order to get the stereo sound your cable company has to install a special output at your cable box which then goes to your stereo FM tuner, where you tune in the stereo sound and play it through your FM stereo system like it was another FM stereo radio station. By the way, there are also some VHS video recorders that can record in stereo sound, so if you have the stereo movie or music channel on your cable and a stereo VHS you can record video with stereo sound for later playback through your TV set and hi-fi system.

Got a headache? Or just a question about timely technology? Either way, we may be able to help. Just write CAPT. VIDIOT, c/o VIDIOT, 187 S. Woodward Avenue, Birmingham, Michigan 48011, and we'll see what we can do.

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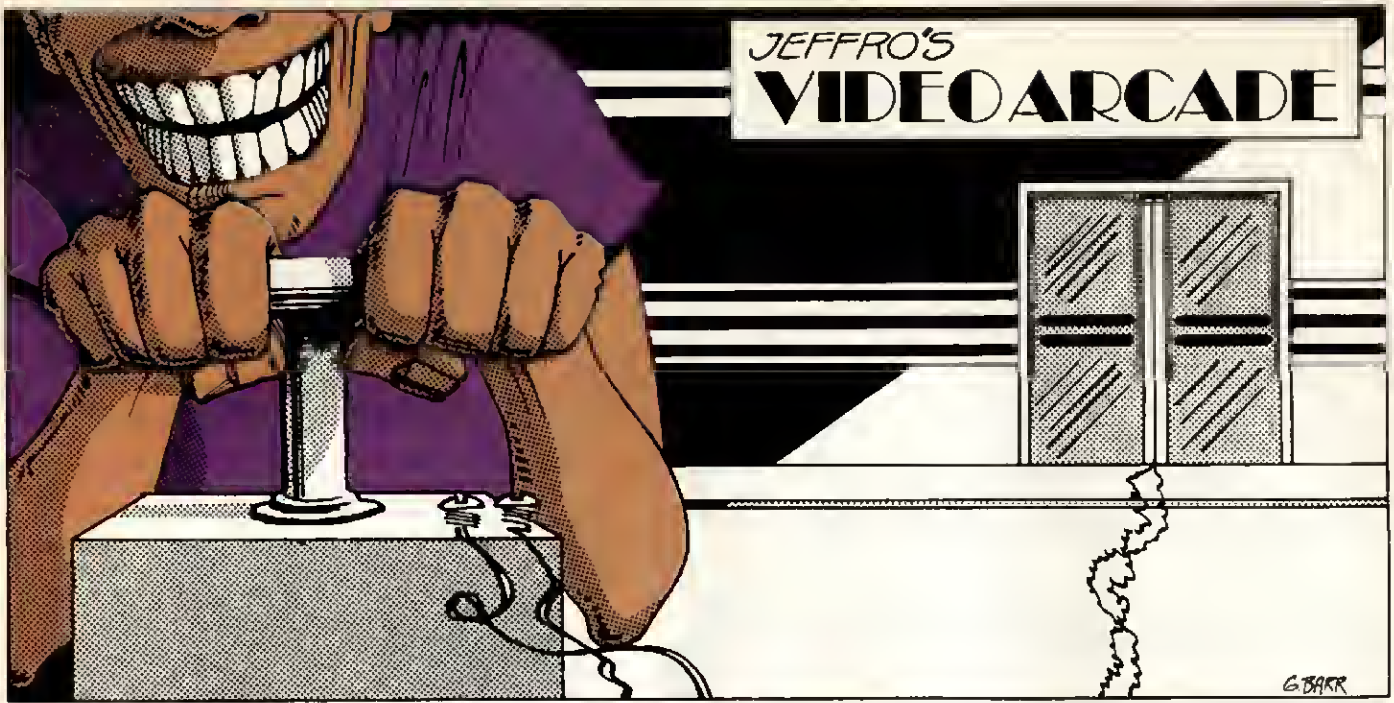
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Why I HATE Arcades

BY JOHN RICHARDSON

I love video games, I really do. I used to love raccoons more, but what can I say? The times are...uh...getting more differenter, as Bobby Dylan once sang.

The only thing wrong with vid games is vid arcades. They're the only place to try the newest games or decide if you want to plunk down 35 smackers on that just-came-out cartridge. But for some of us, they are doom.

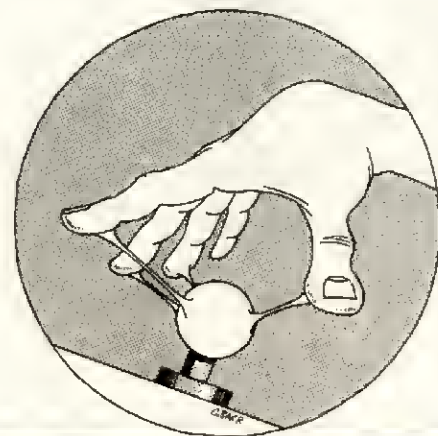
Probably, it's just old fuddy-duddies (yes, fuddy-duddies) like me who can't take the heat and don't even know where the kitchen is. And don't care.

Do you? So what if you don't. Are you all commies or what? Too busy whipping that poor ape, I bet. Put down the banana substitute for a second and check out these misanthropic babblings, will ya? Then you can help us figure out a way to get rid of this guy, OK?

Why do I hate video arcades?

Kids—A recently released national crime report stated that 100 American children are reported missing every day. I'd be willing to wager at least 99 of 'em achieved the status of "missing" by getting wise in video arcades. How do they deserve death? Let us count the ways: 1) *Funny Noises*—where they think up these chorming sounds, I can't imagine. The old days of Bronx cheers

and simulated hippo farts are long gone—nowadays it's collapsing bridge spans, barge mishaps or, worse, imitations of actual vid games. Nothing like having some brat doing a perfect impression of *low-on-missiles*, *Bernice* just when you're about to finally destroy all human life at *Missile Command*. 2) *Laughter*—doesn't count as funny noise, because it's not funny. Here I am, doggedly plunking in my hard-earned porno quarters while they gather in a semicircle behind me to titter (yes, titter), guffaw and fall on the floor in hysterical lamb-climaxes at my foolish attempt to grab the first hammer on *Donkey Kong*. If I had a real hammer... 3) *Staring*—even worse than laughing because of the unbearable tension it produces. I



understand how tuff 'n' all it's been for them, being raised by television, cruel world, etc., etc., but it's not my fault they were born. Well, most of 'em. 4) *Pranks*—I thought getting a hotfoot was pretty funny the first 47 times, but the famous garden hose and firecrackers incident ruined my sense of humor forever. 5) *The Bitter Nudge*—too twerpy to be a prank, too woos to spell aggro. Now, I'm pretty good with my elbows, especially at the starting gate of church rummoge sales. But how do you compete with *Wonder Years* weens who tell their Moms on you when all you did was yank out the plug and suggest another use for the outlet instead? 6) *Just Listening To Their Stupid, Obnoxious Squirrelly Voices*—as they whine about the tragic misfortunes of their little lives—like missing a wheelie and getting snarfed up by a county leafsucker truck.

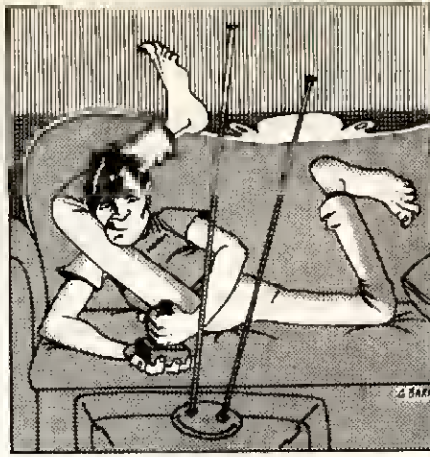
Environment—Here's a true no-win deal. Arcades are either so hot your eyeballs sweat when you blink, or cold enough for Adlai Stevenson to make stupid remarks about Cuban missiles. Some sodistic owners like to pipe in the ugliest music they can locate, full-blost from suspended speakers. Records like *The Somerset Strings'* delightful *Music For Ironing* or tape loops of "Fin Repair Sequence." Colored lights are another biggie. I mean, if I wanted the feel of dodging blow darts in a rain forest, I'd go to Fort Apache. Not to

forget the obligatory busted barstools that create pass-out vibes when wobbled.

Attendants—This strange and incredible breed is related to the human race only by rumor. What most of 'em are is a bunch of rejects. They live in one disgusting room in a crumbling boarding house owned by probable transsexuals with tattoos of rubber gloves all over their bodies. The only color in their white-on-white complexion comes from their personal putting greens of nose hair. Totally flunked shaving, regardless of body part. Will never remind anyone of Lola staddling a bat rack.

Nuns—Arcades are not jet airplanes. You can tell because they're not required to have a nun present at all times. I don't know where they're all at, but I'm pretty sure they're off somewhere scanning weenies for razor blades. Let's keep 'em out of our rooms—you can't really elbow 'em properly through all that nun-padding.

Vid Jackeys—I'm sure you're familiar with this type—the kind of instantly-offended prima-hotshot you wish had never returned from Viet Nam. He needs a flagpole warehouse for all his fancy footwork and choreography. Often, no part of his body touches the machine or the floor. You need elbow pads just to play next to him, if you dare. The last couple of players who interfered



with his game are now unwilling participants in the federal government's Witness Relocation Program.

Rules and Regulations—The most aggravating of all arcade quirks is the inevitable list of official rules. *Shirt and shoes required*, they say. Yeah, right. I always rub my sweaty chest on Tron for the Gaylord Perry Effect. No abusing games. Hey, I don't wanna go blind! Some are extra stupid. No loitering. Hell, don't they know playing these games is just expensive loitering? No garbage on floor. Yes there is! And coming soon: *No bleaching or dying in machines*.

Malfunctioning Games—I've had

a neurotic fear of busted games ever since I ran into an Asteroids machine where the meteors and space itself were reversed. Very unnerving. What do you do when you run into a baseball game where you can't even hit an inside-the-park single? Kick it? Better not do it when the attendant is looking, if you ever want to use your fingers for anything besides beating laundry on a rock.

Canadians—It's not nice to make fun of these poor unfortunates. After all, as Ward once told June, "You've got to realize there're such things as Gilberts in the world." You have to admit, though, it's really funny watching them try to figure out what the joystick is for. They think it's something you wear underneath the bottom half of a hockey uniform.

Accustomed to home games—This one's simple—I can't play standing up. I'm so used to scrunching my body into fetal boo constrictor position on my sofa that when I'm at an arcade, my body keeps trying to squat. This can be very embarrassing, especially if you're in the habit of playing hand held games in the john and you forget you're in public.

Personal—I have this uh, "problem" that I haven't told the furnace repairman or even my druggist about. It's this: being an old-timer, I got one of the eight ounce bladders they were giving out way back before the 12-ounce can was born. Worse yet, I love all carbonated beverages equally and with undying devotion. Anyway, the vast majority of arcades have facilities for such questions of energy exchange, but let me say to the few that don't: excitement causes accidents a one-mop shop should avoid.

Carry Over—The dreaded C.O. effect is a vidgame menace that's received little press. Ever come out after a gruelling afternoon of Frogger, then get into your car and try to jump the first lady frog you see? Not only is this dangerous, but in real life, you *don't* get points.

Better Places To Play—at least ten: bars, bowling alleys, taverns, gas stations, establishments where alcoholic beverages are served, police line-ups, liquor stores and Ben Pupko's House Of Bedspreads.

Faad and Refreshments—You can't win on this subject. Some places, they'll stone you with the bleached skulls of players unfortunate enough to rack up 18 hours without a break if they so much as spot a Sen. Other places, there're so many cherry, tea and tough tobacco stains, you need a case of Efferdent before it's safe to touch the coin slot. What does a sticky joystick suggest to you, anyway?

"John Richardson" is the pen name of a former Illinois-based media critic who prefers to remain anonymous due to, in his words, "fear of high places." ■





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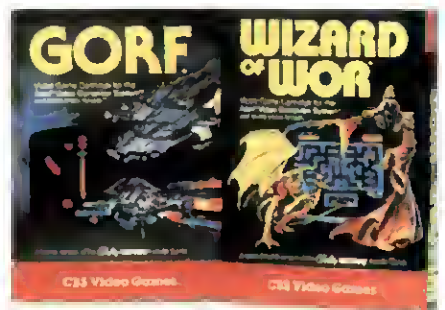


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CBS Video Games

Are you up to the challenge?