

THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman

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Two Dollars

ACTIVISION has announced a new Atari-compatible game, SKY JINKS, to be released in November. Designed by Bob Whitehead, this is a single-player game that creates the experience of high stakes air racing. It features a spritely P41 airplane racer which must fly through a slalom course of red and blue pylons, avoiding trees and colorful hot air balloons that drift in your way. With full control of your racer, you can accelerate to full throttle, bank and turn around the pylons with the fading drone of a real aircraft. Activision promises a 3-dimensional feel with clouds casting shadows, shadows of your P41 as it takes off, etc. The game is geared towards the pre-teen audience and will retail for \$22.95.

For Intellivision, PITFALL and STAMPEDE are scheduled to ship before Thanksgiving at a retail of \$31.95. Watch for our reviews shortly.

INTELLIVISION As a result of information gathered from the New Orleans and Seattle test markets, Mattel Electronics has determined that current pricing of the Intellivision Keyboard Component is not competitive in a rapidly changing marketplace. Therefore, they are in the process of redesigning the Keyboard Component in an effort to develop a sophisticated, low-cost unit, which is expected to be available in early to mid-1983.

There have been problems with the 4 initial M-Network (Atari-compatible) cartridges due to incompatibility between the ROM chip in the cartridge and some of the earlier model Atari VCS units. Mattel has assured us that the problem cartridges will be replaced under warranty. This problem has now been solved, and a few more stock on your dealer's shelf will work with the older VCS units.

More news about Mattel comes from Walter Lantz Productions, which has reportedly signed a licensing agreement with Mattel to allow development of video games based on well-known cartoon characters Woody Woodpecker, Chilly Willy, Andy Panda and Buzz Buzzard. At least one game will feature Woody's famous laugh by way of the newly-introduced IntelliVoice module.

GCE (General Consumer Electronics Corp) has announced their new fully self-contained VECTREX ARCADE SYSTEM. This unit has its own screen so it can be plugged in anywhere, without tying up the family TV set. The unit features an 8-bit microprocessor and 64K ROM. Special visual effects include 3-D rotation, zoom, etc. on a 9" B&W monitor screen. Overlays which accompany each game cartridge provide different visual effects. The unit also features a built-in sound system and a control panel with 4 action buttons and a 360° self-centering joystick. Optional additional control panel can be attached for 2-person play. With the ability to simulate the 3-D effect, GCE has been able to obtain licensing rights to several arcade games including ARMOR ATTACK, SPACE WARS, STAR HAWK, RIP-OFF, an ADOLAR QUEST (all licensed from Cinematronics, Inc.), SCRAMBLE from Konami Industry, and BERZERK from Stern Electronics. There are also several cartridges that GCE has developed for the VECTREX unit. Included with the unit is MINE STORM and others that will be available will be BLITZ (football action game), CLEAN SWEEP, COSMIC CHASM, STAR TREK, and HYPERCHASE (an auto race game). The unit is scheduled to retail for around \$200, with the cartridge retailing in the \$30 range. Although the unit is in a few stores around the country, look for national release in October for the VECTREX master unit and 12 cartridges initially. At press time we had just received our test unit and cartridges for review. So that we can spend an ample amount of time playing with the unit, we will hold our reviews for the November issue.

SPECTRAVISION™ announces availability in November of their first computer games, all in cartridge format for the Commodore VIC-20. Titles include NEXAR, CAVE-IN, THE NUMBER CRUNCH and REAGANOMICS, in which you start with \$4 trillion and attempt to end your 4-year term of office with a \$4 billion deficit (retail \$39.95 each). NEXAR will also be made for the Atari 400/800 computers (retail \$34.95). Brand new on the game market is the Spectravision QUICKSHOT, an Atari- and Commodore-compatible joystick (to be reviewed in the November issue). Also planned for the Atari VCS is an add-on unit in the \$70 price range which will turn the VCS into a basic home computer.



Raiders of the Lost Ark has been moved up to a November release to make way for the December release of E.T., another release coming out of the Steven Spielberg deal. The SUPERGAME (5200) is still scheduled for release about mid-October. Quantities will be extremely limited throughout the balance of 1982. The unit will retail for \$249.00.

When ardent video gamers aren't wielding a joystick, what else would they do but read about games? Game books have been appearing in great numbers, but one of the few to address the home video games exclusively is Ken Uston's GUIDE TO BUYING AND BEATING THE HOME VIDEO GAMES (Signet paperback, \$3.95). Uston's book is enjoyable and informative reading, covering systems and cartridges by Activision, Apollo, Astrocade (Astrovision), Atari, Fairchild Channel F, Imagic, Intellivision and Odyssey. Reviews overall are quite good, although occasionally not as hard-hitting as they might be. We noted one repeated error--Uston is misinformed about the cost of a set of Keyboard Controllers. They retail for \$21.95, not \$50.00. This admittedly minor point aside, we recommend the book to anyone who has or is considering buying one of the systems covered.



MATH GRAN PRIX (★ ★ ½ / ★ ★ ★) is an educational game for children, ages 6 to 10. One child can play alone against the computer or compete with a friend at solving easy, medium or hard problems in any combination of addition, subtraction, multiplication or division. The field of play is board-game type race track. Each correct answer will move the player's car 2 or 3 spaces, and options are allowed such as bumping the other car off the track, landing on a spinner (car moves ahead 1 to 4 spaces), or landing on a skipper (extra turn). Problems may be answered with or without a time limit, and the computer will adjust the difficulty of problems to the player's success or failure. Recommended for younger children--the game may be too simple for some 10-year-olds. (retail \$22.95)

STAR RAIDERS (★ ★ ★ ½ / ★ ★ ★ ½) is based on the game of the same name originally designed for the Atari 400/800 computers. While it is not possible to duplicate a computer game exactly for the VCS, Atari has done a very good job of translation. This is a 2-screen game: galactic map and forward view from the Star Fighter's space window. Packed with the cartridge is a new controller, the Video Touch Pad (12 buttons). A separate overlay shows various functions such as hyperwarp, fore view and galactic map and others. No doubt Atari will use this controller again for other games. The game starts with the map, showing positions of the Star Fighter, Krylon target and the Starbase. Hyperwarp to the enemy sector and prepare to do battle! You're provided with an attack computer and target marker--and there's lots to keep track of, including present position of Krylon fighters, status of the Photon Torpedos, engines, shields and the computer itself. A radar screen helps locate the enemy ships, and the attack computer will lock on. If your timing is just right, you can't miss! This has become a classic space game, and it's a "must have" for fans of space games. Recommended. (retail \$39.95)

SWORDQUEST I: EARTH WORLD (★ ★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ ★) from Atari is the beginning of what will be a total of 4 games: EARTH WORLD, FIRE WORLD, AIR WORLD and WATER WORLD. The games tell a continuing story which is aided by the accompanying comic books. The books also contain clues which help the adventurer to find his way to the Sword of Ultimate Sorcery, the final goal of the 4 games. EARTH WORLD comprises 12 subterranean rooms, each representing a house of the zodiac. Atari has come a very long way from the original Adventure game of several years ago. Not only must you search for clues and discover the uses of 15 magical objects, but you must also test your coordination skills at the Aquarian Rapids (very challenging), the Spears of Sagittarius, the Horns of Taurus, and the Roaring Waterfall in the Jungle of Leo. Not only can you thrill to the challenge of the game, but you can enter the EARTH WORLD contest, part of Atari's SWORDQUEST CHALLENGE. The winner of this first contest will receive a gold Talisman medallion studded with 12 diamonds and other precious stones worth \$25,000. If you like adventure games at all, run, don't walk to your favorite game store and buy this one! Recommended. (retail \$37.95)



COCO NUTS (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★) offers a twist on the usual catching or shooting of falling objects--this time you just avoid them. In

this game best suited to small children. Coco the crazy monkey chatters and hurls coconuts from the tops of two palm trees toward Stanley I. Presume. The first hit costs Stanley his umbrella, the second his pith helmet, and the third ends the game. Graphics are very colorful, and controlling Stanley's back-and-forth motion with the joystick is quite easy. Not for teens or adults, but recommended for the kids. (retail \$31.95)

FAST FOOD (★ ★ ★ ½ / ★ ★ ★ ½) is a riot! The object of this crazy game is to binge until you bulge--or until you get heartburn from munching too many purple pickles and the snack bar closes. You control Mr. Mouth, represented by a set of chewing red lips, and all kinds of snack fly by. Mr. Mouth will eat anything he can touch, from the green pickles and sodas to the high-calorie ice cream, cheeseburgers and french fries. After each successful wave you're told "you're getting fatter," and you have an opportunity to rest. Hit the red button on your joystick, and the next wave comes flying at Mr. Mouth. This is one of the funniest home video games we've seen, and play action is challenging. Recommended. (\$31.95)



PLANET PATROL (★ ★ ½ / ★ ★) is horizontally scrolling game with a differen--all action moves from right to left, with

opportunity to change direction or speed. This may make maneuvering a little awkward at first for all but the most experienced game players, since most of are more accustomed to left to right eye movement. You start with 4 patrol vessels and a full fuel tank and proceed to cruise the planet's surface, shooting enemy drone missiles and avoiding their heat-seeking torpedos. (The torped cannot be destroyed, but they don't seek out your vessel, as you might expect from their name.) Toward the end of each wave, you have the chance to earn extra points by rescuing a stranded pilot (merely fly your vessel directly over h before you must knock out 3 missile bases behind a force field. If you miss any the bases, collision with the force field ends the game. Once the bases are destroyed, you must navigate through the debris from the explosion before you c land and refuel--and start all over again. Some of your missions will take you the dark side of the planet where you can only see the path ahead wh illuminated by the sulfa seeker night sight activated by your laser fire. Aver graphics and play action likely to become boring after a while. Not recommen ed (retail \$22.95)

GANGSTER ALLEY (★ ★ / ★ ★ ½) puts you in the S.B.I. (Spectravision Bureau of Investigation), involved in a shoot-out with 5 wanted criminals. T thugs, along with their 2 hostages, are holed up in a building. You're equip with 4 bullet-proof vests and a rifle with 4 rounds of ammunition. The bad g and their hostages appear in various windows--the object is simply to sh them before they shoot you. The cross-hair sight of your gun is extremely sen sitive to the slightest movement of the joystick, and this takes some getting us to. You must aim quickly and fire--avoiding the hostages--while you watch Nitro Ed, who cruises the roof waiting to drop a bomb when you aren't looki If you can stay in the game long enough, night will fall, and the scene lights momentarily each time you fire. Regardless of how well you play, Nitro Ed a his gang always get the last laugh (a repeated "ha-ha" on the screen). This is n game that will thrill all parents of young children, due to the shooting of hur figures. Aside from that possible objection, the graphics become boring repeated plays. Not recommended. (retail \$24.95)

TAPEWORM (★ ★ ½ / ★ ★ ½) is likely to appeal primarily to kids up to age of 9 or 10. The premise is cute: Slinky the worm tries (with the help of yo joystick) to make his way across the bean patch to a bean before the Myst Beetle reaches a piece of fruit. Graphically well-rendered Beeky the Bird a Spanky the Spider do their best to stop Slinky before he reaches his goal. Slin life is further complicated by the fact that he loses the race if he touches a par himself as he slithers along. Recommended for children only. (retail \$22.9

NEXAR (★ ★ ★ ½ / ★ ★ ★ ½) is our favorite of the new Spectravision releases. The prospective player of this game is warned "do not attempt NEX if you have high blood pressure or dislike video games." Neither being a p blem, we headed for the Space Warp to do battle with Radioactive Beacons : Impact Exploding Saucers. The Space Warp is represented by 2 pyramids of t flashing color bars, the Beacons look rather like box kites, and the Saucers l like--what else--saucers. you're provided with a cross-hair sight which can positioned anywhere in the warp. Laser fire is directed automatically from cr hair sight to the center of the warp, and anything in the path of fire will be d troyed. The real fun of this game is the great 3-dimensional effect achieve tumbling beacons and soaring Saucers that grow larger as they approach--t very nearly come off the screen at you! Action can be fast and furious as you w out wave after wave of attackers. (there are 99 levels, and point scores esca with each level.) A very good game--recommended. (retail \$24.95)



VENTURE (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ ½) is based on the arcade game of the same name in which our l Winky the adventurer, attempts to grab treasure

various hidden chambers which are guarded by various monsters. Lu ng around outside the chambers are the dreaded Hallmonsters. Unfortun these are impervious to the arrows from Winky's bow. On the first view, W ky is a tiny cursor--just move him into the doorway of a chamber, and he'll bec full-size and ready to do battle. Points are gained by capturing treasure and shooting monsters after the treasure is yours. Each chamber offers a diffi challenge (the moving wall room is a real toughie!), and we found the gam as cinating. Though this version offers only 2 levels at various rates of speed, it the Atari VCS owner the opportunity to play a version of the unusual an de game. Recommended.

Explanation of Rating System:

- First set of stars--quality of graphics
- Second set of stars--quality of play action

- ★ ★ ★ ★ = EXCELLENT
- ★ ★ ★ = GOOD
- ★ ★ = FAIR
- ★ = POOR

Any game for a given system is compared only to other games for that system. In other words, all Atari & Atari-compatible games are judged separately from Intellivision and Intellivision-compatible games, etc.

ATARI-COMPATIBLE

IRLOCK (★★/★★) from Data Age presents you with a disabled nuclear submarine--your task is to retrieve 2 hatch keys from each of 5 or 10 levels to save the sub in a limited period of time. Each level has barriers and runaway torpedos which must be jumped before the keys can be grabbed. Elevators move you from level to level. The best graphics in this game belong to the scene of the sub in the ocean with fish swimming by. Unfortunately, this has no part in game play. Both graphics and play action are very basic in the actual game of moving from level to level. Not Recommended. (retail \$31.95)

BUGS (★★½/★★½) from Data Age comes with "Exterminating Instructors," and--surprise--it's a space game. Stange-looking bugs emerge from the surface of the dead planet, and your paddle controller aims a cursor (Ultrasonic Weapon) to zap the beasties before they're fully out of their nests. You must so watch for the Phylax, a bug capable of oozing through the hull of your space craft and ending your mission in a hurry. The concept is unusual, and VCS owners who are fond of the under-utilized paddle controller may like this one. (retail \$31.95)

SNAKE (★★½/★★★) by Data Age is set in the jungle. You've found an ancient fortress, and the perimeter is stalked by prehistoric monsters. Your gun rack moves only in a square along the fortress walls, and the gun shoots only away from the walls, making for an unusual use of the joystick. Shooting monsters would be easy if it were not for the snakes that travel at will through the fortress. They can be shot to knock out a segment, but they cannot be killed. It can get pretty wild--shooting at fast-moving monsters while avoiding the slithering snakes. Data Age deserves credit for creating a game with some offbeat features, but it could have been better graphically. (\$31.95)

ARPROCK (★★★/★★★) from Data Age is another game for your paddle controllers. This time your Tachyon Launcher goes after swarming enemy ships in starry space. The enemy has some tricky moves, including coming at you from below on occasion (your launcher does not travel a solid base, but other moves left and right in mid-space). One chance is all you get in this game, because there are no more launchers in reserve. Those of you accustomed to scores in hundreds of thousands will have to settle for 1 point per hit, up to a maximum of 99. Our only quarrel with this game is the constant barrage of pulsating sound--it really got to us after a while! (retail \$31.95)

COUNTERATTACK L-5 (★★★½/★★★★) from Data Age is a winner! You must defend a space colony under attack by Megalyte Warriors. Your Antimatter Launcher sits on the surface of the planet while your paddle controller directs a cursor at the top of the screen. The firing button sends packets of antimatter toward the cursor from the launcher. Megalytes start as tiny dots at the top of the screen gaining size and form as they swoop back and forth toward the planet. The farther away the Megalyte, the more points you'll earn for hitting it. You can change the position of the launcher by releasing the fire button--the launcher will vanish for a moment and reappear under the cursor. Periodically a red Death Ship will appear, but you will be forewarned by an alarm from your star system. This is a very different game, though built around a familiar theme. Recommended. (retail \$31.95)

THRESHOLD (★★½★★½) by Tigervision is a game with attacking invaders from above which move through a vertical "tunnel." The effect of movement is enhanced by moving color bars on either side of the tunnel. Your spaceship starts at the bottom of the screen but can be directed part way up the screen to attack or evade. Space creatures come in 11 waves of varying shapes and changing formations. The player has a choice of 3 difficulty levels. The more difficult the level, the more erratically and quickly the attackers appear. There are some good graphic touches, such as the attackers which seem to rotate as they travel, but not enough to lift this game above average. Not recommended. (retail \$22.95).



LOCK 'N' CHASE (★★★½/★★★½) is your basic cops and robbers chase game in a bank vault represented by a maze. You have control of 5 red thieves, one at a time, being chased by 4 blue cops. The thief picks up gold bars as he runs, gaining extra points for grabbing an occasional randomly-appearing treasure. Unlike many other games, there are no bonus "lives" awarded at certain point levels. The game may be played at fast or slow speeds by 1 or 2 players. Graphics are simple but very clean, and joystick response is excellent. We rate this one of the best maze games for the VCS. Recommended.

PHASER PATROL (★★★½/★★★½) from Arcadia is packed with their Supercharger unit (retail \$69.95), which inserts into the Atari VCS cartridge slot. A cable on the Supercharger plugs into the earphone jack of a standard cassette player, and all game programs are on cassette tapes. PHASER PATROL is a 2-screen battle in outer space. Screen One is a 6x6-grid map, showing you sectors occupied by the Dracon enemy and friendly starbases. Some sectors are empty, and the contents of others are unknown. Once you've chosen an enemy sector, switch to combat action in space. Joystick controls will be familiar to most players--pull back on the stick to climb, push to dive, etc. The real challenge is fighting the Dracons while keeping a watchful eye on the computer display which provides information on energy, shields, scanner, rangefinder, torpedos and lots more, including a radar screen. Interesting features include a rangefinder which keeps you posted on the enemy's distance from you at all times plus a computerized torpedo sight that locks onto enemy targets if your timing is right. Recommended.

FIREBALL (★★½/★★½) for the Arcadia Supercharger (cassette tape) contains 5 games: Firetrap, Marching Blocks, Knock-A-Block, Migrating Blocks and Cascade. All involve moving your juggler with a paddle controller as he catches and hurls fireballs for a brief time or deflects them immediately. Some games have extra, trapped fireballs that are released when certain blocks are hit--the Cascade game offers 5 extra balls in 5 cavities! The Knock-A-Block game is suggested for beginners, but even the least coordinated player is likely to be bored silly by the snail's pace of this one. Play action ranges from only fair (Knock-A-Block) to good (Cascade). Not recommended. (retail \$14.95)

COMMUNIST MUTANTS FROM SPACE (★★★½/★★★½) is a very challenging game with the most outrageous title of the year! At the top of the screen, attackers start as Mutant Eggs which hatch into Communist Mutants--strange creatures which dive and fire at your Anti-Mutant Cannon. Complicating matters is a Mother Creature who keeps laying eggs to replace the ones you've shot down. Due to the increased memory capacity of the VCS when the Arcadia Supercharger is plugged in, you're given a multitude of choices: 9 difficulty levels plus options for shields, penetrating fire (your cannon can plow right through one mutant and wipe out the next in line), time warp (once each wave you can slow the attackers down and pick them off easily), and guided fire (steering your cannon fire with the joystick). Even at level 1 the action is fast-paced, but level 9 may just scare you to death! Recommended. (retail \$14.95)

A final word about the Arcadia Supercharger--we cannot be too excited about the unit and games presently available. Although the unit allows simultaneous movement of more on-screen objects than possible with the Atari VCS alone, graphics of Supercharger games are equalled or surpassed by many standard Atari-compatible games already on the market.

ROOM OF DOOM (★★½/★★★) from CommaVid involves a series of rooms, each inhabited by its own special monster and surrounded by 4 or more gunmen just outside doors in the walls. Many of the rooms are littered with deadly objects. Your man shoots at gunmen and they shoot at him, but only when the door is open. Your man can also shoot at monsters, but a direct hit only stuns them momentarily. Contact with monsters, deadly objects or gunmen's fire spells Doom. We won't spoil the fun--see if you can learn the trick on your own! This one has 64 variations, which should be enough to challenge the most easily bored of game players. Recommended

INTELLIVISION FROG BOG (★★★★/★★★★) is a really great game for kids from Mattel. One or two players control frogs on lily pads in a beautiful setting of pond, cattails, and blue sky. The object is to make your frog jump off his pad to catch insects with his tongue. In the easiest mode, the frog jumps in a fixed arc each time, and the tongue darts out automatically when he's close enough to catch an insect. In the most difficult mode, you control both the arc and when the tongue darts--this mode will even keep most adults fascinated. Point values depend on size of bug caught, and each game lasts 3 minutes before the frogs go to sleep. This is one of the prettiest games ever from Mattel--day ends and the rose and orange hues of sunset creep in, only to be replaced by a night sky. You also have the option of starting at night and hunting fireflies until the moon no longer shines and the stars come out. Recommended.



Frog Bog™

SPACE SPARTANS (★★★★/★★★★½) is one of the two games released at the same time as the IntelliVoice module. The scenario is the Battle of Thermopylae (when a small Spartan force held off Xerxes and the entire Persian army in 480 B.C.), but this time it's set in outer space. There are 2 screens: Sector Grid and outer space Battle View. You start in the 16x8 Grid, where you will place your 3 Starbases and discover the location of the 3 Alien Starbases and their 6 fleets (3 offensive, 3 defensive). Next, it's on to the Battle View, where you're provided with a cross-hair gunsight. Fire your laser torpedoes with the aid of the Battle Computer, stay out of the way of enemy fire, and work quickly!

The aliens are faster than you are, and you're badly out-numbered. The real fun of this game is the addition of voice. A male voice is your central computer, advising you of your ship's energy level and the number of aliens in your sector. A female voice (shades of Star Trek) is the ship's computer--condition of ship systems and progress reports on repairs. (Just wait 'til you hear "Hello, Commander, computer reporting.") You also have a robot-voiced starbase computer, and the alien commander, who announces "The battle is over." The voice module is not just a gimmick, which is very much to Mattel's credit--it's an integral part of game play. Recommended.

B-17 BOMBER (★★★★/★★★★) is a must-have for every Intellivision owner--this game alone makes the voice module a worthwhile purchase. One of the voices of this game has an accent that we place as Arkansas/Oklahoma or somewhere in that area and it's a fun touch. Just wait 'til you hear this guy say "Uh-oh" as a bandit approaches, or "That was on target" when your bomb hits the mark! This is a multi-screen game: Strategic Map of Europe (1943), gauges in the cockpit, pilot view with direction indicators, bomb bay view, and machine gunner's views at 3, 6, 9 and 12 o'clock. In the map view, you can preview possible targets to see how many points they're worth. Set your initial target, and then take off! You have to set pitch and roll, rev the engine to 2500 RPM, get the speed above 90 MPH, then lift the nose of the plane by touching the bottom of the controller disc. (If you have joystick-type attachments on your controller, just pull back on the stick--just like in a real plane!) On your way to the target, things can get pretty wild--you'll be warned to watch for flak, then "bandits at 6 o'clock." you're also warned when you're approaching your target, but sometimes you'll end up flying right over it because so much is happening. Do your best to return to England before disaster hits, and you can make another mission. (But don't bomb England--there's a 50-point penalty!) Mattel has really outdone themselves this time. Recommended.



Space Spartans™



B-17™ Bomber



DEMON ATTACK (★★★★/★★★★) is one of the first cartridges to fit Intellivision to be made by a company other than Mattel, and they've made a splashy debut.

This version of DEMON ATTACK features the familiar swooping, shoot demons with erratic moves enough to make things difficult. The bird-like creatures are very colorful as they enter the screen from the top. Your spaceship travels back and forth along the pock-marked surface of the moon, and planet Earth can be seen on the right. Knock out 3 waves of progressively more difficult demons, and your spaceship takes off, afterburners aflame, to the accompaniment of a brief phrase from Moussorgsky's "Night on Bald Mountain." Your destination is one of the home bases of the demons, and it's a real masterpiece of graphic evil. Don't stop to look, though, because lesser demons will attack immediately by diving at your ship. Your task is to wear away the flickering shield of the base, finally delivering the coup de grace by aiming through the traveling opening into the flaming mouth of the base (this part is tough).

If you can destroy the base, you go back to the Moon with 100 extra points to defend the Earth against a new attack. Recommended.

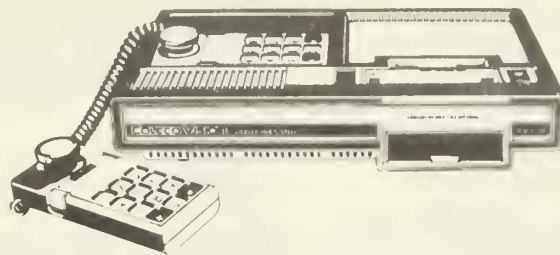
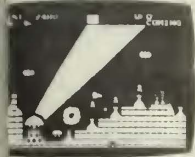
ATLANTIS (★★★★/★★★★) from Imagic is a game of defense. The city is attacked by various kinds of ships and saucers--get them early, or they'll knock out part of your city with a deathray. Daytime in the beautiful city of Atlantis makes way for the grey skies of evening, then the black skies of night when searchlights are turned on and the attackers are not always visible. The player has the option of 2 modes of defense--you can use a cross-hair in the sky for aiming fire from left or right gun emplacements, or you may shoot down attacking saucers with your saucer. In the saucer mode, you have a time limit, due to use of the saucer is flying. The graphics are stunning--very typical of Imagic games--and play action is exciting and challenging. The use of music is fun, too "Reveille" at break of day and "Taps" at the end. Recommended.

MICROSURGEON (★★★★/★★★★) is an original concept for a video game. The object is to direct a tiny Robot Probe through the various systems of a patient in need of treatment, somewhat like the concept of the movie, "Fantastic Voyage." The player has the ability to pilot the Robot Probe plus select and dispense 3 different medications (antibiotic, ultrasonic ray, aspirin). The Patient Status Report screen gives complete readout on overall status, plus such things as amount of brain tumors, bacteria, tapeworms, cholesterol in the arteries, and more. Once in the very colorful representation of the human body (multiple screens), the player is warned to stay inside the arteries, veins, and lymph or run the risk of being attacked by roaming white blood cells. Time is limited, since the Robot Probe has a limited amount of power, so you must work quickly and efficiently to save the patient (a little basic knowledge of human anatomy doesn't hurt at this point). We found this a thoroughly intriguing game, and it's one with educational value without being boring. Recommended.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (★★★★/★★★★) involves a big beast (an ape) who has stolen your best girl and taken her to the top of a tall building. Your job is to control the boyfriend as he climbs the building a level at a time through windows which only open for a short time. The man must deal with rats which run along the ledges (jump over them), birds (run away from them), and boulders tossed by the beast (avoid or jump over them). Periodically the beast throws the man a kiss (red heart). If he catches the kiss, he has superhuman strength for a few moments and can crush any rat, bird or boulder in his path for an extra 50 points each. Reach the girl, and you'll find that the beast has taken her up to the next level. An overall view of the entire building (shown to you between levels achieved) tells you how far you've been. At the very beginning of the game there is a great little biplane that flies across the screen trailing a banner that says "Imagic." As you complete each level, you see the plane again, carrying messages such as "well done," "not bad," "lucky," and "good job." If you reach the top of the building and finally rescue the girl, the beast falls off the building and that little plane reappears to rescue the girl and her boyfriend. We found this a thoroughly charming game that will definitely appeal to children and adults alike. Recommended.

COLECO

COSMIC AVENGER (★★★½/★★★★) is a horizontally scrolling space game based on the arcade game by Universal. The player controls a highly maneuverable space fighter which can drop bombs or fire missiles straight ahead. Flying over the surface of an alien planet, you encounter vertical and diagonal rockets, tank and barrage missiles, and UFO's. In portions of the battle, you travel undersea and deal with submarines, torpedos and mines. The graphics are typically very good, with bright colors and good detail. Play action is quite challenging, especially at the higher skill levels. Recommended.



MURF RESCUE IN GARGAMEL'S CASTLE (★★★★/★★★★) is a must for all the little and big (including adult) kids who follow the Saturday morning adventures of the Smurfs. Gargamel has captured Smurfette and has trapped her in his lab. Smurf must run, jump and duck his way through fields, dangerous woods, a cave and the spooky lab in Gargamel's castle. The player starts with 5 Smurfs, each of which has a limited supply of energy on each



screen. In the first difficulty level (good for beginners and kids), there are only obstacles to be hurdled. In levels 2 through 4, there are hawks bats and spiders to avoid, and they become more aggressive in each higher level. The higher levels also contain longer adventures with more screens. Hint: if you just can't seem to jump onto the skull in the castle, re-read the instructions on jumping--it can be done! Recommended.

LADY BUG (★★★½/★★★★) is an excellent maze game, again based on the arcade version by Universal. A choice of 4 skill levels are offered for either 1 or 2 players. The Lady Bug must make her way through the maze, avoiding predatory bugs and skulls while eating dots. There are lots of bonuses, such as hearts, vegetables and letters. If you manage to spell "extra" with your letters, you earn an extra Lady Bug and go on to the next level. Spelling "special" wins you a Vegetable Harvest bonus screen with extra points. An interesting feature of the maze is the presence of turnstiles that only the Lady Bug can



move. With good timing, you can manage to place a turnstile in the path of an onrushing bug. Recommended

VENTURE (★★★★/★★★★) is based on the unusual arcade game by Exidy, and the cartridge is every bit as much fun to play. Winky is an adventurer in search of treasures in chambers guarded by terrible monsters. There are 9 levels of play with several chambers in each, and Winky has only his bow and arrow to protect him. Outside the chambers there are Hall Monsters lurking, ready to stop him, and he cannot shoot them! Typical of all ColecoVision games so far, musical effects are wonderful and truly add to the fun. One of the real fascinations with this challenging game is the variety of monsters guarding treasures. Each chamber is labeled, and some of our favorites are the Skeleton Room, Wall Room (no monsters, but moving walls) and Demon Room (the demons even have pitchforks!). The graphic detail is exciting, down to Winky's smile, which turns to a frown if he's touched by a monster. Recommended.



ACCESSORY UPDATE

WICO

In the quest for the "perfect" joystick, the home video gamer has more choices than ever. Wico, the world's largest designer and manufacturer of control devices for commercial arcade games, has been in the business since 1940. Now they've entered the home video game arena for the first time with their "Command Control" series of products. Their basic unit brings new meaning to the word "joystick," because this one truly is a joy to use. Larger than the standard Atari joystick, this sleek-looking red and black, bat-handled controller sports two firing buttons--one in the usual spot on the base, the other atop the handle. A slide switch on the base allows you to choose



which button to use (it is not possible to use both at once). In use, we preferred the one-handed style of play, using the thumb button on top of the stick. If you really get involved in your video games, this makes you feel like a genuine space pilot! The base, with its non-slip rubber grip pads, is heavy enough for table-top use, yet light enough for hand-held action. The joystick itself has noticeably more play than the venerable Atari controller. The bat-handle is very comfortable, and those who spend a lot of time in the arcades will undoubtedly prefer the feel of this joystick to the standard model used with Atari, Sears and Commodore home video games and computers. This appears to be a very sturdy joystick, and Wico backs it with a 1-year guarantee. Recommended. (retail \$29.95)

Home Video Games We're Asked About but are not scheduled for release until 1983 at the earliest!

- TUTANKAM (Parker Bros)
- 007 (Parker Bros)
- REACTOR (Parker Bros)
- PHOENIX (?)
- VANGUARD (?)
- JAWS (?)
- DIG DUG (Atari)
- LAND BATTLE (Mattel)
- PINBALL (Mattel)
- MINOTAUR (Mattel)
- RIVER PATROL (Tigervision)
- HEAD TO HEAD FOOTBALL (Coleco)
- HEAD TO HEAD BASEBALL (Coleco)
- TURBO (Coleco A/C & I/C)
- ZAXXON (Coleco A/C & I/C)
- UNDERWORLD (CommaVid)
- MISSILE INTERCEPT (U.S. Games)
- THE FLY (U.S. Games)
- DARTS (U.S. Games)

... Look to us for the most accurate and up-to-date information available as we talk directly with the manufacturers EVERY month!

AVAILABILITY UPDATE



(based on projected release dates by mfrs. May change without notice)

ATARI-COMPATIBLE

OCTOBER

AIRLOCK (Data Age)
BUGS (Data Age)
CARNIVAL (Coleco)
COCO NUTS (Telesays)
COMMANDO RAID (U.S. Games)
ENCOUNTER AT L-5 (Data Age)
ENHANCED BASEBALL (Atari)
FAILSAFE (Atari)
FAST FOOD (Telesays)
FROGS AND FLIES (M Network)
MINDS OF MINOS (Commavid)
MOUSETRAP (Coleco)
SSSNAKE (Data Age)
SQUOOSH (Apollo)
TOWERING INFERNO (U.S. Games)
WARPLOCK (Data Age)

NOVEMBER

AMIDAR (Parker Bros)
COSMIC CREEP (Telesays)
DARK CAVERN (M Network)
ENHANCED VOLLEYBALL (Atari)
INTL SOCCER (M Network)
MISSION OMEGA (Commavid)
RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (Atari)
SKY JINKS (Activision)
SPIDERMAN (Parker Bros)
TURMOIL (Fox)

DECEMBER

ALIEN (Fox)
ENHANCED FOOTBALL (Atari)
E.T. (Atari)
FANTASTIC VOYAGE (Fox)
MEGAFORCE (Fox)
TURBO (Coleco)

JANUARY

HIGH SEAS (M Network)
STAR WARS (Parker Bros)
SUPER COBRA (Parker Bros)
TRON DEADLY DISCS (M Network)

INTELLIVISION-COMPATIBLE

OCTOBER

DONKEY KONG (Coleco)
MOUSE TRAP (Coleco)

NOVEMBER

ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS (Mattel)

ATLANTIS (Imagic)
CARNIVAL (Coleco)
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (Imagic)
DEMON ATTACK (Imagic)
MICROSURGEON (Imagic)
ROYAL DEALER (Mattel)
TRON DEADLY DISCS (Mattel)

NOVEMBER

LADY BUG (Coleco)
MOUSETRAP (Coleco)
PITFALL (Activision)
STAMPEDE (Activision)
SWORDS AND SERPENTS (Imagic)
TRON MAZE-A-TRON (Mattel)
VENTURE (Coleco)

DECEMBER

U.S.C.F. CHESS (Mattel)

JANUARY

TRON SOLAR SAILOR (Mattel)*
*Name subject to change

ODYSSEY

OCTOBER

ACROBATS

NOVEMBER

S.I.D. THE SPELLBINDER
SMITHEREENS

COLECO

OCTOBER

BLACKJACK/POKER
CARNIVAL

TURBO w/Module

ZAXXON

NOVEMBER

Conversion Module/Atari

MOUSE TRAP

DECEMBER

HORSE RACING

SKIING

ASTROCADE

OCTOBER

ARTILLERY DUEL

NOVEMBER

BOWLING
CONAN THE BARBARIAN

COSMIC RAIDERS

MUSIC MAKER

SOCCER

SOLAR CONQUERER

COMING NEXT MONTH

Reviews of . . .

- Activision for Intellivision
- Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (Mat)
- GCE Vectrex Arcade System
- K.C.'s Crazy Chase (Odyssey)
- Cosmic Creep (Telesays)

. . . and much more!

OUR APOLOGIES

We inadvertently miscredited two cartridges in the September issue. TAPEWORM and CROSSFIRE (renamed CROSS FORCE) shipped in September are by SPECTRAVISION, NOT TIGERVISION. SPECTRAVISION also announces the late Sept. release of a new title, NEXAR (All cartridges are Atari-compatible)

VIDEO TAKE-OUT'S TOP 10 SELLERS

This Month	Last Month	A/C=Atari-comp. I/C=Intellivision-Comp.
1	-	Pitfall (Activision A/C)
2	-	Riddle of the Sphinx (Imagic A/C)
3	1	Donkey Kong (Coleco A/C)
4	3	Starmaster (Activision A/C)
5	4	Berzerk (Atari)
6	9	Chopper Command (Activision A/C)
7	-	Star Raiders (Atari)
8	-	Frog Bog (Intellivision)
9	2	Atlantis (Imagic A/C)
10	-	Lock 'N' Chase (Intellivision)

IN THIS ISSUE...

Reviews of . . .

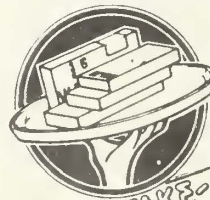
- . . . INTELLIVOICE CARTRIDGES
- . . . COLECO CARTRIDGES
- . . . THE FIRST OF THE INTELLIVISION-COMPATIBLE IMAGIC CARTRIDGES
- . . . NEW SPECTRAVISION GAMES
- . . . STAR RAIDERS BY ATARI
- . . . and much, much more!

KING PONG IS BACK?!

Nolan Bushnell, the father of the home video game lunacy (he invented Pong and founded Atari) may be back soon! Warner Communications purchased Atari, Bushnell signed an agreement stating that he would not develop anything in the video game area for a period of 10 years. Well, our calculations tell us that he will shortly be out from under that agreement and we hear interesting rumors that he has been busy inventing a "new generation" of video games that will knock your socks off! If anyone can come up with something innovative, it's Nolan. We look forward to his re-entry into the video game market.

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