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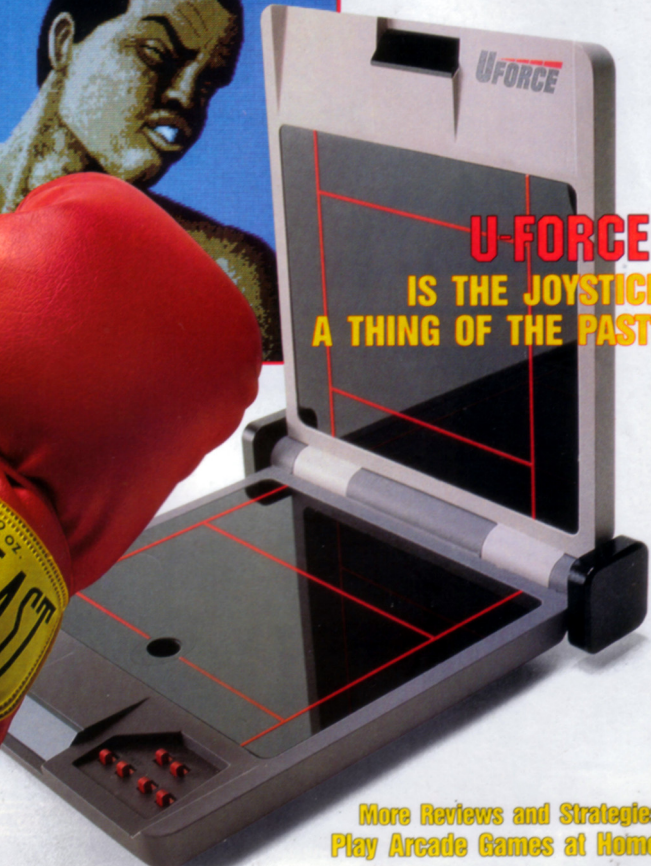
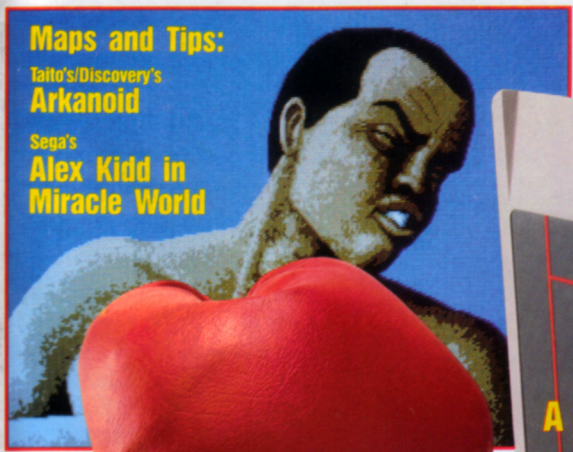
# Video Games & Computer Entertainment <sup>T.M.</sup>

May 1989 \$2.95  
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## Maps and Tips:

Taito's/Discovery's  
**Arkanoid**

Sega's  
**Alex Kidd in  
Miracle World**



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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

MAY ▼ 1989

Cover: The innovative U-FORCE could knock out the video-gaming community. Photography by Ladi von Jansky

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Imagine: You turn on your favorite game machine or computer, anxious to try that new car-chase software you just bought. You sit in your favorite lounge chair, power up the gameware and watch as the title screen appears.

The game begins, and you start to maneuver your on-screen vehicle, not with a control pad or a joystick, but with an imaginary steering wheel in front of your body. Suddenly, you need to speed up. You move your hands forward, and the car responds with a burst of speed. Just in time to avoid a collision, you pull your hands back and apply the brakes. The other car pulls ahead and vanishes. The road is finally clear, and you steer your car around the bends by "turning" the phantom steering wheel.

Switching to a boxing game, you jab and swing in the air as if your foe were standing in front of you. After a few heated rounds of punching, your on-screen opponent reels in the ring and drops—you've scored a knockout!

Finally, you load an adventure game and slide a button-covered gauntlet over your hand. On the screen you see a crablike robot floating in the air. You suddenly notice that the creature seems to follow the movements of your gloved hand. Stopping at a large boulder in your path, you take your "control hand" and imitate a hammering motion. The on-screen robot hammers the rock, smashing it to bits. You open your fingers, lower your hand, then close your hand again, and the robot drops down and grabs the gem that sits in the debris of the broken boulder.

That story sounds like something from the faraway future, doesn't it? But to our delight, VG&CE recently saw demonstrations of hardware that will allow video gamers to control a game in these futuristic ways. Broderbund's U-Force (see our preview on page 24) and Mattel's Power Glove introduce the player to this nontraditional method of game control. Both devices should appear in stores later this year.

We've recently seen other amazing advances in video-gaming hardware too, such as inexpensive liquid-crystal glasses that give realistic 3-D effects in color. And let's not forget the next generation of video-game consoles, such as the PC Engine and Sega's Mega Drive, which will redefine the state of the art for video-game graphics and sound.

Some new human vs. human and multiplayer cooperative games have also taken advantage of some recent advances in video-game technology. For example, some new programs allow gamers to pass data between their computers over a phone line so they can interact in the same arena. Using a different method, Hybrid Arts' *MidiMaze* lets up to 16 Atari STs hook up as a network and shoot it out in a maze, each player seeing the scene from his or her own perspective.

Indeed, 1989 will bring striking innovation and sophistication to the video-gaming world. And the best news is that, with this issue, VG&CE is going monthly—our way of making sure that you receive fast, up-to-date information on all of the exciting, new gaming products coming your way.

The future can be defined in years—or in days. But no matter when or how it comes, the future will offer some exciting video-game developments, and VG&CE will be there to bring you detailed coverage in the form of product reviews and in-depth articles.

We're looking forward to what the future will bring and hope you'll join us each month. We promise it'll be fun.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

# TITAN

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PC AND COMPATIBLES  
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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Give me an "S," give me an "E"....  
Dear VG&CE:

I own a Sega Master System, and personally, I think it's the best. And being a Sega owner, I think it is great that you put aside so much time to talk about Sega! You must be the best video-game magazine ever! I can't wait for the next issue!

—John King  
Harbor City, CA

P.S. Keep up the rad artwork!



Thanks for the compliment, John. From our vantage point, there are a lot of choices for the electronic gamer between Nintendo, Sega and Atari. Also, most every computer currently on the market has games available for it. Some players have opted to buy more than one machine for their game play. (See the next letter for an example.)

To make it more exciting, there are developments on the horizon to add more selections to the list: NEC's PC Engine, Sega's MegaDrive, Nintendo and Atari each have 16-bit entries in the works. Additionally, we've gotten word of another game machine... well, we can't say yet. Our July issue should give more details. The point we're making is that there is no single machine that is the "ultimate" for game play. But as long as there are people playing these machines, we'll do our best to cover them.

He takes his games seriously!  
Dear VG&CE:

Finally, a video-game magazine again, and from the good folks of *Electronic Games*, the magazine that started me on all this. One hour after reading the first issue [of *EG*], I went out and bought a 2600 and just went crazy from then on.

Just got your second issue yester-

day. Very nice, but too much computer stuff. There are only two video-game magazines and tons of computer magazines, so giving up space to computers is a disservice to video gamers. I'm not anticomputer: I have an Atari 400 souped up with memory and keyboard, a stock Atari 400, an Atari 130XE, a Commodore 64C, five disk drives, three modems, one tape drive, one printer, three monitors, one A/B switch and approximately 300 original store-bought items of software. With all the computer magazines out, I don't see why you have to give up scarce video-game space to computers.

I have a Sega system and all 68 games out so far. How about an article on why it's taking Sega so long to see the light and let the quality third-party software companies in. I know they have to be careful that a lot of junk doesn't come out like what happened to the 2600, but I think they are overdoing it a bit.

Thanks for your magazine, and good luck. By the way, at 40, I'm one of the old video gamers.

—Name and address  
withheld by request

Thanks for your interesting letter. Our readers will, no doubt, get a kick from the picture of your setup. And, yes, Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley

were the cornerstone of *Electronic Games* a few years ago. We're glad to have their expertise on our side.

As we noted above, our magazine is devoted to all forms of electronic gaming. In some cases, this brings up screams that we didn't do enough for certain segments of the gaming community, but we're trying our best to spread it out evenly and give something to everyone.

To answer your last point, it appears that Sega—by applying the same strategy as Nintendo—is trying to pace the market. Activision and Parker Brothers are currently the only third-party producers of software for the SMS, but Absolute Entertainment was added to the list at the winter CES. It's obvious that Sega is looking to keep its system fresh with new titles, but as you said, no one wants to end up like the 2600, with too much software to support the demand. At this point, with games taking over 100 hours to complete, the need for new software is somewhat less than the need was for the first-generation video machines.

#### Corrections

Our February 1989 issue contained an erroneous caption. On page 62, the picture we labelled "Pro Wrestling by Nintendo" is actually Sega's *Pro Wrestling*. We apologize for the mistake.

The strategy tips for *Superstar Ice Hockey* made its way into our April 1989 issue's Table of Contents, but not into the pages of the magazine. It will appear in our June 1989 issue.

All letters considered for publication should be addressed to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations.





## One great quarterback



It's third down and a long four to the first down that will stop the clock. No time-outs left. The weak side linebacker is lined up inside his defensive end. They're coming!

You check-off the play at the line of scrimmage and call for a quick pass to the tight end. He breaks it for a T.D.!

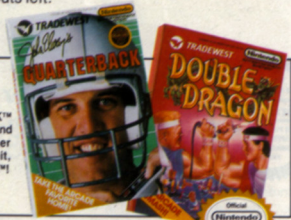
It's not the Super Bowl, it's the super new video football game for Nintendo Entertainment Systems, John Elway's QUARTERBACK!™ So real you see the game like a quarterback does, from the line of scrimmage. You call the plays, you beat the blitz, you make it happen.

## deserves another.

Named for the quarterback who twice won the AFC Player of the Year Award, this is the game cartridge made for every kid or grownup kid who ever wanted to play the game as well as John Elway.

Get it now before time runs out. Remember, you have no time-outs left.

Look for John Elway's QUARTERBACK™ wherever you find Tradewest's other block-buster hit, Double Dragon.™!



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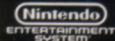


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 I've ever played"*  
 - Dentist from New York -

*"I can't put this game down.  
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 - Game pro from Texas -



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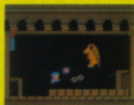
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- 9 year old from California -

*"The graphics are better  
than anything else"*  
- Designer from California -

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Compiled by Joyce Worley

## Konami, Acclaim thinking small

Two more software companies have started thinking small about games. Acclaim and Konami both announced plans to market electronic hand-held games in 1989, as an extension into smaller realms of video entertainment.

Acclaim entered the diminutive market with hand-held versions of three of its video-game software hits. *Rambo*, *Airwolf* and *Wrestlemania* are scheduled for the silvery LCD (liquid crystal display) screen early in 1989, for \$19.95 each.

Konami should have tiny versions of *Double Dribble*, *Gradius* and *Contra* in retailers' hands by May, and *Top Gun* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* are scheduled for midyear distribution. More titles are slated for later in the year, with all titles selling for around \$15. According to company spokespeople, the new games take advantage of recent advances in LCD technology to produce more sophisticated graphics and special effects.

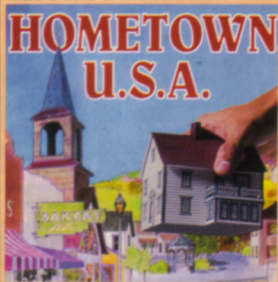
Ernil Heidkamp, vice president of Konami's consumer division, commented on the company's decision to scale down its concepts: "Hand-held games were a hit with kids during the late 1970s and, just as video games have had a phenomenal rebirth, sales of these games should be strong over the next several years. We believe the mar-



ket for hand-held games is wide open. Sophisticated graphics and action-packed special effects should make these games popular take-along versions of their video-game and arcade counterparts."

## Build a world

Carol Manley of Manley & Associates, creators of *The Christmas Kit* (Activision), banks on a new paper model builder that is so open-ended, computerists can truly make a world of their own.



*Hometown, U.S.A.* (Publishing International) contains building blanks and clip-art banks of all the trimmings for finished models. Windows, doors, parapets, spires, towers, domes, columns, customized signs and totally modular design make it possible for compu-architects to create an entire paper empire.

The program, available for Macintosh, Apple IIGS, IBM, C64 and Amiga, interfaces with most paint-box programs, to become a hobby-crafter's delight. It comes with sample structures for the beginner to just print, paint and paste. But it's so unlimited that more elaborate projects are well within range of even young computerists. The manual which accompanies the program suggests many craft uses, ranging from gift boxes and doll houses, to Advent calendars, recreations of historical structures or even the Taj Mahal.

## Capcom unveils new NES titles

The hit coin-op comes home, as *Strider* becomes the first Nintendo title released by Capcom in 1989. The gamer, in the title role, is dropped into Russia to infiltrate the Red Army and retrieve enemy secrets. *Strider*



fighters KGB agents, enemies in the Siberian mountains and jungle tribes in the lowlands.

*MegaMan II* springboards the player into a crisis of more universal scope. The evil Dr. Wily has expanded his army of robots, in the hopes of regaining his previous position of supreme power in the universe. Wily has placed his own metal men in high places.



The super robots rule eight empires that must be defeated by MegaMan, before the player gets another shot at the wily Wily.

Capcom also plans more Disney titles for 1989, to go alongside 1988's *Mickey Mousecapade*. These NES games are specifically created for children, ages five to 15, but, according to company spokespeople, with challenge enough to involve the entire family. Due for 1989 release are *Adventures in Disneyland* and *DuckTales*.

# BUBBLE BOBBLE IS DINO-MIGHT!

(FOR YOUR NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM.™)



THESE ARE TWO HUNGRY DINO-MIGHTS AND THEY'VE GOT BUBBLE FIGHT'N FUN DOWN TIGHT. You and your two brontosaurus buddies, Bub and Bob, are up to your brows in bubble troubles. You've got to battle battalions of bullies by blowing and bursting billions of bubbles. It's a fast-paced bubble banquet through 100 screens of slap happy suds. Got an appetite for fun...then get blowin'.

These are two hungry dino-mights and they've got bubble fight'n fun down tight.

Bubble Bobble™ is totally addictive action. Computer Entertainer Magazine says "it's impossible to resist...you want to play over and over again." Bubble Bobble™ has been Europe's #1 game for over 3 months. You'll scramble through 100 screens of laughs as your brontosaurus buddies, Bub and Bob, blow you away with endless action. If you're lookin' for fun, these dudes are the ones.

For more arcade quality fun at home, grab Taito's other action packed hits for the Nintendo Entertainment System:® Operation Wolf,® the awesome prisoner rescue mission and the world's number 1 arcade game. Renegade,™ the fast paced street-style Karate brawl. And coming soon, Sky Shark,® the arcade's meanest air battle.

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## Tengen challenges Nintendo

Tengen, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of arcade-software developer Atari Games, has become the first video-game publisher to defy Nintendo's control of the software market for its machine, in a move which establishes the company as the first independent third-party producer of NES games.

Since the introduction of the NES, Nintendo maintained control of the manufacturing of all NES-compatible cartridges. Atari

Games (not to be confused with computer manufacturer Atari Corp.) developed technology to produce NES-compatible cartridges without Nintendo's help, and launched Tengen's line of video games with independently produced and manufactured cartridges. The first releases—*Pac-Man*, *Gauntlet* and *RBI Baseball*—hit retailers' shelves in time for Christmas.

Randy Browneleit, Sr., vice president of operations for Tengen, commented, "In the

past... the only way to market games for the NES format was to have Nintendo produce them. As a result, Nintendo had total control over the supply. This development puts us in control of our own destiny."

In a related story, Atari Games filed suit in San Francisco against Nintendo for damages that could total over \$100 million. Atari charged that Nintendo's control over manufacturing of NES cartridges constituted an illegal monopoly.

## Lucasfilm Games with Industrial Light & Magic

Lucasfilm Games is now part of Industrial Light & Magic, the well-known cinematic special-effects firm. Lucasfilm



spokespeople said ILM and the Games Division will combine to create state-of-the-art applications of interactive video, com-

puter animation and computer simulations.

Industrial Light & Magic has won eight Academy Awards and two Emmys for cinematic special effects. Best known works include *Star Wars*, *Willow*, the *Indiana Jones* movies, and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*.

Lucasfilm Games has a line of games for IBM, Apple and Commodore computers. These include *Maniac Mansion*, *Zak McKracken* and the *Alien Mindbenders* and *Battlehawks 1942*. Lucasfilm Ltd. President Douglas Norby had this to say about the new arrangement: "Lucasfilm is very interested in making interactive media more creative and accessible. The natural partnership of ILM's visual special effects and



Games Division's interactive storytelling puts us in an outstanding position to become leaders in this exciting new market. We went on, by combining Games' know-how in interactive design with ILM's visual magic, we can create a whole new dimension in entertainment."

## Court overturns "look and feel" decision

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court decision in a suit brought by Data East against Epyx in 1986, opening the door for similar "look and feel" products in the industry.

Data East originally sued Epyx in 1986, claiming copyright protection for its *Karate Champ* game. Epyx's *World Karate Championship* game, according to Data East, infringed on the earlier product, and the court agreed. However, Epyx appealed the decision, claiming the right to create and distribute products that express the same ideas.

The Court of Appeals, in deciding the suit,



reversed previous practices that protected the "look and feel" of software designs, and opened the way for a flood of "me too" products.

Software Publishers Association's Executive Director Ken Wasch tried to look on the bright side of things, saying, "This decision and other cases pending will remove a substantial degree of uncertainty with respect to the scope of copyright protection in software development."

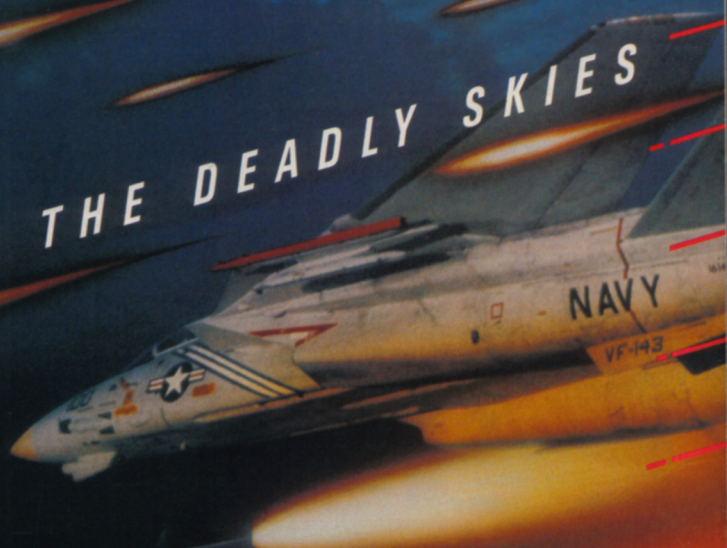
## German gamers pick Maniac

West German computer gamers have a taste for the macabre, according to *Happy Computer Magazine*. Lucasfilm's *Maniac Mansions*, where players rescue a kidnapped cheerleader, topped the country's sales lists for three months straight.

The company is currently working on a German-language edition of *Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders*, where the player becomes a tabloid reporter.



FLY THE DEADLY SKIES



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Jet Fighter™ The most revolutionary and advanced jet combat simulator around. Industry guru John Dvorak called it "THE FINEST FLIGHT SIMULATOR I'VE EVER SEEN . . . Highly Recommended!" It'll put afterburners on your computer with the fastest, and most dazzling, graphics imaginable.

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## Sierra duo: Looking for love or hunting a man

A pair of releases from Sierra share a searching theme. Both cast the gamer as a seeker, but what you'll be hunting couldn't be more different.

Leisure Suit Larry is back to try again, in a sequel to his first hit game. The new adventure written by Al Lowe, *Leisure Suit Larry Goes Looking For Love (In Several Wrong Places)*, starts when Larry wins the lottery and goes on a cruise. While visiting tropical resorts, Larry encounters spies, foreign agents and intrigue. The tongue-in-cheek humor is sparked by graphics at double the resolution of the first game, and Lowe wrote a special musical sound track to add interest. Various film techniques, like windowing and split screens, colorful landscapes



and ambitious animations make Larry's search more fun. The game is scheduled for several computer systems, including Apple IIGS, Atari ST, IBM PC and Macintosh.

Larry may be looking for love, but the seeker in *Manhunter: New York* has something much more deadly in mind. The gamer takes the role of a detective in a futuristic New York City, two years after aliens have invaded and conquered our world. The detective is working for the alien dictatorship.

The game, designed by Dave, Barry and Dee De Murry (best known for their work on *Ancient Art of War* and *Ancient Art of War at Sea*) uses windowing effects, split screens, close-ups and a new programming technique that lets the gamer see more screens without changing disks. Actions are viewed in third-person and first-person perspectives, and no typed-in commands are used to play. Over 250 scenes, including realistic on-screen maps of New York City, take the *Manhunter* from Flatbush to Coney Island, all over the Big Apple. The multidisk game will soon be available for Amiga, Apple IIe/c, Apple IIGS, Atari ST and Macintosh.

## Atari meets milestone

Atari Corp. marked a milestone during 1988, by selling its 26 millionth video-game system. According to Mike Katz, president of Atari's Entertainment Electronics Division, Atari has now sold more than twice as many video-game systems as any other company.

The sales figures includes totals for the company's three video-game systems: the Atari 2600 (\$49.95), the Atari 7800 (\$79.95) and the XE system (\$149.95). The company claims a combined total of over 200 games for the three entertainment systems.



According to company spokespeople, Atari has sold over three million video-game units since 1985, doubling its video-game sales for two consecutive years, and currently holds an estimated 30% of the U.S. home video-game hardware market.

# Kids Under 30!

Your parents were once awesome kids like you. What happened? Here's the crazy TV program that helped turn them into the amusing people that they are! You might have heard that the *Honeymooners* are the greatest— but once you play this game— you'll have so much fun you're sure to become a big fan too!

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Software Publishing



## PSS war games campaign for U.S. market

Through an agreement with Personal Software Services, a British company, IntelliCreations will distribute the *PSS Wargame Series* in North America. The first products to reach the colonies were *Firezone*, *The Annals of Rome* and *Sorcerer Lord*, for Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore and IBM PCs.

*Firezone* is a one- or two-player strategy contest in the year 2160, as Earth's four power blocks duke it out using nuclear artillery, gray tanks, moveable artillery fortresses and bipedal fast-attack units, through cities, ruins, marshes and woods. A scenario generator lets you invent new campaigns when you complete the nine included.

*Annals of Rome* casts a single gamer as



ruler of the republic in 273 BC. The frontiers are assaulted by hostiles, and traitors within Rome could cause a civil war.

*Sorcerer Lord* sends one player on a strategic adventure, in this combination fantasy/war game. The gamer leads the fight against the Shadow Lord up from Shadowlands, or he'll seize the enchanted Rune Ring stones. To do this, the tribes must be convinced to quit squabbling and raise armies, as you keep track of movement, fatigue, sorcery and leadership ratings.

Personal Software Services is noted in Europe for its line of popular strategy war games, where its products are published and distributed by MirrorSoft.

## Nintendo announces 1988 results

Nintendo reported increased sales for its fifth consecutive fiscal-year reporting period. Net sales were over \$1.5 billion for the fiscal year ended August 31, 1988. This represents a 41% boost in sales over the same period of 1987. These consolidated results cover Nintendo Company Ltd. of Japan and its largest subsidiary, Nintendo of America.

According to Minoru Arakawa, president of Nintendo of America, video-game sales in the U.S. increased more than 100% in the past year. Nintendo's market penetration of basic hardware is currently about 12% of all U.S. households, and the demographics have expanded beyond the traditional base of eight- to 15-year-old boys. "Where 80% of this industry was comprised of members of this group in the...early 1980s, today that group only makes up 60% of our user base," said Arakawa. "Now, 15% — and growing dramatically — of our users fall into the 25- to 44-year-old age bracket."

# Just Make Sure Lil' Chum... That We Never Meet!



### What Do...

- ❖ Sword wielding demons and a sad king
- ❖ The Grim Reaper and a young girl trapped in a burning barn
- ❖ A castle with magical doors and a Formula 1 racing car
- ❖ Hunters after human prey
- ❖ A toy store and Vietnam

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Actual Amiga  
Screen Shot

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- ❖ 30 different characters, 20 different places!
- ❖ Another dimension... reality meets nightmare
- ❖ Hot graphics for all 4 color cards (CGA, VGA, EGA, and Tandy)
- ❖ And Mr. G. Reaper!

## Old video and computer hits lead Ultra line

Ultra looked to the past for a couple of its newest video-game releases. *Q\*bert*, first seen on a Mylstar coin-op in 1983, bounces his way back into video-gaming history again, this time decked out in updated graphics for the NES. The gamer must maneuver the well-known alien over three dozen or more checkerboard pyramids, changing the colors of each square, while dodging a group of enemies headed up by his most famous antagonist, Coily the purple-headed snake.



*Gyuss* features a dark and evil alien force, attacking in swarming hives of death ships. The game player has the job of saving the people of earth and freeing the planet, by zapping the attackers. *Gyuss* also started its game life as a coin-op.

*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, of comic-book fame, will become a NES cartridge, as well as a program for play on Amiga, C-64 and IBM PC computers. The martial arts heroes come armed with Oriental weapons.

Cinemaware's award-winning computer game, *Defender of the Crown*, transports NESers back to medieval days. The gamer plays the part of a knight, who raises the money, weapons and armies to battle the Normans who are conquering Britain. Famed for its outstandingly beautiful graphics, the NES version promises the same level of excitement and stunning visuals.

## From round table to time travel

IntelliCreations' two interactive fictionilogies take you from the days of the Knights of the Round Table to a time lord's eternity-changing adventure.

*Lancelot* is a three parter. The knight travels through Camelot, endures trials by combat, romances Guinevere and Elaine and moralizes over his betrayal of the king. Digitized graphics help bring Malory's version of the tale to life, as the user interacts with 60,000 words of text.

Three adventures combine in *Time And Magik*, as the gamer struggles to stop the Time Lords from corrupting eternity. In the first, the gamer must recover nine items to foil the plot. In the second, he has a shot at the Red Moon Crystal, the last source of Magik. Finally, the gamer confronts the madman who has the crystal. The games can be played independently. Both *Lancelot*



and *Time And Magik* are available for Apple, Amiga, Atari 8-bit, Atari ST, Commodore, IBM PC and Macintosh computers.

*lot and Time And Magik* are available for Apple, Amiga, Atari 8-bit, Atari ST, Commodore, IBM PC and Macintosh computers.



and *Time And Magik* are available for Apple, Amiga, Atari 8-bit, Atari ST, Commodore, IBM PC and Macintosh computers.

## Texas Instruments gives Computer Fun



Texas Instruments' Computer Fun is a child (ages 4-8) guidance toy specifically designed to make children more comfortable with the computer format. Twelve simple games help children develop reading and math skills, using a computerlike console with a standard "QWERTY" keyboard, cursor keys, voice recognition and spoken instruction delivered in a child's voice.

The unit superficially resembles some laptop computers. Closed, it's completely portable; opened, the lid contains an LCD screen, flanked by the microphone that picks up the child's answers to questions from the computer. A bank of icons with 12 game selections, yes/no buttons, number keys and other command controls make the keyboard easy to understand and use.

The LCD graphics can't rival real-life computers of course. But they are varied and plentiful, with over 100 animations. The dozen games included start with simple letter- and number-recognition tests, then advance through word recognition, spelling, counting and number sequencing. More advanced games address sentence structure, silly story building and addition and subtraction. But the educational aspects are largely cloaked in entertaining and inventive pastimes that make this stand-alone a child-fascinator.

## Epyx establishes BBS for customers

Epyx has set up a new online Service Center bulletin-board service (BBS) for customers, so that any gamer with a modem can call in for information.

The online Service Center offers day and

night access, technical support, warranty and update information, an online catalog, game hints, product release dates, new product information, beta-test information, market research studies and upcoming con-

tests. There are no membership or per-minute charges.

Anyone with a modem can reach the service by calling (415) 364-0281; 300/1200 Baud-8 Bits-No Parity-1 Stop Bit.

## Traveler's aid for video gamers

Going somewhere? Trips are more fun if you take your video game along, and the "Voyager" Video Game System Carry Case from Labo (Bloomfield, New Jersey) makes it easier to pack up the goodies. The black bag measures 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide by 7 inches high, by 12 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches deep, and holds a complete NES, Sega or Atari system, along with accessories, cartridges and documentation. A movable Velcro panel subdivides the inside to adjust the fit as needed.

Labo is best known for its line of carry cases and storage units for audio and video products. The video-game case was created specifically to make it possible for a per-



son to carry an entertainment system, while protecting the equipment within. The Voyager is constructed of padded nylon fabric, with a padded adjustable shoulder strap and a zippered outer pocket. It's available for \$19.99 at many retailers.

## Top coin-ops for December 1988

Figures provided by *RePlay Magazine*, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators:

### Best upright video games:

1. P.O.W., SNK
2. Double Dragon, Taito
3. Operation Wolf, Taito
4. Bad Dudes, Data East
5. After Burner, Sega
6. Team Quarterback, Leland
7. Quarterback, Leland
8. Power Drift, Sega
9. Out Run, Sega
10. Assault, Atari

### Best software:

1. Cabal, Fabtek
2. Shinobi, Sega
3. Aliened Beast, Sega
4. VBall, Taito
5. P-47, Jaleco
6. Roadblasters, Atari
7. Capcom Bowling, Capcom
8. Twin Eagle, Taito
9. Championship Sprint, Atari
10. Twin Cobra, Romstar



## Computerists clog California phone lines

Fans of Sierra games were burning up the wires to Coarsegold, California, according to the telephone company. Ed Lacy, speaking for the Sierra Telephone Company, said, "During peak times we were turning away thousands of calls an hour. . .causing (phone) traffic problems as

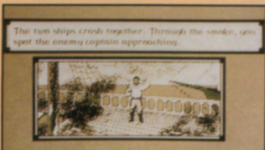
far away as Modesto and Sacramento."

It seems adventure gamers flooded the switchboard, following the 1987 gift-getting season. The software company responded with expanded hours (8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Pacific time), more phone lines and a larger staff trained to handle the requests.

## Pirates! aboard the Mac

MicroProse Software's award-winning *Pirates!* has been converted for the Macintosh. The role-playing/adventure game, honored in 1988 for its on-screen graphics, simulates seafaring adventures on the Spanish Main. Players select from six different time periods during the days of derring-do of the 16th and 17th centuries, nine different types of ships and over 50

Gold	Software	Merchant	Price
Food	1500 pieces	7500 pieces	
Fuel	14 tons	40 tons	70 pieces
Spice	0 tons	71 tons	60 pieces
Sugar	0 tons	45 tons	60 pieces
Comms	8	49	50 pieces
Space to build	22 tons	0	60 pieces



locales to visit. The player starts with one ship, then sails the Caribbean for wealth and prestige. Towns are attacked by cannonfire or land assault, ships can be pirated and

boarded, and captains who refuse to surrender their goods will fight in deadly duels. Political turmoil affects the success of the swashbuckling, and swordfighting provides arcade-style action through realistic fencing moves and techniques.

*Pirates!* is the first game MicroProse has created for the Macintosh. MicroProse Vice President Steve Meyers said, "We feel that Mac users . . . because of their well-regarded creativity, will find the adventure and role playing in *Pirates!* particularly satisfying."

## Late-breaking news flash!

Mattel is making an effort to re-enter the growing video-game market with the introduction of its innovative Power Glove controller for the Nintendo Entertainment System. This accessory—first developed by NASA for controlling robots in space—slides on the player's arm like a gauntlet, and uses sensors to determine the position of the fingers and hand in 3-D space. This data is then turned into controlling movements for the on-screen character. The player will also be able to access "turbo" and slow-motion features from the glove to further enhance game control.

To make the device more versatile, it contains a keypad-controlled computer so the player can turn personalized hand and finger moves into specific control-pad actions. Instructions will be provided for customizing 30 of the most popular NES titles.



Mattel claims that the Nintendo-approved Power Glove will work with all current NES joystick-controlled games. They will also release game cartridges under the Glove Gaming Series that take advantage of the glove's capabilities. The first title, *Bad Street Brawler*, will appear sometime this fall.

The Power Glove, available in two sizes, will hit store shelves in August, and the price is currently set at \$75.



# PC Engine's CD-ROM Player



The CD-ROM and PC Engine fit into a compact carrying case with a lid (not shown) that protects the hardware. The docking interface is built into the case and contains additional memory. The U.S. version of the PC Engine will be larger than what's shown here.

**G**ood news! The shelves soon after. While the price is yet to be announced, VG&CE estimates the street price to be in the area of \$150. Sources also say that there will be a sizable quantity of games available with the machine's introduction.

by Lee H. Pappas

We've had a chance to use the PC Engine for six months now and find it to be an amazing step forward from existing game consoles. Though the games we've been playing are all intended for the Japanese market, many of the 18 games we have now are playable



*Fighting Street* is martial-arts game with digitized voices, music and lots of action.

without benefit of the instruction booklet, and easily demonstrate the PC Engine as the powerful

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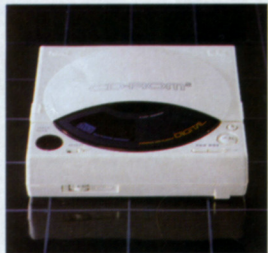
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The on-screen control panel lets you play music CDs with great flexibility.

game machine it is. The games are rich in detail and color, and many offer truly superior play in every respect. There is no guarantee that the card format used in Japan will be the same employed in the U.S. when it is introduced, but we foresee no loss of quality. In fact, some of the biggest and most respected names in the U.S. software development field are working on creating games for the U.S. version of the PC Engine.



The CD-ROM as it stands alone. It will play music discs in five-inch or three-inch formats, and includes a digital readout, stereo headphone jacks and volume control.

As we mentioned last issue, one of the exciting options now available in Japan is the CD-ROM (Compact Disc Read Only Memory) player. Think of it as a cross between a compact disc and a game cartridge with major advantages. The compact disc can currently hold up to 550 megabytes of information when used for computer data, the equivalent of a novel in book form. The best feature of the CD is that it will never wear out or break, unless you abuse it, because it is read by a laser beam. The CD contains extensive programming information, with any piece of data almost instantly accessible by the PC Engine, which translates to more elaborate game maps, high-quality music, realistic sound effects, as well as digitized voice and graphics capabilities.

The PC Engine's CD-ROM unit also plays any

normal music compact disc, including the newer three-inch CD "singles," as well as the sound portion of CD videos (though not the five-minute video information on those discs). And since the PC Engine can output in stereo, you can play music CDs through your stereo system or television/monitor. The system control card that comes with the CD-ROM unit offers you a neat on-screen "control panel," allowing you to perform functions that even the most expensive CD players don't offer. These include programming the order that tracks play in, block marking and playback, and even fade-outs.

Can any home or portable CD player be used with the PC Engine in a CD-ROM capacity? Unfortunately, no. The CD-ROM contains a special decoder to control the flow of necessary computer data. Nor can the CD-ROM unit be purchased and used on another brand of personal computer or game machine aside from the PC Engine.



The CD-ROM system cartridge contains an advanced screen that allows you to program songs in any order or random play. Additional features include sound fade-out, various time displays and "LED" meters.



*Bikuri Man* is a compact-disc-based catalog of Japanese comic-book characters. Details of adventures are included, as well as a quiz on what you have learned.

Removing the CD player from the interface/carrying case will also allow you to listen to musical CDs separate from the PC Engine,



*No-Ri-Ko* is an interactive story featuring "concert" performances. It will only be available in Japan.

as a headphone output is included. The unit requires AC power and isn't designed as a portable; it wasn't built to handle the bumps and jolts that regularly available, portable CD players can. If you play CD-ROM-based games using the headphone jack, only the CD sound will be audible; the sound effects via the PC Engine will not come through.

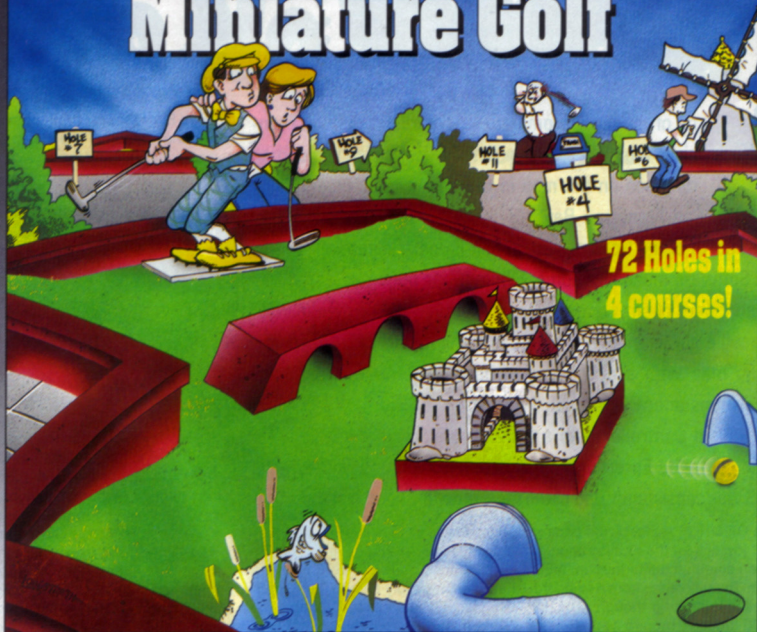
The CD-ROM requires the use of a special interface/docking port that holds both the CD-



ROM and the PC Engine. The output from the device runs to a standard television set or monitor; sound can be run through a home sound system in stereo, if you choose. An RGB monitor cannot be used, but isn't needed because of the games' already excellent visual quality. The interface unit also contains non-volatile backup memory, and can hold information on its own for about two weeks without outside power.

The overall benefit of the CD-ROM is more game/program space, outstanding sound and the ability for advanced game designs. Imagine adventure-type games with thousands of rooms or levels. Games that play like a real movie or strategy games with incredible detail and complexity. This is what we're likely to see. And very soon!

# Hole-In-One Miniature Golf



**72 Holes in  
4 courses!**

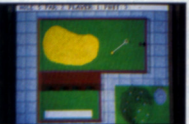
Hole-In-One Miniature Golf combines digitized sound, quality graphics and superior playability with realistic ball play to give you the best miniature golf game made!

Utilizing the mouse (point and click) interface, DigTek Software has created a game that will challenge adults yet is so simple to play that children can play as easily as adults from the very first game. This game supports up to 4 players making it one of the few games that the entire family really

can enjoy together.

Hole-In-One Miniature Golf is 72 Holes of pure fun in 4 separate courses that give you classic miniature golf as well as hilarious fantasy holes. The digitized sounds of the crowds, the ball, and special effects all add to the fun and realism.

Another revolutionary game from the company that brought you Vampire's Empire, Amegas, and Hollywood Poker — DigTek Software!



Amiga versions shown here.

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# U-FORCE™

# Look



One of the most prominent landmarks in the San Francisco area is the Golden Gate Bridge, which has earned its place on the map in the way it rises majestically above the San Francisco Bay.

Just north of the Golden Gate, in San Rafael, California, Broderbund Software makes its home. While it has been one of the largest suppliers of software to computer owners worldwide since it started eight years ago, it hopes to make its mark on the video-gaming map with a new piece of hardware. Introduced at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show, the U-FORCE—billed as the “Force Field Controller”—is a truly innovative hardware add-on for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Its demonstration at the WCES was consistently one of the most crowded booths at the show.

The U-FORCE replaces the control pad or joystick for the manipulation of your on-screen counterpart in NES games. The difference from a standard controller is striking though: The U-FORCE doesn't require you to hold anything in your hand! Using what Broderbund refers to as a “patent protected series of electronic sensors and proprietary circuitry,” it can detect not only movements of your hands, but also velocity of motion and how far away from the U-FORCE you are holding your hands and body.

## How It All Started

Dave Capper first came up with the idea late in 1987, and shortly thereafter created a working demo of the U-FORCE. Capper is no stranger to new-product development, having previously held executive positions with Mattel and Galoob Toys before starting his

own consulting firm. But he's quick to credit his partner, Stan Axelrod, for his contributions on the project, labeling him “an incredibly talented and creative electronics engineer.” Capper explained that Axelrod's way of thinking is especially valuable to the development of unique and innovative concepts, because he has the insight to look outside the apparent bounds of a problem in order to solve it.

The initial plan was to create a more realistic method for people to interface with video-game consoles and computers. It's obvious that a controller of this nature would be a risky venture, because it utilizes sophisticated hardware in what would likely be a somewhat pricey item for the consumer. In fact, the first company that Capper pitched it to—one of the country's top-five toy companies, who also happens to be involved in video games—turned

it down. Even though Capper brought a working model of the device, the company was hesitant to take a chance on it.

Broderbund was the next company Capper decided to show it to, partly because of its extensive background in software development and its close proximity to Capper's home in Sausalito. There was, after all, the possibility that someone would beat Broderbund to the punch, and it wouldn't help to have geography work against the company.

Capper isn't shy about the primary reason he is happy the U-FORCE project ended up under Broderbund's roof. “It is a dynamic, entrepreneurial company with the ability to focus,” he says frankly. “It has the ability to make things happen that larger companies don't. It's one thing to have a vision, but it's another thing to find a company that shares your vision.”

The New Ventures Division of Broderbund, through which the U-FORCE is being developed, is a company within a company, specifically designed to allow innovative products to be developed. Broderbund's Ed Bernstein, vice president of new ventures, and Alan Weiss, product manager, were floored when they first saw the U-FORCE demonstrated. Immediately, they saw the potential for the device and started feverishly working to better the concept.

## Current Events

In the short time since the early development days, the U-FORCE has seemingly flown into the product it is today. Hours of brainstorming and play-testing sessions, using both in-house employees and off-the-street NES play-



# Ma, No Joystick!

by Andy Eddy



ers, brought to light many possibilities for its future.

Of course, an important consideration was how Nintendo would see the U-FORCE. "When we went up to demonstrate it for Nintendo the first time, [the company] was pretty amazed about what we were doing," Weiss explained. "[Nintendo] didn't think it could be done, and we sort of blew people away showing them that we could do it. They're really excited."

Taking it further, Weiss noted that Nintendo has shown a commitment to support the U-FORCE. "[Nintendo] is anxious to have innovation on the system. They're glad we came to them,



and so are we. We just think Nintendo can do the best job with it right now because they have the best installed user base." This won't prevent Broderbund from producing a version of the U-FORCE for home computers at a later date, though it will probably stay exclusive to the NES market for a year or so after its introduction.

The first question to be asked is: How well does this process work? At the time of this writing, the device wasn't 100% completed, but I was allowed to "test drive" it on *Mike Tyson's Punch Out*.

Once I got past the awkward stage of learning the moves I needed to make the various punches, I found the response to be quite crisp. Actually punching in midair made the game seem much more natural, and in no time I was moving around as if I were in the ring.

In this case, punching relates directly to what the on-screen boxer does, but other games require different controlling motions. The U-FORCE has a bank

of four switches that the user can set in different configurations, to vary what sensors handle what control pad operations. A list of current games and configurations will be included so a player can configure the U-FORCE to work with his/her existing software library.

It will also come with a T-bar that mounts in a socket on the face of the U-FORCE to make flying- and driving-game control more natural for the player. The handles can be removed and used by themselves, and they will be equipped with fire buttons to simulate the "A" and "B" buttons on the NES control pad.



In most situations the player would set the U-FORCE up with the top section facing them, but certain games are best controlled with the entire unit laying flat. In this manner, you can mimic the control pad better—directional control on the left, button control on the right—for scrolling games like *Super Mario Bros*.


Naturally the U-FORCE won't work for some games, and Broderbund admits that certain titles are not suited to the control engineering of the device. These include cartridges that require the Power Pad or a light gun, as well as games that utilize variations in controller input, such as those you get with most sports cartridges.

When I questioned Weiss about the possibility that these limitations would restrict it too heavily, he told me the main problem they faced in creating the U-FORCE was the need to adapt it to existing games. Now that the

product is past that hurdle, current in-house development is taking place to specifically address U-FORCE's strong points. For example, Broderbund is working on a more realistic driving game where you can accurately control the range and speed of turning. It is also toying with a superhero game that will let you fly by putting your hands in front of you, and battle foes by "throwing" lightning bolts.

The strongest feature, according to Weiss, is that game software can be programmed to configure U-FORCE "on the fly," allowing games with varying play mechanics to be designed. You could start in a driving scenario, move into a karate battle, then progress into a scrolling adventure, with the game cartridge changing the sensor configuration at each stage.

U-FORCE is due to be released in May or June with a price tag of \$69.95, and they figure to sell between 500,000 and 750,000 in the U.S. by Christmas 1989. When asked whether the price might be a stumbling block to meeting their goal, Weiss showed nothing but optimism. "We think it's going to do well. After it was announced, we [were] approached by at least ten groups that have asked us about programming and compatibility and how they can program to take advantage of the U-FORCE. People are anxious to get behind us on this. Can you imagine a *Wheel of Fortune* where you actually spin the wheel with your hand?"

So the future of the U-FORCE remains open to the imagination of others. In fact, Capper hinted that the U-FORCE hasn't reached its full capabilities with what they are currently working on. Don't be surprised to see further inventions revolving around the concepts contained in the U-FORCE. I don't think the last has been heard from these inventive personalities. After all, another innovative gadget, the Power Pad, didn't sell very well when it was first introduced by Bandai. Since being bundled with the NES as the "Power Set," it has sold 1.1 million units, and now more cartridges are being developed to work directly with the Power Pad. Perhaps the Power Set's success will lead the way for a "U-FORCE Set" this Christmas? 

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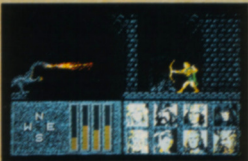
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## Reviews

# Milon's Secret Castle

Hudson Soft

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$34.99)

**P**oor Milon! He lives in a land (named Hudson—I wonder how he got that name) where everyone communicates using music, and he has no musical ability whatsoever. In desperation, Milon decides that it would be a good idea to find some other people like himself. But just before leaving on his quest, he pays a visit to Hudson's Secret Castle where he hopes to visit Queen Eliza.

Milon discovers that the castle has been attacked by an evil warlord who has taken away all the people's musical instruments and hidden away the queen. And so our unlucky hero finds himself with a new quest—to rescue Queen Eliza and bring music back.

**Though it rehashes the "save the queen" motif, Hudson Soft's *Milon's Secret Castle* offers tough puzzles for the player to work through.**



I'll admit that the story line isn't exactly original—nowadays it seems that every video game has a rescue-a-member-of-the-royal-family scenario—but because of the game's superior graphics and good sound effects, the player will soon forget the unoriginal premise.

When you begin the game, the screen displays a front view of the castle. The castle has many floors, each of which contain many doors and windows. Some of the doors or windows you can enter right away; others remain inaccessible until you complete the preceding levels.

The initial step of your quest is to go through the first door and battle your way to the top of a huge room filled with money and other surprises—one of these surprises being the many creatures bent on Milon's destruction.

The treasures, unfortunately, are not visible. You must search for

them by breaking open the dozens of stone blocks that fill the room. Many of the blocks contain coins, which will let you buy items from the shop. Other objects that you may find include honeycombs, which restore your energy, and the Hudson Bee, which surrounds you with a protective shield.

Other important items are hidden in the rooms as well. The music box will transport you to a bonus level where you can catch notes to increase your money. You'll also need to find a key and a secret door; otherwise you'll never be able to leave the room.

Avoiding the creatures is a good way to stay alive, but sooner or later, you have to fight. Destroying the enemy is the only way to get two other valuable items: the heart, which increases your energy by one point, and the umbrella, which lets you shoot your magic bubbles faster.

Once you have solved a level, it's on to the shop where you can buy many helpful items, such as high-jumping boots or secret hints. Finally, you enter the last room of the level to do battle with a demon. Unless you've completed everything on a specific level, the demon won't appear—but when he does, be prepared for a tough battle!

*Milon's Secret Castle* is an enthralling game whose only defect is its overly high level of difficulty. Each level is a tough puzzle to solve, and you'll need your thinking cap if you plan to discover all the secrets. This reviewer was told by Hudson Soft that a clue book was forthcoming, and I suspect that most players will need one.

—Clayton Walnum

Hudson Soft, 601 California Street, Suite 2004,  
San Francisco, CA 94108; (415) 391-1494

# Trojan

Capcom

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$29.95)

**T**ake on the role of the Trojan warrior, master of the martial arts. There are seven screens to conquer in this game, and the final objective is to defeat the king of your (unnamed) enemies. As you can imagine, reaching the king is not easy. His many subjects will do their best to keep you from achieving your goal.

*Trojan* is played against the backdrop of a city. Your view is from the side, and the city scrolls by behind you as you walk. The graphics are quite good, with buildings, windows, doors, manhole covers and other realistic objects. Your primary armament is a sword and

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shield; although you are an excellent practitioner of karate, which can be very handy if you lose your other weapons. Pressing the "A" button puts up the shield in any of five directions (depending on the position of the joystick). Pressing the "B" button causes you to swing your sword in the direction you are facing.

Sadly, you won't have time to enjoy the view. Almost immediately, enemies come at you from both the front and back, armed with swords, maces and other medieval (but effective) items designed to do you harm. A single swing of your sword is enough to rather graphically decapitate most enemies. The red-garbed knife thrower is a particularly dangerous enemy, since he can not only throw knives, but he tends to kneel down and try to get under your shield if you are standing. It takes two hits to kill the knife thrower. He also has another weapon—a magic ball that makes your sword and shield fly away! They can be recovered later, but meanwhile, you must depend on your karate skills. If you lose your sword and shield, the buttons control your feet and hands.

Just to keep things interesting, there's a hidden archer that pops out of the manholes, and you must be careful not to get shot by his arrow. You can also hop down into the manhole, where you will be faced by a single, powerful enemy demon. It can be tough to defeat, but its domain contains all sorts of important weapons, such as super-jump boots, keys and speed-up (increases your walking speed, which is critical to defeating the king).



Armed with only a sword and a shield, you must rely primarily on your martial-arts skills to get past all the adversaries that stand between you and the evil king in Capcom's *Trojan*.



As you reach the end of a level, more powerful enemies will appear. The mad bomber starts tossing dynamite at you from the windows, though you can deal with this threat if you have the super-jump boots. Finally, on the last screen of a level, a particularly tough set of enemies appear. The axe-wielding Hatchet Brothers show up at the end of Level 1, and Level 2's Iron Arms (with his boomerang arm and his own shield) is particularly tough to defeat.

*Trojan* is not just your ordinary hack-and-slash game. For one thing, there are a lot of surprises that are only revealed by striking the right place with your sword. It is a very tough game that will provide a challenge to even a champion arcader, especially since timing is critical—you must deal with enemies coming from both sides. This gets especially tough when one of the enemies has a "distance" weapon, such as a knife or arrow. One final word of warn-

ing: If you use a joystick, make sure it is a good sturdy one—this game will give it a beating. —David Plotkin

Capcom, 1283-C Old Mountain View/Alviso Road, Sunnyvale, CA 94089; (408) 745-7081, (800) 843-4632

## Wizards & Warriors

### Acclaim

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39.95)

Once again, a princess has been kidnapped and locked inside a mighty castle by an evil wizard. And again, you, as the brave knight, must battle untold horrors to rescue her. Though the story line is old and tired, the game is certainly *not*. *Wizards & Warriors* combines arcade action, sharp graphics, problem solving and a bit of luck to produce an adventure that will keep you occupied for many, many hours.

You, as Kuros, start the adventure in a forest, armed with courage and a big sword as the only tools with which to defeat your enemies. And enemies there are—enough to fill whole pages of the instruction booklet with their names—such as bothersome flies and spiders. The big, circling eagles are potent, and their fireball-spitting cousins are more dangerous still. You'll also face snakes, werewolves, skeletons and a particularly nasty rock pillar beast. If any enemy touches you, your life force is diminished; when it is gone, you lose one of Kuros' three lives. The life force can be replenished by picking up various artifacts or food, which is always a good idea.

Not all the creatures you will encounter can be defeated with your sword, but other weapons are available if you know how to find them. The throwing dagger is handy, and the Wand of Wonder's ice rays or the Staff of Power's fireballs make quick work of almost anything you meet. The Exploding Egg, which destroys everything on the screen, is a good weapon for those tight spots. The Cloak of Darkness (enemies can't find you) and shields can also aid Kuros in evading enemies.



Gathering gems, hoarding weapons and battling all sorts of creatures are your primary goals in Acclaim's *Wizards & Warriors*.

Many things are to be found in *Wizards & Warriors*, and much of the game's challenge comes from figuring out how to make use of the items to further your cause: Gems can be used to bribe the level guardians; keys open doors and treasure chests; and potions and certain artifacts give you extra powers, some of which can be tremendously helpful. In fact, there are places where you cannot escape unless you are endowed with a particular ability. Some of the objects you pick up replace items you may already be carrying; so some discretion is needed to decide what items you should sling into your backpack.

The biggest challenge is figuring out how to get around the world

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of Elrond and to the castle IronSpire. As mentioned, the game starts in a forest, but there are whole worlds hidden away from view that you must negotiate to find all the required items. Some parts of the screens you do see can only be reached via hidden rooms, some carefully timed jumping or the right potion. Even after you figure out how to get out of the forest (the instruction booklet is purposefully vague on the details), you must still traverse the ice caves, lava caves, another forest and the castle itself—a series of mazes of no small proportions. Keep in mind that the rewards are great for this journey: Besides the princess, the evil wizard has locked up other kidnapped maidens, each worth a king's ransom in points!

*Wizards & Warriors* is a tremendously challenging game, requiring hair-trigger timing, patience and devious thought processes to unravel the built-in puzzles. The game is enhanced by the fact that if you lose your last life, you can pick up exactly where the last game ended, though minus your previous score. The excellent graphics and sound also contribute to an enjoyable gaming experience.

—David Plotkin

Acclaim Entertainment, 189 South Street,  
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## Fantasy Zone: The Maze

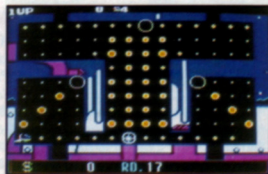
Sega

For the Sega Master System (\$29.95)

As fans of the last two *Fantasy Zone* games (*Fantasy Zone* and *Fantasy Zone II*) know, the evil Menons have twice attacked the Zone in an attempt to obtain a planetary system to replace their own dying one. Twice before, the Menons were defeated—but they are back again.

Now the Menons have built a series of mazes on each of the

**Sega's Fantasy Zone:**  
*The Maze* brings the  
*Pac-Man* theme up  
to date by trading  
coins for dots and  
adding a large enemy  
force to avoid.



seven Fantasy Zone planets. It's up to you, as the now-famous Opa-Opa, to find your way through all of the mazes and destroy the Menons. Because Opa-Opa has been weakened by his previous encounters with the Menons, his younger brother, Upa-Upa, is available to help him on his new quest.

*Fantasy Zone: The Maze* is like a state-of-the-art *Pac-Man*. Like its predecessor, each maze is filled with dots (coins) that must be gathered up in order to proceed to the next round. As you work your way through each screen, you must avoid the enemy soldiers

that patrol each maze. Unlike *Pac-Man*, there's no limit to the number of enemies that can be on the screen. Many mobile bases travel the mazes, and each time the master hole in the center of the maze turns red, a plasma wave will be sent out, that will release enemy soldiers from one of the mobile bases. Each time you run over the hole, it loses all its energy and has to build it up again. In this way, you can control, to an extent, the number of soldiers pursuing you.

Also unlike *Pac-Man*, Opa-Opa (and Upa-Upa in a two-player, cooperative game) has available to him a number of weapons that may be purchased with the coins he has gathered. These weapons include Twin Shot, Wide Beam, Laser Beam, Heavy Bomb, Fire Bomb, Top Power and Big Wing, each of which adds, for a short period of time or until Opa-Opa loses a life, extra combat power.

Once you complete a round, you move on to a bonus screen, that consists of an invisible maze containing coins. You are briefly shown the maze, after which it disappears, and you must make your way to the prizes with only the portion of the maze surrounding you revealed.

*Fantasy Zone: The Maze* adds many interesting twists to the old *Pac-Man* theme. The addition of the weapons especially gives this game a greater depth. The graphics are okay, though nothing sensational, and the sound effects are good. The player should be warned, however, that the control pads make less than ideal control devices for this type of game. It's difficult to get Opa-Opa to go exactly where you want him to go, and you'll sometimes swear that the game has a mind of its own.

—Clayton Walnum

Sega Of America, 573 Forbes Boulevard,  
South San Francisco, CA 94080; (415) 742-9300, (800) USA-SEGA

## Rampage

Data East

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

Like many fellow arcaders, *Rampage* reminded me of one thing when I first discovered it in the arcade: those incredibly bad monsters-devouring-Tokyo flicks with the atrocious English dubbing. My friends and I used to watch these "movies" on television during those long summer vacations between elementary school years. Yeah, those were keen days.

Essentially, what you get with *Rampage* is the opportunity to play a movie monster, pillaging city block after city block to your heart's delight. Here, you'll find virtually all the things you've seen in those Japanese monster films: attacking helicopters, army soldiers and policemen; innocent bystanders getting eaten; and, of course, collapsing skyscrapers. In fact, about the only things that are *not* in *Rampage* are English dubbing and a lousy screenplay.

*Rampage's* motto is simply "Let's trash this place!" This is a game of pure destruction. Period. The giant George the Ape and the equally large Lizzy the Lizard must tear down buildings through 128 different screens of city blocks. You do this by moving George or Lizzy onto a building and having him or her punch out as many of the story windows as possible. This gradually weakens the building's structure, eventually bringing it to a collapse.

Points are awarded for anything that you can get George or Lizzy



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to destroy. But you have to watch out for the policemen and military soldiers who are shooting and bombing your monster from the building windows and the street. Then there are the missile-firing helicopters and tanks and electrical signs that George and Lizzy should avoid coming into contact with. All injuries sustained show up on a damage bar. When this bar reaches its maximum length, George and Lizzy transform back to their human forms, respectively, and briskly walk off the screen.

In order to avoid having your trashing party brought to an end, you can make George or Lizzy grab handfuls of innocent bystanders and devour them. Not eating enough citizens, or accidentally swal-

There's no sign of Godzilla in Data East's *Rampage* for the NES, but you'll find plenty of destructive action as you tear up the town.



lowing poison, however, will affect the damage bar. Some who are weary of violence in video games will probably declare that the people-eating and building-bashing will induce impressionable young minds to violence. But playing *Rampage* hasn't turned me or my friends into destructive cannibals.

Like the original *Mario Bros.*, this is one of those games best played with two people—each player controls his/her own monster. If you're playing by yourself, the adversaries are tougher to deal with alone, yet you get to choose between assuming the role of George or Lizzy.

The graphics are good, and the animation is surprisingly flicker-free most of the time. Music and sound effects are equally great and complement the on-screen action nicely. You'll wear a satisfying sneer every time you see and hear a building crumble down to the ground due to your demolition.

Perhaps the greatest thing about *Rampage* is that it makes for an excellent stress reliever. Had a bad day at the office? Then fantasize for the moment that you're George the Ape wrecking down your office skyscraper and chewing up your editor—I mean, boss.

One of the only complaints that can be made about *Rampage* is its hefty price tag—\$45—but that's because this is a two-megabyte game pak. Still, this is sure to be one of the hottest NES games of 1989. *Rampage's* success will rest on the fact that it is the epitome of what every good video game should be: fun.

And, oh, in case you're wondering, you won't miss the English dubbing and lousy screenplay.

—Howard H. Wen

Data East USA, Inc., 470 Needles Drive,  
San Jose, CA 95112; (408) 286-7074

## Amagon

### American Sammy

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39.95)

The software market for the NES is filled with companies that are household names, such as Konami, Data East and Taito.

At the other end of the spectrum, particularly because Nintendo's roots are in Japan, are companies not yet familiar to American game players. One such company, American Sammy, has released a scrolling adventure called *Amagon*, which it hopes will bring the company into the forefront of the American NES market.

The character in your control is Amagon, a celebrated soldier in his native country. Armed with only a machine gun and the strange ability to turn into a hulking superhero, he is sent to overtake a mysterious, beast-ridden island in the South Pacific. His mission is hampered by myriad creatures that vary from scene to scene, ranging from wasps to fireballs to scorpions to bouncing mushrooms. The goal is to cruise over the landscape without getting hurt—certainly nothing new as far as video-game strategies go—and to plug away at all attackers. Bonuses are revealed when certain enemies are shot, giving Amagon a higher score, extra bullets or a "Mega-key." The Mega-key is the potion that turns Amagon into Megagon, the muscle-bound dynamo when the Select button is hit. Instead of shooting a gun, Megagon punches his way through his attackers. In this form he can also generate a powerful laser beam to fend off his attackers, but that weapon chips away at his ability to maintain his large size.

Again, similar to other games of this ilk, there is a "boss" character at the end of each level, and it, too, comes in different forms: Lion Head, Devil Tree, Cosmic Man and many others. These threats are more resistant to damage than the other adversaries you meet, so they need to be struck many times to be dispatched. Unless you are in the Megagon form, it is unlikely that you will survive.



Amagon may look meek here, but he's capable of turning into Megagon, a powerful soldier up against an island full of creatures.

You'll have to be at the top of your game to keep Amagon out of severe trouble. He can jump atop some of the obstacles in his way to avoid enemy contact, but you'll still have to be quick on the trigger to save yourself. In some cases you'll risk falling off a precarious perch, like when you are riding a floating cloud, to get around adversaries and on to the next segment of the game. While the challenge is strong in *Amagon*, it sometimes lacks the variety that urges you to try again and doesn't offer much that hasn't been done before. The graphics and sound are adequately handled, though I wish there was more action in the way of character animation. *Am-*

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gon comes on a one-meg cartridge—offering more storage than most game cartridges for the NES. It appears the extra capacity was used to provide the large complement of enemy characters you face and for the colorful backdrops that set each scene.

Seeing that it's difficult to get through just one scene scratch-free, *Amagon* will undoubtedly keep players busy for hours trying to successfully traverse all 12 of its levels. Though it doesn't offer much in the way of innovation or new concepts, it will test your abilities to the maximum.

—Andy Eddy

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## Dark Chambers

Atari

For the XE Game System (\$34.95)

In *Dark Chambers*, you must guide your hero through dank underground caverns, battling with enemies, collecting treasure and, in general, having a real good time. The smooth animation, two-player aspects and variable skill levels all combine to create a winner. *Dark Chambers* consists of 26 levels, lettered A through Z. Each level is different and covers multiple screens. Using your joystick, you must guide your on-screen alter ego through the underground passages. As you approach the edge of the screen, it scrolls smoothly,

showing what lies ahead. And what lies ahead is *danger*—lots and lots of danger. The caverns are filled with monstrous creatures, each more deadly than the last: zombies, skeletons, wraiths, wizards and, ultimately, the grim reaper. Each of these creatures can be shot, but it takes more hits to kill them, and they mutate into lesser creatures when shot. Fortunately, the creatures pursue you with a single-mindedness of purpose that can be used to your advantage. If one of the denizens of the dungeon touches you, it saps your life force, which is indicated by an on-screen bar. Your energy is also depleted by just walking around the dungeon; so you must periodically find food or potions to recharge your hero.

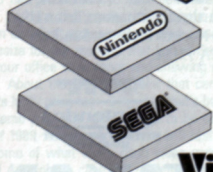
Exploring the dungeons is quite an adventure. Portions of each level are locked, and you must find the key to unlock that section to get at the treasures. Sometimes, even the ladder that leads to the next level is locked away, and the key is hidden behind screens full of enemies! Bombs that can clear the whole screen, additional weapons and shields can be picked up in the dungeon. These bombs



The smooth animation and challenging game play are apparent through all 26 levels of *Dark Chambers* for the Atari XEGS.



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can be set off by pressing the "1" key (hard to find in the heat of battle) or pressing the fire button twice, quickly (too easy to do in the heat of battle).

The creatures are created by structures called "spawners." Each type of spawner creates a different creature. These spawners can be destroyed with your shots, but, again, the more powerful spawners take multiple shots to destroy, and the creatures of the dungeon tend to get in the way! There are also poisons and traps to watch out for.

*Dark Chambers* is smoothly animated and a lot of fun to play, but two features contribute to the high entertainment value of the game. The first is that the difficulty levels range from novice, which will allow a fairly inept player to survive and have a good time, to a killer level that will challenge even veteran arcaders. The second factor is that two persons can play *Dark Chambers* cooperatively—you will survive much longer playing with a friend—and one player can even reincarnate the other one by finding a pulsing heart in the dungeon. This game is highly recommended.

—David Plotkin

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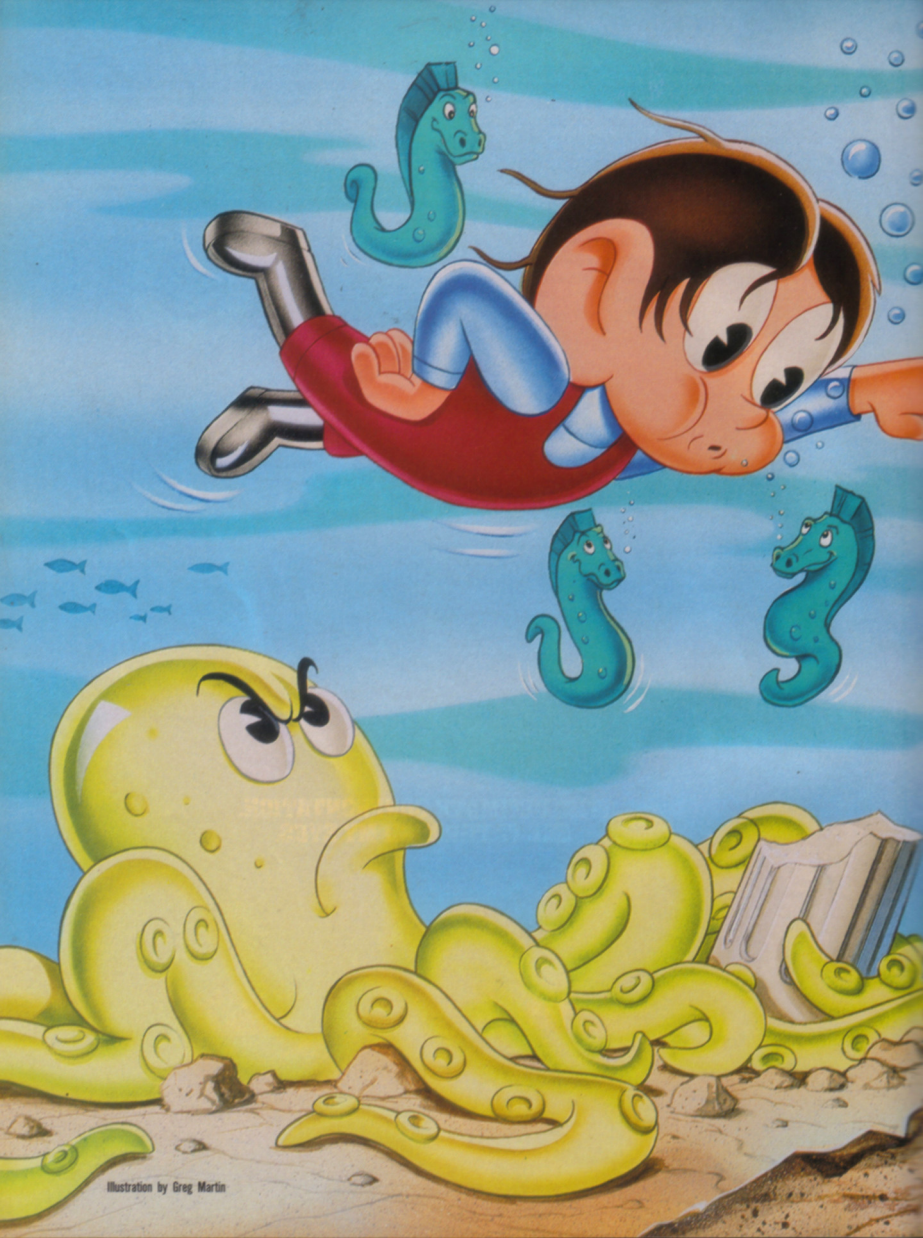



Illustration by Greg Martin

# Adventures in Miracle World, Part 2

## A Player's Guide to Alex Kidd in Miracle World

by Clayton Walnum



Last month, we presented the first six levels of this marvelous game from Sega. We hope that the information we provided helped you get started on your way into Miracle World. This time around, we'll give you some more valuable advice, as well as present the maps for the final 11 levels of Alex Kidd, which will bring us all the way to the end of the game.

### Advanced Janken techniques

Once you get to the fourth Janken match,

you can no longer predict the pattern of scissors-paper-stone choices that your opponent will use. Therefore, it's important that you have the telepathy ball from Mt. Kave, so that you can get clues as to what Scissors Head, Paper Head or Stone Head is thinking. Without those clues, your chances of winning are slim indeed.

But having the telepathy ball is not enough—you have to know how to use it. Scissors Head, Paper Head and Stone Head think almost the way you do. As it gets closer



## Area 7—Mt. Kave



Here's another place to get a power bracelet. If you don't already have one, you'd better get it.

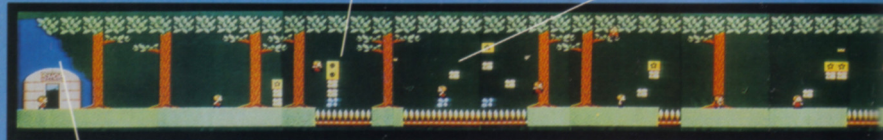
Here's your first chance to get a telepathy ball. Having this in your possession will help you win all the Janken matches. At first, it may seem impossible to get into this little subcave, but you can do it. Read secret answer #1 if you need help.

The easiest way to get past the flame is to use your power bracelet to blast a pathway through the stones. You can get past here without a power bracelet, but you'll need to punch out the rocks to the right of the flame one by one—and that takes tricky timing.

In order to cross this pit, Alex must punch out the stack of boxes. The top box can be gotten with a run-jump-punch move, but be careful Alex doesn't land in the pit. The rest of the boxes can be gotten by carefully "tapping" (see last month's article) Alex forward until he can reach them.

You're going to need to practice Alex's jumping skills to get by this pit. It's fairly easy once you get the hang of it.

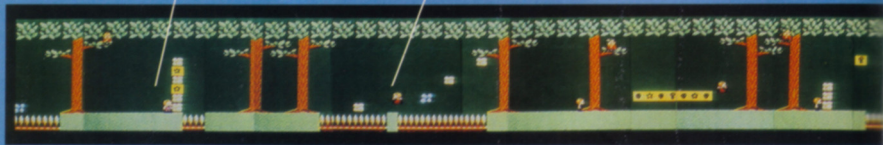
## Area 8— The Blackwood



Buy the cane of flight in this shop. But don't get the Sukopako motorcycle, or you'll be in for a rough (and short) ride.

The monkeys always shoot at the last place you were standing. So by running back and forth between the stack of boxes and the left of the screen, you can easily avoid his shots and still punch out the boxes.

More fancy jumping required here.



## Area 9— The Blackwood



From this point on, to the end of this area, stay along the bottom. That's the best way to stay out of harm's way.





There's a ghost in this question mark box. Make sure you don't punch it.

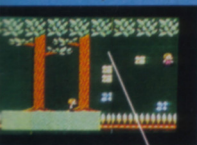
When you punch it, the pink star box won't actually do anything that you can see, but punch it a few times anyway. If you don't, you'll run into problems later on in the game.

This question mark box holds a ghost too, but you should punch open the box anyway. Why? Because if you don't, you may miss out on a free Alex Kidd later on in the caves. Getting away from the ghost is easy; just run to the right as soon as you punch the box. But before you punch the ghost box, make sure you've gotten rid of the scorpion so you have an open pathway through which to escape.

This is the scorpion you must punch out before you free the ghost from the question mark box.

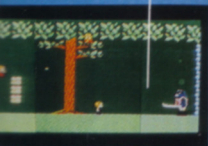
This question mark box will hold a free Alex Kidd if you did everything right. If you didn't do the right things, you may find yourself faced with a ghost.

Here's your second Janken match. Just like your first match with Stone Head, Scissors Head will pick his scissors, paper and stone in the same order all the time. If you have trouble, read secret answer #2.



Use your cane of flight here. But watch out for the monkey and the bat on the other side.

The easiest way to beat grizzly bear is to let your friends (the "A" capsule) do the fighting for you.



The "A" capsule calls up some friends to help Alex with his battle.

to the time to show their choices, they change their minds often. With the telepathy ball, you can see this process in action.

So how do you beat your Janken opponents if they're always changing their minds? Easy!

First make your selection; it really doesn't matter much whether you choose scissors, paper or stone. (Quite frankly, I think the game cheats, anyway—it always seems to know what you've chosen.) Let's say that you choose paper. Paper can be beaten by scissors, so carefully watch your opponents' thoughts. While the music is playing, he'll keep changing his mind, but the instant the music stops, if you see that he's thinking of scissors, press the up controller twice quickly.

If you're fast enough, you will have changed your choice before it's too late. (Of course, if you choose stone as your first choice, you

must watch for paper, and if you choose scissors, you must watch for stone.)

You're probably wondering why I suggested that you press the up controller twice. You need to do that because, once in a while, after the music stops, your Janken opponent will change his selection twice. In these cases, if you only change once, he'll still beat you. By changing twice, you'll either beat him or end up with a tie.

This technique requires some practice, and it's easy to get confused. But with a little practice, the Janken matches will become easier to handle.

### It's a tight squeeze

There are places in *Miracle World* that can only be gotten to if you have mastered the skill required to slip under rocks. There's not



Alex balances precariously over spikes in order to reach some blocks in his way.



The cane of flight helps Alex get over some spike pits.

## Area 10—Bingo Lowland



You'll want to buy at least the Peticopter in this shop. It's difficult to get through this level on foot.

It's not too hard to avoid the lightning bolts. The trick is to wait until they're almost hitting you, then scoot past.

If you need a power bracelet, you can get it here. But if you've already got one, just skip this question mark box.



## Area 12—The City of Radaction

There's probably nothing you need in this shop, if you've kept your inventory well-stocked.



This is your fifth Janken match. Once you beat Scissors Head, his head will fly off, and his body will start shooting at you. You must punch the head three times while you avoid getting hit by the shots.



A lightning bolt threatens Alex in his Peticopter.



Alex clears a path by shooting a monster bird.

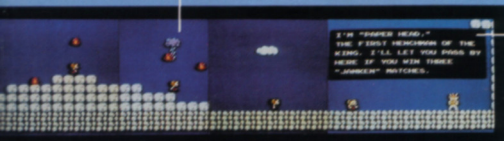


Alex tries to obtain the golden crown and finally save Radaction City.



You have to keep on your toes (figuratively speaking) because the thunder and lightning keeps on coming.

If you're brave, you can actually fly above some of the thunderclouds. But make sure you keep Alex peddling furiously so that he doesn't lose any altitude.



Here's your third Janken match. If you have trouble here, see secret answer #1 at the end of this article.

At first, it may seem impossible to avoid the ceiling spikes, but if you get a small running start and just tap the jump button, you can easily make it to the room's exit.

To get the highest money bags, you have to get a running start and time your jump so that you jump into the hole above.

Here's a free Alex Kodd! It'll take a little practice to get to it, though.

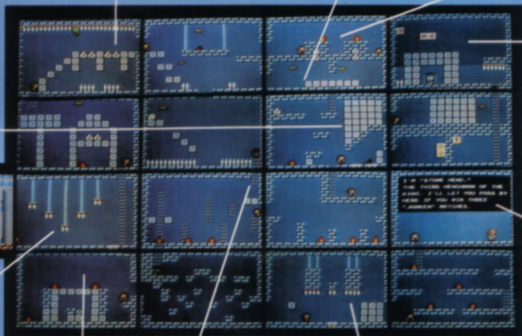
## Area 11—Radaction Castle

You need to get to the upper right-hand exit. To do that you must jump from the upper platform and punch out the boxes on the right as you fall by.



Once you enter this room, run directly to the right side (don't forget to jump over the skull box). As long as you don't slow down, the descending spikes will miss you.

If you got the telepathy ball from Mt. Kave, you don't have to enter this room.



Take the ladder in the upper right corner to the room above, where you'll find a letter. You must have the letter to get past the Kingdom of Nibana.

Run quickly to the right, jumping over the skull box, and punch out the blocks on the right as fast as you can.

Here's where you rescue Alex's brother. Make sure you punch all the pink boxes.

This is the end of the castle and also where you'll face your fourth Janken match. (See the section on playing Janken elsewhere in this article.) Once you win the match, be prepared to do some fighting!

much I can tell you that'll make this easier, but I've had the best luck by running toward the rock I want to squeeze under and pressing the down controller at the last second. When you press the down controller while Alex is running, he'll squat down and slide a little way. It's this sliding action that'll get you under the stone.

### About your inventory

At the beginning of most levels, there is a shop. The shop offers you many valuable items, most of which are necessary to complete the game. As well as the normal items, there are two vehicles, the Peticopter and the Sukopako motorcycle, that are frequently offered for sale in the shops. In some cases,

## Area 13—The City of Radactian



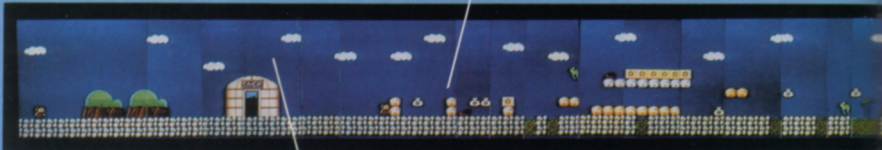
## Area 14—The Kingdom of Nibana



If you've got the letter from Radactian Castle, just get the Hirota Stone and leave. If you forgot the letter, watch out for the ghosts!

## Area 15—The Kingdom of Nibana

Use a power bracelet to clear your path of scorpions and hoppers.



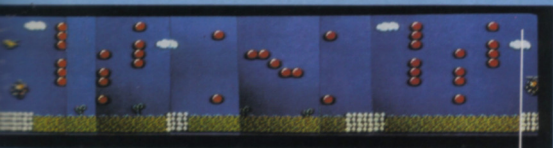
The best way to get through this level is on foot.

If you've used your power bracelet, you can get another from this question mark box.

There's a free Alex Kidd hidden in this question mark box.

You can get the upper money bags only from the left, so get them first.





The second half of the City of Radaction requires some precision flying and shooting and is the only level in Miracle World that moves from right to left. Many monster birds will get in your way here.



When he has the telepathy ball, Alex can see what his opponent is thinking.



Alex blasts some star boxes with his power bracelet.



When you beat Paper Head at Janken, his head will fly off. He's easy to fight, though. Read secret answer #2 if you can't figure out how.



The "B" capsule protects Alex from danger.



The magic castle doesn't appear on the map until Alex gets there.

you're better off without one of these vehicles. Consult the accompanying maps for information on when to buy the Peticopter or Sukopako motorcycle.

Other items in the shops include teleport powder, power bracelets, the cane of flight and magic capsules "A" and "B." All of these items are invaluable in your trek through Miracle World. Always check your inventory before entering a shop, and when you do enter the shop, buy whatever items you are missing (if they are offered; only three items are offered in each shop). By keeping your inventory well stocked, you'll always be prepared to meet the many challenges of Miracle World.

### Radaction saved!

It's a long journey, but we're confident that you can make it. Just keep practicing and following the advice in this article. During your travels through Miracle World, you may discover secrets that even we, the VG&CE game masters, weren't aware of. If you should discover something new, please drop us a line. We'd like to share your discoveries with the rest of our readers.

### Good luck in Miracle World!

#### SECRET ANSWER LIST

#1: Run into the hole from the left, keeping the right arrow of the controller pad pressed down. If you're lucky, after you fall down the hole, you'll run to the right, rather than falling into the lava. Just keep walking to the right to find the secret exit.

#2: Choose scissors and then paper.

#3: Keep choosing paper. You'll win eventually.

#4: When Paper Head's head flies off, run all the way to the left of the screen. He can't get you there, but you can still punch him as he comes by.

#5: It's easy to punch Janken the Great in the forehead. The instant you beat him at Janken, run right up to him (get close but don't touch him or get behind him). When you're standing close, his shots will miss you. As soon as a shot goes over your head, jump up and punch his forehead. Do this three times, and he'll change into stone.

#6: Walk over the pink boxes in this order: sun, waves, moon, star, sun, moon, waves, fish, star, fish. Keep in mind that this combination only works the first time you try. If you make a mistake and lose a life, the combination changes. ♪

## Area 16—The Kingdom of Nibana

This room is very difficult to get past, and you're bound to lose lots of lives trying. You must punch the fish box on the left twice and then run to the right as fast as you can. Believe me, you don't have even a millisecond to spare.

Once again, you must run to the right as fast as you can and punch out the block. Punching the fish box on the left will build a ladder back up to the previous room, if you should need it.

You need a cane of flight to get to the exit above. If you fall through the trapdoor, you'll end up in a section of the castle that's almost impossible to get by.

As you fall, try to get as far to the right as possible so that you land on the ledge with the money bag.

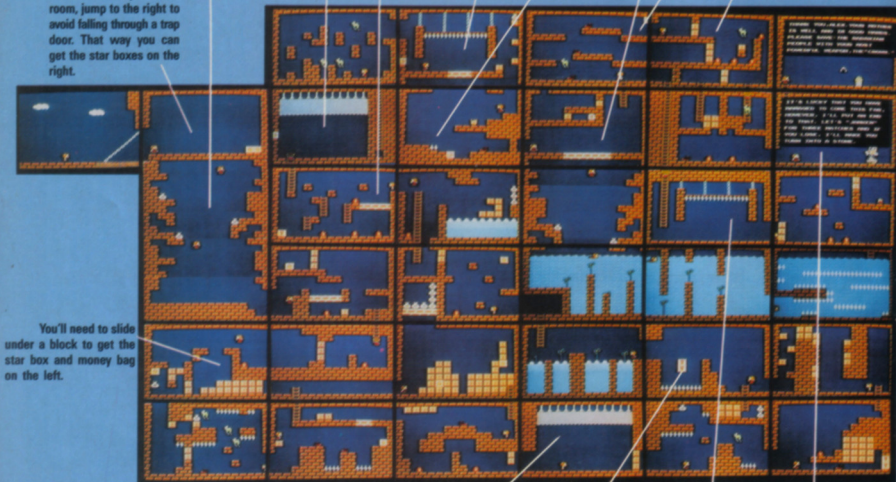
Punch the fish box five times.

Run in quickly, and when you're about one third of the way into the room, jump to the right to avoid falling through a trap door. That way you can get the star boxes on the right.

As soon as you step into this room, you must move slightly to the left so that you don't fall on a flame.

Try to punch out the rolling rock before it can get to the floor of the room; then punch the fish box twice to open an exit.

Some form of invincibility will help here, either a "B" capsule or teleport powder.



You'll need to slide under a block to get the star box and money bag on the left.

To avoid the poisonous gas, run to the right and punch out the blocks as quickly as you can.

Don't even think about trying to get these to boxes. The only way to do it is with a cane of flight, and you need to save the cane for later on in the castle.

Once you beat Janken the Great at the Janken match, you have to punch him in the forehead three times. This may seem impossible at first, but there's an easy way. See secret answer #3 if you can't figure it out.

If you want to try for the free Alex Kidd in the room to the right of this one, then you'll have to get past the spikes. To do that, you must immediately jump from the top of the ladder and run to the right. There's no time to dawdle!

You must walk over the pink boxes in the proper order. One misstep and you'll be faced with a ghost. If you can't figure out the combination, see secret answer #4. When the combination is complete, the gold crown will appear. To win the game, just get the crown!

## Area 17—Cragg Lake



You have to punch out the monster frog.

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## Gradius

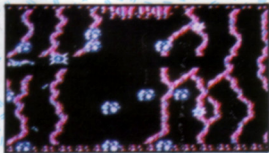
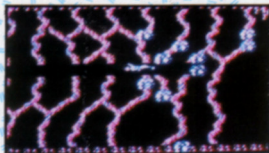
(Konami for the NES)

After the game starts, pause it with the START button, then hit U-U-D-D-L-R-L-R-B-A. This will, if done right, give you a full complement of weapons and shields. This can only be used once per level played.

Also, there is a level-continue bonus that lets you restart a game from the last level you were in. When the GAME OVER



display comes up, hit D-U-B-A-B-A-B-A-B-A. Better work fast, as you only have a few seconds to enter this one.



## Life Force

(Konami for the NES)

We were inundated with hints from all over on how to get 30 free ships in *Life Force* as soon as we printed our request for tips. A tip of our hat and \$10 goes to Aaron Field and Brook Francisco (both of San Francisco, California) who first informed us that the "weapons" hint listed above for *Gradius* will also work to give 30 free lives in *Life Force*.

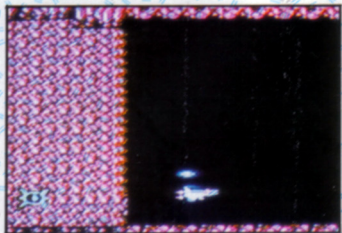
We also received a letter from Johnny Young from Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee, that included locations of two free lives in the first level of *Life Force*. In the photo at the top left, destroying the blob in the webbing leaves you with a power-up icon. Running over this icon gives you a free ship!

Similarly, cutting through the last red block just above the bottom edge of the screen (see photo at bottom right) will also reveal a free ship icon. We're sending some bucks your way, Johnny. Thanks!

We're looking for more Easter eggs all the time, and you can make a few bucks by helping us! Just send your hints and tips to us at VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Be sure to include your name and address!

Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up      D = Down      L = Left  
R = Right    A = "A" button    B = "B" button





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## Arkanoid Strategy Guide

by Andy Eddy

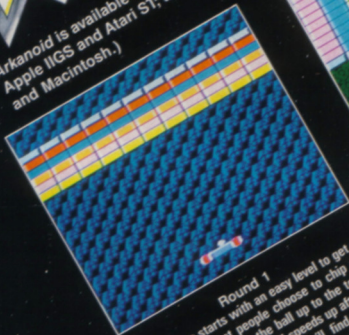
**A**rkanoid has proven itself a very popular game, as its predecessor Breakout did when it was introduced. In fact, it is the best-selling game to date for the Amiga. In this article, we're going to provide some helpful hints for the Amiga.

Keep in mind that the pictures you see here are taken from the NES version, and some details may vary depending on the pictures you see here on screen. For example, the NES version has the third screen flip-flopped, the Apple II/MS version is reportedly a clone of the arcade version, and the Amiga version has 23 bonus screens, so you have more control over the game than you do on the NES.

Also keep in mind that you have more angles to work with in the computer versions, so you have more control over the path the ball takes. For the most part, you'll find the pictures here to be very similar to the available computer versions. The main difference with the computer versions is the addition of bricks or rows of bricks. Overall, the strategies listed here still will be applicable, but we've noted any major differences. (Thanks to Logical Choice for Computing in North Hollywood, California for their assistance in finalizing this strategy guide.)

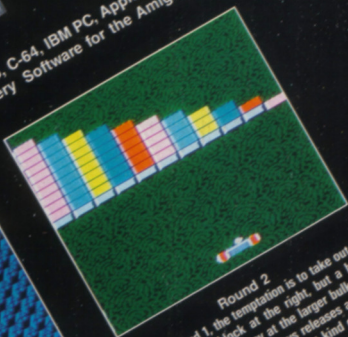
# ARKANOID

(Arkanoid is available from Taito for the NES, C-64, IBM PC, Apple II, Apple IIGS and Atari ST; and from Discovery Software for the Amiga and Macintosh.)



## Round 1

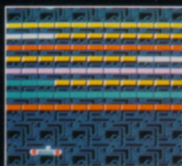
The game starts with an easy level to get you warmed up. Most people choose to chip away at one side, then put the ball up to the top. The only danger is that the ball speeds up after it hits the top edge repeatedly. You'll find a helpful strategy is to eliminate the lowest rows, and then work your way towards the top.



## Round 2

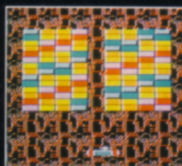
Like Round 1, the temptation is to take out the solitary single block at the right, but a better strategy is to cut away at the larger bulk at the left. The single block always releases a capsule if it's hit first, and seeing what kind of weapon you get here will help decide your strategy. For example, lasers are great to clear the left-side blocks while the ball is slowly chipping away above.





### Round 3

You're at perhaps the hardest level of the game. It'll be necessary to angle the ball steeply—a nervous shot for novices—by hitting it at the very tip of the paddle. Take any capsule except "D" during the early stages of this level, until you get the ball at the very top; at that point, Dispersion helps you finish. Also, when you get the ball into the "channel," don't move your paddle unless you have to: The ball may come down at the same angle, giving you an easy shot back up.



### Round 4

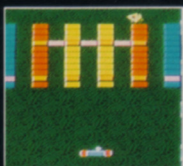
To make things more difficult here, the background is very hard on the eyes; and, to make it worse, it returns every fourth level. Other than that, this scene is fairly straightforward. Be on your toes: The lower bricks, when hit, toss the ball back at you quickly, and often at different angles. If you get Lasers, you'll be on to the next level in no time!



### Round 5

The hardest part about this level is the large quantity of silver bricks; because it takes two hits to get rid of each one. Don't worry, it will get worse.

Also, there are few capsules that can be sprung free; because the designers only provided ten colored bricks. Concentrating on the middle of the *Space Invaders*-like creature is the safest strategy.



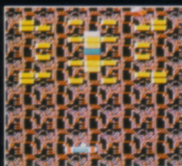
### Round 6

This scene looks easy because of all the open spaces, but the gold bricks make it almost impossible to accurately angle the ball to hit a specific brick. To start, you should concentrate on clearing a row on one of the sides. After that you're on your own. As we said in the general notes, getting the Catch capsule is extremely helpful in putting the ball where you want.



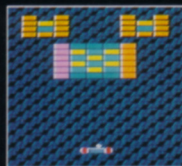
### Round 7

We're back to a fairly simple level, with only one clump of bricks to get. To offset it, though, the ball starts off by moving a little faster than normal. By now you should be getting the hang of angling the ball and keeping it in play. If so, you'll have no trouble with this level.



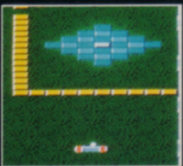
### Round 8

Only seven bricks to get here—sounds, pretty easy, huh? Unfortunately these bricks are right in the middle of a ton of gold bricks, which helps turn your game into an out-of-control pinball machine. If you can, you should start by bouncing the ball through the middle to get the center column of bricks. Persistence is needed to get the last one or two, because the ball will end up going 100 mph before you're done. The Dispersion capsule will help in this level.



### Round 9

The center section is very easy, but the two pairs of colored blocks that are cradled in gold are hard to clear. The angle to get the ball up there is difficult, but the toughest hurdle is getting the ball by the creatures. They seem to hover around the brick you hope to bop. Getting those four bricks early, before the ball picks up a head of steam, is certainly the best plan.



### Round 10

This is the start of a tough trio of levels, though not as bad on computer versions. If you don't angle the ball into the corridor steeply, it will come right back at you faster than it started. Start the level by releasing the ball with your paddle under the fourth block from the left, then hit it at the extreme left of the paddle, and you should be able to get the ball trapped in the chamber. Once trapped, a Dispersion capsule will quickly move you on.



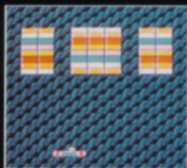
**Round 11**

Have your vision checked before attempting this one. Being composed of all silver bricks—which need three hits each to disappear—this level gives you no opportunity for capsules, and also speeds the ball up quickly. No special strategy is suggested, but you will need to be good with moving the Vaus so you can keep up with the path the ball takes.



**Round 12**

If Round 10 wasn't enough of a nightmare, this level will make you want to quit. Similar to Round 10, you'll need to angle the ball steeply to get the ball into the gold-brick pathway. If you place your paddle between the third and fourth bricks from the left, release the ball, then bat the ball with the left tip of the paddle. You should be on your way. Should you leave a few blocks after the ball passes through, it will likely exit towards you like a rifle shot.



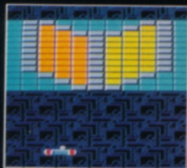
**Round 13**

As congratulations for getting past those last three scenes, you are rewarded with a reasonably calm round to work through. Don't let down because of the simplicity—the pace won't stay light for very long. Just the same, you should have no trouble finishing the level and moving on.



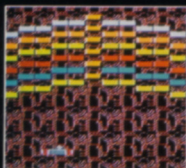
**Round 14**

This is a little harder than the last, but still no tough test of talent. If you can poke a hole in a row of bricks and get the ball going at a steep angle, you might be able to clear most of a row by getting the ball trapped. The main obstacle is clearing the blocks that sit between the gold bricks. As we noted before, the Catch capsule is particularly helpful to shoot the ball at the proper angle.



**Round 15**

While this level contains no extraordinary challenge, there are more bricks to break than any other screen in the game. With a good quantity of those blocks being silver, you'll be busy for a while. Lasers are a perfect weapon, though accumulating Slow capsules will allow you to play out the round longer. Again, persistence is the key.



**Round 16**

Could it be that the designers are letting us off the hook by giving us easier levels? Perhaps, but the effect of gold bricks on the ball gets tougher with each round. The longer the ball is in play, the harder it is to deal with the increased speed. If you can keep the ball to the sides, you'll be safer. The level is fairly tame, except for the background, so don't fret. Your opportunity to stress out will come again later.



**Round 17**

While this round appears easy, it is harder than it looks because of the blocking effect of the gold bricks in the "umbrella's" hooked handle. If the ball doesn't get too fast for you to keep up with, you'll have no trouble here—guess the designers are trying to give you a false sense of security before they slam you back to reality.

Hitting the ball at the tip of the paddle assures that the gold bricks won't hinder your progress as much.



**Round 18**

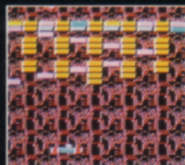
Now we're starting to get back to the difficulty you expect from *Arkanoid*. There is a single silver brick that you should get out of your hair before things get too quick. After that, concentrate on the row along either the left or right edge, and work from the top down. You'll find yourself losing a Vaus or two on this scene, unless you are a top-notch player or extremely lucky! The computer version has an added row in the center, but it shouldn't alter your strategy much.





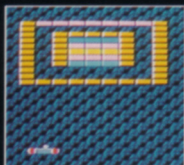
#### Round 19

Here's another that is tougher than it looks. The gold bricks that surround the breakable bricks will make lasers useless. The only way around this stage is to angle the ball behind the gold blocks. The creatures that drop down from the top will also get in your way a great deal. On the computer version, there is a single breakable brick in the center line of gold. This adds further frustration, as that block is *incredibly* hard to knock out; but it does allow travel between sections.



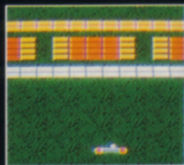
#### Round 20

As with Round 8, the quantity of gold in this scene makes accurate shots almost impossible. Particularly at the latter stages of this level, when the ball is traveling beyond the speed of light, the only thing you can do is keep the ball in the playfield and headed in the general direction of your remaining breakable bricks. Good luck—you'll need it!



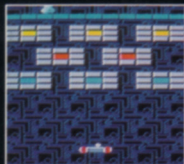
#### Round 21

Our most common tip is to get the ball going where you need to before it speeds up out of control; Round 21 is a perfect example of this. Getting the ball up to the top is not as easy as you'd think, and the creatures keep getting in your way to add to the frustration. Once you clear the top row, popping the inside block of bricks is equally tough. The computer version has an added row of bricks to block you off from the center section, though you are better able to steer the ball where you want.



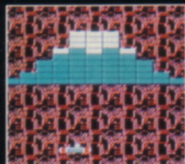
#### Round 22

Thankfully, a reasonably easy level is provided after the Round 21 struggle. Though it is tough to get the last few bricks—unless you have the Catch capsule—you should cut through this scene without much ado. Rejoice in the fact that there are no silver bricks, and the few clumps of gold bricks don't cause big problems either.



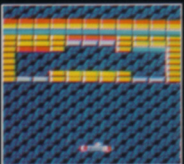
#### Round 23

Inside each silver "island" is a colored brick that will release a capsule—unless a capsule is already falling. The scene isn't too hard in itself, but because each silver brick must be hit three times, it will take a lot of time to get wipe out each brick. Because it takes so long, the ball speed will be the death of you, so take every Slow capsule you see! The computer version has one added island.



#### Round 24

Well, that nasty background is back; but the designers have offered another lightweight scene with no silver blocks, so you shouldn't have any trouble forging ahead. Working away at the center of the brickwork will keep the ball moving at a reasonable pace and under your control.



#### Round 25

If you slept through that last level, it's time to wake up. First you must break through a set of silver blocks, but concentrate on keeping the ball in the same path for the best control. Once you get it in the first cavity, you need to keep it up there to cut through the center logjam of silver blocks. Of course, when you get to that point, the ball is moving like a BB around the screen. The only advice is to minimize contact with the gold bricks, which is a near impossibility.



#### Round 26

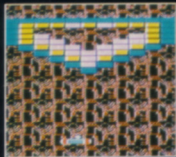
Another "this doesn't look rough" screen. Unfortunately the silver bricks slow your progress into the gold-block enclosure. Shallow angles are necessary to succeed, but working the ball over the top of the gold ring is the hardest task. Starting about one paddle length from the right side and releasing the ball is the best start. Don't think the little beasties will help, because all they'll do is mess up your angles.





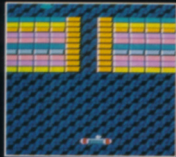
**Round 27**

By now any silver bricks have become more of a pain than they were at the start, because they require more hits to disappear. Again, the steep angles are a plus, because skimming the ball between the rows will rapidly chip away at the blocks—and without as much effort from you. If you've gotten through some of the other tough screens to this level, you won't find any difficulty with this scene.



**Round 28**

If you don't get a Catch capsule, or aren't very good at angle shots, you might as well give up now. This is another game-breaker level, especially adding the horrendous background to your woes. Try to blast the hole through the center first, then work away at one of the side columns. The gold bricks are situated as to almost always be in your way.



**Round 29**

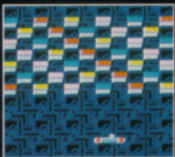
This is a hard one to diagnose: If you go right up top at the start, you'll likely clear the few bricks up there, but the ball will also get trapped for a period and speed up.

If you stick to the lower bricks, the time it takes to clear all of them will also speed up the ball, making the center chute hard to get into. The latter method is my choice because you have more opportunity for helpful capsules. The computer version has a single colored brick in each section so you can pass between the gold rows.



**Round 30**

Almost finished, gang—particularly the computer gamers. Only five gold blocks to get in your way, but that is what they do! Chipping away at a single silver brick, then trying to trap it at the top is recommended for this level, even though I've discouraged it up until now. The hardest part is getting rid of the last couple of blocks, especially the now-annoying silver ones.



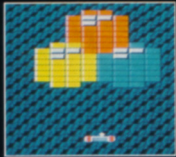
**Round 31**

There is a capsule in each colored brick here, except if one is already falling, so you should have your choice of tools to complete this round. The ball will get trapped in the little cells, clearing mass amounts of bricks while you watch. But when it exits towards you, it'll have gained a full head of steam. As we noted, don't stray with your paddle much and you won't have to move far to rebound the ball into the pack.



**Round 32**

Gold-brick city! As with Rounds 8 and 20, the bricks inside the little spaces between the gold blocks are tough to negotiate. It's not hard to predict that you'll end up with just one block left to get, and the ball cruising at warp speed. Thankfully there aren't too many bricks to get, but you'll no doubt lose a few Vaus paddles before the level is cleared. You'll almost have to rely on luck, as skill won't do the whole job.



**Round 33**

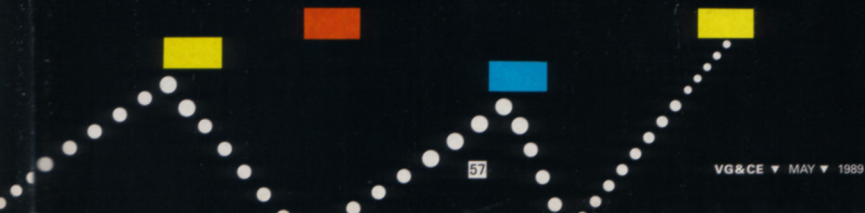
Computer owners must be saying, "What is this picture you're showing us? This isn't on my screen!" Here is where the NES version deviates from the arcade game, and though it's not documented in the instruction booklet, the cartridge contains 36 screens; Rounds 33, 34 and 35 are extras. And this is a straightforward level, with not too much to do except keep it in play.



**Round 34**

Here's another bonus screen, and it doesn't pose too much of an obstacle to your progress. Start off by eliminating the lowest set of bricks and work your way up toward the top. There are only five gold bricks, but they might as well not be in the picture because they won't get in your way too often. Hey, we're almost finished!

(continued on page 96)





Bringing  
the

# Arcade Home

Save Your Quarters With These Video and Computer Games

It all started down at the arcades. That's where the classic coin-ops like *Pong*, *Space Invaders*, *Asteroids* and *Pac-Man* created the public appetite for games, based on computer technology that paved the way for the home market of the 1980s. In the early '80s, there was a great overlap between home gamers and arcade denizens. That all changed after the Great Video-Game Crash of 1984.

The average age of today's computer-game audience is 32. As a result of this gap, coin-op creators stress different elements than computer-game designers. Arcade games are built around action, visual excitement and a hint of strategic challenge.

Computer games are more cerebral. Few depend exclusively on joystick manipulation, because most users no longer have a

teenager's reflexes. Most computer games take longer to learn and have a long playlife.

Into this polarized situation came the re-born video game. Computer software publishers reacted to Nintendo and Sega's success by producing similar, arcade-style programs. When they sold well, it fueled a renaissance of computer-action games. The result is a tremendous increase in the number of video and computer games based on top coin-ops.

### One-man armies

One of the most popular coin-op formats over the past few years has been the one-man army game, typified by contests like *Commando* (computer versions by Data East, NES version by Capcom), *Ikari Warriors* and *Ikari Warriors II: Victory Road* (Data East for computers, NES versions by SNK

and *Rambo* (Acclaim on the NES).

In these games, the player controls a solitary on-screen figure, seen from a slightly angled overhead perspective, as he runs a vertically scrolling gauntlet of enemy men and machines. Along the way, the player/character has the opportunity to pick up any weaponry left behind by vanquished foes.

In *Commando*, *Rambo* and *Ikari Warriors*, the enemies are human, but in *Ikari Warriors II: Victory Road*, the enemy is Stonehead and his distinctly inhuman minions, including Green Gremlins, Winged Man-Beasts and the always-nauseating Wormsnakes.

Sometimes, the enemy is neither man nor beast, but alien invaders. In Sega's *Alien Syndrome* (all computer and Sega Master System versions by Sega), the player must move through an alien spaceship that has

by Bill Kunkel and Arnie Katz



In one of the more recent conversions, Capcom brings the action of *Street Fighter* to your computer or NES.

*Rampage* (computer versions by Activision, NES version by Data East) allows users to experience life as a one-monster army.

### Sports action

Coin-op makers once scorned sports simulations as inappropriate to the arcade format, but in the past half decade this has become one of the strongest categories in the pay-for-play industry.

Most coin-op sports games stress action over strategy, whereas most computerists prefer sports simulations with more depth. *John Elway's Team Quarterback* (Leland),

kidnapped his friends and rescue them before the ship blows sky high. As the action moves from room to room within the great ship, the player must face and defeat a swarm of extraterrestrial nasties

An interesting variation on this category is the dragon-slaying contest, best exemplified by Atari's *Gauntlet* (computer versions by Mindscape, NES version by Tengen). *Gauntlet* attempts to capture the flavor of fantasy role-playing games so popular on computers by allowing the user to compete as a warrior, magician or thief.

Speaking of one-man armies, Bally's



Taito's *Arkanoid*, shown here by Discovery on the Amiga, takes *Breakout* to a new dimension.



*Pac-Man*, shown here on the NES, is one of the most popular arcade conversions in history.

however, which has been brought to home computers (Melbourne House) and the NES (Tradewest) as *John Elway Quarterback*, is an outstanding exception. The action in this vertically scrolling, overhead perspective pig-skin simulation is first-rate, but its strategic



BERAD6



Boxing excitement comes to the NES with *Boxing King* by Data East.

elements are also strong with sophisticated play calling and variable formations.

In the video-game arena, Irem's *10-Yard-Fight* (Nintendo), though not as sophisticated as *John Elway Quarterback*, offers an appealing blend of gridiron action and strategy. *Ten-Yard-Fight* employs the same overhead viewpoint and vertically scrolling graphics as *Elway*. Both offer one- or two-player versions.

Nintendo also offers several sports programs based on its famous "Vs." coin-op series, including *Baseball*, *Golf*, *Tennis* and *Soccer*. Like too many video-game sports contests, however, these are mostly pedestrian entries with the exception of the excellent NES *Golf*, which offers club selection, wind effect, a close-up of the golfer and an overview of the entire hole.

For ice hockey fans, the old Sente coin-op, *Hat Trick*, was recently transported to the NES by Capcom. Though the original, with only two skaters, was hardly a full-blooded simulation of the world's fastest team sport, it has remained surprisingly popular, and hockey-starved video gamers should welcome it onto the scene.

One of the decade's most successful sports coin-ops, *Punch-Out* (Nintendo) has become one of the year's most disappointing NES video games, *Mike Tyson's Punch-*



One of the most popular arcade games becomes one of the most popular home video games. Tradewest's NES version of *Double Dragon* is shown here.

*Out* (Nintendo). In the coin-op original, the player was represented by a transparent boxer in the foreground, his back facing the screen. The opponents faced both the player and player/character in the most unique and creative boxing game ever produced.

Unfortunately, the creators of the NES version were not able to reproduce the transparent player/boxer and so settled on making him a dwarf, who punches up at his opponents in a pathetic imitation of the original.

Fans of multiple-event track-and-field competition will want to check out *Track & Field II* (Konami). This NES cartridge offers 15 contests, including pole vaulting, arm wrestling, hang gliding and skeet shooting, all rendered in outstanding graphics with easy-to-learn play mechanics.

Gamers who enjoy less conventional sports, however, might gravitate toward *Tag Team Wrestling* (computer versions by Data East, Sega Master System version by Sega). While it doesn't capture the real ambience



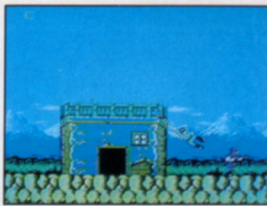
Electronic Arts' Amiga version of *Marble Madness* is true to the original coin-op game.

of professional wrestling, it is an amusing and offbeat simulation with a wacky, cartoon quality.

### Running, jumping and shooting

The single-most popular video-game format, especially on the NES, is the running/jumping/shooting contest that Nintendo made famous with its Mario Bros. games. *Mario Bros.*, *Super Mario Bros.*, *Mario Bros. 2* (all three by Nintendo), *Karnov* (computer and NES versions by Data East), *Express Raider* (computer versions by Data East), *Trojan* (computer and NES versions by Capcom) and *Ghosts & Goblins* (Capcom for the NES) are examples of coin-op translations that make use of this formula.

In these games, the player/character is seen from a side perspective, and moves left-to-right over a horizontally scrolling landscape. The player/character invariably can



You'll battle attacking aliens in Capcom's *Bionic Commando* for the NES and computers.

leap prodigious distances and has some sort of offensive weapon—whether a gun, fireball or magic spell—that he can launch at a cornucopia of nasties who stand between him and his objective. There are also bonus objects that the player can collect along the way, thus enhancing his power and/or his vitality.

The problem with these games is their single-minded construction. The format for these games is so ironclad that the only variable is the visual context in which the game is set. With this genre, one can truly say that if you've played one, you've played them all. Still, this remains one of the most overwhelmingly popular categories of arcade games, as younger players seem to crave the comfort of repetition and familiar ground rules.

### Arcade classics

Arcade games have been part of the mass culture for over a decade now, and in that time several games have attained classic status. These are the titles that every new gamer will eventually want to add to his or her collection. They represent themes and ideas that have passed the test of time and have been the inspiration for most of today's big hits.



*Rampage* brings Japanese monster movies to your game machine. Activision's IBM version shown here.

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HARADWAITH

Near Harad



Capcom's *Commando*, shown here on the NES, is one of the many one-man army games.

*Burger Time* (Data East for the NES); *Donkey Kong Classics* (Nintendo for the NES); *Elevator Action* (Taito for the NES); *Williams' Defender II* (HAL America); Namco's *Pac-Man* (NES version by Tengen); Atari's *Millipede* (computer version by Mindscape); *Xenious* (computer versions by Mindscape, NES version by Bandai) and *Joust* (HAL America for the NES); *Speed Buggy* (computer versions by Data East); Mylstar's *Q-Bert* (computer versions by Data East, NES version by Ultra); and Data East's *Bump 'n' Jump* (Vic Tokai for the NES) are among the treasure trove of arcade classics currently available to computer and/or video gamers.

Sega has also updated at least one arcade classic by making it part of its 3-D series for the Sega Master System. *Zaxxon 3-D* takes the game that made Sega a household word and reinvents it, sending the player down those deadly space gauntlets from a whole new point of view: directly behind the titular ship. *Zaxxon 3-D* represents the wedding of a classic theme with state-of-the-art technology.

Another example of an update on an earlier arcade standard was Taito's *Arkanoid* (computer versions by Taito and Discovery, NES version by Taito), a contemporary revamping of the old wall-bashing theme first explored in Atari's *Breakout*. *Arkanoid* offers not only superb sound and graphics, but adds a strategic element to the game in the form of



Data East's computer versions of *Ikari Warriors* pits the player against a slew of enemy attackers.

power icons that can be used to enhance the player's paddle.

All arcade classics aren't necessarily a decade old either. Atari's *Marble Madness* is less than five years old, but it has been regarded since its release as one of the most enduring and innovative coin-ops ever produced.

Electronics Arts has published several computer versions of this game and they vary greatly. The C-64 and Atari ST versions are disappointing, but the Amiga version is a spectacular recreation of a modern coin-op classic. In addition, Milton Bradley is scheduled to release an NES version.

### Martial arts action

Data East's *Karate Champ* (computer and NES versions by Data East) created one of the hottest new coin-op categories of the '80s, the martial-arts contest. The common denominator of these games is a side view



The goofy *Q-Bert* is brought to home screens by Data East and Ultra for everyone's enjoyment.

of the action and player control over a variety of kicks, spins, jumps and punches.

Data East's *Bad Dudes* (Data East for the NES) and Taito's *Renegade* (Taito for the NES) further explore this idea of realistic martial-arts combat set against a variety of backdrops.

Soon after *Karate Champ* was released, however, a mutation of the genre occurred and an even more popular subcategory was born: the kung fu adventure. In this type of game, players also battle a series of enemies, but the skirmishes are part of an ongoing, horizontally scrolling adventure.

Examples of this category include Taito's *Double Dragon* (computer version by Arcadia, NES version by Tradewest and Sega Master System version by Sega), Data East's *Kung Fu* (Nintendo for the NES) and Sega's *Kung Fu Kid*. Kung fu adventures do not generally offer the same level of martial-arts realism, however, because the moves are limited to punches and kicks.



Based on the popular film, Acclaim's *Rambo*, seen here for the NES, has him battling through Vietnam.

### Death from the skies!

One of the great, recurring themes in the coin-op universe is the piloting of an armed aircraft or spaceship on some dangerous mission. From the earliest days of computerized arcade games, players have enjoyed games where they navigate some great engine of destruction, blowing up the enemy and attempting to stay alive in the process.

These games vary mostly in the viewpoints they employ. Whereas games like Sega's *After Burner*, *F-16 Fighting Falcon* (computer and Sega Master System versions by Sega) and Konami's *Top Gun* (Konami for the NES) use a first-person cockpit perspective, Sega's *Space Harrier* (computer and Sega Master System versions by Sega) uses a modified first-person viewpoint, with the player character in the immediate foreground.

Data East's *Cobra Command* (Data East for the NES), Konami's *Gradius* and its sequel, *Lifeforce* (NES versions by Konami) all use the horizontally scrolling playfield pioneered in Williams' *Defender* while Sega's *Thunderblade* (Sega), Taito's *Tiger-Heli* (Acclaim for the NES) and *Sidewinder* and *Xanadu* from Arcadia's *Awesome Arcade Action Pack* (computer versions by Arcadia) all use an overhead perspective.

Whatever the viewpoint, the vitality of this category is amazing and it continues to



Sega's *Thunder Blade* brings the popular helicopter game to the SMS.

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Mindscape delivers Atari's wacky *Paperboy* into your home, shown here on the C-64.

dominate the coin-op scene as it has since the late '70s.

### Driving cars and riding bikes

Auto-racing games have been an arcade staple since the days when players doted on coin-ops with the illusion of driving that consisted of steering a toy car on a metal bar back and forth against an unfolding roll of background scenery.

Games like Sega's *Enduro Racer* and Atari's *Pole Position* helped rekindle interest in this category in the early '80s. Today, armchair Mario Andretti can get the feel of the road on such coin-op translations as Nintendo's *Rad Racer* and Sega's *Outrun* (computer and Sega Master System versions by Sega). Coin-op racing games succeed or fail based on the quality of their graphics and their ability to simulate movement at high speeds and both of these titles do a super job.

Another kind of auto-based coin-op is represented by Bally's *Spy Hunter* (computer version by Sega, NES version by Sunsoft), an overhead perspective contest in which the player's vehicle is armed with all the gadgets and gizmos that made James Bond's Aston Martin famous. This car has a front-mounted machine gun, torpedoes, oil slicks, smoke screens and no end of enemies look-



Adventure and arcade action are mixed in *Gauntlet*, a fantasy role-playing game. Mindscape's Atari ST version shown.

ing to drive it right off the road.

For those who quail at the thought of driving a car, even in simulation form, a somewhat tamer experience is offered by Atari's *Paperboy* (computer versions and NES by Mindscape). There are still plenty of dangers, however, as everything from local punks to a mischievous kitten do everything within their power to screw up your delivery route.

### Computer to coin-op and back again

An interesting phenomenon tangential to this subject are those games which have made the transition from home game to coin-op and then back to home-game format. The coin-op folks were looking to upgrade the strategic content of their product several years ago, and though neither of the games discussed here made a major impact on the coin-op scene, both enjoyed moderate success in the arcades.

The first major home-to-arcade-to-home title was Broderbund's *Lode Runner* (computer and NES versions by Broderbund), the



*Karate Champ* by Data East was one of the earliest martial-arts games to appear on the scene.

action-strategy classic in which players control a tiny figure who must run, jump and climb over 50 playfields in an attempt to steal gold barrels from the evil Bungeelings, whose very touch means death.

Continuing this trend was First Star's *Boulder Dash* that Mastertronic marketed in revamped form for the arcades as *Rockford*. In this series of kinetic puzzles, players manipulate little Rockford through scrolling macro-playfields full of boulders, deadly butterflies and jewels. Boulders can be pushed, or *Rockford* can tunnel beneath them, but each time a boulder is moved, it reconfigures the entire playfield. *Rockford* has since returned to home computers courtesy of First Star in *Rockford* and *The Boulder Dash Construction Kit*.



*Trojan* by Capcom is one of the running, jumping and shooting games that are very popular these days.

### New and exciting

New coin-ops are what keep the quarters rolling in, but the computer-software publishers still have a lot of catching up to do. Broderbund, for example, will finally provide computer gamers with a version of Atari's classic *Star Wars*. Based on the "Trench" sequence from the original George Lucas film, the player must pilot a Jedi Fighter down a gauntlet of death in order to breach the Death Star's single weak point.

Arcadia, meanwhile, is much more current, introducing a computer version of the Taito hit, *Double Dragon*, while Capcom will be publishing both NES and computer versions of its own *Bionic Commando* and *Street Fighter*.

*Bionic Commando* is a one-man army-type game in which a cyborg warrior is sent into the fortress headquarters of invading aliens, while *Street Fighter* is a straight martial-arts game in the *Karate Champ* tradition. Data East will also keep the martial arts booming with the long-awaited NES version of *Shinobi*.

So keep those tokens in your pocket. The home arcade is a lot cheaper, and the library of available software is getting stronger each and every day. 🎮



Data East's *Speed Buggy* is a playful race-against-the-clock driving game.





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Send in the SWAT team to save the captured embassy workers in *Mindscape's Hostage*, seen here on the Amiga.

by Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley

## Computer Games

# LEAP FORWARD

Higher 1988 sales have computer-game makers working overtime to increase the flow of new software. A few older labels are showing signs of age, but a vigorous new generation of publishers is rising.

Upstarts like Interplay, Discovery Software and Miles Computing are among the leading game developers for the more powerful home computers. Also, companies once identified with budget disks, such as Mastertronic, Data East and Cosmi, are now producing top-drawer products that rate with the best.

The winter Consumer Electronics Show, held each January in Las Vegas, demonstrated that both quantity and quality are on the rise this year. The emergence of international markets has given publishers extra incentive to pour money into ambitious R&D projects.

The darker side of progress is obsolescence. The best games take the greatest advantage of the capabilities of machines like the Amiga, MS-DOS family and Apple Macintosh II. The more a program maximizes its potential, the harder it is to produce a viable version for less powerful systems like the Commodore 64 and Europe's Sinclair Spectrum.

It looks like 1989 will be the year the industry fully commits to the 16-bit computer. There'll be plenty of programs for the Commodore 64, at least through the end of the year, but most of the new product development is concentrated on the Amiga and IBM PC arenas.

### License Mania

Licenses are now at the center of the computer-gaming universe. Some publishers are buying them by the carload to serve as the basis for new programs, while other companies look for hot tie-ins for games that are already completed, but not yet marketed.

*War in Middle Earth* (Melbourne House for IBM PC) is inspired by the all-time



Cinemaware's TV Sports: Football is so realistic, you'll even see players on the sidelines saying, "Hi, Mom!" Amiga version shown.



Captain America and Spiderman in Doctor Doom's Revenge is Paragon Software's first entry in its Marvel Comics series.



Rainbird again takes the world by storm with *Savage*, a high-quality dungeon battle, shown here on the Amiga.

fantasy classic, J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. A 36-screen scrolling map of Middle Earth is the backdrop for the adventure and combat excitement, starring all of the fabulous epic's heroes and villains.

Comic-book characters will cavort across the screen in several action-oriented adventures. *Superman* (TyneSoft) is already available in Europe and should be available in the U.S. by this fall for all systems. Paragon Software has begun a line of action adventures based on Marvel Comics' characters. The first, *Captain America and Spiderman in Doctor Doom's Revenge* (Paragon for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64) should hit the stores this month with an X-Men disk to follow in September.

Two Parker Brothers' board games are going electronic. GameTek, which has already produced *Sorry!* and *Pay Day* (both for IBM PC, Commodore 64, Apple II), is adding *Advantage to Boardwalk* and *Big Boggle* to this spring.

*Remote Control and Fun House* (both Hi Tech Expressions for IBM PC, Commodore 64, Apple II) will soon move from the video screen to the computer monitor. The former is the MTV trivia test, while the latter asks pre-teens to answer questions and win action contests. Hi Tech also hopes to have a Muppets graphics adventure ready by Christmas.

Even the sequel to an established seller like *Chessmaster 2000* (Software Toolworks) will greet the world with the added push of a license behind it. *Fidelity Chessmaster 2100* (Software Toolworks for all systems) presents additional options, more lavish visuals and greater strategic skill at the highest difficulty

settings. *Sargon IV* (Spinnaker for IBM PC), also due this year, isn't tied to a license, but it probably doesn't need one. The name has been synonymous with outstanding computer chess for more than eight years.

#### Accent on Action

The computer field is reacting strongly to the video-game renaissance. Software is selling well—up over 25% compared to last year—but continued growth depends on resisting pressure to turn some retail shelf space over to video-game cartridges and consoles.

In the battle for game-buying dollars, many computer-game companies have turned to action contests. Arcade-style computer programs, based on both hit coin-ops and original concepts, have reclaimed popularity lost in the wake of the Video-Game Crash of 1984.

*Sky Shark* (Taito), an aerial combat game, will zoom into the stores for the Commodore 64, Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC by midyear. Editions of *Operation Wolf*, *Qix* and *Renegade* are also promised for spring and summer.

*Savage* (Rainbird for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64) has sound, graphics and animation to rival any coin-op machine. The multistage arcade game provides frantic fantasy combat action in a dungeon setting. The driving rock beat carries the player through three different contests tied together into a single heroic quest.

A charmingly low-key action game is *Chomp* (Cosmi for IBM PC, Commodore 64). The player guides a fish from tank to tank, facing aquatic dangers. Cute graphics and lilting music complete this challenging action contest.

Data East continues its arcade-to-home translations with *Heavy Barrel* (IBM PC, Commodore 64). The player must assault the underground command center of a nuclear missile installation and recapture it from terrorists. The same company's brand of action comes to the Macintosh for the first time with the debut of *Super Hang On* and *Karnov*.

*Thunder Blade* (Sega for all systems) is the next Sega coin-op scheduled for release as a computer game. The Sega label's first two arcade-to-home translations, *Out Run* and *Space Harrier*, give action fans hope for a faithful home edition of this lightning-fast action contest.

#### An International Flavor

Like last year, many forthcoming games were designed and programmed overseas. Most of 1989's imports went into the low-priced labels, but the forecast is much brighter for game lovers in 1989.

There are two important reasons for this shift. First, computerists are finding budget software less appealing as the price of the cutting-edge disks drops. Computer games are at least \$10 cheaper per disk, on average, than just two years ago.

The other reason is that this era of international software cooperation has exposed designers and programmers in every country to what other folks are doing. This healthy artistic competition has caused all creators of funware to raise their artistic sights.

*Hostage* (Mindscape for all systems), the



Spinnaker's *Sargon IV*, shown here on the IBM PC, brings a new dimension to one of the oldest chess programs for computers.

latest release by Infogrames of France, is going to excite American gamers far more than last year's esoteric *Captain Blood*. This time there's a challenging, absorbing game wrapped inside all the terrific visuals and sensational sounds. This multiphase game sends a six-member rescue squad on a mission to liberate a captured embassy.

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Epyx, which was negotiating to buy Infogrames as VG&CE went to press, will bring several titles to the U.S. under its own label and through its association with Britain's U.S. Gold line. *Devon Aire* in *The Hidden Diamond Caper* (IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64) casts the player as a reformed thief in a baffling case of stolen gems. Aire prowls the 30 rooms of Crutchfield Manor, shown in 3-D perspective, to find clues and a glittering legacy.

*Ringing Brothers Circus Games* (Keypunch for all systems) demonstrates the type of international development gamers can expect in the future. New York-based Subway Software designed the licensed multi-event action-strategy game, Tynesoft programmed it in Great Britain, and Keypunch will promote and publish the product in the United States this summer. The same stateside design group is now working on an action-strategy road combat game called *Thunder Highway* (California Dreams for all systems) with a programming group based in Poland.

Hewson's fast action games will soon be available here through Medalist International, a division of MicroProse. The British company, which previously wrote *Iridium* (Mindscape), supports IBM PC, Amiga, Commodore 64 and Atari ST. *Eliminator*, a car-racing game, which recently topped the U.K. charts, will probably be the first release.

Colorful graphics and 80 action screens are the chief attractions of *Titan* (Titus for all systems), a European design. This overhead perspective action-adventure turns the computerist into a competitor in a futuristic game. There is a fabulous cash prize for the winner, but the bodies of the less fortunate testify to the life-or-death stakes.

### No Sports Shortage

Look for plenty of new individual and team



You'll find nothing but trouble in Mindscape's *Devon Aire*: Lost in Las Vegas adventure. Atari ST version shown.

sports titles in the next 12 months. Undaunted by fierce competition, publishers are sticking with sports for 1989.

The first game in CinemaWare's sports line, *TV Sports: Football*, has already appeared. Next up is *TV Sports: Baseball*, being developed under the hand of Don Daglo, who was instrumental in Electronic Arts' *Earl Weaver*. A basketball game is expected to follow in 1990.

*Magic Johnson's Fast Break* (Melbourne House for IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS, Commodore 64) and *World Trophy Soccer* (Melbourne House for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64) are two excellent team sports simulations. The former is a modified side perspective, horizontally scrolling version of hoops, while the latter makes soccer so lively and entertaining that even Americans will be tempted.

The computer field is reacting strongly to the video-game renaissance. Software is selling well—up over 25% compared to last year.

*Mat Mogul* (Capstone for all systems) is light years removed from the NFL or major league baseball. This simulation of the secret world of professional wrestling casts the player as a promoter. The gamer must plan shows, hire wrestlers, orchestrate the plot twists and pilot the company to financial success.

A more naive presentation of grappling is found in *Sgt. Slaughter's Mat Wars* (Mindscape for IBM PC, Commodore 64). The player can become a manager who buys and trains wrestlers for the professional wrestling ring. The computerist takes direct control of the wrestler when the opening bell clangs and can employ a repertoire of exciting moves.

It sounds like the name of an airplane, but the star of *F40 Pursuit Simulator* (Titus for all systems) is a car. Of course, the Ferrari



Mindscape brings professional wrestling action to your computer screen with *Sgt. Slaughter's Mat Wars*, as seen on the C-64.

F40's top speed of 200 mph isn't much slower than a low-flying plane. The driver must plan each leg of the route carefully, because the most direct road on the map is sometimes the hardest to travel. Roadblocks, spinouts, crashes, chases and lots of superb sound highlight this automotive extravaganza.

Epyx has found a sure way to avoid running out of sports to turn into action-strategy simulations. They have started inventing new ones. The first is *Skate Wars* (Epyx for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64). It's a cross between soccer and hockey in which the gamer coaches a three-man team against either the computer or another human.

### All Aboard for Adventure

No type of computer game has undergone more change than adventures in the last two years. Even Infocom is no longer offering all-text adventures.

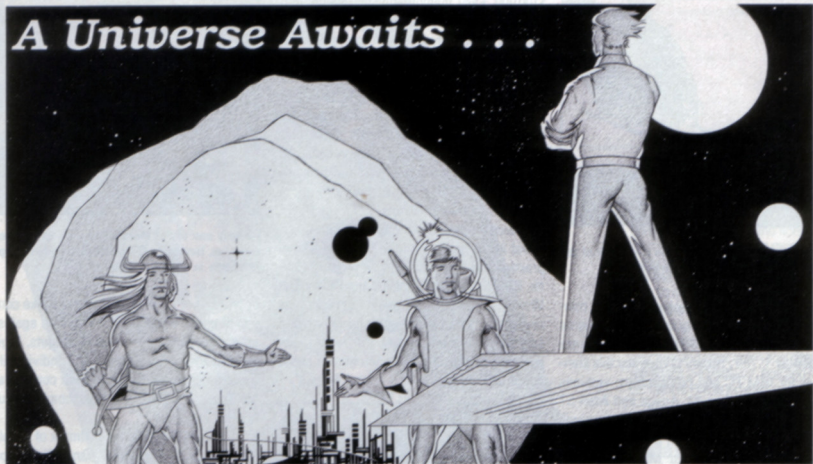
The interactive graphics adventure, activated with icons, menus or simple controller movements, is far and away the leading type. Smooth user interfaces let the computerist concentrate on the plot, characters and setting without getting bogged down in marathon typing.

*Lords of the Rising Sun* (CinemaWare for all systems) isn't a sequel to *Defender of the Crown*, but fans of the medieval adventure are sure to enjoy this excursion to the Orient. Not only has CinemaWare improved the graphics and sound, but the action sequences are far more interesting and replayable.

Also joining the East is *Samurai* (MicroProse for IBM PC). Designer Lawrence Schick has elaborated upon the system in Sid Meier's *Pirates* (MicroProse). Japanese artwork and music enhance this role-playing game in which the player attempts to become a warlord in feudal Japan.

Game Designers Workshop's "Traveller,"

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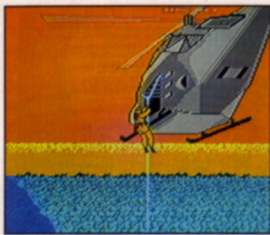
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**Navy Seal** by Cosmi makes you a member of the elite combat forces to battle evil.

the top nonelectronic science fiction, role-playing system, is finally coming to the home computer. Paragon Software will release *Traveller 1: The Zhodani Conspiracy* this summer for IBM PC and compatibles; versions for the Commodore 64, Amiga and Atari ST will be in the stores by fall. The game will blend extensive text with colorful graphics to portray the Spinward Marches on the frontier of a galactic empire.

The sound and graphics are superior to the first two games in this science-fiction adventure series, but the uniquely askew humor of *Two Guys from Andromeda* remains intact in *Space Quest III* (Sierra for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST, Macintosh, Apple IIGS). Roger Wilco returns on a desperate mission to rescue two beleaguered game designers from enslavement by an interstellar software company.

Mike Woodruffe, who designed *Heroes of the Lance* (SSI), is starting a new line called HorrorSoft. *Personal Nightmare*, which Britain's TyneSoft will produce for all systems, introduces a new game system that puts the player in the midst of one terrifying situation after another. The sound and graphics of this icon-driven program really set the necessary mood of menace to put the shivery theme across.

Roberta Williams exchanges her magic wand for the tools of the detective trade in *The Plantation Murders* (Sierra for all 16-bit systems). She and collaborator Jackie Austin will present a tongue-in-cheek murder mystery set in the romantic, lurid world of a New Orleans plantation.

*Deja Vu: Lost in Las Vegas* (Mindscape for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST, Macintosh, Apple IIGS) is a sequel to ICOM Simulations' 1987 classic. Gangster Tony Malone gives the player seven short days to come up with

\$100,000. Easy manipulation of objects and the total absence of typing should make this mystery especially easy and enjoyable.

### Simulations Stay Hot

It may be hard to believe, but there will be quite a few more flight simulators for those who aren't satisfied with those that made their debut during the previous 12 months. The new ones promise even more eye-popping visuals, unusual aircraft and a broader range of missions.

*Search for the Titanic* (Capstone for all systems) is the second title in Intracorp's new prestige line that kicked off with *Trump Castle*, the Atlantic City gambling simulation. The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute has reviewed this strategy game of diving and salvage for accuracy, and the reward sequence includes digitized photographs of the actual submerged wreck of the Titanic.

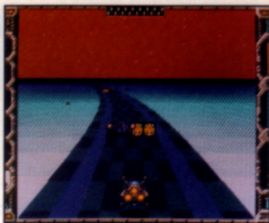


Motorcycling action is the focus of Data East's *Super Hang On*, a home-computer conversion of the arcade game.

*Navy Seal* (Cosmi for all systems) is an action-oriented simulation of operations conducted by the Navy's elite commando force. The player can learn the skills needed to be a Seal in the training mode, then test his/her ability under combat conditions.

A different type of naval simulation is *Harpoon* (Three-Sixty for IBM PC, Macintosh, Apple IIGS, Amiga). This highly detailed, yet smooth-playing, simulation of naval combat between NATO and the Soviet Union is the brainchild of Larry Bond, the co-author of the novel *Red Storm Rising*. More than 1,090 different weapons systems are available to the gamer in this comprehensive simulation of a near-future war at sea.

America's new Los Angeles class nuclear-attack submarine is the focus of *688 Attack Sub* (Electronic Arts for IBM PC). In this one-



Another one of the more popular driving games overseas, Hewson's *Eliminator* will make its appearance in the U.S. soon.

or two-player contest, the user can take control of either the U.S. or Soviet side against other submarines or airborne targets. Digitized sound, 3-D graphics and individually modeled crew members provide considerable realism to the undersea combat situations.

Authenticity will be the hallmark of Arnold Hendrick's *M-1 Abrams Tank Simulation* (MicroProse for IBM PC). Based on three U.S. Army manuals, the game will feature extensive graphics and many possible missions for armchair tankers when it reaches stores this summer.

Another view of this class of vehicle is found in *Abrams Battle Tank* (Electronic Arts for IBM PC). Amateur tankers will obviously have a feast with these two well-programmed and accurate simulations.

### The Crystal Ball

The hot competition among publishers keeps most companies on guard against prematurely previewing their new products. Therefore, the games described here represent a fraction of the new entertainment programs on tap for 1989. Some of the titles mentioned in this article may never quite make it to market, but this loss is more than covered by the great number of still-secret development projects.

Will 1989 be better than the banner year of 1988? Risky as it is to make predictions, it's a safe bet that the next 12 months will bring games of unparalleled sophistication, quality and enjoyability. ♪

*Video-game fans!* Next month in VG&CE, we'll offer a preview of what new video-game software and hardware will be shown at the 1989 summer CES, which will take place in June in Chicago.





**A**s far back as I can remember, I wanted to be three things," explained John Cutter, producer, director and one of the driving forces behind Cinemaware, the company that brought us *Defender of the Crown*, *SDI*, *King of Chicago*, *The Three Stooges*, *Rocket Ranger* and *TV Sports: Football*. "I wanted to be a writer—I was a science fiction fan, and I also studied broadcasting. I also wanted to be an actor or a comedian and, in fact, I did stand-up comedy and worked for a while as a magician. Finally, I wanted to be a scientist. I wasn't inspired by the science, though, as much as I was by the flashing lights and trappings of those old mad scientist movies; the ones where they say things like 'Activate the Retracto Ray!' And, you know, it's funny, but it really worked out, in that I was able to combine all three!"

In the jargon of Cinemaware's movie-oriented philosophy, John Cutter is, or at least was until recently, producer of the company's many game projects. Unlike the film industry, however, where the functions of director, screenwriter, producer, etc., are clearly defined, the software industry still hasn't come to terms with the nomenclature of the roles involved in creating computer and video-game entertainment. In fact, the industry still hasn't reached a consensus on whether or not the game-making process should be primarily the work of an individual, assisted by technicians who supplement any weaknesses in his technique, or a collaborative process analogous to filmmaking with the programmer as cinematographer, the designer as screenwriter and the producer as producer.

Many software publishers use the so-called producer system, initiated several years ago by Electronic Arts. The system works like this: Once a project is approved and has been assigned to a programming team, an employee of the publisher is named as producer. The producer is essentially a coordinator who keeps tabs on all phases of the project's development, from the design spec to the documentation. When programmers reach an impasse, or an artist is unable to produce exactly the effect called for by the specifications, the producer steps in to resolve the situation. He must also see to it that the project comes in on time without being rushed. At Cinemaware, however, that traditional role has been re-shaped to take advantage of Cutter's extraordinary creative gifts.

Cutter's actual position in the Cinemaware game-creation process is actually closer to a film's director than its producer; although it's probably a mistake to take these metaphors too far, since every creative medium has unique requirements.

But we're getting ahead of our story. Obviously, John Cutter did not spring, full blown, into the director's chair as the software equivalent of a mighty film studio. He started moving in that direction, however, as far back as junior high school, where he fell in love with the "whole game idea" after purchasing an Atari 2600. Later, while pursuing higher education at Pepperdine, he splurged \$99.95 on a Timex-Sinclair 1000 computer ("It went on sale for about \$29.95 a couple of weeks later," he observed) and tried creating his own games. Though somewhat disenchanted by the Timex-Sinclair's serious inadequacies in the area of game design, he continued to dabble in programming while earning his living, variously, as a prestidigitator for a local magic shop and a radio station DJ.

Soon, he realized he was burning his candle at both ends. "I was working at a radio station on the midnight shift, and I'd go home after work and stay up with the computer till three or four in the afternoon. I was making myself sick."

He decided to give game making his best shot and started making the rounds. Slim though his resume may have been, he decided to try and find a job with an established company, rather than freelance. "I just work better in a structured environment," he decided. "I always wanted to be a writer, but I'm the kind of person who has a very hard time if you



Curly dips for soup crackers; shown here on the Amiga.



In *The Three Stooges*, the famous trio must raise money to save the orphanage.

# Lights, Camera.

AN

INTERVIEW

WITH

JOHN

CUTLER



Illustration by Richard Pina

... Boot up!

by  
Bill  
Kunkel

just sit me down in front of a blank piece of paper and say, 'Be creative!' Give me structured guidelines, though, and I can find very creative ways to make things work."

John's first interview, with Scott Orr's Gamestar, got him a job with that sports-oriented publisher in the days before it was acquired by Activision. John is certain to this day, however, that he won the gig on a fluke. After all, he had no meaningful experience or background in programming. He did have something else going for him, however, that proved stronger than his inexperience: magic! "I'm sure he never would have seen me, otherwise, but Scott noticed on my resume that I had worked as a magician and, being an amateur magician himself, he called me in to talk about it. I wound up getting a job."

John's first assignment was to produce a screen editor that was intended for release as a commercial product. "It took me four months. I wrote it all down on paper at the library, then took it home and spent four or five days typing it in." The results were so impressive that Gamestar opted not to publish it after all, since it was actually superior to what the programmers were using at the time. John's screen editor became an in-house design tool, and he was hired full-time.

"I was never a great programmer," John admits, "but I always found a creative way to handle problems. I eventually moved up to a general-manager position and even did some graphics work." Cutter finished up *On-Track Racing*, which Ed Ringler had started, and worked with Ed, Troy Lyndon and Doug Barnett on the original *Star Rank Boxing*.

At that point, Gamestar was absorbed into the growing Activision empire, and John felt it might be time to move on. His job search soon led him to Bob Jacob. "I'd known Bob as an agent, but I really didn't know what to expect," he says, referring to the industry belief that Bob had great ideas, but ran into snags when it came to producing results. "I went to the interview with my wife, Melanie, and Bob showed us the screens that Jim Sax had already done for *Defender of the Crown*." The quality of those screens can be measured by the fact that, halfway through the show-and-tell, Melanie turned to John and whispered urgently, "Take the job!" He did, becoming the first full-time employee of Bob and Phyllis Jacob's Cinemaware. "And the rest, as they say, is history."

Which brings us back to the present, where John has just changed job descriptions. "I'm no longer involved in the mundane, day-to-day details of a project. I'm more a director than a producer now." In his current position, Cutter has more input into the original and updated design specs. He'll continue to deal with the artists, but with less emphasis on the niggling details that can stifle creativity.

In the struggle to redefine the nature of computer entertainment, Cinemaware has also redefined its own structure. Initially, the company plan was to strictly limit the in-house employees, contracting everything out to freelancers. This system had advantages, but Cutter was bothered by what he felt was a lack of sufficient control over the project. "We never stop pushing our products, trying to make them better, and we have some problems working with outside developers." On *SDI* for the ST, for example, Cinemaware ordered all the graphics redrawn after the game was apparently finished. For independent contractors, time is money, and when Cinemaware asks them to go back and re-work some element of the program, developers are often reluctant. At best, they'll want more money.

The positive and negative aspects of outside contracting arose again during the creation of *The Three Stooges*. "I did the original design document for the game, which we sent to Incredible Technologies. They had their own ideas about the game and added some interesting things. For example, I had the idea about starting the game with the *Defender of the Crown* title screen, but they added the 5-4-3-2-1 countdown, which was really great."

On the downside, Cutter clearly feels there were other elements of the game that he wished he'd had more direct control over. His response has been twofold. On the one hand, Cinemaware has staffed up to 60 employees and, though a dozen or so work at the company warehouse, they now have the on-site talent to shape products entirely in-house. On the other hand, Cinemaware will continue to work with outside developers and actually give them more independence and greater opportunities to show off their creativity. By whatever circuitous route they travel during the creation process, it is the games themselves that have turned the Cinemaware name into boffo box office while much of the industry suffers from slack sales.

John cites two major reasons for the superior graphics that have become a hallmark of their games. "First, it's the quality of our artists. John Duggan, who did most of the



Shortly after joining Cinemaware, Cutter "produced" *Defender of the Crown*, one of the popular titles.

Early days for many creatives, working

HTIW



"When you have a larger palette to work from, your imagination runs free."

graphics for *TV Sports: Football*, is an excellent artist who has been published extensively in magazines, has done cartoons and is especially proficient with his airbrush work.

"You know, when we first started Cinemaware I figured that as soon as other publishers saw our stuff, they'd try to imitate it. But that hasn't happened. Maybe other publishers don't pay their artists well enough to get the best work. Also, they aren't hiring artists and teaching them the computer systems that we do. Too many of the people doing graphics today are just programmers who have a limited ability to draw. We're looking for people who are artists. We can always teach them the programming end."

The other reason for Cinemaware's superior look, according to Cutter, is technological proficiency. "Our programmers have the technical know-how to create systems that play back and move at such high speed, it allows us to use large figures and full-screen art. You know, when I was at Gamestar, I did a lot of the graphics, and we never compressed any of it. Compression was treated like something that was way off in the future, something that only guys from Cal Tech were doing."

Cinemaware's latest release, *TV Sports: Football*, is both a new direction for the company, and a return for John Cutter to his Gamestar roots. "When I first joined Cinemaware, Bob showed me his manifesto, a list of 14 things that every game should have. We went back over that list a few months ago and, you know, we've really stuck to it. Anyway, one of those points was that computer games are a fantasy thing. And I thought, *We've already done [the] Star Wars [genre]; we did old gangster movies; you've been Sinbad and Rocket Ranger*. In a way, sports was the next logical step.

"We always concentrate on the hook, and the hook in *TV Sports: Football* is the TV Sports tag. Whenever we do a product, there's got to be something about it that, if I saw it on the shelf, it has this one extra thing. And with this game, that extra thing is the interactive TV element."

*TV Sports: Football* is only the first in a projected line of sports games; but for the moment, John's attention is focused, not on the gridiron or baseball field, but on feudal Japan, the setting for Cinemaware's upcoming *Lords of the Rising Sun*. The game has been compared, favorably, to *Defender of the Crown* because of its heavy strategy content. "It has some of the best graphics we've ever done—one artist spent over a year on them."

Cinemaware has been criticized for its devotion to graphics, as if beautiful graphics were somehow synonymous with superficial play values. But Cutter has discovered that attractive visuals can greatly enhance the experience. "We put great importance on feedback in our games. Let's say you have two identical sequences involving a helicopter bombing a plane. Now in one sequence, the explosion is just a pop, but in the other, it's this enormous explosion. That's good feedback. After we had the graphics redrawn on *SDI*, we were testing it, and it was much more fun to play; so we called the programmer and asked him if he'd made any changes. But he hadn't; the only changes were the graphics. That started us thinking about feedback, just changing the graphics made the game play better!"

Because of its visual priority, Cinemaware has traditionally produced the first version of every game on the Amiga, though these days the IBM PC version is produced simultaneously. "When you have a larger palette to work from, your imagination runs free," he explained. "As a result, we've done things in the Commodore versions of our games that we wouldn't have tried if we'd done that version first. Suddenly, though, we realized we could do this on the Commodore. Also, starting out on the Amiga gets us all that hype from Amiga users and reviewers."

The interview is almost over, but John has one final thought he's very anxious to express. "Game design is a team effort. When you're designing a game, it's very difficult to fill in all the gaps, to imagine all the possible alternatives. Our programmers do a lot of that, filling in the gaps. Our programmers are very creative. I think that's very important."

As with all team efforts, no single team member is more important than any other. Like master cinematographers, the programmers may "only" be capturing the image the director and actors have set up before them, but it is through their eyes that the customer eventually perceives the result.

Listening to John Cutter, one can almost see him at some future Academy Awards ceremony, humbly thanking the rest of the team, one by one, reminding the audience that creation on this level is a collaborative process with each member adding an invaluable and irreplaceable piece to the gestalt. 🙇



*TV Sports: Football*, seen here on the Amiga, makes the program more realistic by adding a commentator and shots of fans in the bleachers.



Cinemaware has made a splash with its movie-like graphics, as you can see in these shots from *King of Chicago*.



# Piracy and Prices and Me and You

by Annie Katz

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Annie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each issue, his column gives readers an inside look at the world of video and computer gaming.

Here's where I blow what little popularity I have, at least with a certain segment of the VG&CE readership. As a discussion topic, software piracy is only a little less incendiary than sex, drugs and religion. When Bill Kunkel and I devoted our monthly seminar on the Quantumlink computer network to the topic, I set the U.S. record for electronic death threats.

It doesn't take Freud to deduce that a lot of the heat comes from repressed feelings of guilt. Most of us like to be honest. People feel safe and protected when they act in harmony with the social contract. Yet some who would faint at the thought of shoplifting a book are five-fingering software at the boot of a blank disk. The strident attacks upon anyone who might impede such thefts indicate that, deep down, these folks know stealing programs is wrong.

So, this column isn't a lecture on morality. I prefer to appeal to enlightened self-interest. Piracy cheats every computer gamer, even those who succumb to the seductive lure of "free software."

Game stealers never run out of rationalizations for their activities. *Inside Gaming* doesn't have enough space to refute them all, but let's look at some.

**Excuse #1: Software prices are too high.**

This excuse attempts to portray computer criminals as modern Robin Hoods who take from fat-cat publishers and give to the people. They aren't snatching someone's property. They are protesting against excesses of the capitalist system.

This noble-sounding reason neglects two key points. Even if you agree that software prices are high, it is irrelevant to the ethics of swiping a program instead of buying it. Few would seriously argue that they have the right to steal a Mercedes, just because it is expensive.

Blaming software theft on high prices also conveniently ignores the fact that piracy has largely created the current pricing structure. Everyone would rather see computer games sell for less, but piracy directly undermines the economic stability of the industry. If publishers could get paid for even a fraction of those illegal copies, the cost of software could be significantly reduced.

Software is a business, not a hobby or a charity. Most people in computer entertainment display extraordinary personal commitment to their work, but the wheels would have to stop turning if people could not earn a decent living.

Staying in business means balancing expenditures against potential income. There are three to five illegal copies of a game for every one sold. To put it another way, a disk that could legitimately sell 200,000 to 300,000 units ends up doing 50,000.

This is ruinous in a hit-driven business like computer entertainment. Just when a publisher has a chance to make a little money on what should be a mega-hit, a bunch of disk snatchers knock it back to a much lower level.

Lower sales make it harder for the manufacturer to offset fixed costs like development, packaging and disk duplication. The expense of producing each copy is much higher, per unit, for a run of 50,000 than it would be for a distribution of 200,000. So to break even at a reasonable point in the sales life of a title, the publisher must keep the wholesale price as high as possible. Each wholesale dollar translates to \$2 at retail, which is why we have so many \$49.95 computer games.

Software publishers have repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to trim retail prices as sales volume rises. Today's average game is at least \$10 cheaper than it would have been two years ago. How many other products can show a comparable price drop over the same period? The price will keep falling, too, but it will drop much more quickly if piracy doesn't swallow up expected sales gains.

**Excuse #2: I only copy programs I won't buy.**

People who trot out this alibi are hard to refute without the ability to read minds, but it flies in the face of elementary logic. If people swiped only games that aren't worth buying, then bad games would be the most heavily pirated.

Of course, this is exactly the opposite of what happens. It's the hot titles that get it in the neck. *Rescue on Fractalus* (Epyx), the first Lucasfilm title, was ruined by excessive illegal copying, and low quality had nothing to do with it. People steal games they want to play, not to punish producers of substandard programs.

The net effect of cutting off the sales peaks is that publishers are afraid to invest big bucks in research and development. They know only too well how piracy sabotages success. The rewards for creating a wonderful game are not what they should be; so many companies are content to import generic titles from Europe instead of investing in the design of innovative, ground-breaking games.

**Excuse #3: I copy games because I can't afford to buy them all.**

This one doesn't sound too unreasonable, until it is restated in terms of any other type of merchandise. There are too many movies, comic books, record albums, science fiction books and, yes, newsstand magazines for most people to have them all. That doesn't mean you should go down to the bookstore and shove a couple of shelves full of mystery novels under your coat.

Everyone constantly makes choices and reconciles their desires with reality. No one this side of Donald Trump can afford to purchase every computer game on the market. But so what? There aren't enough hours in the day to play them all.

**Excuse #4: I only break game code for the challenge.**

This is another attempt to glamorize petty crime. Being called a sneak thief doesn't inflate anyone's ego. So pirates often characterize themselves as trail-blazing researchers, wrestling with the cutting edge of modern computing.

The whole idea is ridiculous. According to pirates comparable status with designers and programmers is like equating someone who robs a museum with the artists whose work lines its walls. If every pirate vanished tomorrow, the computer field would not only be unharmed, it might well be healthier. How many games will the pirates create for you if all the designers disappeared?

Inventing a game requires talent, skill and a liberal application of elbow grease over an extended period of time. Stealing one takes greed and insensitivity.

Even a columnist hard up for a topic would never mention piracy if it only involved those who personally bust a program bit by bit. It's stealing, and it's not especially creative, but this form of software piracy accounts for a minute percentage of illegal copies. If manual program-busting were the only form of game theft, it wouldn't be worth mentioning.

Most software is stolen using commercially available copying programs or by duplicating an illegal, unprotected copy of a program. Either procedure is about as challenging as operating a toaster. No one much brighter than a chimp should seriously claim that copying software is a notable achievement.

Software pirates love to portray themselves as untamed masters of home computing, but it won't wash. It is the designers, programmers and artists who infuse the program with their creativity, not the dishonest person who merely appropriates the work.

**Excuse #5: All software should be free.**  
In an ideal world, everyone would get everything they want without cost or effort. In the real world, even creative artists have to eat.

If by authoring games they can't support home and family, programmers and designers must do something else. When the corner butcher starts giving away steaks and the landlord stops collecting rent, free software may be a viable alternative. Until then, it is a cruel joke on people who work incredibly long hours to give computerists a little fun.

Piracy deprives every joystick jockey of some terrific software. These are the games that never get done, because low pay forces the people out of the field. More than one programmer has forsaken gaming for automated payrolls and computerized inventory management.

Royalties are the designer's lifeblood. They are the difference between barely scraping by financially and getting a little slice of the good life. And software piracy shrinks royalty checks faster than hot water shrinks a wool sweater.

If pirates had their way, there would be no professional designers or program-

mers. No one would be able to afford to do it full-time. Be glad they haven't succeeded yet. No one disputes the enthusiasm and devotion of computer hobbyists, but professionals can add talent, resources and time to that dedication.

Check out a year's worth of public-domain programs. That would be the entirety of computer gaming if software piracy crushed professionalism. If pirates steal enough games, it won't be long before there isn't anything published worth stealing.

So much for excuses. Software thieves never run out of them. The rest of us have some pretty good reasons for not pirating software or encouraging those who do. I've covered most of them in the course of dealing with the various rationalizations for piracy, but there are still at least three major ones worth mentioning.

It's illegal. Federal and state authorities are arresting, prosecuting and jailing software pirates. Pleas of ignorance fall on deaf ears when your friendly neighborhood pirate finks on his "customers" to avoid a stretch in the slammer.

Pirates sometimes steal more than software. Sometimes they like placing long telephone calls to exotic places and charging expensive merchandise to others' credit cards. I have seen tears cried by people who turned a blind eye to piracy to get free games, and then had a bank account emptied over a weekend by their illegal software connection. Where was that illegal program before you got it?

If you buy a game from a reputable retailer or mail-order outlet, it will be uncontaminated. The whimsical fellow who offers the latest game for \$2 may decide that wrecking your entire system would be even more hilarious than defrauding a bunch of game designers.

There are three ways to fight softlifters: make programs harder to duplicate, catch the thieves and reduce the demand for illegal copies. All have merit, but I prefer the third choice. That was the inspiration for this installment of *Inside Gaming*.

The problem with arresting pirates is that it is hard to tell a cynical crime from a youthful mistake. Besides, the jails aren't large enough to hold all the pirates, even if the police diverted their attention from more serious crimes to catch them. Piracy as a whole is big business, but it is often small potatoes on an individual basis.

Copy protection deters the casual thief, but it incites the aggressive ones. And once a pirate breaks the protection scheme, the program is susceptible to ordinary duplication methods.

Copy protection is expensive and, sometimes, inconvenient. Companies invest money and time to safeguard existing programs that they would otherwise spend to develop new ones.

Some protection systems use code words, hardware keys and other devices. These protect the program, but are awkward to use. There isn't a software executive who doesn't regard copy protection as a costly, though necessary, evil. Publishers would junk this stuff in a minute if the threat of piracy diminished.

Can anything be done? I think so. As a good start, let's make the manufacture, possession and use of program-busting products a crime. It's analogous to similar laws about burglar tools. There is no lawful reason for such programs (other than making personal backups of disks, but since most companies will supply such backups at a reasonable cost, even that use is unnecessary).

In the long run, eliminating the demand for pirated disks is the cheapest and easiest solution. Let's give the games of Chris Crawford and Tom Snyder the same chance readers give novels by Lawrence Sanders and Stephen King. Let them earn the just rewards for their efforts instead of stealing their creativity. ♪

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# The Game Doctor Tells All!

by The Game Doctor

Well, finally we reached the point in the cycle where I have questions from VG&CE readers. So let's skip the wah-wah and cut to the chase. First question:

**Q: Welcome back from your hibernation! A couple of quick questions for you. First, I think NES is a better choice for video gaming because of its wide variety of games produced by other manufacturers. Why are all Sega games produced only by Sega?**

**Second, Nintendo and other manufacturers promise new games to be released at a certain time, but they all end up coming out six months or more later than announced (i.e., *Link*). Is Nintendo trying to get rid of old games sitting on the toy-store shelves or is there a shipping problem from Japan to the U.S.?**

—Andy Dusin, Gloucester, RI

**A:** In the first place, not all Sega games are produced by Sega. *Choplifter*, for example, is a Broderbund game that Sega produced under license, and *Ghostbusters*, although released under the Sega label, was produced by Activision.

When the Japanese ventured into the U.S. market with the Sega and Nintendo video-game systems, they were intent on avoiding the mistakes that were made during the video-game boom of the early '80s. They were anxious to avoid the product glut that choked the Atari 2600 market, with uncontrolled third-party publishers dumping games of minimal quality on retail shelves. In order to keep a clamp on products, Nintendo strictly regulated independent publishers, while Sega forbade them entirely. Nintendo and Sega maintained that control by keeping secret the technical specifications necessary for producing compatible software.

All did not go smoothly in this regard however. In fact, Tengen (the name under which Atari Games publishes NES software) recently succeeded in

"reverse engineering" the Nintendo process, began releasing "unauthorized" NES games and filed a multi-million-dollar suit against Nintendo for restraint of trade.

As to why games like *Link* were so hard to find last Christmas, the official reason is a DRAM (Dynamic Random Access Memory) chip shortage. When the U.S. recently restricted the importation of DRAM chips from Japan, it created a worldwide shortage while other manufacturers prepared to take up the slack. In that interim, there were not enough chips to go around.

**Q: Will a Commodore 64 disk drive fit in a Commodore VIC 20? If not, why?**

—Mike Paulio, Phoenix, AZ

**A:** You're making the Doc nostalgic talking about the VIC 20, a computer many of our readers have probably never even heard of, since it's been off the market for five years.

The answer, of course, is no. The two computers are not compatible because they are two totally different systems, using different processors, etc.

**Q: What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of the Sega cards vs. the cartridges?**

—Troy Paulsen, St. Cloud, MN

**A:** Good question, Troy. Well, as Sega fans know, Sega has tried more software formats than MicroProse has flight simulators. There have been Combo Cartridges, Mega Cartridges, Two-Mega Cartridges and Sega Cards, which fit into the same slot Sega uses for its 3-D glasses. The supposed advantage of the Card was its compact size, but its disadvantages, primarily lack of memory storage capability, outweighed the benefits, and very few major games have actually appeared in this format.

**Q: I feel I must take exception to**

**your description of the Atari ST computer in the premier issue of VG&CE. I agree that the ST is a powerful machine, but its sound chip is not "awful." While it is true that ST's sound is not outstanding, it is certainly more than adequate. Listen to games like *Obbliterator* from Psygnosis and *Captain Blood* from Mindscape, and you'll see what can be done with it. You also neglected to mention the Atari's built-in MIDI ports. These ports allow much more freedom for musical applications, and the ST is currently the only computer to offer these at no extra cost.**

—David Litchman, Stamford, CT

**A:** Look, the Doctor appreciates system loyalty as well as the next guy, but loyalty doesn't mean one should be blind to the weaknesses of his hardware. Whether the sound chip is "awful," as I say, or simply "not outstanding" as you put it, is splitting hairs. The fact is the ST sound chip is not even up to the standards of the Commodore 64, much less the Amiga. Just because creative programmers have been able to overcome the chip's limitations to produce acceptable sound on certain games does not excuse the fact that this chip is not up to industry standards.

Sure, *Captain Blood* sounds good for an ST program. But listen to it on the Amiga, and you'll realize how far from optimal that ST sound chip really is.

True, the ST has a MIDI port which makes it a great computer for musicians, but from the perspective of the game player it means nothing. ♪

And that about wraps things up for this installment of Q&A. Remember to send all your questions to: **The Game Doctor**, P.O. Box 020541, Brooklyn, NY 11202. And until next issue, take an aspirin and call somebody else in the morning—I don't get up till after noon.

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# Tips to Help You Reach for the Stars

## Strategic Studies Group

Versions: Apple II, Apple IIGS, Commodore 64, IBM PC, Macintosh

Even though each game of *Reach for the Stars* is different, a player that follows several basic principles will greatly improve his or her chances of victory.

The main key to *Reach for the Stars* is that the best defense is a good offense. A player who simply responds to opponents' attacks is soon overwhelmed. Instead, a player must carry the fight to the enemy's door. A foe who is busy responding to attacks in his own territory will be much less likely to initiate hostile missions into your domain.

Peaceful expansion and coexistence are noble goals, but, unfortunately, they do not work for long in this game. This is not to say that a player should fight as often as possible. Picking fights with every other participant may inspire a combined offensive against the player's empire. Rather, a player should respond in force when it is appropriate, especially after an enemy attack.

In a similar vein, opponents in the basic game could be compared to a cancer. Everything goes better if the disease is detected early enough and stamped out. A threat that is allowed to ripen unchecked is certain to cause many problems farther down the line.

A strong offensive early in a campaign can totally eliminate a potential rival from the game and gain the player a valuable source of resource points. Even if not completely destroyed, early victims will be set back, and the player will receive bonus points for any successful attacks.

It is also important not to spread forces too thin. Mass force is vital for guaranteed victory. Instead of leaving a small covering force at each planet, the player should keep a large

potent force available to respond promptly to any attempted assault. One good way to accomplish this is for the empire builder to select one planet in each area as a base for such a force.

The outcome of the war is what is important, not the individual battles. A player can lose a few battles, and possibly a planet or two, as long as they are recaptured quickly and decisively.

Understanding the impact of each element



of the product phase is vital to a thriving interstellar state. A player should not increase research when under attack. Likewise, a player who builds a massive space fleet at the beginning may seem impressive, but those who invest in research are likely to do better in the long run. In general, a player should stress research and industrialization at the start of the game. It is best to hold off building a massive space armada until approximately Turn 10 or later.

In the advanced game, first contact may not come until even later because of the navigation limits. This provides the player with more time to build up an economic base. This peri-

od of relative peace should not lull the player into neglecting the future. There will be wars, and the empire needs ships with which to fight them. The limitation on the number of ships that can be under construction makes it impossible to wait until an actual first contact with rival powers occurs to raise a space fleet. A player should begin the build-up a few turns before the ships will be needed for combat.

When building ships, the player should buy the maximum number of crafts wherever possible. Numbers are far more important than quality in battles in *Reach for the Stars*. The more sophisticated ships are good mainly for their movement capability. Even though they do have good firepower, ten Mark IV ships will be quickly overwhelmed by 55 Mark IIs.

The most important thing to remember is that there is no perfect plan, no golden expressway to victory. There is more than one way to conquer the known universe, and a wise player develops a playing style in harmony with his or her personal temperament. In other words, a player who is excited by slugfests in deep space would be better off pursuing a policy of military aggression. Having an armchair warmonger labor to win the game by cleverly manipulating the production system is asking for trouble.

*Reach for the Stars* is a long and arduous test, and resoluteness in the face of temporary adversity is an absolute requirement. Therefore, the player needs a strong emotional belief in the plan that guides the empire. Adaptability is a virtue, but switching tactics too many times is a recipe for defeat. ♣

—R. Bradley Andrews

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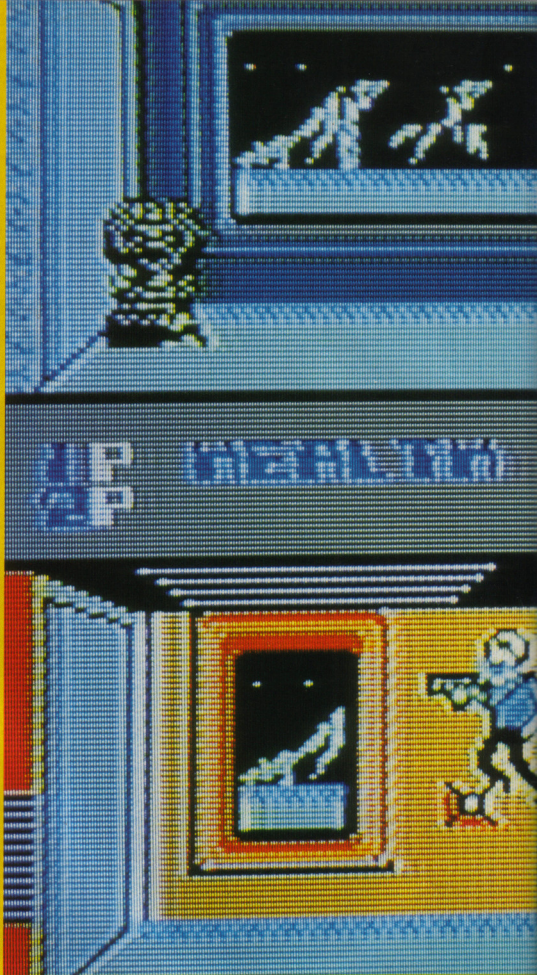
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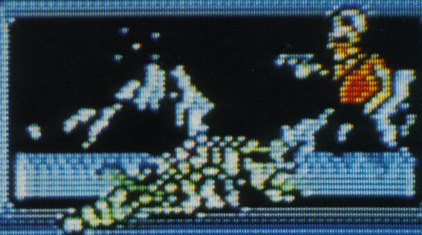
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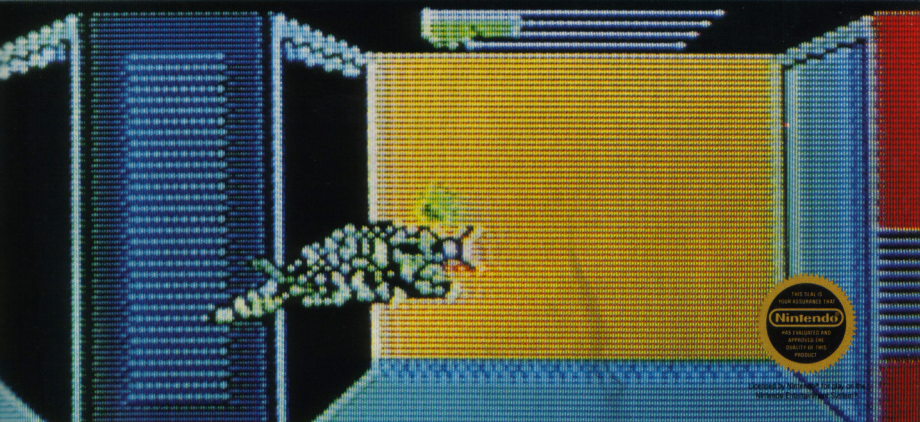




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# Spritebusting: Tips for Typhoon Thompson

## Broderbund

For the Atari ST

**S**prites can be the most annoying creatures...

They can, however, be dealt with. And that, after all, is the object of Dan Gorlin's *Typhoon Thompson: Search for the Sea Child*.

### Know Your Enemy

Sprites never leave the water unless they're ensconced within a flyer. Here are the various types of Sprite flyers and notes on each:

**Bumper**—You generally hear this baby before you see it, and it never takes you by surprise, due to its signature beeping sound. Contact is not fatal to Thompson or the jet sled, but they will screw up Typhoon's aim whenever possible.

**Whomper**—Similar to the Bumper, except that contact with this flyer can destroy a jet sled. Whompers are like the physical manifestation of a hiccup, careening madly over the water like an automated pogo stick: loud and nasty, which at least guarantees they won't sneak up on you.

**Forcer**—This flyer generates powerful repeller rays that make it difficult to hit. Other than throwing you off course, however, Forcers are harmless, and they can be easily picked off from a distance.

**Sucker**—Shoot this flyer from as far away as possible. Give this Sucker an even break, and it will inhale you right into its funnel-like maw, and you'll be swimming back to the Guardians to beg for another jet sled.

**Bubbler**—These innocuous-looking contraptions pump out giant bubbles that bob along the surface and swallow up adventurers who get too close. The bubbles can be burst with a well-placed laser round, but you're better offacing this flyer at first sight before it starts generating those globes of doom.

**Spitter**—Nasty. This sweetheart spits out exploding rounds, and its aim is deadly. Go underwater (see the "Tough Sledding" section), and wait for this flyer to start circling; then come up behind it and fire.

**Zapper**—The king flyer, one touch of a Zap-

per, and you're a toasted Typhoon. While diving is a viable strategy when dealing with the other flyers, try dropping beneath the waves on a Zapper, and it'll be on you like scales on a Sprite. There is only one strategy for dealing with Zappers: destroy them, do it quickly and do it from the maximum distance.

### Island Lore

It's important to remember that, beyond the first round, individual islands now contain more than one Sprite each, and you must capture each Sprite on that island before it is deactivated. At the third and fourth villages, failure to contain the Sprites can lead to your being overrun by flyers. The more active islands there are, the more difficult the process becomes.



If a Sprite revives before you can bag it, shoot it again with the laser cannon and pick it up. Once you've lured it from an island and blown up its flyer, you must capture it before it can get back to that island!

### Tough Sledding

Steering the jet sled takes some practice. Remember that a mouse is different from a joystick in one crucial way: A joystick returns automatically to the neutral position; a mouse does not. Remain alert to the possibility of drifting because you have forgotten to re-center the mouse.

Use manual steering only to go left, right, reverse or to dive. Try to use the thrusters for any forward movement, and don't worry about overshooting your target; the jet sled brakes very well. You will scoop up any dazed

Sprites automatically after you have passed over them, even at high speed.

Diving can be a useful stratagem. To go underwater, push the mouse forward while engaging the thrusters. To pop back to the surface, hit the left mouse button. Since the Zapper is the only flyer that can track a jet sled underwater, it is possible to drop beneath the surface on the other flyers, wait for them to establish a pattern of movement, then snap to the surface and open fire.

### A Wealth of Weapons

Here are the weapons in your war with the Sprites. They are bestowed on you by the Spirit Guardians in the form of a cold, flaming bath. New weapons are awarded with each artifact you return to the Guardians.

**Laser Cannon**—Tiny laser cannonballs are launched great distances. They destroy any flyer they hit and leave the Sprite floating, stunned, on the surface.

**Scatter Bomb**—When the flyers are getting too thick, this breaks them up, dispersing all flyers within the bomb's range.

**Sprite Magnet**—Any Sprite in the process of swimming back to an island who comes within range of this magnet will be transfixed by its pulsing signal and will home in on it immediately. These can be launched underwater, which means the player can dive, launch a magnet in near-total safety, then surface to pick off the clustering Sprites.

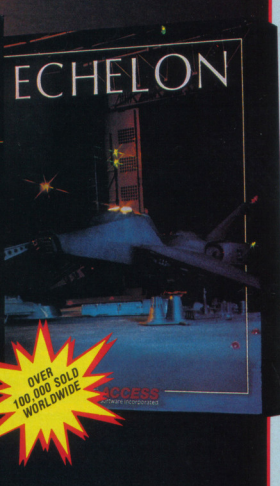
**Freeze Bomb**—Neutralizes any flyers within its range, and it can be fired underwater.

### Last Words

It takes a keen eye and a steady hand to deal with the swarms of Sprites who haunt Aguar, but the solid strategist is always at an advantage. The key is in eliminating entire islands and deactivating them as quickly as possible. Keeping the flyers to the absolute minimum is the best way to win the game. So climb on that jet sled, hit the thrusters and spritz those Sprites! 🐉

—Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley

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C-64/128, AMIGA, IBM PC



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C-64/128, APPLE II SERIES, IBM PC



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## Reviews

### Starglider II

Rainbird

Versions: Amiga (\$44.95), Atari ST (\$44.95),  
Commodore 64 (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95),  
Macintosh (\$49.95)

Several game years have passed since you piloted Draziv Industries' pride and joy, the AGAV (Airborne Ground Attack Vehicle), against the rowdy Egron, on behalf of the peace-loving Novenians. In the interim, the Egron have continued to cut a bloody swath through the galaxy, invading and occupying the five planets of the Solice System. The AGAV, meanwhile, has been phased out in favor of a new Starglider, Dragoon Industries' ICARUS (Interplanetary Combat and Reconnaissance Universal Scout), which has most of the AGAV's better features plus an interplanetary capability that is crucial to negotiating this sprawling epic of a game.

*Starglider II*, also by British developer Argonaut Software, should appeal to fans of the original. The ICARUS flies and fires weaponry

Rainbird's *Starglider II* improves on the original game by adding better shadings to the stunning graphics.



exactly like an AGAV. The big difference from the original is the game's look. Whereas the original *Starglider* used imitation vector-style graphics, this sequel employs a more traditional computer-game look. Vector graphics—and the imitation of that technique seen in the original—produce vivid, single-color line drawings against a black background. As a result, *Starglider* was one of the most singular-looking games of 1986 and 1987. The problem is the original took this technique about as far as it could go, and the designers obviously felt some significant visual upgrade was required in order to justify the existence of a sequel. So *Starglider II* gives us color and lots of it. The shadings and animations really push each computer

system to its graphic limits, creating a very sophisticated but occasionally muddy look.

In play terms, the ICARUS Stardrive is the game's major innovation. Described rather ponderously in the instructions as a "revolutionary 16-chamber, neutrino-fueled, semiautomatic, latent energy drive booster," the Stardrive is what allows the ICARUS to go planet hopping within the Solice System. With the Stardrive, the ICARUS can amp up to eight times its normal speed once beyond a planet's gravitational pull. This allows the player to jump from one planet or moon to another, and lets the designers create several, distinct combat scenarios.

There are five planets and ten moons within the Solice System, though not all of them can be visited. The habitable ones are bustling with activity, however, and most of it is malign. There are the Egron, of course, constructing beam projectors on the moons of Millway, which will be used to defend the enormous space station they're building. When it's completed, the space station will be turned against Novenia. Then there are space pirates and bounty hunters, opportunists looking to pick the bones of the Solice System. These mutts will swipe a ship's cargo and leave it for space junk without a second thought.

*Starglider II* is a lot of fun. In addition to exploring the various planets and moons, several of these worlds have tunnel networks that contain some rewarding surprises for the dedicated explorer. Then there's the ICARUS itself, with its amazing high-tech gizmos and weaponry. Now for some elusive reason, *Starglider II* doesn't quite generate the electric excitement level of the original. But any disappointment gamers may feel will surely be assuaged by *Starglider II*'s wider range of strategic options and greater thematic scope.

—Joyce Worley and Bill Kunkel

Rainbird Software, P.O. Box 2227,  
Menlo Park, CA 94026; (415) 322-0900

### Road Raider

Mindscape

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Atari ST (\$39.95),  
Commodore 64 (\$29.95)

*Road Raider* by Gray Matter plays as if designer Chris Gray were locked in a room for six months with nothing but a computer and copies of *Auto Duel* (Origin) and *Into the Eagle's Nest* (Mindscape). The result is a skillful grafting of two fairly compatible game ideas, which may not be original, but ends up entertaining.

*Road Raider* is a post-holocaust arcade contest with the player cast as a bounty hunter, searching contaminated cities for the evil

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Dr. A. Noid (*groan*). Noid is a mad scientist-type who has provided the starving remnants of mankind with a new type of foodstuff. Sounds good, right? Turns out the synthetic edible, dubbed "slu," is totally addictive and transforms all who eat it into ravenous slu junkies. Needless to say, his slu franchise gives Dr. Noid quite a bit of leverage in Nuketown and makes him a pretty tough man to find when he doesn't want to be found.

The player must move through a series of three abandoned cities in an ATV (all-terrain vehicle), jousting with the various drone vehicles Noid has patrolling in each burnt-out metropolis, while beating the radioactive bushes for the few remaining buildings that may contain valuable supplies.

The game uses the overhead perspective seen in *Auto Duel* during the sequences where the ATV drives through the city streets; but once the player steers his vehicle into a building's entrance, the program toggles into its pedestrian mode. The player/surrogate, on foot, is now seen from an angled overhead viewpoint. In a game

You'll need to stock up your ATV to successfully survive the war-ravaged landscape in *Road Raider*, as you search for the mad scientist Dr. A. Noid.



mechanic eerily reminiscent of *Into the Eagle's Nest*, the player must now move through the interior of the maze-like structure, shooting down or avoiding the humanoid zombies who shuffle through its halls, and whose touch is ruinous to a person's health. Buildings contain such goodies as first-aid kits that restore health, ammunition, fuel cans, keys to unlock sealed rooms and, ultimately, an arena pass. The ST and Amiga versions also have a radar gun, smoke generator and multidirectional gun, while Commodore versions include a missile launcher and ten shells. The arena pass is the most crucial item, however, since it gains the player access to the gigantic demolition derby held in the local arena for Noid's edification. If the player survives the arena, he gets to move on to the next city.

Food is the basic unit of exchange in this world, and, in addition to items scavenged from buildings, the player can swap food for fuel, repairs, ammo and weapons at any gas station.

*Road Raider* does not offer players the opportunity to build more elaborate vehicles, as in *Auto Duel*, but considerable arcade-type strategy is nonetheless required, along with a healthy level of joystick savvy. It will take the average user quite a few hours just to locate and search all the extant buildings in any given city, find the necessary equipment and get to the arena without running out of gas, having your ATV totalled or getting killed while on foot.

The graphics by Rob Anderson and Nick Gray, based on art by Dennis Turner, are very attractive, and Ed Zolnierky's program runs very smoothly. The only real problem is that perhaps too many obstacles were programmed into the city streets. Between the other cars, oil slicks, land mines and gun turrets, the ATV is forced to move at a virtual crawl. Moreover, since hits by drone vehicles do much more damage when the ATV is cruising at a high speed, the program basically dictates this frustratingly slow pace. On the plus side, it's possible to save one game in progress, so at least the player needn't always start at the beginning.

So long as you don't demand originality from your games, arcade action fans should be delighted by this slick hybrid of two earlier classics.

—Arnie Katz and Bill Kunkel

Mindscape, 3444 Dundee Road,  
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## Pure-Stat Football

### Software Simulations

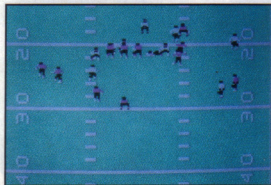
Versions: Commodore 64 (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

The pickings are poor for simulation-minded football fans. There are plenty of arcade-style pigskin programs, but statistically based gridiron games are as rare as ambidextrous quarterbacks. In fact, only one stat title, *Super Bowl Sunday* (Avalon Hill), has achieved a significant level of acceptance. Yet even *Super Bowl Sunday* has its flaws. It doesn't print out rosters or compile customized teams. These limitations make it less than ideal for serious keyboard coaches to form drafted leagues as their baseball counterparts do.

Fortunately, Ed Daniels, who wrote *Super Bowl Sunday*, is not the type of man to loll around soaking up praise for past achievements. He has returned to the design station to create *Pure-Stat Football*. Daniels has clearly benefitted from the experience of doing *Super Bowl Sunday* (and *Football* for subLOGIC). *Pure-Stat Football* is a superb simulation that eclipses all previous efforts.

*Pure-Stat Football* can be played by two human coaches, against the machine or as a fully computerized simulation. The robot coaches are fierce opponents, a rarity among statistical sports programs. The computer even modifies its strategy to respond to a human player's overdependence on certain plays and formations.

Stat-based game fans will really enjoy the realistic aspects of Software Simulations' *Pure-Stat Football*, seen here on the IBM.



Users can adjust the length of quarters, from two to 15 minutes, to shorten playing time. For speedy replays, users can turn off the graphics and race through contests in the quick play mode.

The game disk comes with a selection of ten great teams of the past: the 1964 Browns, 1968 Jets, 1966 Packers, 1969 Chiefs, 1972 Dolphins, 1975 Steelers, 1976 Raiders, 1977 Cowboys, 1984 49ers and 1985 Bears. Each is modeled to perform the same way on the computer screen as it did between the NFL goalposts. Extra disks, available for separate purchase, will present full seasons and individual all-time great squads to expand the pool of teams.

Coaches enter offensive and defensive plays using a series of menu screens. These break down each confrontation at the line of scrimmage into its component parts.

The defensive team's coach sets up his 11 first. The first screen presents a selection of four running and four passing formations.

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Specific assignments are indicated on the next display. The competitor can blitz any of the four linebackers or double team one of the other side's receivers. The third and final screen gives the defense the chance to key on the halfback, fullback or punter.

The offense then selects from among six plays: run, pass, punt, punt inside the 20-yard line, field goal or kill the clock. The same screen offers four possible formations: split backs, short yardage, double tight end and four receivers.

If the coach chooses run or pass, it triggers a secondary menu screen. There are six rushing plays and a choice of ball carriers. The coach can call one of four types of passes and send the catchers on any of four different patterns after the snap from center. The leader of the offense picks the quarterback and intended target.

When the strategizing is done, it is time to see the results. *Pure-Stat Football* switches to an overhead, scrolling view of the gridiron. The program runs an animated sequence that shows the result of the play, based on the offensive and defensive setups and the abilities of the athletes involved.

The field has full vertical scroll and limited side-to-side movement to keep the action visible at all times. Although this is not as realistic as a grandstand view, it makes it much easier to distinguish the movements of each individual player. And that is something players will definitely want to do, because the animation is crisp and lifelike.

It is a pity that all sports simulations don't have a stat keeper like the one in *Pure-Stat Football*. It permits the computerist to manually update numbers or have the computer handle the chore automatically after a game. The totals, divided into conferences if desired, can be printed or saved to disk. Software Simulations also sells a disk that allows users to trade players and compile new teams.

*Pure-Stat Football* is a must for all football-loving computer gamers. Ed Daniels has outdone himself again, and pigskin partisans will delight in his triumph.

—Arnie Katz

Software Simulations, 959 Main Street,  
Stratford, CT 05497; (203) 377-4339

## Zoom Discovery Software

Versions: Amiga (\$29.95), Commodore 64 (\$29.95),  
IBM PC (\$29.95)

This game's song-and-dance introduction is almost too delightful for its own good. Watching the three stars of the Zoomland Magic Show is so addictive that the computerist may sit mesmerized instead of plunging into the 50 playfields of action-strategy challenge. If cute could kill, . . .

*Zoom* marks the international design debut of Frank Neuhaus. The inspired help of Jochen and Gisela Wiegelt (computer graphics) and Thomas Lopatic (sound) makes the game as delightful to see and hear as it is to play. *Zoom* packs as much charm as a Disney cartoon.

Like *Discovery Software's* other recent releases, *Zoom* is inspired by the classic coin-ops. In this case, the play mechanic is partially derived from *Amidar*. The big difference in the play mechanic is that *Zoom* lets the player's on-screen surrogate roam freely around the playfield instead of limiting it to the corridor's of a simple maze.

While most computerists will play *Zoom* solitarily, the program offers a choice of two player modes. A pair of gamers can alternate turns, or they can each use a joystick for simultaneous cooperation.

The player guides *Zoomer* around the geometric playfields that are divided into an arrangement of squares by colored grid lines. *Zoomer* cruises along the lines, changing their color in his wake. When a square is totally enclosed by completed lines, it turns from transparent to a bright color. When every square is recolored, the playfield flashes and a new one hurtles onto the screen to renew the test.

*Zoom by Discovery Software* (IBM version at right, C-64 version below) is an easy-to-learn game, but the 50 playfields will keep you busy for some time.



*Zoomer* starts his journey through the playfields with three lives. A variety of nasties works hard to take them as quickly as possible. The disembodied flapping mouth, known as the Jaggernaut, poses the most consistent danger. The red lips follow *Zoomer* like a homing missile, and a single touch is lethal. Other menaces are the line-erasing Wormlets, bottomless Black Holes, Spheroids and Angleheads.

Fortunately, the round yellow character is not completely helpless against his assailants. By pushing the action button, the player orders *Zoomer* to drop bombs. These charges temporarily block the grid line and give *Zoomer* the chance to light up squares without worrying about pursuers.

Valuable prizes pop up during the game. If *Zoomer* touches one before it vanishes, he receives the corresponding reward. Glue slows the enemy down, and an ice cube freezes all monsters in place. A magic potion makes *Zoomer* invulnerable until the gauge to the right of the active display runs down. Candy provides a burst of speed, but a rocket can fly *Zoomer* right to the next playfield!

Plucking a big red apple lights four squares at once. This is a double-barrel bonus. It puts the gamer four squares closer to advancing to the next round and adds time to the bonus scoring gauge, which is next to the previously mentioned invulnerability meter. The player also acquires additional time whenever *Zoomer* lights two or more squares simultaneously.

The cheery music and quirky sound effects are nearly as impressive as the graphics, and that is no small praise. *Zoomer's* exuberant whoops and yells, generated with speech synthesis, punctuate each phase of the game. "Hey! Hey! Wow!" could become the "woc-ka, woc-ka, woc-ka" (in *Pac-Man*) of the late 1980s.

This enjoyable program has gained more than a play-mechanic idea from the arcades. Frank Neuhaus is loyal to the coin-op credo:

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"Easy to learn, and fun to play over and over again." It's a perfect description of *Zoom*, which is why this amusing, yet exciting action contest is unreservedly recommended.

—Arnie Katz

Discovery Software, 163 Conduit Street,  
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## Reach for the Stars

### Strategic Studies Group

Versions: Apple II (\$44.95), Apple IIGS (\$39.95),  
Commodore 64 (\$44.95), IBM PC (\$44.95),  
Macintosh (\$44.95)

**R**each for the Stars (third edition) is an update of the classic game that helped to launch Strategic Studies Group (SSG), an Australian company, into the international computer-gaming arena. While this version is built upon the first two editions, it has enough improvements to be considered a new game.

In *Reach for the Stars*, up to four players command an emerging star empire in its quest to become sole master of an area of the galaxy. The computer fills in where needed. The goal is to amass the most points through planetary development, winning battles and destroying and conquering opposing planets.

SSG's *Reach for the Stars* lets you explore and colonize planets in an effort to control a portion of the galaxy. IBM PC version shown.



Production phases form the core of *Reach for the Stars*. During this time, the player decides how to allocate resources in the three basic areas of planetary improvement: offenses (starships), defenses (armies and planetary defense bases) and technology (better ships, navigation and production capability). There is never enough money, especially early in the game, to fund all the areas to the hilt. As in real life, a winning strategy must emphasize getting the biggest bang for the buck and meeting the most urgent needs. Wrestling with the priorities of the society under the player's direction is one of the most interesting aspects of this absorbing science-fiction strategy contest.

There are also two movement phases between each production phase. During these segments, a player maneuvers his forces to explore the galaxy, colonize other planets and combat rival empires. The player with the most points after the number of turns specified at game start is declared the winner. Many times a game can be "called by the refs" prior to this point, if one player achieves a significant point advantage over the others and is awarded an "overwhelming victory."

Some computerists may prefer an open-ended game. Play can be continued even after the program awards a victory, if the participants

wish. Taking over the entire universe may give a player a sense of accomplishment. *Reach for the Stars* does not provide any special rewards for this accomplishment.

The first 40 turns of a standard game can be played in approximately one hour. Later turns take proportionally more time, as the player must become more involved with carrying out the production and movement activities of his empire. The program includes an option that automatically completes a player's turn, avoiding a lot of paperwork. Of course, the computer never provides the best solution and will sometimes do exactly the opposite of what the player might have desired. Experienced gamers will certainly want to handle it all themselves, even if it does take longer.

All input is done on spreadsheet-like forms that allow the player to view the entirety of his commands prior to acting on any one order. Even then, all orders can be updated and changed at any time prior to the end of the phase. Except for the Commodore 64 version, which fails to allow for a joystick input, each version makes maximum use of available input devices to provide as seamless an interface as possible.

The graphics vary according to each system, and aren't truly state of the art on any of them. The visuals on the more powerful machines are for the most part attractive, legible and facilitate ease of play. Graphics on the lower-end computers could have been improved.

The most outstanding feature of the game is the ability to adjust nearly any of the parameters used during play. This combined with the choice of basic and advanced scenarios make each campaign of *Reach for the Stars* new and exciting. Even if players elect to install the same option settings, other variables in the simulation insure a different outcome.

The few flaws in the third edition of *Reach for the Stars* are far less important than its virtues. It builds upon its predecessors and then jumps beyond to provide for many hours of mentally stimulating entertainment.

—R. Bradley Andrews

Strategic Studies Group, 1747 Orleans Court,  
Walnut Creek, CA 94598; (415) 932-3019

## Typhoon Thompson: Search for the Sea Child

### Broderbund

Versions: Atari ST (\$34.95)

**A**bout two years ago, Dan Gorlin—still known best for the multi-system action classic, *Choplifter*—unveiled his anxiously anticipated new game, *Airheart*. The basic play mechanic featured an on-screen player/surrogate sailing away into the horizon, on what appeared to be a motorized inner tube. The effect was instantly appealing, but *Airheart* had a slow and ultimately fatal leak in its underside: It was a play mechanic in search of a game.

*Typhoon Thompson: Search for the Sea Child* is that game. It's a marvelous, totally enchanting contest that blends elements from children's storybooks, a dynamite action game and, of course, that compelling play mechanic into one of the most entertaining and innovative games of the year.

The player, cast as the heroic Typhoon Thompson, is off to the planet Aguar in the Omega sector. An intergalactic commercial transport has crashed into the oceanic surface of Aguar, and it is be-



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lieved a human child still survives. In order to rescue the child, it will be necessary to deal with the powerful Spirit Guardians from Aguar's prehistory. These Guardians strike a deal: If Thompson will retrieve four artifacts from the canny and impish sea-dwelling Sprites, they will locate the child for him. To aid Thompson in his four quests, the Guardians provide him with additional lives, magical weapons and even the ability to live underwater for extended periods of time. But his most important tools are the jet sleds that are his sole means of transportation over Aguar's watery surface.



Broderbund has pulled out all the stops to produce a masterpiece of graphics and game play with *Typhoon Thompson*, as demonstrated on the Atari ST.



The Sprites live in tiny floating villages that consist of a central, white Treasury Dome and a series of donut-like islands. On the first quest, the Guardians provide Thompson with a laser cannon, but additional weapons are provided for subsequent forays. The player must fire at the occupied islands—signified by a glittering light just behind it—in order to drive the Sprites out into the open. When they emerge, however, it is inside a flyer, a tiny flying contraption that provides the Sprite inside with both offense and defense. There are seven kinds of flyers and each has its own distinctive power.

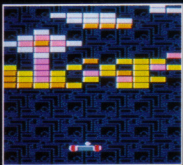
The player then must hit the flyer with the laser cannon. This destroys the flyer and leaves the Sprite within, lying stunned on the watery surface. Thompson must then sled in close and scoop up the Sprite before it regains its senses and heads back to an island, where it can jump in another flyer, and continue the battle. If Thompson captures all the Sprites at a given village, the local head Sprite sticks his tiny head up from inside the Treasury Dome and surveys the scene. He soon realizes what has happened and a trade takes place: the captured Sprites for one of the artifacts. The transaction completed, Typhoon strikes the magical artifact back to the Guardians, who prepare him for the next and more challenging quest.

*Typhoon Thompson* is a pure delight. The graphics are phenomenal; the mouse control feels completely natural; and the game itself is a joy to play. There is literally nothing wrong with this game, and I can't imagine anyone not being completely enchanted by it. There's an old axiom that goes: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Dan Gorlin Productions tried *Airheart* again and, boy, did they ever get it right the second time! 🎮 —Arnie Katz and Bill Kunkel

Broderbund, 17 Paul Drive,  
San Rafael, CA 94903-2101; (415) 492-3200

## ARKANOID

(continued from page 57)



### Round 35

This is the last round before we face the evil Doh, and again you can take it easy. The way that the gold blocks are situated will keep the ball in action, so putting it up top won't be as bad as previous levels. In fact, it's easier for you to let the game do the work, seeing that you can poke a hole in the lower bricks, place the ball above; and the action of the ball will chip away from the top down.



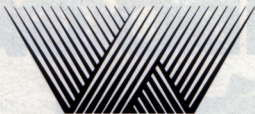
### Round 36

You've made it to the confrontation with the fortress Doh. Frequently, Doh will toss lethal bolts that head toward where you are located at the time. The best way to avoid them is to hover at the opposite wall from where you are going to receive the ball, which serves to draw the bolts away you are going to play. Also, getting the ball to travel at a steep angle will strike Doh more frequently. Even if you succeed, the final screen portends more to come.

### General Hints

- As always, the game's design is to get you to lose as soon as it can; your strategy should be to stay alive as long as you can. For this reason, don't try anything too dangerous, such as going for a capsule when the ball is dropping at the other side of the screen. *Always* go for the safest move.
- Generally, keeping the ball from going up to the top of the screen until later in the level will keep things from speeding up too quickly. Certain levels go against this advice, and we've noted those.
- The Catch capsule is much more useful than you'd expect. Seeing that some of the screens require precision angling, grabbing the ball with a sticky paddle lets you bring the ball to a specific location for release.
- My vote for the least productive capsule is Dispersion, which divides the ball into three projectiles. The first negative is that no other capsules will be released while you have multiple balls. Secondly, the ball speed will increase much quicker than normal, leaving you in a worse situation as far as ball control goes. Lastly, it's hard to decide which of the three balls to concentrate on with the paddle. The best choice is to pick one to keep your eye on (unless you have slowed the action) and ignore the others. Trying to keep all three in play will result in having *none* in play. The only time Dispersion is helpful is if the ball is trapped in a thin corridor or when there are one or two straggling bricks that you are having trouble getting. 🎮





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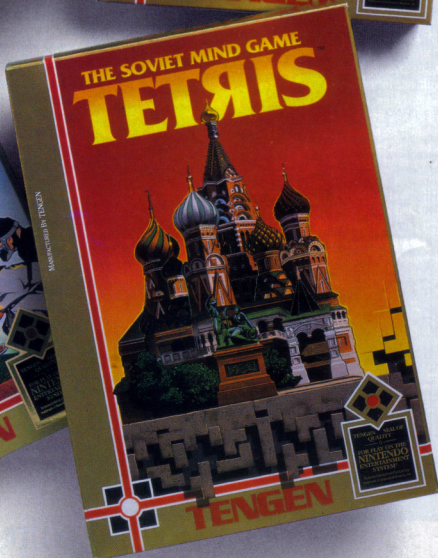
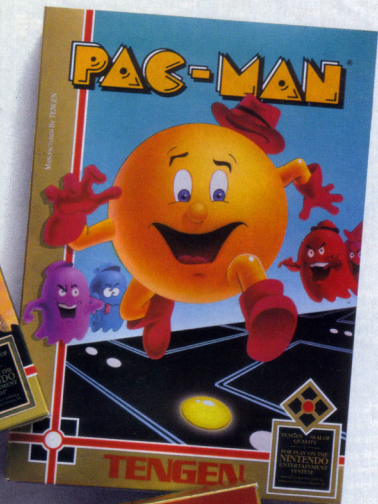
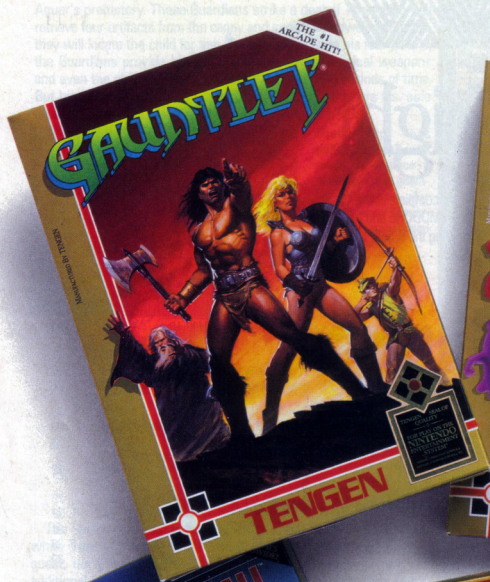
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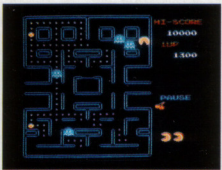
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