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Video Games & Computer Entertainment

U.S.A. \$3.50
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April 1991

**Can Coin-Op
Laser-Disc
Games
Return From
the Dead?**

MAPS AND TIPS:

**Konami's
Castlevania III
Part I**



**NEC's
Veiges Tactical
Gladiator,
Part II**



**SEGA
HOLDS A
VIDEO-GAME
CONTEST IN
HAWAII**

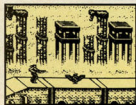
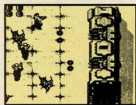
NINTENDO
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Super NES—VG&CE
Gives a Sneak Peek at
What's in Store for Us!



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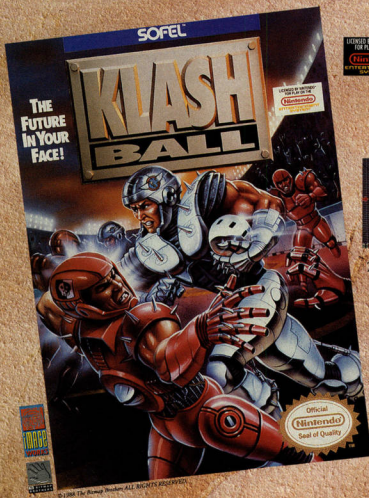
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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: For the past eight months the U.S. has been awaiting the release of the Nintendo Super Famicom. Turn to page 36 for the first installment of our sneak preview.

Photography: Garry Brod
Cover Art: Alan Hunter

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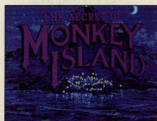


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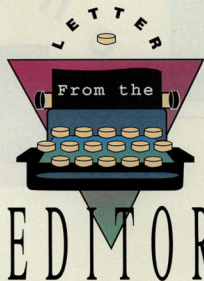
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Recently, our mail, phone calls and correspondence over the "World of Video Games" on the Delphi on-line service have brought some strong comments on the opinions stated in our review sections. Though they are certainly in the minority, it appears that some of our readers occasionally disagree with the stated conclusions our writers come up with.

"Different strokes for different folks."

The important thing to remember is that, while our reviewers are highly qualified both as gamers and writers, their scribbles are simply *opinion*, not the gospel. Indeed, reviewers try to pass on some personal viewpoints on a game, but primarily they report the foundation of a game—sports simulator, arcade, adventure, role-playing, etc.—so the reader can be a more informed video-game buyer.

"One man's ceiling is another man's floor."

In the same sense, no one should use one person's feelings on any product as the end-all in advice, rather, one should take the espousings of our writers as a guideline in purchasing software. For example, I love to watch Siskel and Ebert have at each other, but they certainly don't agree on everything—if anything at all—even though they are at the head of their profession.

What I acquire by watching Siskel and Ebert is an estimate of what a movie is about, details of who stars

in it and the duo's view of the performances and quality of the filmmaking. Moreover, the film clips they show help provide additional details through small samples of scenes.

"To each his own."

Relating this to VG&CE's reviews, I hope you similarly get an idea of what a game is about and how it looks and plays on-screen (through both descriptions and screen shots)

and learn from generalized references to high and low points from the reviewer's perspective.

Of course, I'd be silly to say that you shouldn't pay heed to what a reviewer says, especially because

his or her views can provide wonderful insight into a product not yet on the market. What you have to keep in mind is that if you ask ten people to rate a game, it's likely you'll get ten different scores.

The bottom line is, read our reviews carefully, but also look between the lines a little to see what you can get out of them. Also, if you get a chance, check out a game before you buy; there are some stores—sadly, not enough of them—that allow you to take a test drive. And don't hesitate to tell us what you think.

On a sad note, Lee Pappas, who started VG&CE and TurboPlay, has left us to start his own company. His contributions to our publications will be dearly missed. Good luck, Lee.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor



KABUKI QUANTUM FIGHTER



■ The setting—Earth, the future. ■ The defense computer protecting the entire planet has been invaded by a constantly mutating, evolving virus. ■ One lone volunteer has the courage to face the virus on its own ground. ■ Converted to raw data and transferred into the circuits of the computer, the molecular structure of this brave warrior is transformed by the as-yet untested Image Transfer System. ■ Into the circuits of the computer steps an unlikely hero—the Quantum Fighter! ■ Six levels of challenging action, unequalled game control, and a surprising arsenal of weapons!



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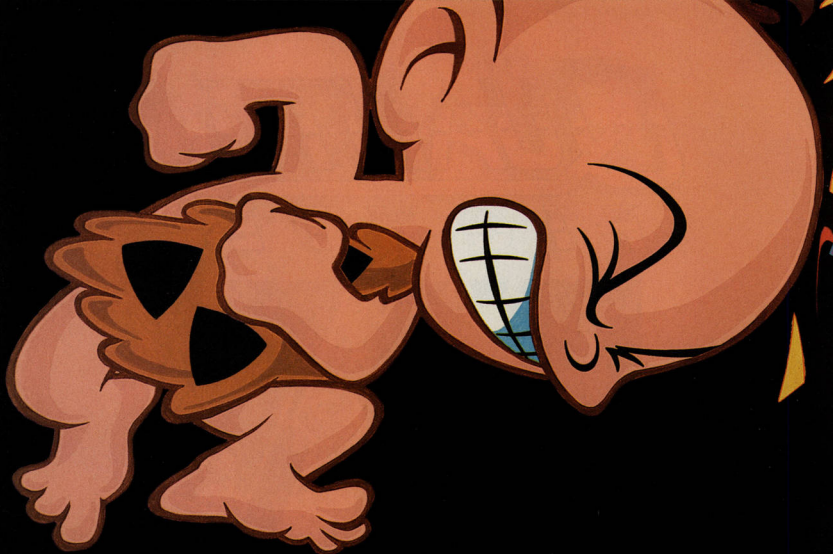
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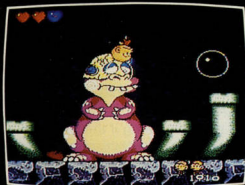
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ADVENTURE



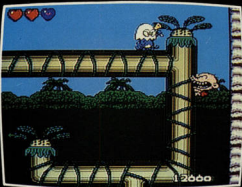
As Bonk, you must battle Huey, the first Boss. Huey is hypnotized, so he forgets he's really your friend. Just keep bonking him on the head to jog his memory.

Look for more lives inside the dinosaur. Also remember to check every cave entrance and bonk all walls to find secret bonuses.

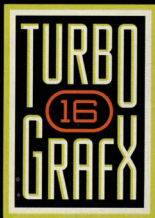


Meat helps Bonk get fired up to beat the bad guys. Like all fast food, you never know when you'll come across it, so keep your eyes peeled.

A most heinous boss, Tractor Head, has a deadly beanball fight with Bonk. You can beat him, just use your head.



Sometimes Bonk needs to climb to get where he's going. Since they hadn't invented the ladder in 10,000 B.C., he uses his teeth.

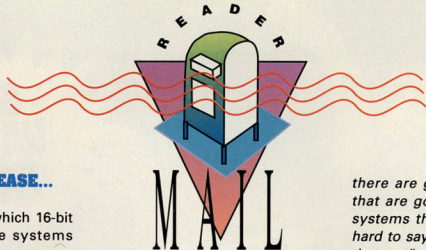


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THE ENVELOPE PLEASE...

Dear VG&CE:

I would like to know which 16-bit machine has sold more systems around the world, because my friend, who used to live in Japan, told me that more 16-bit players have the TG-16 than the Sega Genesis. I would like VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT to answer this question.

Daniel Carias
Compton, California

Good question, Daniel. According to our sources, the Genesis holds a slight lead over the TurboGrafx-16 in the U.S., but the TG-16 caught up some this past summer. We understand that worldwide the PC Engine (the Japanese version of the TG-16) holds a substantial lead over the Mega Drive (the name for the Genesis in Japan). Hope that helps.

HARDWARE WARS CONTINUED

Dear VG&CE:

I want to talk about NEC. I am 15 years old, and I have a TurboGrafx-16. When I bought the TG-16, I expected fun games and great graphics. I knew that the TG-16 had better graphics than the Genesis,

but then I realized that the Genesis has more fun games than the TG-16. What kind of TG-16 owner would spend \$45 on games like *Pac-Land*, *Cratermaze*, *MotoRader*, *J.J.* and *Jeff*, *Fantasy Zone* and *Deep Blue*?

On the other hand, Genesis has games like *Strider*, *Golden Axe*, *Sword of Vermilion*, *Phantasy Star II*, *Super Hydlide*, *Populous*, *Revenge of Shinobi* and *Lakers Vs. Celtics*. And almost all the fun games for the TG-16 are on CD. Now try to tell me that *Legendary Axe* is better than *Golden Axe*.

Also, there are a lot of people out there who cannot afford the CD-ROM for the TG-16. People who can afford it realize that the price of NEC's CD-ROM plus one CD game costs about \$475. For that price, you can buy up to eight regular TurboChip games.

—Michael Perelman
New York, New York

Thanks for your letter, Michael, but I think you'll get an argument from many TG-16 owners. Indeed,

there are games on both systems that are good and games on both systems that are bad. It would be hard to say that Genesis has games that are "more fun."

For instance, on the TurboGrafx-16, *Blazing Lazers* is a big favorite, as has been *Bonk's Adventure*. On the Genesis, *Phantasy Star II* is still popular, as is *Pat Riley Basketball*. These are just a few of the games that owners of these two systems like, but it's unfair to say that one is better, because it's a matter of personal preference and the games you want to play.

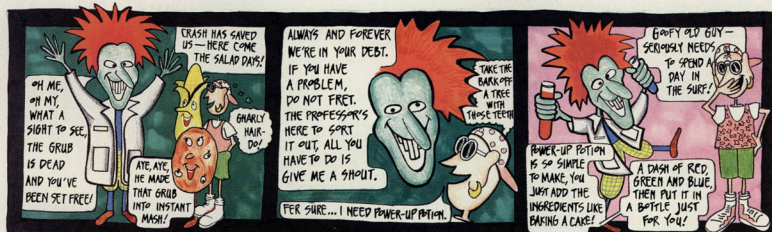
Finally, we picked *Legendary Axe* as the best video game of 1989 because of its components, depth and quality of challenge. We would say that *Legendary Axe* features a little more game play than *Golden Axe*.

THE BIGGER. THE BETTER

Dear VG&CE:

I was wondering if the people that

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review games are part of your staff or not. If so, are these people adults or teenagers? The reason I am asking is because if these people are adults, they don't feel the same about video games as teenagers like myself. I think that teenagers that read your magazine would like to have a fellow teenager write reviews of some of the games.

I own a TurboGrafx-16, and, if at all possible, I would like to become a part of the reviewing staff. I am 14 and I love to play video games. I even placed third in the Michigan Nintendo World Championships. If I was a part of your staff, I would not disappoint you.

Thank you for your time.

Matt Kusky
Clarkston, Michigan

The people who review games in VG&CE are, in most cases, freelance writers. They aren't necessarily part of the office staff, but still are considered part of the VG&CE staff because of their contributions.

As for joining the staff as a reviewer—and this goes for everyone reading this—the reviews are a small part of the magazine. We have an adequate number of reviewers to cover the demand at the present, which makes it a hard section to break into. On the other hand, we always welcome writers to send in samples of their work so we can consider them for future needs in the magazine.

Finally, as to your question of whether our reviewers are adults or teenagers: If you can't tell how old they are, we certainly won't give

their ages away. Call it an industry secret. Oh, and congratulations on your standings in your local contest.

HE LIKES TAKING TESTS?

Dear VG&CE:

I would like to become a beta tester. Just in case you don't know what that is, my dad says it is when a company sends you one of their products to get your opinion.

I was wondering if (and hoping that) you could enlist me as a beta tester for your magazine or refer me to a company like Nintendo. I have a varied opinion about everything in the video-game world, and I'm happy to be a part of it.

My references are simple: I'm 12, I average 90% at a Grade 8 level and I am tutored, so I do have a lot of spare time. I enjoy computers beyond games alone, like using databases and word processing.

Luke Sather
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

Breaking into the exciting world of beta testing is not that easy. In many cases, companies employ in-house testers because it's easier to control the product that is being verified. There have been many instances of programs being released to the pirate market by dishonest testers. Though that's harder to do with a video-game cartridge—which is more difficult to copy—lots of care is taken with who gets their hands on prototype products. In that respect, most companies have game counselors who

double as testers. Finally, most video-game development takes place in Japan, which leaves less debugging to take place in America.

If you are interested in becoming a tester, your best bet is to send your qualifications (what equipment you own, etc.) to any companies you would like to work for, then sit back and wait for the mailman to come. While I wouldn't hold my breath for a job offer, stranger things have happened. Good luck.

MOVING?

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Return To A World of Loyalty and Honor



Nobunaga's Ambition II, a best seller in Japan, is now available for IBM PC/Compatibles and Nintendo!



Opening Screen



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Battlefield



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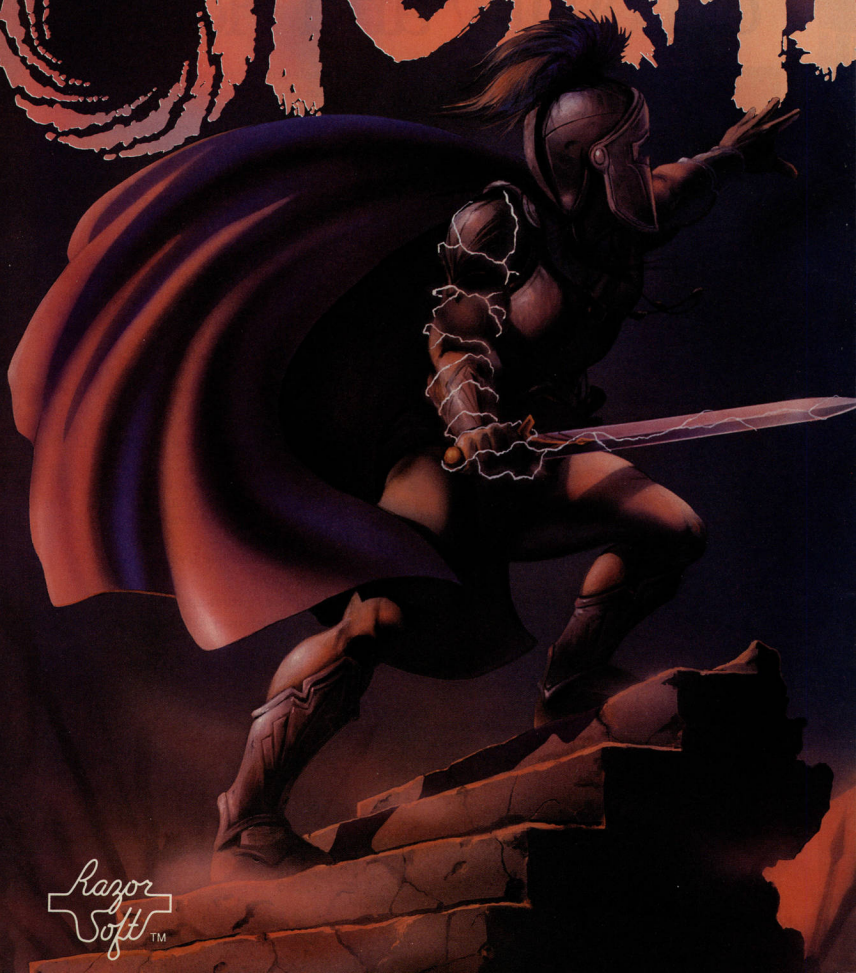


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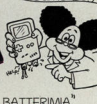
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Don't blow it!

Blow it!



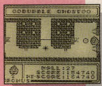
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CIRCLE #110 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed *Tip Sheet* to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

VG&CE,
9171 Wilshire Blvd.,
Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA
90210
Attn: *Tip Sheet*



by Donn Nauert

I can't pass Mission 6 in *Double Dragon II*. Can you please give me some hints?

—David Connelly
Carson, California

To get by Mission 6 takes nothing but timing. Since there isn't a time limit, you might want to watch the pattern of the steps as they appear and disappear. The timing comes into play when you make your jumps from one step to the other. You'll need to wait until the step you're on is about to disappear (count one thousand one, one thousand two), and then you should jump to the next step. Remember, on the last step you need

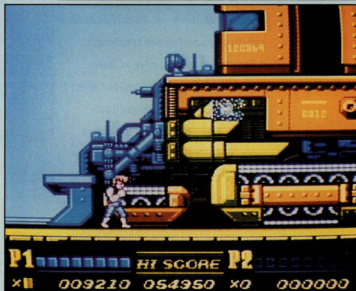
to jump at the far-right edge of the step to guarantee making it to the door.

There are also some other tips like extra continues and men you can get in the game that you might not know about. Here are some tips we've run in VG&CE in the past. To get extra continues on Missions 1 through 3, during the "Game Over" screen press up, right, down, left, A, B. For Missions 4 through 6 press up, down, left, right, A, B.

To continue on Missions 7 through 9 press, on Controller 2, A, A, B, B, down, up, right, left.

You can get seven extra men at the beginning of the game by selecting a "Two-Player Play B" game and then killing the other player. Each time you cause the other player to lose a life it adds to yours.

To get unlimited men (this is a little complicated) get to the train at the end of



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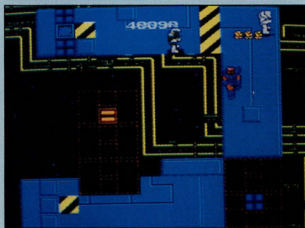
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In LIN's X-Men you can get the disk and finish a mission without defeating the enemy boss.

Mission 6 with no lives left and three bars of health left on your life meter. Now get on the first step of the train, and as the train begins to move, jump right and with one unit of life left, get hit by the top exhaust pipe (this takes great timing, that's why you want three units left so you can practice). Your character should then land on the train's smaller wheel and get pushed to the right. If you continue to hold to the right after you have jumped, your character should bounce between the small and large wheels.

Normally, when you lose a man, your character will blink six times before a new man or the "Game Over" screen appears, but since your character is bouncing between the two wheels past the sixth blink, the game will sometimes put a weird graphic symbol in place of the number of men that you have. This will give you anywhere from two, to an unlimited number of men.

I was wondering if you know any tips for a game called X-Men. I've been playing and finished the four missions, but I can't get to Magneto's lair. Any help

would be appreciated.

—Pedro Romero
Calexico,
California

To find Magneto's lair, after you have all four disks, press and hold the B, **SELECT** and up buttons and then press **START**. This will take you right to it. Here are some other tips that might help you or other readers regain any member of the X-Men who has died in a mission. If one of your two-man team dies, continue and complete the mission with the remaining man.

Once you're back in the menu, choose the practice room and run around for a few minutes. Then exit and all six heroes should be back.

You can also get the disk and finish a mission without defeating the enemy boss. Simply get to the boss, and when the timer starts, exit through the door and work your way back to the beginning. When you reach the beginning, the game should indicate that you have finished the mission. When you begin a new mission, you should have the disk for the previous mission.

I've been playing Blaster Master for several months, and I still haven't found a way to defeat the last guy. What does it take to defeat him?

—Jimmy Smith
Columbus, Ohio

To defeat the end boss, first get your

gun as powerful as possible before going into the room. When the first end boss comes out, shoot it in the head. You can shoot the balls that it spits out at you and cause them to take another path as they bounce around the room. Knowing this, a good strategy would be to concentrate on the balls and where they are as you shoot straight up.

Remember, you can hold down the A button so that you can move left, right and down without having to shoot in that direction. Then when the warrior appears, continue to hold down the A button, and fire up from the bottom of the screen. The trick here, is to move to the left and right along the bottom as quickly as you can, and try not to caught in the corners. By moving back and forth you'll prevent the warrior from getting a good shot at you with his whip. 🐾

You'll have to make your gun as powerful as possible before going into the room where the end boss is, in Blaster Master.





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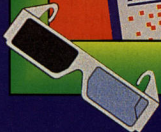
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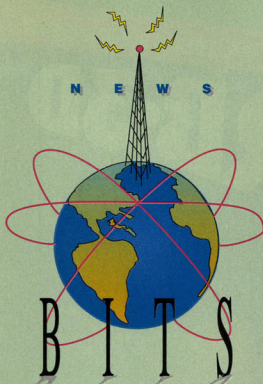
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Commodore Unveils CDTV

Commodore introduced the long-awaited CDTV (Commodore Dynamic Total Vision) and hailed the beginning of a new era in home entertainment. Commodore Chairman of the Board Irving Gould praised the machine for its icon-driven, "intuitive" interfaces and expressed his belief that CDTV will become the entertainment appliance of the '90s.

Nolan Bushnell introduced the technical specifications of CDTV. It is an Amiga 500 with a CD-ROM data capacity of 540 megabytes. It supports CD+G (CD plus graphics), regular CD and CD+MIDI. It works with both NTSC and PAL television, or with a monitor. Input and output ports work with either a home stereo, MIDI keyboard or headphones. There are also ports for a printer, personal memory card, keyboard, modem and disk drive.

The company promised 50 CD entertainment titles, which will be ready when the CDTV is launched in retail channels, and said this number does not include CD+G disks already on the music market, nor

"shovelware" (i.e., existing games bundled onto a CD disk). Prices for software are predicted to average \$50 each.

Some of the products Nolan mentioned were Groliers Encyclopedia, Disney's *Mickey's 1-2-3* (which delivers its messages in your choice of four languages), the Guinness Disk of Records and the World Vista Atlas.

Commodore promised CDTV would be available in retail channels throughout the United States and United Kingdom (in such outlets as McDuff's, Montgomery Ward and

Sports Programs Show New Polygon Techniques

Brøderbund's new sports simulations, *Sport*



Software, Etc.) by the end of the first quarter of 1991 in this country and later in other countries.

Simulated Boxing and Sport Simulated Tennis, make use of polygon shapes to create on-screen sports competitions in a technique that is thought to be the first use of polygon technology on human figures, except as background objects.

The on-screen players are created from polygon

shapes. The company first filmed real human figures executing the motions, then created "stick figures" around the pictures and used polygon-fill techniques to build up the human replicas. This produced smooth body motions that reflect real musculature and authentic movement much more realistically than bit-mapping can.

The two programs are currently in development for Brøderbund at DSI (best known for its work on *Test Drive* and *Test Drive II*.)

Nintendo Reports 1990 Sales Results

Nintendo of America revealed their 1990 sales results to attendees of the Winter Consumer Electronics Show (WCES) and expressed their faith in the future of the video-game industry. Peter Main, vice-president of marketing, said the company had a 27% increase in sales, or \$3.4 billion for the year. There were 7.2 million Nintendo Entertainment Systems sold during the year, an increase of 20% over 1989. Main said that Nintendo owns 87% of the video-game market and has a 30% penetration into

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Precision performance for Sega GENESIS 16-bit video game systems.

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Congress Approves Software-Protection Bills

The House and Senate have approved two pieces of copyright legislation designed to protect the computer-software industry, and the bills have been presented to the President for his signature. The first is the software-rental bill, which makes it illegal to rent or lend disk-based software without

permission of the copyright holder. The bill does not apply to nonprofit libraries nor nonprofit educational institutions, nor does it apply to cartridge-based software.

The second bill clarifies copyright infringement as it applies to states and state governments; specifically, it states that state government and state entities (such as universities) are subject to suit if they infringe copyrights or pirate software.

G.I. Joe Gets Big Send-Off

Taxan is spending big bucks to introduce the *G.I. Joe* video game. The company is reportedly spending a cool million in advertising for the new title, with TV ads, magazine ads, direct mail and special dealer incentives.

The new game, playable on the NES, is a three-Meg-plus MMC3 configuration,

with password capability, multiple endings, multiple quests and weapons options.

G.I. Joe has continued to be a top toy brand since its initial release as an action figure 24 years ago.

Lynx Price Slashed

Atari dropped the price for the Atari Lynx to \$99.95 in a move calculated to put the portable color-graphics video-game unit into more players' hands. In an associated announcement, the company previewed a number of new Lynx game cartridges by Atari, as well as a growing library of titles under preparation by third-party software providers.

The Lynx unit comes packed with the *California Games* cartridge for \$99.95, or comes as part of a complete user's packet available for \$149.95. The bundled Lynx comes with an AC/DC adapter, the Comm-



Link cable to connect for multi-player action, a *California Games* cartridge and the purchaser's choice (from four titles) of a second game.

Stuck in the Dark With Elvira?

Accolade can shed some light for anyone stuck in their graphic adventure *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark*. The company has completed a hint book with four parts to brighten the way.

The first part is an interview with the vampire Bob,

American homes, with 60 million players. He also revealed that Nintendo sold approximately 60 million game packs in 1990.

The company sold 3.2 million Game Boy units in 1990 and 9 million pieces of Game Boy software, numbers that equal the sales of the NES for its first two years. There are 60 titles currently available, and 80 new titles are planned for 1991 from Nintendo and licensees.

Nintendo to Introduce Super NES, Game Boy Peripheral

After months of speculation, Nintendo finally revealed its marketing plans for its new 16-bit video-game machine, dubbed the Super Famicom in Japan, where it is already available. In the U.S., the machine will be called the Super NES and will be available in retail outlets sometime during the second half of this year. According to spokesman Peter Main, it is waiting for

16-bit software to be available. The company has not yet announced its price.

Nintendo sent memos to its licensees in December of 1990 stating that it would not enforce exclusivity on the 16-bit software providers; it also dropped exclusivity requirements on the 8-bit NES. However, it will continue restrictions about the number and quality of games that any software manufacturer can produce.

The company made several other announcements, including the introduction of an adapter for the Game Boy to permit systems to be linked for four-way play. It has established 150 repair depots in the U.S. to service Nintendo products. Keeping ever busy, Nintendo plans for the NES Campus Challenge, first begun in 1990, to travel to 50 colleges this year. The company also revealed that there will be a film, *Super Mario Brothers: The Movie*, starring Danny DeVito as Mario.

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which presents hints and clues. Part 2 is a walk-through with specific solutions to the puzzles. These are in black ink overprinted with a red screen, so the hints must be read through a filter (provided with the booklet) to be visible. The third part lists all the objects and ingredients and where they can be found, and Part 4 maps the key sections of the game.

The hint book is available from Accolade for \$12.95.

Game Boy to Be Work Boy

Game Boy, Nintendo's portable video-game system, is about to get serious—serious software, that is. GameTek, Inc., has premiered informational software for Nintendo's Game Boy handheld video-game unit, the first such work-a-day software for the portable player.

The company is developing a trio of innovative products for the Game Boy under the trademark InfoGenius. The *InfoGenius SpellChecker* uses *The American Heritage Dictionary* word list to correct 70,000+ commonly misspelled words.

A series of InfoGenius language translators are planned, including French, Spanish, Italian, German and Japanese, based on Berlitz Phrase Books and Dictionaries. In addition, the company is working

on a travel guide for the Game Boy that will cover America's 20 most visited cities and include tourist information about food, lodgings, arts and entertainment and local high spots.

The new line of productivity products will be available to Game Boyers by autumn of this year, and each unit is expected to retail for \$39.95.

New Pins Feature Humor, Characters

Midway Manufacturing marked the 50th birthday of America's favorite rabbit with a pinball featuring the bad bunny and his Looney Tune friends.

Bugs Bunny's Birthday Ball uses an inverted lower playfield area, a new slant for pins. Looney Toons characters such as Wile E. Coyote, Roadrunner, Yosemite Sam, Sylvester, Tweety, Elmer Fudd and Porky Pig join Bugs Bunny to dress up the play and sound effects in a high-scoring

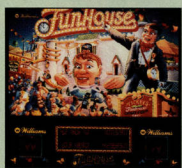


game that gives a 50-million point shot when Bugs blows out all the candles on the backboard cake.

Funhouse, Williams Electronics' latest pin, fea-

tures new technology and the first dual plungers. The game takes place in a fantasy amusement park and features Rudy, a talking head whose eyes follow the ball as it careens around the playfield.

Rudy reacts to the action, laughs at blunders and spews forth nonstop commentary on it all. Players advance the clock by hitting targets until midnight when Rudy falls asleep. His open, snoring



mouth then becomes the starting point for a three-ball play.

Top Coin-Ops of December 1990

Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
2. *Pit Fighter* by Atari
3. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
4. *G-LOC* by Sega
5. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Konami
6. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
7. *Beast Busters* by SNK
8. *Final Lap* by Atari
9. *Smash TV* by Williams
10. *Off Road* by Leland

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Final Fight* by Capcom
2. *Ninja Combat* by SNK
3. *Magic Sword* by Capcom
4. *ATAXX* by Leland
5. *Raiden* by Fabtek
6. *Violence Fight* by Taito
7. *Off Road Trak Pak* by Leland
8. *Baseball Stars* by SNK
9. *WWF Superstars* by American Technos
10. *Lightning Fighters* by Konami

Best New Videos

1. *Cyber Lip* by SNK
2. *Hit the Ice* by Williams
3. *GP Rider* by Sega

Video Company Computerizes

Acclaim Entertainment, a leading producer of top Nintendo video-game software, is branching out into computer games. Several of Acclaim's hit NES titles will be translated into



No Brain nO Gain



Had enough of ninja swordfights on Planet Zark? Wondering why it's always up to *you* to defend the universe against foreign terrorists with bad breath and giant radioactive amoebae?

Reclaim your brain! Get **Puzznic™**

— it's the fast-paced puzzle that'll give your mind a heavy duty workout.

Puzznic seems easy — move and match geometric shapes to wipe out all the puzzle pieces. Trouble is, you've got to match the shapes in just the right order — or you won't blast one puzzle and get to the next. Rack up bonus points for matching multiples — if you're really fast, you can beat the clock and start some chain reaction action. And when you finish the first **160 puzzles**, the fun's not over. You also get **Gravnic™**, the *bonus game* that lets you play against gravity.

So dump the fake stun gun. You've got a few more hours before the universe goes terminal. Pump up your brain cells with Puzznic. When you pop back into those ninja pajamas, you might just have a fighting chance.

Actual Nintendo Entertainment System® screens shown.



Don't let nasty elevator cubes squeeze you into a corner!



Pick Password to resume your game after each completed level.



Plan carefully or you'll be caught with extra shapes.

TAITO™

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CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



IBM PC format, and the initial Acclaim computer products should hit the market before Christmas 1991. The company hasn't yet decided which titles will be translated first, but an announcement will be forthcoming soon.

The manufacturer has also begun development work on software to be used with the Super NES, Nintendo's 16-bit machine, which will be introduced later this year.

Konami/Mirrorsoft in Joint Venture

Konami has entered into a joint publishing partnership with ImageWorks, the established brand from Mirrorsoft, Ltd, one of the largest publishers of home-computer entertainment in Europe. Mirrorsoft is also the leading European publisher of 16-bit PC software.

The first two titles that will be brought into the U.S. by the Konami/ImageWorks team will be *Back to the Future Part II*, for Amiga, Commodore 64 and IBM PC machines; and *Theme Park Mystery*, for Amiga and IBM PC. Europe will receive *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles*, a title now available for Amiga, Amstrad CPC, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC and Spectrum systems.

Parents' Choice Approved Video Games

Parents' Choice announced their annual list of child-approved video games, basing selections on quality, design, human values, fun and ability to hold the player's interest. The list included two titles for play on the NEC TurboGrafx-16: *Boxy Boy* and *TV Sports: Football* (both by NEC). Other titles listed

below by company are for play on Nintendo:

A Boy and His Blob (Absolute Entertainment); *Mega Man 2*, *Chip 'n' Dale Rescue Rangers* (Capcom); *Fisher-Price Perfect Fit*, *Fisher-Price I Can Remember*, *Jeopardy! Junior Edition*, *Wheel of Fortune*



Junior Edition (GameTek); *Lolo 2* (HAL America), *The Chessmaster*, *Sesame Street A-B-C* (Hi-Tech Expressions); *Bases Loaded II*, *Goal* (Jaleco); *Pictionary* (LJN); *Super Spike V-Ball*, *Super Mario Bros. 3*, *Pinbot* (Nintendo); *R.B.I. Baseball 2*, *Klax* (Tengen).

Psychosis Breaks Through on CD

The most dramatic technical achievement on view at WCES came from Psychosis. The company has developed a breakthrough software-based system that generates CD graphics. The technique is also very quick, creating its images in real time.

The *Fractal Engine* is not a game; instead it is a system that works with all existing and announced CD hardware formats, to generate game visuals using fractal and ray-trace techniques. VG&CE editors saw a demonstration that included a ray-traced space-suited figure moving across an alien terrain, as the face inside the space

helmet turned independently of the visor.

Other footage produced realistic-looking space sequences, then a skim above the surface of a planet, as the *Fractal Engine* produced complete landscapes, including mountains, meadows and rippling lakes, all taking place in real time.

Several companies are now discussing the gaming potentials of the process with Psychosis, and VG&CE will cover all developments as they occur.

MLSA's Baseball, Football Soon to Be Coin-Ops

MicroLeague Software Association announced that its hit game *MicroLeague Baseball* will soon be in the arcades. The statistical simulation is being turned into a computer cartridge for arcade play under the Quantum label. The play-for-pay machine will give three innings for a quarter.

In another MicroLeague-related announcement, the company revealed that it is also developing a cartridge based on *MicroLeague Football* for the Quantum cabinet.

Electronic Arts Announces Sales

According to figures released by EA, the company has sold 15 million games since its first product release in May 1983. (That game was *Pinball Construction Set*, which sold 250,000+.)

In addition to that first product, eight other EA entertainments are certified "platinum" (the Software Publishers Association designation for games that have sold 250,000 copies or more). The big sellers are: *Chuck Yeager AFT*, *The*

Bard's Tale, *Dr. J and Larry Bird Go One-on-One*, *Music Construction Set*, *Populous*, *Skyfox*, *Marble Madness* and *Starflight*.

Logitech Breeds New Kind of Mouse

Logitech has a new line of controllers, dubbed the MouseMan family of input devices. The company is readying mouse devices specifically designed for either left- or right-handed users. Later the line will expand to accommodate either large or small hands. Logitech is also introducing a radio-controlled remote mouse.

The new control device was particularly designed with ergonomics in mind. It is asymmetrically shaped and slanted left or right. According to the design team that perfected the new mouse, the angle should significantly reduce



hand strain. It uses optomechanical tracking systems (an LED on one side emits light and a phototransistor on the other side translates the signals into something the computer understands).

The new remote cordless mouse doesn't require the user to be in direct line of sight for the controller to work. It can be six feet away from the receiver, which has five feet of cord, for a total possible of 11 feet from the microprocessor.

The new control devices should be available in retail outlets by the second quarter of 1991. 🐭

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Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly and 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
C = "C" button

TV SPORTS: FOOTBALL

CINEMAWARE FOR THE TG-16



Select "Clipboard" and then examine teams. On the team-select stage, press: Button II, D, U, D, U, D, U, U, U, Button II and then select a team. Every player should have a rating of 12 on that team.

In either the "Clipboard" or "Exhibition" games you can press and hold Button II and then press **SELECT** to enter the password screen. Enter TENMINUTES for ten minute quarters; FIVEMINUTES for five minute quarters; SUPERSPEED for 12 on speed; SUPERHANDS for 12 on hands; SUPERSTRENGTH for 12 on strength; and SUPERAGILITY for 12 on agility.

First select "Exhibition." During the team select press and hold Button II, and then press **SELECT** to enter the password screen. Type in ULTIMATEWIZ to start with 28 points in the first quarter; THECOOKER to prevent the other team from tackling your fullback; GOLDIELOCK for no blocked or intercepted passes; and CORNBREAD to give the opposing team a fifty-fifty chance of fumbling the ball on each play on offense.

Mike Kilcullen of Schenectady, New York, sent in this code for the championship game between the Tidal Waves and the Sharks, BCSVMDPDJAZRT. Thanks, Mike.

Mega Man 3

CAPCOM FOR THE NES



Here's the best order to defeat the bosses. Start with Top Man, then Shadow Man, Gemini Man, Spark Man, Needle Man, Snake Man, Magnet Man and, finally, Hard Man. Defeat each boss with the former one's weapon, except Spark Man: Use the shadow blades on him.

SOUND TEST

- 0 EXIT
- 1 TITLE DEMO
- 2 CHAMPION
- 3 VICTORY
- 4 LAST
- 5 SELECT
- 6 DEFEAT
- 7 OPENING
- 8 SOUND EFFECT

PUSH START BUTTON

ONE PLAYER

OR

PLAYER1 VS PLAYER2

OR

SPECTATOR MODE

Buster Douglas Knockout Boxing

SEGA FOR THE GENESIS



Alex Rodriguez of Queens Village, New York, has found a way to bring up a sound test for this game. On the game-mode screen, press **START** on Controller 2. To hear the sound, push D to select the one you want. Then push A to begin the sound and B to end. Nice find, Alex.

continued on page 32

THE SIMPSONS™ *BART VS. THE SPACE MUTANTS*



Hello, fellow humans!
Bartholomew J. Simpson
here, with a big secret:

Space mutants are invading Springfield!

Yours truly is the only one who can see 'em—so it's
up to me to stop 'em. I've gotta spraypaint things, get radical on my skateboard, and in general
behave like a nuisance, man. It's a good thing I've got the rest of the Simpsons to help me out.

So if you're a decent person, a patriot, save the Earth! *Buy this game!*



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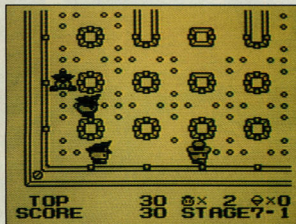
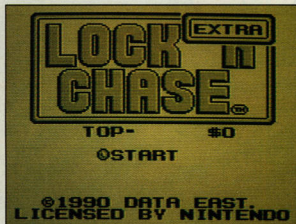
CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Thunder Force III

TECHNOSOFT FOR THE GENESIS



Emarit Ranu of Ft. Collins, Colorado, found that if you have the Arcade Power Stick and a lot of different weapons, you can set Button C on rapid fire while shooting with Button B, allowing you to shoot all available weapons at once. Thanks for the great Easter egg, Emarit.



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: Fall of the Foot Clan

ULTRA FOR THE GAMEBOY



With any turtle at any time during the game (even when fighting the bosses), when your energy is low, press the **START** button to pause. Then press U, U, D, D, L, R, L, R, B, A and then **START** to unpause. Your energy should be at full again. Thanks go to Jimmy Cheng of Westminster, California, for this Easter egg.

Lock 'n' Chase

DATA EAST FOR THE GAMEBOY



When the title screen appears, press A, A, B, B, A, B, B to start on level 7-1. You'll know the egg worked if the word "Extra" appears in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. This Easter egg is courtesy of Ryan Sullivan of Seaside, California. Thanks, Ryan.

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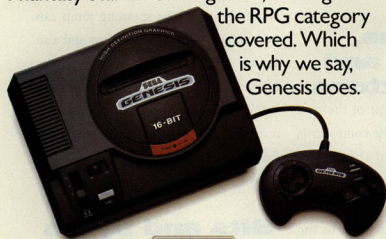
IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

Fatal Labyrinth is fresh. Because you create the journey. And no two journeys are the same. Travel through 30 levels of ever-changing mazes, with new rooms and hallways revealing themselves at every turn. No hundred-page hint-books here. You're on your own.

Marauding ghouls have raided the nearby village and stolen the Holy Goblet, delivering it to the High Tower where the Dragon rules. With the goblet in his vile talons, soon darkness will consume the world.

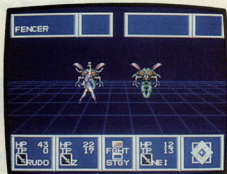
As Trykaar, you will bravely enter Dragonia Castle and employ a vast array of powerful weapons and mysterious magic items, discovering their functions and uses as you journey headlong into the clutches of the Dragon's minions.

Whether you're new to dungeon travel or a hardened veteran, Fatal Labyrinth will hold surprises and high adventure unlike any other fantasy game. Every time you play, it's like a new, different game. And with Phantasy Star II,[™] Sword of Vermilion,[™] and Phantasy Star III[™] coming soon, we've got the RPG category covered. Which is why we say, Genesis does.



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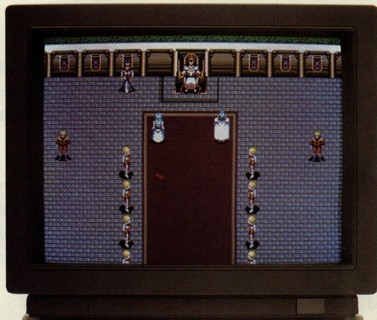
PHANTASY STAR II:

With 19 multi-level maze dungeons and 9 separate cities to explore, you'll solve twisted riddles and fight hundreds of Biomons that will hopefully lead you to your goal. Awarded "1990 Best Video Game of the Year" by Video Games & Computer Entertainment.



SWORD OF VERMILION:

Awarded "Best Genesis Fantasy Role Playing Game" by Game Players Magazine. Sword of Vermilion combines the classic aspects of RPG with an innovative sidescroll combat system and Genesis sound and graphics.



PHANTASY STAR III:

The most asked about Sega sequel from consumers nationwide. 7 unique journeys and 4 different endings. There are 9 worlds and moons to explore with characters that age, marry, grow old and die. Available in June.



It seems that for the past eight months the gaming world has been awaiting the release of the Nintendo Super Famicom (SF), Nintendo's entry into the "next generation" of video games. The unit was released at last in Japan this past November, along with *Super Mario World* (or, as it's commonly known, *Super Mario 4*), *Pilot Wings* and *F-Zero*.

On the first day the unit was released, Nintendo sold all 400,000 decks produced; two weeks later another 400,000 were sold in one day. Now it looks like the sales since Christmas have passed the 1.5-million mark and will exceed 3 million by the end of this year. In comparison, this is almost twice the combined U.S. sales of NEC and Sega's respective 16-bit machines.

At the Winter CES (Consumer Electronics Show) in January, Nintendo finally announced plans to release a Super NES (the U.S. version of the SF) this September. Is this the fantastic dream machine that everyone says it is? Are the graphics and sounds really better than Sega's and NEC's consoles? What would cause 1.5-million Japanese kids to run out and buy a new system with only three games available? For the answers to

these and many other questions, you must read on!

Buttons, Buttons and More Buttons

The most noticeable part of the new system is the controller. The controller is a very important part of the system because the number of buttons determines the complexity of the game play and the creative freedom given to the designer. At first glance the control pad for the SF looks like a slightly rounded NES controller, but look closely and you will see four main control buttons

instead of the NES' two. Arranged in a diamond pattern, the buttons are close and easy to reach. Located on the top of the controller are two other buttons, labeled "L" and "R," bringing the total to eight including **START** and **SELECT**. (That's twice as many as the Genesis, for those who thought *that* controller was overloaded.)

Are all these buttons necessary you ask? Well, in *Mario 4*, all eight of the buttons are used. The "Y" and the "B" buttons replace the "A" and "B" in the NES version of the game. "Y" causes Mario to run faster and jump higher, and "B" is the standard jump. Additionally, the "A" button causes Mario to perform a spinning jump. The spinning jump can make Mario break blocks below and also squash enemies. What's the importance of the "L" and "R" buttons, you ask? Interestingly enough, they cause the screen to shift to the right or left so you can see ahead or behind.

Bits and Bytes

Let's get technical for a second. The SF utilizes a 65816 processor, which is essentially a 16-bit version of the common 6502 found in today's C-64 and

NES. The processor runs at a maximum clock speed of 3.58 MHz—not 14 MHz, as some others have stated. Though the clock speed is slower than the Genesis, the number of instructions the SF can process is higher than the Genesis, which results in smooth animations, sounds and overall performance. The processor of the SF is also helped along by a custom graphics processor with more power than most CPUs.

The SF has seven different graphics modes with resolutions up to 512 x 448. In all of those modes, the screen can be scrolled horizontally and vertically, and

The workhorse behind the SF is a 65816 processor, which is essentially a 16-bit version of the common 6502 found in many popular brands of home computers.

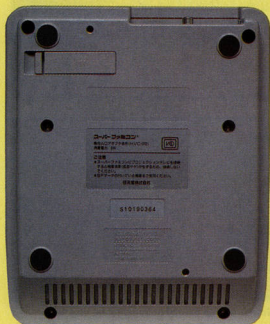


a mosaic or pixel block effect can be applied. Programmers can really have fun by laying screens on top of each other for more colors and parallax scrolling, but the real magic of the SF comes out when you use "Graphics

Mode 7." When you use this mode, the SF has the ability to enlarge, reduce and/or rotate the graphics quickly. Trust me, this is cool.

The SF can display 32,000 colors, though not all at once. In most modes the colors on the screen are determined by palettes that the programmer defines. Every screen has eight palettes of up to 16 colors; the first color is always the background color, so that makes 121 simultaneous displayable colors. In some modes, such as the previously mentioned Mode 7, this limit can be pushed up to 256. When you consider that the NES can only display 13 colors, 256 is fantastic!

What really makes the system great is the number of sprites that can be displayed. As you may know, a sprite is an object that is moved around on the screen, whether it's a character, flickering flame or just about anything that moves or is animated in a game. Needless to say, the more sprites the



The Super Famicom can support up to seven different graphics modes, with a maximum resolution of 512 x 448.



better, which means you can have more action on-screen without the flickering that hindered the older machines.

Well, the SF comes in second (next to the 380 for the Neo•Geo) for the most sprites of any game system, with a maximum of 128 sprites on the screen. Those sprites can be any size, from 8 x 8 to a huge 64 x 64 pixels. Not only that, but the SF can display up to 32 sprites on one scan line without flicker, which means you can draw a line of sprites from the left side of the screen to the right side without running out. On the NES, this is impossible, since you can only draw eight sprites across the screen.

What are great graphics without great sound? Well, don't worry—there's plenty of that here. The SF features a Sony sound chip with an 8-bit CPU and a DSP (digital signal processor) built-in. What this means is full stereo sound with eight "voices" or sounds played at once. Not only that, but there is an echo effect that sounds great.

Software

What about games? I had a chance to take a look at the three games that were released by Nintendo at the same time the system hit the Japanese shelves, *Super Mario World*, *Pilot Wings* and *F-Zero*.

Super Mario World (SMB 4)

By far the best installment in the Mario saga. Don't worry—this is still the Mario-type game we all love, but the improvements just keep coming. Similar to SMB 3, Mario starts out on a large map and can walk to the next world you wish to tackle. Mario still gets larger with mushrooms, invincibility

with stars and can throw fireballs with the flower, but now the feather will give him a cape to fly in a whole new way. Not only can Mario fly up but he can also swoop down into a earth-shattering nose dive, dip back into smooth flight or slide to a stop on his face. Mario is also helped along the way by his new dinosaur friends, who will eat just about anything, especially turtles. The animations in *SMB 4*, particularly the goofy-looking, loping dinosaur, are simply hysterical.

Mario has to run and fly through eight new worlds, where he must destroy the seven castles, finishing each level off with a Koopa castle, which is somewhat of a maze. Have faith in the fact that there are more bonus worlds and warps than any other game before: Winning the game means reaching all 96 goals.

While the end of every level is a goal, goals include keys with keyholes and hidden second endings to some rounds. The game can be won with 20 or so of the goals completed, but only the best player will be able to go back and find

all of the goals he missed. In order to find all 96 goals you will have to go to every red spot on the main map and look for a second ending. Some will be easy to find; others, like the "secret star world," are ridiculously hard.

This game has some of the richest graphics ever seen on a home video game, including nicely animated backgrounds and two or three levels of parallax scrolling. I was constantly amazed by the new monsters that would pop up on each new level.

Between the music and the sound effects, the audio section rates an A+. Hook this game up to a stereo, and the sounds will constantly amaze you. The moderate difficulty kept me playing for weeks and loving every minute. Rating: Totally rad.

Pilot Wings

Flight simulator fans rejoice—that's flight simulator, not combat simulator—



Super Mario World proves to be the best installment in the Mario saga, containing rich graphics and several levels of parallax scrolling.

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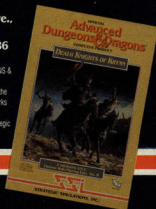
MIAMI SCREAMS IN DESPAIR AS SHE
RECOGNIZES THE GROSS REMAINS OF
HER DEAD LOVER. SHE KNEW KENNETH
HIS SWORD AS HIS DEATH DRAGON SHOOTS
TOWARD THE SCATTERING CROWD.



NAME
MATTHEW
THOMAS
LEDERER
SHANE
PHILIPPE

AC HP
100 100
100 100
100 100
100 100
100 100

LORD SOTH TURNS TO YOU BEFORE MOUNTING
HIS NIGHTMARE. WITH MIGHTY HANDS
OUTSTRETCHED TODAY, I SHALL MAKE AN
UNWINNING GUN. TREASURE YOUR FETTERED
VICTIMS, IT WILL NOT BE LONG LIVED.



because your time has come. *Pilot Wings* has no guns or enemy planes. Instead, it is a pure test of landing and flying abilities. Start on Level 1 with the biplane and a parachute, and advance your way through the levels to use the hang glider, jet pack and the helicopter.

Each level has between two and five events that are a mix of the above vehicles. Points are awarded for flying through and touching green targets, landing precision, landing difficulty and other goals. With the hang glider, for example, you must hit a thermal (an area of warm air rising off the ground, which gives a glider lift) and reach an altitude of

500 feet. If all your events total a certain score, you are given the next license class and a password to continue. Each level gets progressively harder and requires you to hit a higher score on each event.



In *F-Zero*, the gamer can pilot one of four hovercraft through five grueling races on four circuits.


ercraft through five grueling races on four circuits. The game features simple controls: jets on, rear thrusters, steering, and for the really hard turns you can use the "L" and "R" buttons to lean the craft into the turns. Watch out for ramps and the turbo spots that boost your speed. In addition, every lap you survive awards one turbo boost to be used at your discretion. It's a good idea to use the turbo on the straightaways, though, or else you'll end up bonking into the walls that line the course.

This isn't any ordinary driving game, however. Instead of a pit stop, there is an "on-the-fly" fuel area.

This game uses the SF's hardware scaling extensively and, thus, is very stunning visually. The animation is first-rate, and you'll find yourself gripping the controller every time you land the biplane too hard. This is one fun game, and please, don't forget to open your parachute.

F-Zero

If you like driving games, this is probably one of the fastest, most playable games since *Super Monaco GP*. In *F-Zero*, you pilot one of four hov-

Driving through this striped lane prompts a fuel ship to fly over and gas you up as long as you stay there. This is like a 3-D version of *R.C. Pro-Am* with all the ramps and obstacles. Once again, the look of the graphics are fantastic, and the sound just has to be seen to be heard. Man, this is one intense game. 

IN THE JUNE 1991 VG&CE: Revo will delve into more of the Japanese SF titles, current and upcoming, as well as further descriptions of the technical aspects of the Super Famicom.

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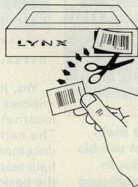
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CIRCLE #118 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

VIDEO GAMES REVIEWS

Totally Rad

JALECO

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

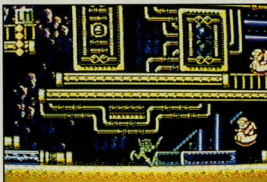
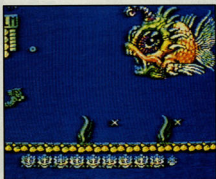
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

It's up to you, the reader, to decide if *Totally Rad* is a stupid name or a clever one. It doesn't really tell you anything about the game, but if you read between the lines, it tells you everything you need to know.

Totally Rad is another "guy game"; your character is a guy who runs from Point A to Point B shooting nasties and chasing after his kidnapped girlfriend, the "righteous babe" Allison. (Don't blame me, that's how the instruction manual describes her—and she is pretty cute for a video-game character.) The guy's name is Jake, and he's been trained in the ways of magic by a strange, grinning geezer called Zebediah. With his skills, Jake can fire energy blasts from his hands, cast spells and transform into three different half-human creatures.

Good-looking graphics make Jake's adventure a pleasant one featuring rich, brilliant colors. Parts of the scenery scroll by at different speeds in some areas; not with the pronounced depth you see in the arcades, but using enough to trick your eye with a nice pseudo-3-D effect. The "boss" characters are appropriately heinous. Rubyllia (at the end of Act 1) looks like Mr. Peanut, but top hat and cane have been replaced by fangs, claws, jackboots, an earring and a purple mohawk. Okay, maybe he doesn't look like Mr. Peanut.

Jake looks a lot like Ted "Theodore" Logan of *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*, and he definitely sounds like the vapid Ted when he opens his mouth. But his magical powers make him a formidable hero, and the ability to change his shape can be used to great advantage in many situations. Jake's animalistic alter egos look like minor league superheroes taking their shot at the big time: the "eagle" spell changes Jake into a winged warrior in blue; the "fish" spell makes him a web-



In *Totally Rad*, the main character, Jake, must use his shape-shifting abilities in order to save the "righteous babe" Allison.

footed wonder with green gills; and the "lion" spell lets him leap through the air as a whirling ball that can't be harmed (though this spell limits your attacking power to close-range encounters).

The biggest problem with *Totally Rad* is the hackneyed dialogue that appears on the screen during the intermissions. The instruction manual is similarly infested; words like "bodacious" and "gagsome" are sprinkled liberally throughout the text. Frankly, it's hard to believe that the storyline of the game was intended to be presented this way. When Jake delivers a line like "Who were those dweebs, anyway?" with a straight face, it looks like a badly dubbed karate movie.

The game also refers to you as "dude" on occasion, effectively turning off half of its potential playing audience (or more, if you happen to be insulted by this type of jargon.) I'm sure there are kids who share Jake's vocabulary, and *Totally Rad* will appeal to those who keep up with the latest catch phrases—which is why the game will seem so dated in only a year or two.

There's nothing unusual here; just an entertaining game that somehow manages to shine through the distracting veil of "gnarly" vernacular.

—Chris Bieniek

Jaleco USA Inc.
310 Era Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
(708) 480-1811

The Adventures of Lolo III

HAL AMERICA

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (NA)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Yes, it seems that once again, Lolo and Princess Lala are here again in yet another incarnation, *The Adventures of Lolo III*. The early copy I received came without documentation (which is fortunate if you hate reading through those storylines), but the basic story seems to run this way. An evil "it" has invaded the land and turned all the inhabitants of Princess Lala's kingdom to stone. Lolo and Lala happened to be hanging out at a nearby stream and



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CIRCLE #119 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

were thus spared the attack. They appeared just in time to hear evil laughter as the creature made its escape.

Other than that, everything about *Lolo III* should be very familiar to anyone who has experienced the first two games. This one is divided into nine levels, each with at least six areas in it; a few special cases have more. In some of the levels, there are also boss creatures to be defeated. The regular areas are pretty much the same as in the older versions.

Your challenge? You must gather up all of the hearts inside the room that you are in, which in turn will open a chest, exposing an item that will destroy all the monsters in the room and allow you to escape into the next. Sound simple? Well, it can be early on, or if you know the correct procedure. The hard part comes in dealing with the aforementioned monsters. Some of them fire projectiles, so you have to move objects to block their path. Others have to be killed to clear the way for the heart collection. You must often encase a monster in an egg of sorts, then push it around in the same manner as the stone blocks and use it to shield yourself from spine-spitting trees. Fire-breathing lizards can heat things up as well, although the fireballs can be dodged, unlike the spines. Sometimes you must push an egg into water and ride it like a raft in order to reach a heart.

Strategy, logical thought, patience and experimentation are all required assets for progressing from stage to stage. Occasionally special power-up hearts are available that will enable you to place a span of bridge across a section of water, change the direction of certain one-way passageways or even crush a boulder that is blocking your path.

Lolo III is primarily a puzzle/thought/strategy type of contest and can be frustrating (slight understatement there!) but also rewarding once an area is finally conquered. While not graphically dependent, all the graphics are good. The music is okay for a while, but it can become a bit bothersome after a while. I guess that's what the volume control is for!

Anyone who enjoyed the first two *Lolos* will definitely want to check out this third installment. There is plenty of challenge and a good solid game contained within *Lolo III*.

—Brent Walker

HAL America
7873 S.W. Cirrus Drive, 2F-
Beaverton, OR 97005
(503) 644-3009



Lolo III, by HAL America, follows in the tradition of its predecessors while providing a high degree of playability.

Basewars

ULTRA

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$53.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

You're not going to find "cybersport" in any dictionary for at least the next few decades. But if robotics keep progressing, perhaps someday there will be real cybersports (sporting matches played out entirely by robots), and the arcades of the early '90s will have been responsible for their existence.

The theme has recently exploded onto the video game scene, and Ultra's *Basewars*, a surprisingly playable cyberbaseball simulator, is a must-have archetype of the genre. It not only plays a decent game of baseball, it adds a lot of very clever and amusing twists—like Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots Day at the ballpark.

The game is 85% straight baseball, either open play or a pennant race (any combination of computer and human-operated teams), minus a few important conventions. No bunts, no base stealing, no designated hitters, no substitutions. (Substitute? Hardly. You'll just have to pay for repairs after the game, out of your winnings—if you've got any!) Fielding is semi-automatic: Your cyborg will often make catches itself, but you'll still have to stay on top of it and make sure the ball is directed to the right base.

Aside from the cyborgs' ability to throw blazing fast balls and literally knock them into orbit, what sets them apart from human players is the way they interact on the field. During any squeeze play, the two cyborgs go head-to-head in a fast, vicious fighting match. The weapons used in the match depend on what you can afford for your cyborg!

There are four types of cyborgs, each with certain abilities, but there's no variation inside each type; for instance, a flybot always plays like another flybot. That is, until you start buying add-ons. The add-ons are meant to improve either baseball-related abilities (stronger shoulders, quicker servomotors, faster arms, etc.) or battling abilities (laser weapons, gloves

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and more). About the only thing you can't do is kick dirt on the umpire.

In pennant mode, you create a league out of any six of the 12 teams available—ten preformed city teams and two completely configurative teams. With its battery backup, *Basewars* remembers all league information (though you can't run more than one league at once). The games go extremely quickly, and the interface is a breeze to learn. It's heavily based on all the other baseball games already available.

The graphics are occasionally very impressive. There are times when you may forget this isn't a 16-bit production. The robots are big and nicely animated, particularly the batters. The screen pans smoothly to keep up with the action, and home runs are rewarded with a novel 3-D outer-space salute. The sound is also well above-average, containing plenty of separate themes, fairly realistic sound effects and digitized voices calling plays and grunting appropriately.

The only problem worth mentioning is the lack of strategic options in the game. Without being able to bunt or plan a steal, baseball loses a good deal of tactical pizzazz. The ability to outfit the player with technological assistance helps put some of that interest back, but the game would have been richer if the programmers had kept as much existing strategy as possible and then added to it with cyborgian elements.

Football seems to be the most popular inspiration for cybersports, but *Basewars* is more fun than the competition. Perhaps it's because baseball gives you a greater opportunity of face-to-face strategy between two robots, rather than having 22 cyberplayers all running around at the same time.

—Joshua Mandel

Ultra Software
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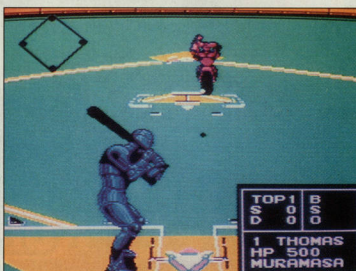
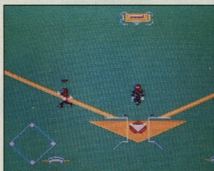
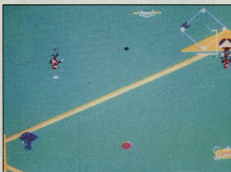
Sword Master

ACTIVISION

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

"Innovative" isn't a word that's been used to describe a lot of recent video games lately. Take *Sword Master*, for example. It's as generic as its title implies, offering nothing new to ideas that have



Basewars' impressive graphics will make you forget at times that the game isn't a 16-bit product.

been done often—and better—in the not-so-distant past.

The game play is appropriately accompanied by a cookie-cutter scenario: You are a mighty warrior returning from crusading in the Borderlands to your home kingdom of Eledar. To your dismay, you discover that the kingdom has been taken over by the evil Fire Mage and the Serpent god, Vishok. Princess Aria has been kidnapped and is being held in a castle dungeon. King Aragon has asked you to save his daughter and vanquish all evil from Eledar. After all, "YOU ARE THE SWORD MASTER... YOU MUST NOT FAIL!" the instructions emphasize. Hey, no problem.

Sword Master is one of those side-view perspective fighting contests that horizontally scrolls to the right. Your player is armed with a sword. Despite wearing bulky armor, he can kneel, jump in the air and raise his shield in defense—what an agile guy! Besides Vishok and the Fire Mage you must deal with wizards, knights, skeletons, dinosaurs, wolves, bats and even leaping lizards!

Magic potions may be picked up after they are dropped by defeated baddies. These can give you the ability to shoot an energy ball, a bomb, lightning rod or fire ball. Using these powers isn't free. A certain amount of "experience points" are

spent each time you use them. These points are gained by slashing at enemies.

A bar indicates the well-being of your character. It lowers when he gets struck and increases by a few points whenever a potion is taken from a slain enemy—you get the picture. One of these bars also shows up to represent an enemy's status. When your

health bar empties, the game ends, yet up to five game continues are available. Yippee.

Though scrolling fighting games are quite common, most attempt to outdo competitors by utilizing elaborate background graphics and larger-sized on-screen characters. *Sword Master* doesn't. Characters are only a bit bigger than in earlier efforts, and enemy heavies aren't all that menacing. The montage that visually narrates the game's background situation is finely illustrated. But it's still pretty standard-looking stuff and is only shown at the game's title. The backgrounds to the game screens are each so subdued that

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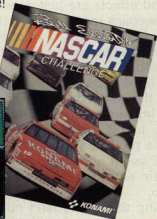
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they tend to be unidentifiable on their own.

Sound effects are just as weak. Fallen enemies meet an ungracious demise accompanied by what sounds like a match being scratched along the back of a matchbook. Your warrior character grunts and groans with every sword swing, thanks to the wonders of gratuitously implemented digitized voice technology. Just as lifeless is the crunching effect he produces with every jump. The clash of sword upon sword or shield is as dramatic as a pin falling onto a glass tabletop.

Playing this game isn't necessarily a horrible experience—but it's likely to instill a sense of déjà vu, inducing flashbacks to times of enjoying similar yet better-produced NES titles. Along with its anemic graphics and dinky sound/music, *Sword Master*, overall, is a rather tired gaming experience.

—Howard H. Wen

Activision
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Menlo Park, CA 94025
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Fatal Labyrinth

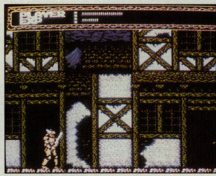
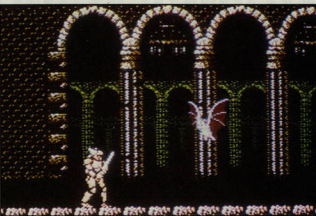
SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Sega's Genesis has garnered a reputation as being the machine to own if you're hot on adventure games. Role-playing contests like *Phantasy Star II* have attracted critical praise from reviewers and gamers alike, while Genesis' major competition, the TurboGrafx-16, continues to be weak in the adventure category. Sega's new role-playing game, however, isn't going to do much to help Sega hold their reputation.

In fact, *Fatal Labyrinth* barely qualifies as an RPG. Yes, your character battles enemies, gathers experience points, picks up



Activision's *Sword Master* is a typical side-view perspective fighting contest that suffers from a lack of originality.



In *Fatal Labyrinth*, each of the castle's rooms is saturated with a myriad of exotic creatures for the gamer to fend off.

treasures and dies when his hit points are used up, but all that's only the trappings of an RPG. What *Fatal Labyrinth* lacks is a gripping storyline, something a successful adventure game cannot do without. In addition, the scope of the game is limited. The play area is confined mostly to the labyrinthine castle after which the game is named.

When the game begins, you're in a small town. There are a few people in the streets to whom you can talk in order

to gain background information, but none of the buildings can be entered. There are no shops in which to buy equipment. No cellars to search for neat surprises. Instead, you just walk out of town and enter the castle in which the game is actually played.

Inside the castle, you must explore the maze of rooms in order to find much-needed equipment. At first, only the room in which you're standing is visible. As you explore, you reveal more and more of the castle. Each maze ends with a staircase that takes you up to the next level.

As you roam the castle hallways and rooms, you'll discover many useful objects, including swords, armor, shields, scrolls, magic canes, gold and medicine. As with most RPGs, at first you'll find only weak weapons. The further you get into the game, the more powerful the weapons become. (Of course, the enemies get stronger too.)

Fatal Labyrinth didn't get its name because the castle is safe. Each new room is stocked with plenty of monsters. You can expect to face such exotic creatures as snails, bats, magicians, robots, ninjas, killer flies and others. In addition, rooms may have pit traps in their floors and secret doors in their walls.

Regardless of its adventurelike scenario, *Fatal Labyrinth* is more like *Gauntlet* than the super hit *Phantasy Star II*. Lovers of RPGs will find this title lacking depth and devoid of excitement. There's no story to draw you in; any fun to be had is derived solely from exploring the mysterious labyrinth, defeating its occupants and picking up





Fatal Labyrinth falls short of being a true role-playing game, due to its lack of storyline.

the treasures.

As an arcade game, *Fatal Labyrinth* is okay, although I think most gamers will find that it has very little repeat-play power. If you're looking for another top-notch RPG, you'll just have to wait for *Phantasy Star III*.

—Clayton Walnum

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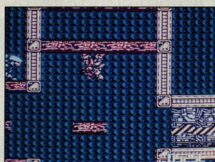
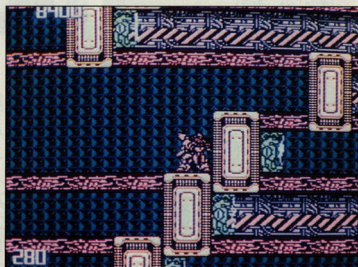
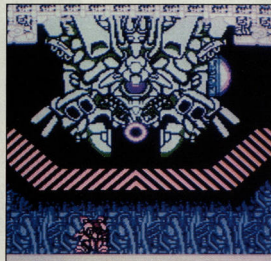
MetalStorm

IREM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What's nine feet tall, weighs in at 2,100 pounds, is activated by 1,300 kilowatts of power and can reverse gravity at will? The "M-308 Gunner," the most sophisticated weapon available to planet Earth. Earth is under threat of total annihilation from a renegade computer-operated defense system on the planet Pluto. This



What distinguishes Irem's MetalStorm from most shoot-'em-ups, is the complexity of the game's levels.

station was originally intended to protect Earth from the threat of hostile aliens, but due to some unknown malfunction, it has started destroying other planets in the solar system! A built-in self-

destruct mechanism has jammed, so you are being sent to make your way through the battle station "Cyberg," and attempt to activate it manually.

While this is certainly a new storyline, it's not exactly a brand new concept for a game. Basically, it fits the tried-and-true mold of fighting through a space fortress, crushing the enemy and defeating the end bosses. There are, however, some distinct differences!

In *MetalStorm*, there are four primary stages and three stages of the computer system itself that stand between either the obliteration or continued existence of Earth. Each of the stages is divided into two areas, which are inhabited by varying enemies—walking or flying robots, fixed-gun emplacements and jagged, spiked ceilings or floors that must be successfully navigated.

Ceiling and floor become more subjective here, however. By utilizing a special "gravity flip" function, you can, in effect, turn the tables on gravity. Your character flips over and flies in the opposite direction and lands on the first available surface. Thereafter, jumping is affected accordingly, depending upon where your head is!

Your character is armed with a powerful auto-firing laser, which may increase one step in power with the acquisition of the proper power-up. Other power-ups available include ones for 1-Ups, extra time, a "smart bomb" effect, armor, etc., for a total of eight in all. While shooting prowess is always important, jumping ability combined with manipulation of the gravity-flip ability are imperative for progress into the deeper levels of Cyberg.

Complicating matters further are special levels that may only be traversed in one direction, indicated by arrows that line the level. In some areas, there really isn't much of a ceiling or floor to orient you. You may simply step off a ledge and continue to fall forever! The levels simply wraparound, and you will often find yourself walking along a floor that only

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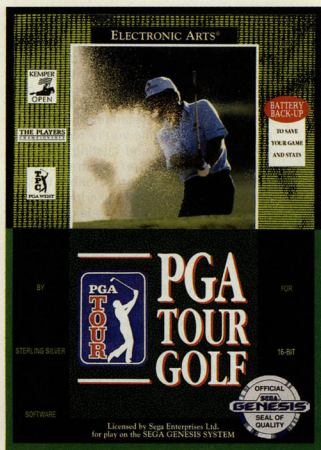
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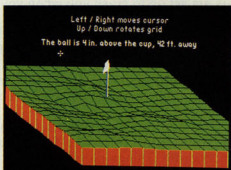


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CIRCLE #123 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



moments before you had seen as a ceiling. Some system defenses are triggered by your character's orientation, while others are set up to crush you when you pass between them.

The theme of *MetalStorm* doesn't break any ground, but does have enough freshness to make it interesting. Graphically, the game is adequate, although some backgrounds seem somewhat "tiled," or patterned.

The game is fairly challenging, but most of the tricks can be figured out in short order. Things didn't really get difficult to any extent until over halfway through the game, so anyone should be able to handle the action. Unlimited continues and a password option are available as well, which makes the chances of saving Earth much easier!

—B. W.

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RoboCop 2

DATA EAST

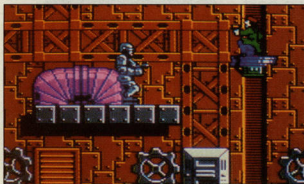
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Although movie-based video games have a long history of mediocrity, some titles have managed to retain the original film's feel and excitement. At the very least, some of these Hollywood spin-offs have offered up a decent game, even if only a game loosely based on the work that inspired it. For example, Data East's *RoboCop*, in spite of its movie tie-in, managed to catch the eye of the gaming public and scoop up a good share of sales. Sales were good enough, in fact, that we now have *RoboCop 2*, a jump-and-shoot contest that, if not exactly original, can at least supply the arcade aficionado with many hours of action.

In *RoboCop 2* you control everyone's favorite robot crime fighter as he sweeps

Data East's *RoboCop 2*, will supply the arcade aficionado with many hours of action.



through the city looking for bad guys and rescuing innocent bystanders. RoboCop's automatic pistol is a powerful weapon, but it must be used with restraint. Criminals that fire at you are suitable targets for your blasting rage; others, however, must be arrested. Keep in mind you must never shoot an innocent bystander or a citizen in need of rescue. While you're rescuing citizens and shooting and busting bad guys, you must also gather up the required number of "nukes," presumably to keep them from the hands of the criminals.

Most of the levels are made up of many platforms and obstacles. Getting from one platform to the next requires not only a skillful control hand, but also a little brain power; there are several routes you may take, only one of which will allow you to accumulate the right number of nukes, killed or busted criminals and rescued citizens. If you fail to meet any of your quotas, you must return to the beginning of the level and try again.

Some of the obstacles and devices you'll run up against include falling columns, which crush you like an ant under an anvil; electromagnets, which grab you and carry you across dangerous areas; laser guns, which quick-sizzle you into a robo french fry; and jet sleds, which must be used in order to reach some distant platforms.

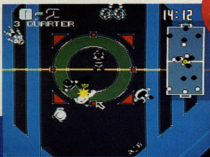
If your bad-guy-busting powers are not up to par, you may find yourself at the target range, where your robo-powers will be sharpened and calibrated. Here you must

control an on-screen cursor, aiming for targets that pop up in windows and from behind trees, trash cans and other hiding places. Once again, you must shoot only the bad guys. Blasting innocent bystanders will get you a fast trip back to the beginning of the level. In addition to the human targets, you'll have a chance to shoot icons that provide such bonuses as increased time and extra bullets.

The graphics in *RoboCop 2* are detailed and well-rendered. RoboCop himself moves in a suitably clunky way; his foot-steps, especially when he jumps, resound with heavy thuds. The music is okay, but not extraordinary.

In summary, although it'll win no awards for originality, *RoboCop 2* is a decent enough jump-and-shoot game that'll please gamers looking for something new in that genre.

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The Game Creator

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Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA™
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However, if you're in the market for a game with some depth, you'd better keep looking.

—C. W.

Data East
1850 Little Orchard St.
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 286-7074

Metal Mech

JALECO

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Finally, a video game for fans of heavy metal. I'm not talking about music, I mean heavy metal.

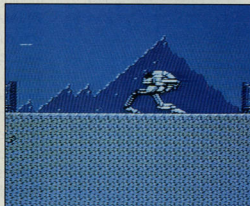
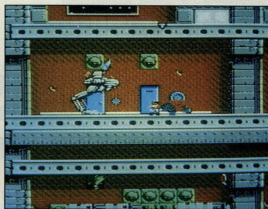
The year is 2025, and the Earth has been overrun by an alien queen and her army of Metal Mechs. A group of scientists has captured one of these bulky biomechanical beasts, and you've been selected to climb inside and blast your way to the alien queen's lair.

The Mech is pretty impressive; it's a hulking three-legged battletank that stomps and shoots, crushing everything in its path. The firepower and maneuverability of your main weapon can be upgraded by locating special power-up items, and the Mech is also equipped with a supply of "smart bombs" that attack everything on the screen at once. Though the on-screen animation is a little rough, the game really gives you a clear impression of the Mech's tremendous bulk. For example, when the Mech takes a leap forward, the ground literally shakes from the impact, and the sound effects are appropriately thunderous.

By contrast, Tony the Mech pilot is a tiny, goosestepping squirt who swings his arms wildly as he scurries around like a frantic bug. Many areas in the game can't be reached by the huge, lumbering Mech, and it's necessary to eject the little guy from the Mech's cockpit so you can squeeze into tight spaces and climb trees and buildings.

To compensate for his small size, the game's final area is a *Metroid*-style maze adventure that depicts a much larger Tony...but the Mech has been left behind. It's an interesting twist; the game play of the last level is completely different from the rest of the game.

Though *Metal Mech* features only six levels, each one is fairly expansive. The screen scrolls both horizontally and vertically, and you'll have to do a lot of explor-



Though reminiscent of Infocom's *BattleTech* series, *Metal Mech* places more emphasis on arcade-style action.

ing to find the "level keys" that allow you to exit the area and move on to the next one.

There's some great music playing in the background in this game; it's abstract, moody and percussive, and it's a perfect match for *Metal Mech*'s images of armor and artillery. Unfortunately, the limited number of voices available on the NES has led the programmers to "borrow" the music channels and use them for sound effects. As a result, the music is momentarily switched off whenever there's a lot of action on the screen, so you can't enjoy the tunes without interruption for more than a few seconds at a time. Ironically, there's a menu-selection screen that allows you to turn off the music altogether; in this case, it would have been nice to be able to do the opposite.

My only other gripe is that it takes a heck of a long time to get used to the Mech's controls. When the action gets intense, it's hard to remember that you can't steer the Mech while you're holding down the fire button. The controls are responsive if you know what you're doing, but it often seems like your input is being ignored because you're holding down the wrong buttons.

Flaws like these keep *Metal Mech* from realizing its full potential, but it's still an enjoyable romp through a world of explosive destruction. If nothing else, this game has more bullets, bombs, lasers and missiles than any other title in recent memory.

—C. B.

Jaleco USA Inc.
310 Era Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
(708) 480-1811

Powerball

NAMCO

For the Sega Genesis (\$56.99)

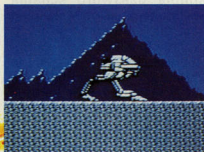
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

A bizarre composite of football and the *American Gladiators*, Namco's *Powerball* is a pretty fair game. How so? Well, if you've got the ball, you're fair game. If you're in my way, you're fair game. If it's a good match, chances are pretty fair that half of each team will be lying unconscious on the playing field before you're through. Joe Montana meets *Shinobi*. Okay, kids, go to it.

In *Powerball*, your primary means of getting possession of the ball consists of taking flying leaps in the air and landing

METALMECH™

MAN & MACHINE



The all-terrain attack vehicle of the future!



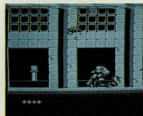
You can beat 'em into the ground...



...or blast 'em underground...



...or fight 'em alone!



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The most powerful duo on the face of the earth!

Fight "The Great Alien Invasion" with MetalMech!

MetalMech is the all-terrain attack vehicle of the future—a fusion-driven, three-legged beast that mangles, stomps and blasts anything in its path...mechanized dogs, slinkys, rats, space-fighters and more.

Need to blast enemies out of a tight spot? Eject your armored warrior from MetalMech and strike out on foot. Zap 'em on rooftops, balconies, and in underground passages.

The MetalMech battle takes place on dozens of screens through six levels of the most exciting, super-futuristic, blasting action ever created for the Nintendo Entertainment System®.

But beware—this machine has a mind of its own. It's up to you to discover all of the controls, weapons and tech systems. Then make them work for you as you fight against time to save what's left of mankind.



New! For the Nintendo Entertainment System.



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full force on your opponent. Some players have more fancy moves, such as spinning kicks. The ball is never out of play, so you don't have to worry about it skittering halfway down the electrified gridiron after you've laid the opposing player down to sleep.

There are eight preformed teams, each a different nationality. Teams consist of 11 players, and every player has a set of stats that reads like a role-playing game: speed, kicking ability, power, stamina and accuracy. The maximum for any stat is 100; the lowest is 25. You get 50 points with which to build up any combination of stats, and



Powerball, by Namco, is a bizarre composite of football and American Gladiators.

you should choose your team according to your preferred strategy. For example, the Japan Samurai team is deadly accurate but weak and slow; the China Emperors have real powerhouse goalies and right halfbacks but mediocre generals. Not all teams are so lopsided, though.

There are several play options: You can train or enter into a tournament, both of which pit you against the computer, or you can go head-to-head against a second player (not in tournament mode). A simple password scheme allows you to retain your standing against the computer in tournament situations. You can configure the length of the quarters in five-minute increments, and the attack- and volley-shot options

allow you to let the computer automatically handle those aspects of the action.

The computer does an admirable job of running all the peripheral offense and defense. You control only the ballholder, or, if you don't have possession, the player nearest the holder. The playfield is often too chaotic; the arrow designating the player you're controlling jumps around fast enough to make keeping track of your player the toughest aspect of the game.

Using the buttons, you choose a pass method or make an attack. The longer you hold down the attack button, the more energy that goes into the attack (the arrow flashes to indicate the amount of energy built up). Provided the attack is effective—based on your stats versus your enemy's stats—the ball will roll, and it will be your chance to sweep it up.

The graphics are only average. The entire game is seen from the same overhead vantage point used in *World Championship Soccer*, featuring the same scaling effect of the ball (or the jumping player) in the air. The scrolling is smooth, and a small full-field view occupies the upper-right corner of the screen to give you an overall perspective of the action. The music and sound effects are actually the standout features in this game; the music is varied, and the crowd sounds, grunts and oofs, are realistic and plentiful.

There's enough strategic variety to make the game interesting, but little originality or innovation and too little control over the makeup of your team. It's not different enough from what's already available (*Cyberball*, *World Championship Soccer* and either of the existing football titles).

—J. M.

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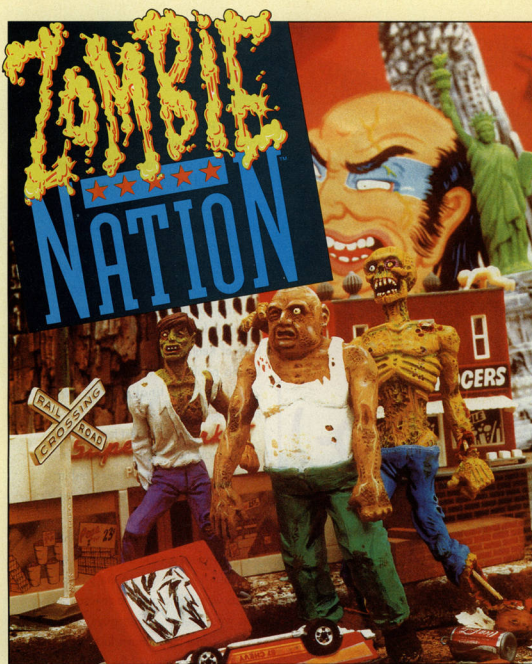
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Monday December 13, 1999

Zombie Hoards Attack U.S.

■ Strange samurai head heading to New York City.

By I. C. GOOLS, Times Staff Writer

NEW YORK--What appeared to be a harmless meteorite crashing in the Nevada desert has turned out to be Darc Seed, an evil alien creature with horrible powers. By shooting strange magnetic rays, Darc Seed has turned the helpless nation into zombie slaves and has brought the Statue of Liberty to life to do his dirty work.

There Goes the Neighborhood

Mrs. Emma Nuttz of Brooklyn had this to say about the situation. "Just when it seemed safe for decent folks to walk the streets again along comes this Darc Seed with his gang of Zombie hooligans and there goes the neighborhood. And if that wasn't bad enough, it seems the only way to defeat this ruffian is by totally destroying every in sight. Now there really goes the neighborhood!"

Mr. I.M. Sickentired of the Bronx added, "As if we didn't have enough stinkin' garbage on the streets already. Between the freakin' wino's and the blasted beggars and all the other louses already fouling up this miserable town...and now these sleazeball

zombies!! It's enough to make me want to move to freakin' Los Angeles with all the other fruits and nuts!!!

Mayor Heminhaw immediately called an emergency press conference where he read the following prepared statement. "I um, er, ahem, ah, I am doing everything, ah, er, er, humanly possible to see to it that ah, this situation er, um, this terrible situation ah, comes to a ah, ahem, a swift and, er, um, a swift and satisfactory close. I er, er, um, have no further er, er, comment at this time. Thank you".

ZOMBIE NATION:

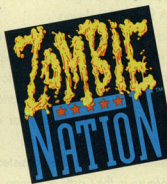
Ground Shaking NES™ Action

Zombie Nation is a ground shaking action/shooting game for the Nintendo Entertainment System®. The object of the game is to wreak total destruction on everything you see by firing powerful projectiles (it's a dark and dirty job, but somebody's got to do it). Meanwhile, you need to rescue as many zombie hostages as you can in order to gain enough strength for the ultimate showdown with Darc Seed (he's toast!).

ZOMBIE NATION:

Devastating Graphics and Pounding Sound Effects

Zombie Nation's graphics are so devastatingly realistic you'll almost be tempted not to demolish them (yeah right!). And the relentlessly pounding sound effects will make you feel like you're right in the middle of the action hammering away at skyscrapers, mountains, and everything else that crosses your path.. So don't just stand there like a Zombie, get your copy now!



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"Gimme an S... Gimme an E... Gimme a G... Gimme an A... WHATZIT SPELL? SEGA!!! Yaaaay...."

The room—or is it my eardrums?—nearly burst as the near-deafening roar of 28 college men joined the trumpeting enthusiasm of the "NCAA Cheerleaders," a small horde of high-school young women, winners of an NCAA competition, fresh from the Aloha Bowl parade in Honolulu, Hawaii. The cheers ushered in the Sega Genesis World Championship finals (a competition to determine the best collegiate video-game player in the country) at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel on December 22, 1990.

The atmosphere was tense, and each contestant showed the strain in different ways. These were the best out of more than 20,000 entrants, and the stakes were high. The winner would receive a brand new Eagle Talon worth a cool \$18,000. These guys wanted that car.

So, as the ringing in my ears started to subside, I observed the first ten contestants slash their way through five minutes of *Shadow Dancer* (the sequel to *Revenge of Shinobi*) on the Genesis. Most of them had never seen the game before, and it took some time for them to figure out how to play. A few of the players

had obviously played the game. (They later told me they had played Japanese imports.) After the first ten players, another ten joypads flashed and slashed, and it was down to the final eight.

The winner of the first round of *Shadow Dancer* was Ray Hashman, with 173,500 points. I picked Ray for a contender right away; he was relaxed and seemed confident.

The second half of the first round consisted of a ten-minute stretch of *Mickey Mouse in the Castle of Illusion*. Here again, some players were more familiar with the game than others. Scores varied a lot, but once again, Ray came through with a top score and placed first in the round with a combined score of 247,300 points.

Sega Champs Square Off in (Not-So-) Sunny Hawaii

BY RUSSEL DE MARIA

At this point, the stress began to show. Several players knew they had done pretty poorly and weren't very happy. Still, 20 of the original 28 contestants would continue, so only eight players went down at this point.

Among those who made it was Kenny Calhoun from the University of Colorado. With the Buffaloes contending for the National Championship in football, you had to like the idea of Kenny as a possible winner, but his position as 18th in the list of 20 first-round finalists was not encouraging.

Now came the biggest test yet. All 20 survivors had to play for ten minutes (or until they lost all their men) in the "non-shuriken" mode. This was much harder.

Almost every player "assumed the position"—legs spread a little, bent at the waist, eyes locked on the screen. Hands were flying and the concentration was intense. These guys were serious. Some unfortunates lost a man right at the beginning of the first level, but all persevered until every man had died a grisly death.

When the dust had settled, the top scorers were, not surprisingly, Ray Hashman and John Heffron, two of the standouts from the first round. The surprise was Kenny Calhoun, who

placed third in this round.

When the scores were tallied, only eight semifinalists were left: Ray, John and Kenny, plus Mike Cuevas, John Pires, Alan Do, Seung Han and Dat Ho (in that order). Ray still looked like a front runner, but Kenny, who had never played *Shadow Dancer* before that day, was a surprise.

Now the tension mounted for eight young men while some of the rest headed for the showers. Though the crowd had thinned somewhat, there were still some hardy cheerleaders and avid video gamers whose enthusiasm had never waned. What game would these eight semifinalists play to determine the winner of that car?

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A Fantasy Role-Playing Simulation

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Sega's Al Nilson had the answer: *Joe Montana Football*, a game that was just being released the same day. None of the contestants had ever seen it before.

In the first round, the players were paired up at random, and each played a ten-minute game, New York vs. New York.

Going into the second round, the original eight contestants dwindled down to four. Two pairs squared off to find out who would play for all the marbles. It was Chicago vs. Chicago, and the two highest scorers would go against each other.

The competition was close, but Kenny was clearly dominant. He won with a score of 28-14 and scored his last touchdown with zero seconds on the game clock. In the other match, John Pires won a closer contest, 21-17.

On to the finals. The long wait was almost over, but Al Nilson called a time out. The guys were given a few minutes to get prepared, and I took the opportunity to talk with Kenny. I had been watching him closely since before the second *Shadow Dancer* round.

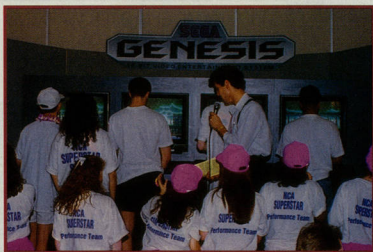
"What's your strategy in the upcoming game, Kenny?" I asked, giving my best sideline sportscaster impression.

He didn't think too long about his answer. "Defense. You've got to keep up the defensive pressure."

I had done my scouting and had noticed a certain tendency for Kenny's wide receivers to get open deep, so I didn't allow him to hide behind this defense screen. I wanted his secrets. "You've got a pretty sound offensive strategy, too, don't you?" I pursued.



The Sega Genesis World Championship finals pitted 28 finalists against each other to determine the best collegiate video-game player in the country. Bottom: Larry Baker, a Jeep Eagle representative (left), and Sega's Al Nilson (right) congratulate winner Kenny Calhoun.



"Well," he hedged, "I just send my guys on deep patterns and throw the ball to receiver number one. It works pretty well. For running plays I like the toss left."

John Pires, on the other hand, told me he was feeling the tension. It was a nerve-wracking experience, but I reminded him that it was almost over, and he had already won at least \$2,500 and a free trip to Hawaii.

Here's the recap of the final game:

- Kenny was the first to score in the game, which featured San Francisco vs. San Francisco, as he dropped into the pocket and fired a long bomb for a touchdown. Score: 7-0, Kenny.

- John returned with a classic drive and scores on a short pass just after the two-minute warning. Score: 7 apiece.

- Kenny took the kickoff to the 19 and

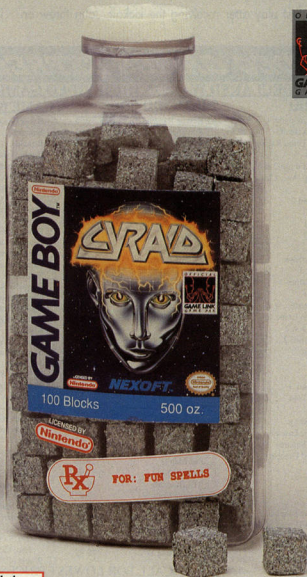
threw another long one. This time his receiver was tackled on the seven-yard line. Just before the half ended, Kenny called a time out. Sending his wide outs on short-crossing patterns, he zipped a quick flip for another score. Score: 14-7, Kenny.

- John took the kickoff and on his first play completed a long bomb. He made it to the 15-yard line, but time ran out.

- In the second half, John got the kickoff. He ran wide to the right for a moderate gain, then threw a deep pass into triple cover-

"Take a rock and a block and call me in the morning"

... Dr. R.O. Gibraltar



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age. Kenny was called for interference. First and ten at the 23—John tried a run that lost three yards and two passes that both failed, so he tried for the fake field goal, but Kenny's pressure defense held and he took over.

- Kenny's first pass from John's 20-yard line was almost intercepted, but he switched up and ran his famous toss left, gaining 22 yards on the play. With eight seconds left in the third quarter, Kenny threw up another bomb, and scored. Score: 21-7, Kenny—and things looked bad for John.

- On the first play after receiving the kickoff, John threw an

incomplete pass, but then potential disaster struck. Heaving the ball down the field, he threw it right into the defensive coverage and Kenny intercepted.

- On Kenny's next possession, he ran a sweep that lost four yards, but it succeeded in running the clock down to the two-minute warning. In a last ditch effort, John went for the blitz, but Kenny burned him with another successful romp into the end zone. Score: 28-7, Kenny.

- John took his last shot. His first play from scrimmage was incomplete and was followed by another. It was then third down,

and time was running out. John took Montana into the pocket and let fly a long bomb to his receiver, who caught it and ran to the ten-yard line. With only 56 seconds left in the game, John kept fighting.

In true Montana fashion, he never gave up. In a play much like "The Catch," John took the quarterback, scrambled and launched a prayer to the back of the end zone. Touchdown! Was that Dwight Clark back from retirement? Score: 28-14, Kenny.

- John knew there was only one option left: an onside kick. He pressed the "C" button, and the entire kick formation shifted to the right. He then kicked the ball toward the right sideline. Did it go out of bounds? No. John dove on the ball. After two incomplete passes and a near interception, the time came down to 26 seconds. Sweating bullets, John tried his hardest, but after two more incomplete passes, the ball turned over to Kenny. The pressure defense held, and Kenny ran out the clock. He beat John 28-14.

When I talked with Kenny after the game, he was amazed. "I only play sports games, really, so I knew I had a good chance once I got to the final games, but I never thought I'd get that far. I did pretty bad in the first round—I think I was 18th. So I didn't expect to do very well in the second round. I surprised myself." He was obviously in shock. There was something really important still to do. "I gotta go call home and tell my mom I won the car."

And so it was that all these kids went home winners. They saw Hawaii, participated in the Aloha Bowl Parade and met lots of cheerleaders. On a rare rainy day in Waikiki, the Sega Championship event was the best thing going. 🎮

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VEIGUES TACTICAL GLADIATOR

STRATEGY GUIDE, PART II

by Donn Nauert

You've made it halfway through the enemy-, or should we say alien-, held territory. Now it's time to get serious about this alien-trampling business. After all, it's only the destiny of the world you hold in your hands. Veigues Tactical Gladiator, the weapon machine invented by the Federation

Army after the world was assaulted by alien forces, is the only hope for mankind.

In the second part of our two-part strategy, we'll help you annihilate those evil alien forces. In Part I, I found that having more vernier instead of field punch was more effective. Now, in Stages 6 through 10, there's more of a need for the field punch rather than the vernier. So, starting in Stage 6 you should make an effort to build up the single most powerful weapon you have, the field punch. How well you have done up to this point will determine how many, if any, units you will take away from the vernier and even, possibly, the shield.

The body weapon should remain at five or six, if possible. At the start of Stage 6 you should have at least four on field punch so that when you reach Stage 7 you can have six units. It'll be important to have the field punch built up by this time; if you don't you could set yourself up for some long game playing. At the end of Stage 7 you can add the extra units to the other weapons; vernier might be the only one left to fill. After that, it'll just be a matter of refilling any shield that you might have lost, then the Vernier.

STAGE 6



To finish out the cave portion of the game, these guys will come at you from both sides of the screen, then fly to either the floor or ceiling and take a shot at you. They're quick and accurate, so try to get rid of them as soon as possible.

The mechanical roosters make an appearance as you enter the tunnel. The field punch works wonders here. So does the beam cannon, although it's a little slower in disposing of them.

Field punch or beam cannon these guys as soon as they appear.



A little more changing directions is called for to get through this section unharmed.

You can use the beam cannon to get these guys out of the way. If you don't, they'll shoot missiles at you.

It's neat, in a weird way, how the game can change scenery in a blink of the eye.



You've now entered a new section in the underground tunnels. These blue guys come out in force.

At this point the blue computer chips come out. It's important to get rid of the bottom that appears on the right because some chips appear from the left, and they can do great damage.

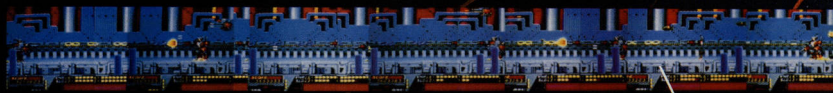
STAGE 7



The second one appears from the top right, moves at an angle to the bottom left and then hops to the right corner. You can stay where you are and take a little damage or try your luck by moving to the center as it moves to the right.

The third one will appear from the left side and hop around a little bit, but it poses very little threat, if any.

The fourth one appears from the top right and moves to the bottom left. It then, in a looping motion, moves to the right, back to the left, then darts off the screen. Obviously, it's not in your way for long.



Once past this section, gold bombs come out. Avoid the ones on the bottom, or go for the points.



The same holds true for R2D2's cousin here.



There are four mechanical flying dragons that come out in this section. The first one comes out from the left and goes straight up. If you're on the right side you can get him with your beam cannon.



Raindrops keep falling on my head...



End Boss: Stage 6



Using your body weapon, shoot the bottom-right gun out first, then be ready for the red gun behind it to open and fire. If you stand in the bottom-left corner, the top right gun's bullets will not hit you. So it should be easy pickings. Once the bottom and top guns have been destroyed, the middle one will be activated. Change directions to dodge the missile it shoots and fire the body weapon until it's destroyed.

When these fast-movin', fast-shootin' enemies hit the screen, you'll probably be on the left side of the screen. Move to the right, turn and face to the left. When you're on the right and an enemy comes out, it will sit right on top of you, but its shots won't hit you. (This strategy doesn't work on the left, because when the enemies come out on the left side, they're facing to the left, and you'll get nailed.)



End Boss: Stage 7



This thing looks like it's riding on iron. There are a few ways to defeat this boss. You can either jump to dodge its bullets and fire on it with the beam cannon, or get in close and use your field punch. You can always use one of the two weapons while you change direction (twice, back and forth) to avoid the shots.

Once you destroy the iron part of this thing, it'll start flying around the screen. The first thing you want to do is get out of the left corner—that's the first place it goes. When it moves out of the corner, you can return there and start blasting it with your field punch. When it looks like it's going to hit you, change directions.

STAGE 8

The guys with the missiles come out of the tubes, and they are bad news. The best thing you can do is get to the right corner, and destroy all you can. If any missiles get released, try to lure them into the walls to destroy them.

You've seen these guys before. You know what to do.

At the top of the stairs, the roosters with bad haircuts come out. Watch the radar so you'll know what direction you need to turn to get out of there quick.

These guys are also a pain. The best thing to do is use your field punch on them before they get a chance to move. If some do, change directions as much as possible.

These little darts are like gnats flying around your head. Change direction often while using your field punch.


STAGE 9

In this area you'll go against most of the end bosses you've defeated before as regular enemies. The final end boss of this area looks similar to the one in Stage 6. The patterns you

used to defeat previous end bosses will still work, only quicker. For the end boss of Stage 5 (the armadillo), you can use the field punch.

Now it's back to the matter at hand: taking out the enemies.

Again, try the field punch for a quicker kill.



The object here is obviously to get past this area as quickly as possible. Try shooting the body weapon at an angle in front of you.

End Boss: Stage 8



Use your field punch or, better yet, the beam cannon to destroy the darts that fly about. Try staying in the center of the screen, and when they approach, change direction and continue shooting from the bottom right (as shown in the photo). When a new set is about to come out, move back to the center and repeat until...



...the machine starts moving. I've found that if you get to the left side of the screen and jump into the air as it shoots down at you, then move back down when it fires again, he can be destroyed easily with the beam cannon.

After the first three foes, you'll encounter this oasis. Be ready to avoid the spikes, which is a matter of timing.

Here's another rest spot.

End Boss: Stage 9



This end boss is similar to the one in Stage 6 except that this one will use his large gun to constantly take shots at you. The lowest shot is the only one that can hit you. After you have eliminated the gun, another target will appear in the center, and the port holes will open fire. Use your laser cannon to destroy it.



The first section of the area is outside the main ship. Use your laser cannon, and you shouldn't have much of a problem.

STAGE 10

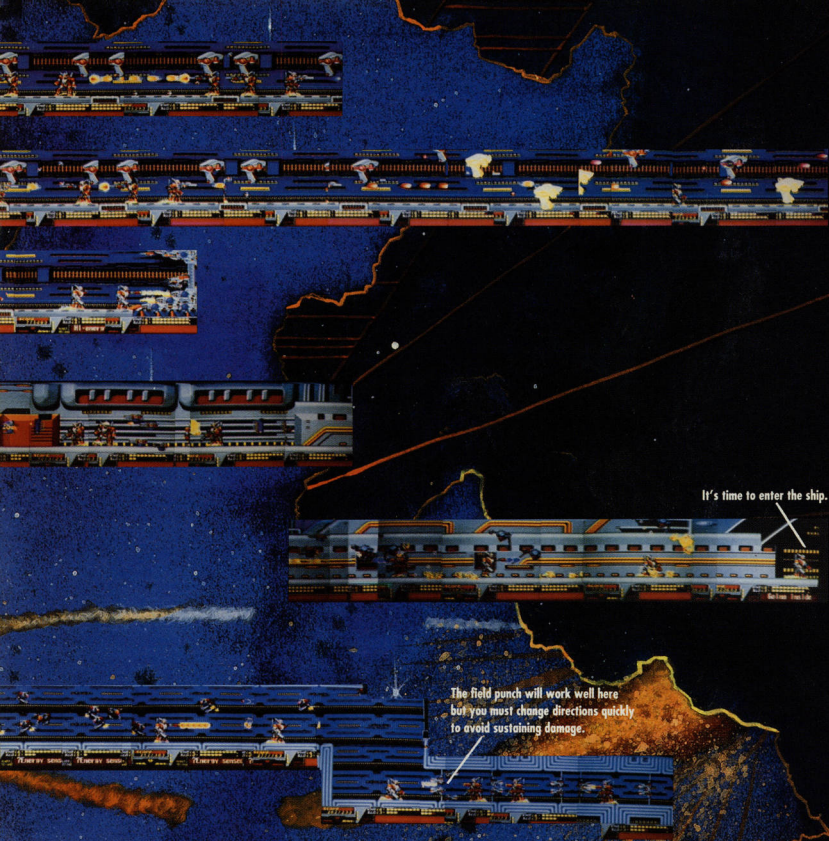
The Federation Army learns that your job is not quite through. They equip you with booster rockets, and you're off for the final fight in the sky.

The first thing you'll encounter is a burst from the guns in the floor and ceiling.

Here you lose your booster rockets and land on the deck of the ship. Using the field punch would be best here.

After the spikes, you come across the black mechanical frogs that appear out of thin air. Get these guys quickly, or it could be trouble.





It's time to enter the ship.

The field punch will work well here but you must change directions quickly to avoid sustaining damage.

End Boss: Stage 10



The end boss will shoot only so many shots before there is a break in the action. Let it shoot at you while you're on the ground, then jump into the air. Hover there until the end boss shoots at you again, then move down to the ground. Repeat this until the end boss stops shooting, at which time you can shoot the rotating diamond until it stops. End of game. End of story. Congratulations!

Mad Dog McCree

BY AMERICAN LASER GAMES

You've been riding hard all day, looking forward to a nice cold drink at the local saloon, but just as you hit town, an old prospector greets you and offers his story.

"The town's in terrible trouble, mister. Mad Dog McCree and his band of outlaws have taken control of the town, and the citizens are helpless against his gang," he starts. "The sheriff is outgunned and is being held prisoner in his own jail. You just gotta help, mister—you're our only chance," he adds.

Just then some of Mad Dog's gang members appear. Of course, they're not



by Donn Nauert

than any of the previous disc titles.

Using real actors, you're given a greater sense of realism. The characters have been filmed doing various things during the game, and based on your

response—whether you are shot or they are shot—will react in different ways. You're also given a choice as to which scene you want to start with first. Whether you chose the saloon, stable, Sheriff's office or bank, you'll need to complete all four (by ridding the section of bad guys) before continuing through the game.

Once you're on your way to the hideout, there are sections of the game that you could conceivably never enter. And with an actual Daisy BB gun used as a light-gun, you may feel you're in the old West and not in an arcade.

Obviously, since *Mad Dog* is a laser-disc game, it's going to have great graphics, but what also adds to the game are the actors and their performances. From the dialogue to the actors' facial expressions to the stunts (spinning and twirling as they're shot and falling off buildings), it's all exceptionally well-done. Though you may pay a little more to play it, the length of the game will more than make up for the cost to game players.

Some other pluses with this game are the standard cabinet (which features a nice big 29" screen) and a solid sound system that allows you to see and hear everything the game has to offer. (There's a larger model utilizing a 50" rear-screen projector display, but most game players probably won't see it because of the cost to the arcade owner.)

Of all the good things you can say about the game, there are a few negatives. First, the light gun, although a good solid gun, has a weight that may prove too much for the younger players or someone with a weak wrist. For this reason it could prove difficult to physically get through the whole game, since you have to tilt your weapon toward the ground to reload.



much for social talk or strangers, and they would just as soon shoot you rather than talk. So whether you wanted it or not, you're now involved in the town's problems, and you've just soared to the top of Mad Dog's hit list with a bullet.

Mad Dog McCree, by American Laser Games, is the first of what could be a long line of laser disc games to come. American Laser Games has taken the laser-disc game a step further and created something that is far superior in graphics and game play



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Guardian Legend	8/14	Guardian Legend	8/14
Guerilla War	10/16	Guerilla War	10/16
Gum Shoe	12/19	Gum Shoe	12/19
Gunslinger	10/16	Gunslinger	10/16
Gyrfuss	10/16	Gyrfuss	10/16
Hard Drive	24/42	Hard Drive	24/42
Hatris	24/42	Hatris	24/42
Heavy Barrel	10/16	Heavy Barrel	10/16
Heavy Shred	22/39	Heavy Shred	22/39
Hercules/Lance	26/44	Hercules/Lance	26/44
Hogans Alley	10/16	Hogans Alley	10/16
Holywood Sps	16/24	Holywood Sps	16/24
"Hot Rod	26/44	"Hot Rod	26/44
Hydride	16/24	Hydride	16/24
I Can Remember	22/39	I Can Remember	22/39
Indiana Jones	12/19	Indiana Jones	12/19
Iron Hokey	8/14	Iron Hokey	8/14
Ikari Warriors I	10/16	Ikari Warriors I	10/16
Ikari Warriors II	10/16	Ikari Warriors II	10/16
Image Fight	12/19	Image Fight	12/19
Immortal	20/32	Immortal	20/32
Imp Mission II	20/32	Imp Mission II	20/32
Indiana Jones	8/14	Indiana Jones	8/14
Int. Sls. Lt. Crsd	24/42	Int. Sls. Lt. Crsd	24/42
Infinitor	8/14	Infinitor	8/14
Iron Sword	14/22	Iron Sword	14/22
Iron Tank	26/44	Iron Tank	26/44
"Is My Way/Stras	24/42	"Is My Way/Stras	24/42
"Isolated Warrior	24/42	"Isolated Warrior	24/42
Jackals	26/44	Jackals	26/44
Jackal	26/49	Jackal	26/49
Jackal King	20/32	Jackal King	20/32
Jeopardy	18/29	Jeopardy	18/29
Jeopardy Jr.	24/42	Jeopardy Jr.	24/42
Jeop 25th Ann.	24/42	Jeop 25th Ann.	24/42
John E. Orback	10/16	John E. Orback	10/16
John's Victory	14/22	John's Victory	14/22
Journey to Silus	24/42	Journey to Silus	24/42
Jojo	12/19	Jojo	12/19
Karate Champ	8/14	Karate Champ	8/14
Karate Kid	10/16	Karate Kid	10/16

512/19	Samurai Conquest	\$24/42	Tennis	12/19
18/29	Section 2	4/9	Terra Cresta	16/24
20/32	Section 3	4/9	Thunder (Nintendog)	10/16
24/42	Selcuz	2/3	3 Stooges	10/16
24/42	Sesame Street ABC	20/32	Thunderbolt	14/22
26/44	"Shadow of Ninja	26/42	Time Lord	20/32
8/14	Shadowgate	12/19	Tian Warrior	24/42
10/16	"Shogun the Ruler	20/32	Tomb Raider	8/14
12/19	Shinobi	26/42	Tools & Treasures	26/44
18/29	Shooting Range	16/24	Tobin	12/19
24/42	Sideways	18/29	Togun Gun	8/14
24/42	Sid Side Pocket	10/16	Togun II	26/44
26/44	Silent Assault	22/39	Tot Secret Episode	20/32
26/44	Silent Service	12/19	Total Recall	20/32
26/44	Silver Surfer	18/29	Town & Country	20/32
22/39	Silver Surfer	24/42	Track & Field	12/19
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14/44	Skull/Crossbones	24/42	Twin Eagle	20/32
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14/22	Sky Shark	12/19	Ultima II	32/32
8/49	Slalom	12/19	Ultimate Basketball	26/44
26/42	Snake Vagabond	18/29	Urban Champion	4/9
10/16	Snakes Revenge	10/16	Urban Dreams	26/44
24/22	Snoopy Style Sports	24/44	Victorians	6/12
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24/42	Solar Jetman	26/44	WWF Challenge	32/59
26/44	Solar Jetman's Key	12/19	WWF Street King	26/44
26/44	Solstice	24/42	"W/Against Drugs	24/42
14/22	Spelunker	18/29	Wheel On Wheels	24/42
10/16	Spider-Man	10/16	Wheel of Fortune	16/24
14/22	Spy Hunter	8/14	Wheel of Fortune	24/42
24/42	Spy Vs. Spy	8/14	Wheel of Fortune Jr.	24/42
24/42	Squon	26/44	Wild Gunman	10/16
26/44	Squon Events	12/19	Willow	8/14
20/32	Star Force	22/39	Willow	8/14
24/42	Star Ship Hector	12/19	Win/Lose/Draw	16/24
24/42	Star Soldier	6/12	Winter Games	14/22
26/44	Star Soldier II	26/44	Wizards & Warriors	14/22
14/22	Star Voyager	4/9	Wizardry	24/42
14/22	Steel	12/19	World Champ. Wrestling	26/44
10/16	Street Cops	18/29	World Champ. Wrest. II	26/44
10/16	Street Cops	18/29	World Games	12/19
10/16	Street Fighter	26/49	World Runner	6/12
8/12	Strider	6/12	"World Trophy Soccer	24/42
18/29	Strider II	24/42	Wrest of Black Magic	26/44
22/39	Super Contra	16/24	Wrecking Crew	12/19
6/12	Super Dodge Ball	14/22	Wrestmania	10/16
24/42	Super Glove Ball	26/44	Xenos	10/16
14/22	Super Glove Ball II	14/22	Xenophobia	26/44
12/19	Super Mario	6/12	Verum	24/42
24/42	Super Mario II	18/29	Xevys	18/29
10/16	Super Mario Bros	26/44	Xenos II	26/44
6/12	Super Mario/Duck/Ht	8/14	Yo Yo!oid	26/42
6/12	Super Mario/Dck/Ht	8/14	Zanac	8/14
24/42	Super Off Road	18/29	Zenda	10/16
10/16	Super Petal	10/16	Zeids II	10/16
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26/44	Swords/Serpents	24/42	Control Player	50/84
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16/24	Tagin Dragon	24/42	Light Gun	6/12
18/29	Talking Sp Pwn	24/42	Misc. Joypads	6/12
10/16	Targel Ranger	26/44	Misc. Joypads II	6/12
10/16	Teemo Baseball	14/22	NES Mac Joypad	6/12
24/42	Teemo Bow	30/54	Power Glove	34/84
10/16	Teemo World Wrt.	12/19	RF Adapter	6/15
8/14	T.M.N.T.	16/24	Satellite	22/39

Second, the most important factor of the game is that it's a laser-disc game. A lot of distributors and operators took a pounding the last time around with these things, so they're shying away. This is bad news for the players, because *Mad Dog* is one of those games that players will constantly play just to see sections they haven't seen before, even though they may have finished the game. I guess only time will tell what lies ahead for the future of laser disc in the arcades—but for now here's a big positive vote.

In the February issue, we stuck our necks out with awards to the best video and computer games. Now it's time for the arcade games to get in on the action:

Best Arcade Game of the Year

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles took the nation—and the arcades—by storm. This multiplayer game by Konami pits the turtle fab four against the ruthless Shredder through various exciting stages. There's plenty of action (and pizza) in this one.

Most Innovative Arcade Game

Air Inferno, by Taito, is probably one of the most innovative (and difficult) games ever. This game is basically a search-and-rescue where you must complete various missions, rescuing survivors from a burning tanker and putting out a fire at an oil refinery, for instance. You'll definitely have your hands full between the controls (foot pedals and stick) and the winds that blow your craft off course.

Best Driving Simulator

Last year's award went to Atari's *Hard Drivin'*, and this year's award goes to another Atari game, *Four Trax*. Trading in your steering wheel for handlebars, *Four Trax* puts you in a race on four-wheel all-terrain vehicles (ATV).

Best Flying Game

F-15 Strike Eagle, by MicroProse, gets

the honor of being the best flying game. This game was originally done for the computers and pits you against an enemy force that tries to stop you from reaching the landing zone. One of the unique aspects of the game is that you're not limited to a certain area, meaning you can travel in any direction for any period of time (as long as your fuel lasts) without running into barriers. This game was a close second for the most innovative game.



Best Multiplayer Game

Well, once again the "turtles in a half shell" have to get this award. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* can be found in almost every arcade in the nation—95% plus to be exact.

Best Combat Game

As far as combat games go, *Mercs*, by Capcom, would have to be the favorite this year. Billed as the "turtle killer," a definite shot at Konami's blockbuster, *Mercs* certainly gave it a run for its money.

Best Sports Simulation

The best sports game for the year, without a doubt, is *Pigskin 621 A.D.* by Bally/Midway. Combining a great sense of humor and some great game play,

Bally/Midway was able to create one of the best sports games in a long time.

Best Pinball

The final award in the arcade-game category would have to go to *Diner* by Williams. The game featured some great target shots and sound effects. 🍷

**Left: Atari's *Four Trax*.
Right: Williams' *Diner*.
Bottom: Bally/Midway's
*Pigskin 621 A.D.***



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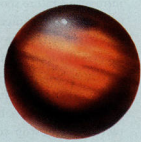
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GAMES BEYOND TOMORROW

IF SCIENCE FICTION had never been created, the computer and video-game industry would've had to invent it. Seldom have medium and message blended together so beautifully. Most gamers are forward-looking individuals, at home with the latest technological marvels, so it is only natural that electronic games about the future would attract a huge following.

Science fiction is not like other game themes. There's no boom-and-bust cycle here! Other concepts, such as tank simulators and football simulations, periodically saturate the market and go "on the shelf" to cool off for six months to a year, but science fiction games are always numerous.

There is no type of science fiction, from laser-blazing space battles to futuristic detective yarns, that can't be found on disk or cartridge. The sophisticated story content familiar to fans of sci-fi movies and books isn't always evident, but the sense of wonder and the sweep and grandeur of science fiction is one of the most powerful forces in the gaming universe.

SCI-FI ACTION

Video-game cartridge makers released too many action sci-fi video games in the last year to even list them all! Let's look at a few that stand out from the crowd.

Obliterating the Overlord of the Asylum is the goal of the interplanetary hero in *Dash Galaxy in the Alien Asylum* (Data East for NES). That means fighting through hundreds of alien space creatures and similarly deadly obstacles in this adventure romp.

Target Earth (Dreamworks for Genesis) delivers plenty of outer space battle action. The Earth must be defended from waves of assaulting aliens in this eight-stage blastathon. The hero's space battle suit offers many possible weapons and strategies to defend our world against interstellar aggression.

A battle-suited hero is also the star of *Final Zone* (Renovation for Genesis), but the action takes place on a hostile planet rather than in the depths of space. Players can load up their combat armor with up to 15 powerful weapons, and there are over 100 from which to choose.

Computer gamers can sink their teeth into a detailed simulation of battle-suit combat in *Day of the Viper* (Accolade for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST). The multi-windowed main display shows both an automatically generated overhead map and a first-person view so that the player can operate the Viper battle suit in a mission to penetrate the heavily defended base of Gar, home of the rulers of the mechanoid invaders.

Fluctuations in the usually immutable law of gravity test arcaders in a couple of sci-fi action cartridges for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Interplay Productions, a major creator of computer adventures, turns action upside down in *The Adventures of Rad Gravity* (Activision for NES).

A GALAXY OF SCIENCE FICTION GAMES

by Arnie Katz

Ten perplexing worlds await! Gravitational changes are only one of many hazards that menace the synthetic warrior hero of *Atomic Robo-Kid* (Trico for NES). Atomic Robo-Kid has four different weapons to aid his quest for Eve, which takes him through 17 levels in this horizontal and vertical scroller.

Thexder 2 (Sierra for Amiga, IBM PC) opens with a disarmingly lavish animated introduction, but fans of the original *Thexder* will recognize the solid action once the aliens attack. Nine combat missions await the transforming battle suit in this shooter from Gama Arts of Japan.

If you enjoyed the all-out action of *Hybris* (Discovery for Amiga), you'll adore *Battle Squadron* (Innerprise for Amiga). Created by the same design team, this vertically scrolling shoot-out is even more frenetic. One or two star warriors zoom up the screen, accompanied by a thunderous musical score, and blast everything in their path. Entrance spaces allow joystick jockeys to descend to subterranean levels of the planet Terrania to battle even denser concentrations of Barax Empire forces.

Stellar 7 (Dynamix for IBM PC) is one of the newest sci-fi action contests—and also one of the oldest. The first version was a favorite in the early 1980s, but this update has the latest in sound and graphics. The first-person combat simulation is as exciting as ever, and it has never looked better.

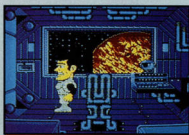
Some sci-fi action games showcase sports of tomorrow. *Skate Wars* (UBI Soft for Commodore 64) mixes soccer, ice



Top: Renovation Products' *Final Zone*.

Bottom left: Accolade's *Day of the Viper*.

Bottom right: *The Adventures of Rad Gravity*, by Activision.



ers choose among five turbo racing flyers, each loaded with deadly armaments. These vehicles compete on any of 36 tracks on nine planets.

A Boy and His Blob (Absolute Entertainment for NES) has inspired *The Rescue of Princess Blobette* (Absolute Entertainment for Game Boy). Although the visuals are necessarily simpler, the Game Boy title retains many of the elements that made the Nintendo cartridge VG&CE's Most Innovative Video Game of 1989.

Last year's sci-fi games report covered two games, *Beyond the Black Hole* (Software Toolworks for IBM PC) and *Arkanoid* (Taito—Discovery for all computer systems), that use science fiction as a graphic theme. The play isn't especially futuristic in either of these action-strategy games, but both will please gamers who like kinetic puzzles in a space setting. *Arkanoid* has spawned a sequel, *Arkanoid II* (Taito for all computer systems). It has even more token-collecting and wall-bashing action than the 1988 hit. No sequel is planned for *Beyond the Black Hole*, but there's a totally revamped version of the game available as a video-game under the name *Orbit 3D* (Hi-Tech Expression for NES).

LICENSED FUTURES

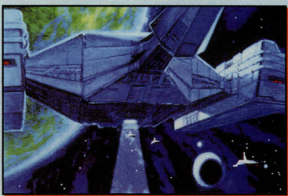
Many electronic science fiction games are based on original concepts, but a sizable percentage derive from licensed properties. There are few well-known sci-fi movies that haven't found their way to the gaming screen.

Total Recall (Accclaim for NES) is a game based on a movie that was, in turn, derived from a science fiction novel by the late Philip K. Dick. The gamer, in the same role as

Top left: Activision's *Galaxy 5000*.

Top right: *Battle Squadron*, by Innerprise.

Bottom row: *Stellar 7*, by Dynamix.



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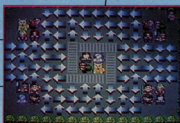
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Top left: LJN's *Back to the Future, Parts II & III*.

Top right: Paragon's *MegaTraveller 1*.

Middle: Electronic Arts' *Space 1889*.

Bottom: Infocom's *Circuit's Edge*.

Arnold Schwarzenegger played over the screen, must discover who has stolen his mind in a plot based on the screenplay.

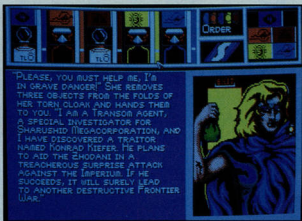
Back to the Future, Parts II & III (LJN for NES) incorporates the plots of the second and third parts of the comedy adventure trilogy starring Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd. The tricks and traps of time-tripping provide the thrills and challenge in this action-adventure cartridge.

Countdown to Doomsday (SSI for Amiga, IBM PC) is based on one of the world's best-known science fiction heroes, Buck Rogers. The Rip Van Winkle of the future is a character familiar to generations from magazine stories, novels, comic books and strips, the classic Buster Crabbe serial, the Gil Gerard T.V. series, and the TSR nonelectronic role-playing game (RPG). *Countdown to Doomsday* finds Buck in the 25th century trying to help a band of freedom fighters liberate the solar system. This science fiction RPG employs a game system based on SSI's popular line of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Gold Box fantasy RPGs, like *Curse of the Azure Bonds*.

Movies are the most frequent, but not the only, source of licensable game concepts. There are also plenty of sci-fi games based on printed stories, television shows and comic books.

The world's most popular sci-fi game has finally plugged into electronic gaming. *MegaTraveller 1: The Zhodani Conspiracy* (Paragon for IBM PC) is home computing's first glimpse of the Spinward Marches, the region of space in which the nonelectronic RPG is set, but, hopefully, it won't be the last. The extensive character-generation system, eye-catching graphics, flexible quick-play interface and majestic scope make *MegaTraveller* a necessary addition to any adventurer's computer library.

Full Metal Planet (Data East for IBM PC, Amiga) is based on a European board game about mining operations on a fairly inhospitable planet.



In this military-economic-diplomatic simulation, one to four players compete against natural hazards and rival companies to extract the all-important ore from the Full Metal Planet. As head of Cobra Steel, the computerist must learn to fully utilize vehicles, equipment and weapons to stay on top of the fast-changing situation.

Victorian Science Fiction is the attraction of *Space 1889* (Electronic Arts for IBM PC). Based on a nonelectronic RPG, *Space 1889* has enough side characters and subplots to keep any armchair adventurer involved in the quest that leads from

the Tomb of Tutankhamen to a hidden civilization buried deep within the bowels of the Earth. Role-gamers who've gotten tired of being dwarves and elves may well enjoy becoming hoods, survivalists or vigilantes as a change of pace.

Circuit's Edge (Infocom for Amiga, IBM PC) is the most striking product this one-time king of the text adventures has published in years. Designed by Westwood Associates in tandem with George Alec Effinger, whose two novels inspired the game, *Circuit's Edge* is an attractive graphic adventure with an unusually colorful setting. It is less like *Star Wars* than a futuristic *Thief of Baghdad*.

Star Wars (Broderbund for Commodore 64) is based on the Atari coin-op, which, in turn, derives from the celebrated George Lucas movie. The player blasts through screens of the Empire's tie-fighters and then zooms down the trench to the heart of the Death Star.

CALLING ALL MECHWARRIORS

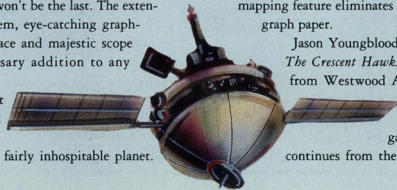
Decidedly different than the "Trek" school of science fiction is *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawks' Inception* (Infocom for IBM PC, Amiga, Apple II, Atari ST, Commodore 64). This combat title casts the player as Jason Youngblood, a novice warrior caught up in the 31st-century struggle to control the Star League. This is the computerized role-playing game for the *BattleTech* universe that is already popular in the form of comic books, nonelectronic games, television and toys.



In *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawks' Inception*, by Westwood Associates, Jason Youngblood returns to rescue his father.

This menu-driven simulation of the life of a MechWarrior cadet jettisons Infocom's all-text format. The modified overhead perspective graphics are attractive, if simple, and the automatic-mapping feature eliminates the need for laborious doodling on graph paper.

Jason Youngblood returns in a sequel to *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawks' Inception* (Infocom for IBM PC) from Westwood Associates. All the MechWarriors are familiar to fans of FASA's nonelectronic adventure-strategy game-system. The plot of the sequel continues from the first installment of the story. To



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triumph, Jason must rescue his father, who was kidnapped during the earlier adventure.

MechWarrior (Activision for IBM PC) is part of the *BattleTech* universe. It differs from the role-play game described elsewhere in this article by offering the player a first-person view of tomorrow's battlefield. The game includes seven different Mechs and numerous missions. Outstanding visuals and sound that supports some of the special audio-enhancing boards make *MechWarrior* a great gaming experience.

Like the real cosmos, the *BattleTech* universe is expanding. Mediagenic currently has an action-oriented *BattleTech* card game for the NES. The game, to be published under the Activision label, is expected to reach stores in late winter or early spring.

TREKKING AMONG THE STARS

Five licensed *Star Trek* computer games and a seemingly infinite number of unofficial adaptations from the Gene Roddenberry creation have made the TV and movie series a staple of electronic gaming.

Predating the authorized adventure programs by several years were many *Trek* games. These were often published by small companies or even single



Two games that go where no man has gone before, *Star Trek V*, by Mindscape (left), and Origin Systems' *Wing Commander*.



Star Raiders all combined to make it one of electronic gaming's enduring classics and paved the way for a steady series of increasingly exciting products.

The latest, and greatest, of the first-person flying and shooting space combat simulators is *Wing Commander* (Origin Systems for IBM PC). VGA graphics and sound-board support make *Wing Commander* play like the action scenes of a cinematic space opera. This 1990

award-winner has the action arcade aces crave, with just enough strategy to keep it from degenerating into a mindless shooting exercise.

Universe III (OmniTrend for Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC) is the third chapter of this action-strategy series. A sensitive diplomatic mission is the main storyline in this role-playing adventure designed by Tom Carbone and Bill Leslie. The overhead perspective graphics are a little drab for such an exciting game, but the menu-based command scheme makes it quick-playing fun.

Five design groups have produced a total of five *Star Trek* adventure games, four based on the original television series and one tied to the movies. These games utilize the characters and *Enterprise* setting familiar to Trekkies everywhere.

Star Trek: The Kobayashi Alternative (Simon & Schuster for Apple, Commodore 64, IBM PC) introduces a window-popping parser interface that allows the player, as Kirk, to have surprisingly realistic conversations with other crewmembers, aliens and assorted nonplayer characters. The scenario is a test for Starfleet cadets in which you must solve the mystery of a missing Federation starship.

The same implementation team, with Subway Software assuming design duties, produced *Star Trek: First Contact* (Simon & Schuster for Apple II, Commodore 64, IBM PC). This tangled tale of an encounter with an alien race incorporates an upgraded version of the *Kobayashi* play system and adds to it a nice set of illustrations.

The Promethean Prophecy (Simon & Schuster for Apple, Commodore 64, IBM PC) is a text adventure not very unlike those Infocom published a decade ago. *Star Trek: The Rebel Universe* (Simon & Schuster for Atari ST) is an action-oriented adventure with a flashy interface. The point-and-click system eliminates laborious typing. A player controls any major character by clicking the appropriate picture on the multi-window display.

The look and feel of Level Systems' *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* (Mindscape for Amiga, IBM PC) is more similar to the movies than the video version of *The Enterprise* saga. It blends action sequences, strategy and a flight simulator to portray a trip to the center of the galaxy.



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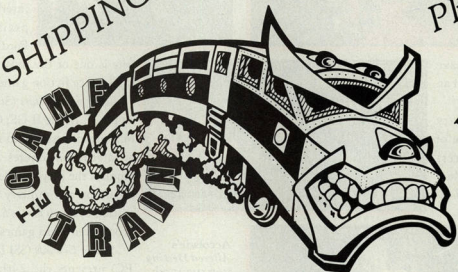
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ADVENTURES IN THE FUTURE

Michael Berlyn is one of the few people whose career straddles science fiction and electronic gaming. He is the author of quite a few computer games and three published novels. *Altered Destiny* (Accolade for Amiga, IBM PC) is a science fantasy adventure with animated graphics and full sound that chronicles the exploits of reluctant adventurer P.J. Barrett. When the hero steps through his TV, the gamer enters Berlyn's fascinating alien universe, which he must save from the destructive powers of an evil jewel.

If you like interplanetary adventure with a heavy dose of slapstick humor, meet intergalactic janitor Roger Wilco. He's the star of *Space Quest I-IV* (Sierra for Amiga, Apple IIgs, Atari ST, IBM PC), designed by the Two Guys from Andromeda team. The graphics and sound get better every time, and *Space Quest III: Pirates of Pestulon* boasts multiple viewing angles, noninteractive dramatic sequences and tension-building cinematic tricks.

Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers (Sierra for Amiga, IBM PC) is scheduled for release by the time this issue hits the newsstands. All Roger wants to do is go home to planet Xenon, but the dreaded Sequel Police stand in his way. If it wasn't for the Latex Babes of Estros and the Time Rippers, the intrepid maintenance man wouldn't have a prayer!

Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess (Draconian for Amiga, IBM PC) is somewhat tongue-in-cheek, but exciting and challenging. This RPG emphasizes puzzle-solving. The player assumes the role of Raven, a would-be revolutionary. Overthrowing the rule of the telepathic Protozorgs, Raven must free the captured Sci-Mutant Priestess. The dreaded Five Ordeals of Delios are mental as well as physical tests for experienced electronic adventurers.

TOMORROW'S WARS

Quasar (Virgin Mastertronic for Amiga) is an economic-military strategy game that takes a tightly focused approach to the subject. An enemy planet at the other end of the galaxy is the player's ultimate target, but it requires a lot of preparation to reach that world with enough force to conquer it. Other spacefar-

ers may try to halt your empire's expansion, and it takes careful resource marshalling of all resources to vanquish the rival planet.

A no-holds-barred struggle between the Alliance of Free Stars and an alien Ur-Quan Hierarchy is the core of *Star Control* (Accolade for IBM PC). A unique feature of the one- or two-player game, designed by Paul Reiche and Fred Ford, is that it has both strategy and arcade action. The player can concentrate on the hot space battles or become engrossed in the building and deployment

of the military-industrial complex to support this war between the planets.

The graphics, sound and interface of *Star Control* are all praiseworthy. Reiche and Ford's action-strategy tour de

force is one of the most absorbing and challenging science fiction games of all-time.

Reach for the Stars (Strategic Studies Group for Apple II, Apple II GS, Commodore 64, IBM PC, Macintosh) casts up to four players as the leaders of interstellar empires. Conquering the universe requires the player to delicately balance economic expansion and military force. The current (third) edition of *Reach for the Stars* is now one of the best "computer board games" on the market.

Stellar Crusade (SSI for Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC) presents the 24th century conflict in the Kiffryn's Cat star cluster. The People's Holy Republic, fearful of encroachment by militant interstellar capitalism, strives against The League, a loose-knit confederation of interstellar traders. A solo human can command the League against the zealots, or a second computerist can try to lead the PHR to cosmic victory.

Typical of games that take a more action-oriented approach to war is *Granada* (Renovation for Genesis). The title refers not to the pop standard tune, but to the Hypertek Cannon Tank (HCT). The video gamer commands this ultimate weapon of the 21st century in deadly fights against flying battleships, a starship and an HCT with similar capabilities.

BACK TO THE PRESENT

Clearly, the science fiction gaming boom shows no signs of slackening. There were even more futuristic games introduced in the last 12 months than in the year prior to that. It doesn't take access to a time machine to say with confidence that the next 12 months will bring at least as many new and exciting science fiction action, strategy and adventure games.

The challenge that video- and computer-game publishers must meet is to infuse science fiction games with the same soaring imagination and sense of wonder in printed and electronic sci-fi.

The next year will be an exciting time for sci-fi gamers. Expected hardware capabilities and the debut of CD software should yield the most sophisticated futuristic funware so far. 🎮



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HUNTING THE HORROR, PART 1

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO

CASTLEVANIA III: DRACULA'S CURSE

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

THE FIRST TWO TITLES IN THE *CASTLEVANIA* SERIES WERE CERTIFIED HITS, AND FROM WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING, *CASTLEVANIA III: DRACULA'S CURSE* ALREADY HAS ITS PLACE RESERVED ON THE BESTSELLER CHARTS. LOOKS LIKE THE POOR BELMONTS ARE NEVER GOING TO GET A REST.

JOIN US NOW ON A JOURNEY THROUGH MANY DANGEROUS LANDS AS WE BATTLE SUPERNATURAL CREATURES AND TRY TO GAIN ACCESS TO DRACULA'S CASTLE. ONLY TRUE WARRIORS HAVE ANY CHANCE OF COMPLETING THE JOURNEY. DO YOU QUALIFY?

THIS MONTH WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT THE FIRST FOUR LEVELS OF *DRACULA'S CURSE*. NEXT MONTH THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

LEVEL 1, Map 1

You start the game here. Make sure you whip all the fire bowls.

Take these stairs up to Level 1, Map 2.



Also, use your whip on all the candles throughout the entire game.

Here's where you'll meet your first enemies. These skeletons are a snap to beat with a single whip crack.

LEVEL 1, Map 3



If you get up close to these bone-tossing skeletons, the bones will go over your head.

Take these stairs down to Level 1, Map 4.

LEVEL 1, Map 4



Don't let the hopping creature here get too close. If he does, he'll be difficult to kill.

Don't jump while standing on these trap doors, or you'll fall through.

Hop over the floating Medusa heads, or use the stopwatch to freeze them temporarily.

These doors mark where you'll restart when you die. Beyond this door lies Level 1, Map 5.

LEVEL 1, Map 6



Get inside here by whipping the pedestal blocks. Then whip the wall to find the meat, which will restore your strength.

These statues shoot fireballs in groups of three. Get up close and keep whipping. Your whip will destroy the fire balls as well as the statue.

You must deal with more hopping creatures here. Whip them immediately.

LEVEL 1, MAP 2



Take these stairs to Level 1, Map 3.

Stairs can be tricky at first. You must press up or down on the direction pad in order to walk on them. It's easy to fall.

These bats are tough to see. Be ready to whip them when they attack.

As always, watch for candles.

LEVEL 1, MAP 5



Pick up an axe here.

Take this stairway to Level 1, Map 6.

LEVEL 1, MAP 7



This door leads to Level 1, Map 7. Find a dagger here.

A candle here holds another cross. Watch out for the bats!

These stairs lead to Level 2, Map 2.

LEVEL 2, MAP 1

This is a tricky jump. Move forward until your head is clear of the block above, then jump. If you hit your head, you'll fall.

Grab the stopwatch in this candle.



Kill this guard from the right before jumping onto his platform. He can endure a couple of hits.

There's a hollow block here. Whip it for a surprise.

The cross you'll find here will kill everything on the screen.

LEVEL 2, MAP 2

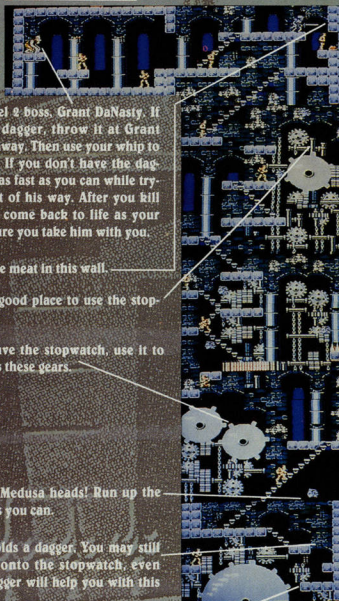


This stairway leads up to Level 2, Map 3.

Kill this guard from the right before jumping onto his platform.

Kill this guard from the left before jumping to his platform. In the candle here, you'll find holy water. But your best bet is to hold onto the stopwatch. You're going to need it.

LEVEL 2, MAP 5



Here's the Level 2 boss, Grant DaNasty. If you have the dagger, throw it at Grant when he's far away. Then use your whip to finish him off. If you don't have the dagger, whip him as fast as you can while trying to stay out of his way. After you kill Grant, he will come back to life as your friend. Make sure you take him with you.

You'll find some meat in this wall.

This is also a good place to use the stopwatch.

If you still have the stopwatch, use it to help you cross these gears.

Oh, no! More Medusa heads! Run up the stairs as fast as you can.

This candle holds a dagger. You may still want to hold onto the stopwatch, even though the dagger will help you with this level's boss.

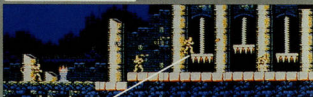
Don't hit your head when you jump from this gear. You'll fall if you do.

LEVEL 2, MAP 3



Get on the second platform so you can jump onto the first pendulum. Jump off the pendulums only when you are as far to the right as they'll take you. The timing is tricky.

LEVEL 3, MAP 1



Jump on top of the spikes and ride them, rather than trying to pass beneath them.

LEVEL 3, MAP 3



LEVEL 3, MAP 4



Remember these statues that shoot three fireballs at a time? Use your whip against them and their fireballs. Also, destroy the hopping creatures immediately, before they get too close.

LEVEL 3, MAP 6



Take these stairs to Level 2, Map 4.



Jump on the gear so that the teeth hold you up. Whatever you do, don't fall down the crack.

This candle will give you holy water.



This way up to Level 3, Map 2.

As soon as an owl appears and spreads its wings, jump and whip. Don't hesitate or you'll miss.



Here you'll find the boomerang, which is helpful against the owls.

More fire-breathing statues and hoppers here.



Take the stairs down to Level 3, Map 5.

The flying jellyfish transform into four smaller creatures the first time you hit them. Also, no matter how many of them you destroy, they keep on coming. Your best bet is to run through here, stopping to fight only when necessary and jumping over enemies whenever possible.



When jumping over this hole, be especially careful not to let a jellyfish hit you.

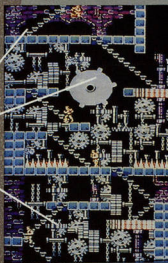
The stairs lead down to Level 3, Map 7.

LEVEL 2, MAP 4

This way to Level 2, Map 5.

Make sure to use the stopwatch when you jump onto this gear. A gargoye head is likely to knock you down if you don't.

The floating Medusa heads will attack again here. Run as fast as you can up the stairs. When making a critical jump, use the stopwatch to stop the heads from attacking.



LEVEL 3, MAP 2

Take these stairs to Level 5, Map 4.



Just as before, get in close to these bone-throwing skeletons.

LEVEL 3, MAP 5

Climb these stairs to Level 3, Map 5.

Beyond this door, you again must choose between two different routes. The upper road leads to the rest of Level 3 and all of Level 4. The lower road leads to Level 5 (see maps in next month's issue). The upper path is the easier of the two.



LEVEL 3, MAP 7



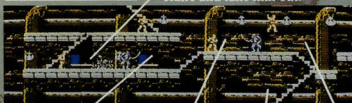
Take these stairs to Level 3, Map 8.

Get the dagger here.

This skeleton has a long whip. Try to keep your distance.

Jump and whip to exterminate the spiders.
Watch out for their webs!

LEVEL 4, MAP 2



This candle holds an invincibility potion.

Climb down to Level 4, Map 3.

Get a stopwatch here.

Before going down the stairs, lure this guard over to the left. Then go down the stairs and take him out.

This guard will be no trouble since the potion has made you invincible.

Jump across this hole and keep going all the way to the left. Then turn to face the ghost that'll appear. Exit left to Level 4, Map 5.

LEVEL 4, MAP 4



Stand all the way to the left and wait for the ghost. When it gets close enough, whip it.

Jump across all three platforms without stopping. On your last jump, whip the skeleton while you're still in the air. Then go back and get the candle. If you retrieve the candle first, it's likely you'll be knocked off the platform by one of the skeleton's bones.

LEVEL 4, MAP 7



These stairs lead up to Level 4, Map 8.

There are more breakaway blocks here. Watch out for them.

In a hollow block in the wall, you'll find some meat. But get rid of the skeleton first.

LEVEL 4, MAP 3



Wait until this guard moves away from the stairs before you descend.

LEVEL 5, MAP 5



Take the stairs up to Level 4, Map 6.

When you get to the third elevator in this series, you must wait a few seconds for the fourth one to appear, but not too long!

LEVEL 4, MAP 8



You must be a fantastic jumper to get across these masts when you use Simon as your character. But if you switch to Grant, it's a cinch.

LEVEL 3, MAP 3

This hollow block contains meat.



Here's the Level 3 boss, the Cyclops. Stand on one of the ledges and keep whipping as quickly as possible. When you kill him, Sypha Belnades will appear and offer to

accompany you on your quest. If you choose to take him with you, you'll lose Grant, who is helpful in Level 4.

To get the candles over the gold blocks, jump onto the block, then immediately

jump again to whip the candle. You should have plenty of time before the block breaks.



Take these stairs up to Level 4, Map 4.

The golden blocks slowly break out from beneath you. Don't stand on them too long.

Grab a dagger, if you're quick.

The red skeletons can't be killed, but you can slow them down with your whip. They'll crumble into dust and rise again after a few seconds.

You barely have enough time to make the jumps across these elevators. Practice!



Stand right under this candle when you whip it, or the large heart inside will fall past you.

LEVEL 4, MAP 6



To beat Medusa, get in close and keep whipping. You'll take a couple of hits, but not as many as you would if you tried to avoid her attacks and fight from a distance.

Here's the toughest boss yet. First, stand behind the left stones, and when the mummies appear, start snapping your whip. Keep whipping until the first mummy is dead. Then go after the second. When you beat the second mummy, a cyclops will appear. The cyclops has a definite pattern of movement that you can take advantage of. Stand on the left-hand blocks. When the cyclops gets close, whip him a couple of times, and jump over his head. Run to the blocks on the right side, and do the same thing again. Keep doing this until the cyclops is dead.

WARNING: When the cyclops stops moving for a second, it means he's getting ready to run. Don't try to whip him when he's running. Just jump over his head, and run for the other side. Good luck and see you next month.

Grant can climb over this wall, which is a shortcut to the end of Level 4. But you might want to go down the stairs and pick up some extra hearts.



LEVEL 4, MAP 9

Darn! More crows!

The crows in this area are tough to hit. Keep practicing.

Take these stairs down to Level 4, Map 9.



Winning the West With Games

by Joyce Worley

The New World was won by men and women of steel. Granite muscles coupled with stone determination carved out our continent. Much of the world's ancient history is a matter of conjecture based largely on the disbursement of artifacts. By contrast, the conquering of the West was done after the invention of paper and ink, by people who were remarkably literate. From diary and ledger, we have almost daily accounts of how the West was won, complete with names and personality profiles on the heroes and heroines who lived the adventure.

We love our history. Our forefathers still live in our memories, and the wonders they worked are the pride of our nation. Considering our passion for the past, it's surprising that Western lore hasn't played a more significant part in computer gaming. Barring gunslinger games, such gritty fare has been scarce. A few stabs at exploration and survival kept the Western spark glowing for years, but the frontier was never reached, much less conquered.

Until now. There was a significant surge in 1990 of the Western trend that began in the late '80s. Several outstanding games now warm the game screens of would-be cowhands, mountain men and women and Western explorers.



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First You Gotta Find It

Before adventurers can conquer the New World, they've got to find it. *Galleons of Glory: The Secret Voyage of Magellan* (Broderbund/IBM PC) retraces Ferdinand Magellan's journey to find a passage to the Spice Islands. The player assumes the role of the historical commander then manages ship and crew through crisis and calamity, sickness and storm, mutiny and mishap on the voyage to South America. Broderbund calls the game an "adventure simulation"; although there's a lot of latitude in what the player can do, the parameters of the game follow historical outlines.

The player, as Magellan, visits the galley to talk with the doctor or the cook; the deck to talk to the gunner and carpenter; the quarterdeck to talk with the navigator and Bosun; and the Cabin to talk with the captain or priest. These advisors give information and receive orders about crew health and morale, ship's status, supplies and discipline. Using the tools of the trade (map and telescope), a skilled commander may successfully reach South America, sail down the coast and locate the Straits of Magellan.

Galleons of Glory is a history-lovers feast and as such, has great educational value. But the adventure surpasses the lesson. The voyage it simulates was among the greatest feats of derring-do in the history of our world. Gamers who conquer the silicon seas to reach the New World will get at least a taste of what Magellan faced.

Populating the Place

Strategic Studies Group has a masterful simulation of new world conquest. *Gold of the Americas* (Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC) recreates colonial conquest conditions from 1500 to 1800. The player tries to build an empire for either England, France, Spain or Portugal, working against three other people (or the computer).

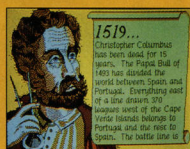
The player controls colonists, explorers, soldiers, trade ships and slavery, in an attempt to establish colonies in the New World, divided (for purposes of play) into 30 areas. Multiple difficulty settings and randomized events keep it interesting, and the conqueror can experiment with varying modes of management (benign, exploitive, etc.) to see which works best when exploring continents.

The Wild and Woolly West

One of England's premier publishers, Ocean Software, concocted *Billy The Kid* (Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC), which is rather loosely based on the life of the West's most prominent bad boy. It contains eight separate action arcade-style games based on Billy's exploits, including his train



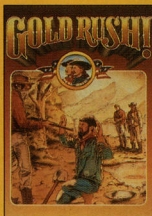
Broderbund's *Galleons of Gold* (above).



robberies, barroom brawls, poker palaces, cattle rustling and shoot-outs.

The player takes the role of Billy or his

Programmers of Sierra's award-winning *Gold Rush* took pains to keep the game as historically accurate as possible.



nemesis, Sheriff Pat Garrett. (Two gamets can play head to head using linked machines.) Billy strives to stay ahead of the law while seeking revenge for a friend's death. There's even a little romance; Billy and the sheriff are actually vying for the love of the same woman.

Billy The Kid features stylized cartoons of large animated characters against Western backdrops. A storyline links the arcade games in a colorful, if romantic, look at history through a technological lens.

The Search for Gold

The image of streets paved with gold evaporated when immigrants disembarked the vessels that brought them to the New World, but the dream never died. It remained dormant, waiting for the cry from Sutter's Mill to reawaken the longing for easy money.

How long would it have taken to settle the West were it not for the dream of riches? No one knows, but every historian recognizes that this country's westward trek was accelerated by the discovery of California gold.

Software students of history can relive a

lot of the excitement of 1849 through Sierra's award-winner *Gold Rush*. This magnificent historical game, styled in the pattern of other Sierra adventures (*Kings Quest*, etc.), starts the gamer in Brooklyn Heights, New York, then sends him on a trek to the gold fields. The trip to California is by boat around the

tip of South America, by boat and jungle trek across Panama, or over land via stagecoach, steamboat and covered wagon.

As an Eastern greenhorn, the gamer must face and overcome obstacles drawn out of history. The adventure is parser-driven and sparked by handsome graphics, and the situations faced are realistic. The authors took pains to keep the program

historically accurate, and the gamer who completes the three routes to the West will not only gain the gold, but also a great deal of understanding of what fortitude it took to stay alive through the gold rush period.

Gold was a driving force for settlers in other parts of the West too. Arizonans tell tales of the Lost Dutchman Mine somewhere in Superstition Mountain. A vein of gold

was lost when an old prospector, Jacob Waltz, died before he could file his claim, but there are rumors of a map. Hundreds of treasure seekers and gold-diggers of every description have tried to find the locale, an eerie number have even died in the attempt. (It's dangerous poking about on remote desert mountains.) So far, the only money to come out of Superstition Mountain has been from the tourists and treasure hunters who have come to search for it.

CATRAP™

Asmik
Corporation of America



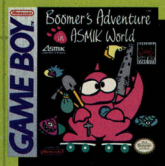
More than just a game of mind-bending intrigue and action, Catrap lets you be the architect of the underground labyrinth and make your own game of intricate mazes. With 100 challenging puzzles to solve, only you can help Catboy and Catgirl land on their feet.



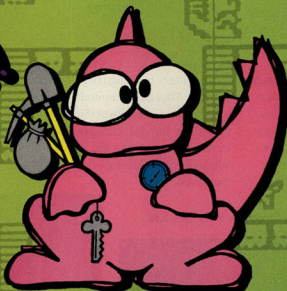
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- 2 player capability with GAME LINK™ cable

BACK TO BACK

Excitement



Our cute and mighty warrior must battle his way through mutant guards to the top of the tower. Travel through 8 challenging worlds as you help Boomer search for the keys to defeat the evil Zoozoon!



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- 2 player capability with GAME LINK™ cable
- Screen moves as Boomer does
- 8 challenging worlds

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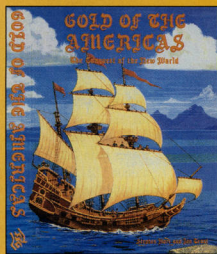
Nintendo



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Boomer's Adventure *in* ASMIK World

CIRCLE #142 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Magnetic Images, a development group located in Phoenix, based its Western game around this myth. *The Lost Dutchman Mine* (distributed by Innerprise Software, for play on Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC) sends the player to Goldfield to outfit, learn the news, talk with the locals, perhaps win some cash playing poker and prepare for the search.

The gamer starts with \$250, so supplies have to be picked wisely. Once in the desert, food and water are monitored carefully. Rivers can be panned for gold or fished for food, and caves and mines can be explored.

It's difficult to stay alive in the hostile surroundings. Falling rocks, cave-ins, rattlesnakes, scorpions, heat, Indian raids and robbers keep the prospector alert (or do him in). The player interacts with the adventure through a status panel with icons that report on all supplies, cash, health and temperature.

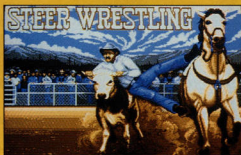
There's a map that's been torn into six pieces and scattered through the abandoned mines. Staying alive to retrieve it is a major accomplishment, interpreting it is another. But after a certain amount of trial and error (thank goodness for the save feature), the gamer can do what no real-life adventurer has done so far: find and stake a claim to the Lost Dutchman Mine of Superstition Mountain.

The goal is gold again in *Colorado* (Color Dreams for play on Sega Genesis). The video gamer is armed with axe, dagger, rifle and explosive in



Left: SSG's *Gold of the Americas*. **Above:** Digitek's *Western Games*. graphics offer stunning scenes of the West, including mountain scenery, Indian villages and rugged frontier buildings.

There aren't many play details available at this time; *Colorado* is not scheduled for release until later in 1991. But it promises spectacular graphics with hot arcade action set against a colorful, historical background.



Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Rodeo, by Keypunch Software, is a collection of contests including steer-wrestling, trick shooting and bronco-busting.

Farmers and Cowboys

Western style shines through on the arcade games too. Digitek's *Western Games* (Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64) is a madcap dose of backwoods humor and six tough-guy (or-gal) contests. The game was introduced sometime ago, but no listing of Western entertainments is complete without it.

Ocean's Billy the Kid.



this action-arcade game that sends the player canoeing his or her way down the Colorado rapids in search of the Cheyenne gold

mine. The background graphics offer

stunning scenes of the West, including mountain scenery, Indian villages and rugged frontier buildings.



Using joystick or keyboard control, the player competes in arm-wrestling contests, beer-shooting (a six-gun quick-shooter), milking the cow, dancing contests, an eating competition and quid-spitting. (That's tobacco chewing and spitting.)

The graphics are brightly colored larger-sized cartoony images of Westerners. They're not in the least heroic; these country folks seem closer to the Ozarks than the Wild West. But it's funny and engaging and rates a spot in a Western software collection.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Rodeo (Keypunch Software for Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC) is a hard-to-find collection of games. Since its initial release in England and subsequent import to the USA, both the publisher and the American distributor have left the software business.

The joystick controls the on-screen movements of a would-be king of the cowboys through a set of rodeo contests that include steer-wrestling, trick shooting, knife-throwing, calf-roping and bronco-busting. There's also a stagecoach race and dramatic

Indian fight, all accompanied by Western folk music and high-res graphics executed by Tynesoft of England.

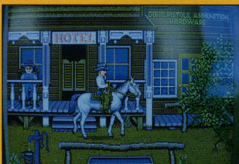
The rodeo moves are taken from real life. The gamer who masters the game may

not be ready to turn professional in the sawdust ring, but at least it'll promote an understanding of just how skilled the real rodeo riders are.

Going into the West

Software historians and armchair adventurers have just begun carving trails. The West is being tapped as a site for future programs. Chances are this is just the first leg of the westward trail for software. The games released thus far are marvelous, but there are surely more coming.

The '90s may see the West finally won, not by the darlings of history but by armchair adventurers reliving their feats (while saving their own feet). ☞



All right, Lynx owners and wanna-bes, let's look at the latest offerings for the Atari portable game system, all four of which are ComLynx titles!

Zarlor Mercenary

Epyx for the Lynx

It should come as no surprise to anyone that games with "mercenary" in their titles tend to be action contests with a whole lot of fightin' going on. In this respect *Zarlor Mercenary* is no exception. In the game you are a mercenary hired by the Zarlors to fight off the invading forces of the Melogites. Your typically mercenary goal is to gain wealth for fighting, and you are rewarded in monetary units called "Zarbits." The more destruction you cause, the more money you'll make.

At the end of each mission—if you survive it—you can take your ill-gotten gains to the Mercenary Mercantile to buy such goods as more deadly weapons or even another ship! Likewise, you can sell things you've picked up or even one of your remaining ships in order to get cash to buy a desirable item.

You start by picking which of the seven different mercenaries you wish to be. Each mercenary starts off with a particular weapon. For instance, Scorch starts off with a laser, which can be picked up right away on Level 1, so you may not find it as useful as an item one of the others is equipped with.

Zarlor Mercenary is an overhead vertically scrolling contest. The screen scrolls at a constant rate, and you are free to move all about it. In fact, the actual area you can move in is more than one screen in width, making it easy to miss a valuable Power Globe or stumble across a previously undiscovered target or enemy.

Your ship's firepower is considerable, but even augmented by purchased weapons and Power Globes, it's a rough ride. Blasting like mad isn't enough. You have to really dance around the enemy firepower while trying to get a bead on your target...and I'm not talking bombs falling straight down the screen. I'm talking energy bolts and missiles coming from above, left, right and diagonally! Sometimes it's impossible to avoid being hit. Fortunately, your ship doesn't explode from just any hit. It takes a certain amount of damage to blow your ship to smithereens.

Zarlor Mercenary features exceptional graphics and better than average sound. If you can take a moment away from blasting, you'll notice the amount of graphic detailing put into the backgrounds and even the ene-



ROBO-RAMPAGING MERCENARIES OF SHANGHAI

by
MAURICE MOLYNEUX

mies. The graphics at the Mercenary Mercantile are also nice, with pictures of each character and the shopkeeper displayed in addi-

four players via ComLynx. You might think it would be a lot easier to get through the game with more players, and in some ways it is. But the game stacks the deck against large mercenary forces by cutting back the number of lives per player the more players there are. In a one-player game you can have up to four ships to start with. In four-player mode that number is cut to two. Ouch!

If I had one complaint with this game it would be that it's too hard initially. The first level isn't very tough, but the second is murder. It's easy to get frustrated and quit when you keep getting pulverized by the swamp denizens of Mezort.

Robo-Squash

Atari for the Lynx

"Pong comes of age!"

I've heard that sort of thing so many times that it makes my head hurt. Yet, in a way, a sort of souped-up Pong is exactly what *Robo-Squash* is. But before you dismiss the game, let me mention that this game adds a dimension that Pong never had: the third dimension of depth.

Robo-Squash is a paddle-game in 3-D. Your paddle moves left, right, up and down, and the ball zips into and out of the screen in perspective.

That's not innovative enough? Okay, what if I told you that there are bonus targets in the middle of the field that you can hit to gain special "power-ups"? Power-ups add abilities to your paddle such as being able to grab the ball or show you where to put your paddle to return the ball.

Still not enough? Fine. What if I told you that a missed ball goes splat on the inside of your Lynx screen, sort of like a big ripe tomato, and that the splatter mark won't go

away until the end of the round, and you have to play with it hanging in your face?

Now the coup de grace. Not only are all of these elements in play, but each round is played for a different "world," one of 16 in a four by four grid. You must not only try to win as many matches as

possible but also try to win them in worlds alongside each other in order to make lines of won worlds for bonus points.

To be honest, it's hard to be fair to *Robo-Squash* in a review. It sounds simplistic in the extreme, and in many ways it is simple. At the same time, it's a fun game and quite a challenge. The graphics are good, and the sound is decent. There are several different playing speeds and a nice animated introduc-



Left: *Zarlor Mercenary* by Epyx
Right: Atari's *Robo-Squash*



tion to images of the wares you can buy and sell. Oddly enough, the best graphic in the game is the closing screen that appears when you die, which shows a wrecked spacecraft smoking on an alien landscape.

Zarlor Mercenary allows between one and

tion sequence that explains how to play the game. The real fun comes when you ComLynx with a friend for a two-player contest. Playing against the Lynx is one thing, but being pitted against a fellow human (or Gorn, Vulcan or whatever) makes the game a lot more exciting and a heck of a lot of fun.

I thought the game was going to be silly, and it really is kind of funky, but it's simple and fun, and I enjoyed myself immensely. You may want to try before you buy, but for my money *Robo-Squash* is a blast.

Rampage

Atari for the Lynx

Why is it that movie monsters appeal so much to sixth-grade boys? Why do mucus-dripping mutants and rickshaw-wrecking reptiles hold such sway over preadolescents? Is it that such youngsters, lacking any real control over the world they inhabit, secretly envy the power and seeming invincibility of these creatures of fantasy?

Maybe. Then again, maybe not, because a lot of us former sixth-graders are still taken with movie monsters, especially when we can, for a brief time anyway, step into their shoes...er, talons...whatever. The arcade game *Rampage* has come to the Lynx. With it you and up to three of your most monstrous friends can engage in the kind of mega-demolition previously reserved for King Kong and the 50-foot woman (now there's a match made in heaven).

In *Rampage* the monsters are all former humans who have been accidentally mutated into slaving beasts. As one of the monsters, your main goal is to maintain your health while simultaneously wracking up points by pulverizing all man-made objects—and men—in the vicinity. There are 61 "days" to complete, the last of which leads you to Sunnyvale, California, where a lab technician holds the key to returning your monster to his or her human state.

Each day presents you with a section of a different city to destroy. Each section contains a certain number of buildings; all must be destroyed before the next round begins. The standard way to smash buildings is to climb their sides and punch away.

Behind the walls you will find various objects, ranging from tasty foodstuff and humans (yum!) to dangerous objects like bombs and "live" electric appliances. When you eat something good for you, it adds to your monster's health. Eating something bad (like a cactus or toilet) results in a lowering of health. You'll know something's not good for your monster if he sticks his tongue out after ingesting it.

The threats to your well-being are many. The most common danger is soldiers who peek out of windows and either shoot or lob dynamite at you. They're not a big problem, and you should think of them as quick snaks

while you're looking for innocent citizens to munch on. More dangerous are the helicopters and tanks that prowl the city. One of the biggest dangers is being on a building when it collapses, which hurts your monster sorely. Predicting the collapse of buildings is difficult because there are little soldiers who attempt to blow up the building, and if you aren't paying attention, you may suddenly take a nasty drop to the pavement thanks to the actions of one of these little demolition experts.



Two new Lynx releases, *Rampage* (top) and *Shanghai* (bottom) were popular computer games.

Using the ComLynx, up to four players can participate in *Rampage*, playing the parts of George the Gorilla, Lizzy the Giant Lizard, Larry the Lab Rat or Ralph the Werewolf. In multiplayer mode you can cooperate, or you can all slug it out to see who's the toughest monster of all.

Rampage has good graphics with lots of neat touches. Not only do the monsters have numerous expressions and animated positions, but there are little details like the victims and soldiers, the detailed buildings, cars and tanks and even the little men sitting in bathtubs and on toilets. The music is good too, although I did recognize at least one piece as having been previously used in *Chip's Challenge*.

Kill, maim and destroy!

Shanghai

Atari for the Lynx

I reviewed this game for the Game Boy a few months ago, and I really liked that version. Well, my opinion of the Lynx version is

no different. In fact, I think I like this version even more than the already excellent Game Boy version, primarily because it is much easier to see on the larger Lynx screen.

For those unfamiliar with *Shanghai*, it is a variation on the ancient Chinese game of mah-jongg. In the game you are confronted by a pattern of several levels of tiles. The object is to locate matching tiles (same type or "suit") on left and/or right borders of the levels. When two such tiles are matched up, they are removed. The ultimate goal is to remove all of the 144 tiles and thus "slay the dragon."

The Lynx version is quite similar to the one played on the Game Boy, but there are a few notable exceptions. First and foremost, the Lynx version "shades" the levels of tiles, so it's easier to tell what particular level tiles are on. In addition, because many of the tile symbols are somewhat similar, the Lynx provides a "zoom" view of whatever tile you are pointing at, so the actual pattern is very clear.

Control is also simplified. In the Game Boy version you had to press the "A" button to pick one tile, press it again to select another and press it a third time to remove both tiles. Playing on the Lynx, when you select the second tile, both are automatically removed from the board. The pointer "wraps around," making moving around the screen easier as well.

The Game Boy version of *Shanghai* had three different musical scores to choose from. The Lynx version has four and a no-music option (which the Game Boy sorely lacked), as well as

numerous different designs for the tile patterns (dragon, spider, hawk, etc.). However, the Game Boy version is easier to play because it allows you to take back moves and get numerous hints. The Lynx version allows no backing up and only one hint for each turn.

The graphics in *Shanghai* are simple but effective. The tile pictures are pleasant, even if they are a bit on the simple side, and the title and end-game graphics are also well-done. The musical scores are excellent, as are the few sound effects. One noteworthy feature is the built-in help function, which explains how to play the game (look ma, no manual!).

That *Shanghai* can also be played by two players (via ComLynx) is also a welcome feature. Other options include competitive and cooperative modes, which results in taking a traditional "solitaire" game and making it "social."

I can't stress hard enough how good a game this is. Sure, it lacks flashy graphics and action, but it's a good mental challenge that won over not just cynical old me, but just about everyone else I showed it to. Give it a look.

Gotta go! So many games, so little time!

COMPUTER GAME REVIEWS

Stratego

ACCOLADE

Versions: IBM PC (\$49.95),
Macintosh (49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

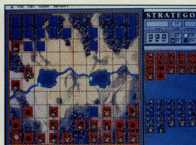
Milton Bradley's *Stratego*, the celebrated military-themed game of skill, has been on a collision course with home-computer entertainment since the TRS-80 allowed computer gamers to play tick-tack-toe without the need of a human opponent. Like that much simpler recreation, *Stratego* stubbornly resists solitaire play. This clash of armies hinges on hidden movement, which can't be implemented without another intelligence to administer the other side.

Now *Stratego* is available to the solo gamer in this sensitive and satisfying electronic edition. Five skill levels, ranked in expertise from sergeant up to field marshal, let the game's challenge keep pace with the player's improvement. If repeatedly besting the sergeant inflates the gamer's ego too much, a round at a higher level often restores humility.

The gamer can play with the standard rules of the classic board game or choose the campaign game, which follows tournament rules. Options like "aggressive advantage," which awards victory to the striking piece in case of a tie in rank, open new vistas while remaining faithful to the true essence of the game. The "Silent Defense" rule, which reveals the rank of only the striking piece, uses the data-tracking power of the computer to produce a valid variation that would be difficult, if not impossible, in the nonelectronic version.

Stratego comes with a wide range of quick setup options, though advanced players can rapidly assemble the troops in any desired pattern with the drag-and-move system. A stored setup can be laid on the board with the flag to the left or right at the touch of an on-screen button. This further increases the variety of ready-made openings.

The graphics are simple, effective and



Milton Bradley's classic game of military strategy, *Stratego*, is now available to computer users, in an adaptation by Accolade.



harder to distinguish than their counterparts in the board game.

Stratego isn't flashy. It lacks the multiple perspectives, animations and other frills of the top chess titles. Perhaps Accolade will offer a deluxe edition someday. Even without these trimmings, the computerized *Stratego* is an outstanding electronic board game.

—Arnie Katz

Accolade
550 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700

Stellar 7

DYNAMIX

Versions: Amiga (\$34.95),
IBM PC (\$34.95)

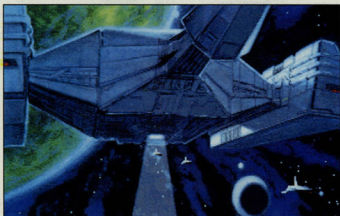
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Despite the fact that home-computer games have been around for over a decade, there have been relatively few "remakes" of older hits. Once sound came to films; for example, much of Hollywood's output for the next few years consisted of "talkie" versions of silent film favorites. Audiences found that technical innovation can dress up an old classic into a new favorite. Stories like *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Beau Geste* have been told and retold so many times that some of the dialogue has grown hair, but the enduring success of these films proves that a great story is a

great story is a great story, to paraphrase Gertrude Stein.

Stellar 7 was a wonderful game when Penguin produced it as an Apple II/Commodore 64 "flippy" (a double-sided disk containing two different versions of the same game) in the early '80s, and it remains outstanding in its current incarnation as a state-of-the-art IBM PC action-strategy pastime. The new *Stellar 7*, from Dynamix, brought back the game's original designer, Damon Slye, to head a team that included lead programmer Piotr Lukaszuk, art director Mark Peasley, conceptual artist Robert Caracol, 3-D artist Cyrus Kanga and audio director Alan McKean. The revamped version uses all the bells and whistles obtainable on current PC technology in order to produce a first-person outer space shootout that is as impressive to a '90s audience as the original was to the gamers of the early '80s.

The game itself is virtually unchanged from its original incarnation. Once again the user is piloting Earth's slickest outer space fighter craft, the Raven, against the forces of Draxon, Supreme Overlord of the Arcturan (read: Evil) Empire. Draxon's minions must be faced and defeated by the Raven in seven different star systems. On each of the seven battlefields a Guardian will appear once the player has eliminated a predetermined number of enemy battlecraft. The Guardian, when defeated, is replaced by a Warp Link, which whisks the player to the next system.



The original designer of *Stellar 7*, Damon Slye, has returned to re-create the game in all its grandeur.

The player's only hope is to master the controls of the Raven, which include (in addition to the standard Bi-Phasal Thunder Cannon and shields): an Inviso Cloak Generator, which renders the Raven invisible to electromagnetic sensory systems; the Eel Shield, which rechannels an enemy craft's shield energy back into itself for ramming; a Super Cannon, which doesn't require the reload time of the standard cannon; an MP Thruster for short bursts of speed; the Cat's Eye, which defeats most cloaking devices; the RC Bomb, which can be deposited behind the Raven and set to explode when another craft breaks its perimeter field; and even a Jump Thruster, which enables the Raven to generate short-term vertical lift.

All the old, familiar Arcturan fighting forces are back as well, spiffed up in 256 color VGA glory (with 256 color MCGA, 16 color EGA, Tandy 16 color and even four-color CGA support). The speedy but thinly armored Sandsled, the sinister-looking Prowler, the heavily shielded Assault Tank and the stationary Laser Battery are among the Arcturan forces.

The audio for *Stellar 7* provides superb sound effects and musical support for the Roland MT-32 and LAPC-1, Ad Lib and Sound Blaster boards, with digital voice support for the Tandy 1000 TL and SL.

Whether you're a grizzled veteran gamer who remembers the original or a tenderfoot to the world of computer gaming, anyone with a fondness for great action games with a soupçon of strategy should find lots to enjoy with *Stellar 7*. Let's hope its success, as well as the promised remake of Sierra's brilliant *Oil's Well*, inspires more publishers to rediscover some of the great game ideas of the past.

—Bill Kunkel

Dynamix/Sierra
P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-8989

Dragon's Lair II: Escape From Singe's Castle

BETHESDA

Version: Amiga (\$69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Modern technology hit the arcades in the '80s like a ton of bricks when Don

Jamie Bunker
Professional Gamer

"Here's one game
that really smokes"

When Jamie says Gaiares really smokes, we believe him. That's because Jamie's been a professional video game tester since he was twelve. And when we introduced Jamie to the eight meg power and 3 way scrolling graphics of Gaiares, he was blown away.

Why? Because Gaiares is the first of its kind to offer universal action, outrageous sound, plus a side kick probe that terrorizes enemy ships by stealing their fire power, then returns so you can blow them out of oblivion.

So before you buy the next game for your Sega system, see what the pro's go for, then go for Gaiares.



RENOVATION
PRODUCTS

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CIRCLE #145 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Bluth released *Dragon's Lair*, the very first laserdisc arcade game. The game was revolutionary in its use of animated sequences that were called up from the laserdisc player inside the game cabinet depending on the player's actions. The gamer would get closer to the goal if he made correct moves or choices at various points in the game.

Although very popular, the game was nothing more than a test of reflexes and memory. Only a few more laserdisc games made it to the arcades before the market crumbled.

It was only a matter of time before someone converted the game for play on the Amiga. Unfortunately, the first try didn't come close to capturing the full effect of the arcade game.

The same design team got together again to produce *Escape From Singe's Castle*, an updated version of the 1987 *Dragon's Lair*. Completely different rooms and a number of other options make it the best conversion so far of the arcade classic, a record that should stand until someone designs a CD-ROM version.

The first Amiga *Dragon's Lair* game lacked the distinct background of the arcade version and instead used bit-mapped graphics for everything. The new title brings the original backgrounds to the computer via digitization. Only the animations are bit-mapped.

Dragon's Lair II: Escape From Singe's Castle puts the player in the role of Dirk Daring, a knight on a mission to save Princess Daphne from the evil dragon Singe. The gamer directs the joystick in the right direction and pushes the joystick button with the exact timing the game requires.

Although the action might sound a bit boring, the attraction of the game lies in the rooms of the castle and the animated sequences. As expected from Bluth, these are nothing less than imaginative and breathtaking. *Dragon's Lair II* truly captures the look and spirit of the arcade game.



***Dragon's Lair II* has a new interface that lets players choose the number of lives and difficulty level as well as set switches for sound effects.**

There are 11 sequences in *Dragon's Lair II: Escape From Singe's Castle*. A new interface lets the player choose the number of lives and the difficulty level and set switches for sound effects. There's also an aid that reveals the correct move and a mirror-image option. In addition, the designers threw in two sequences not in the original game, plus the ability to save the game after each successful encounter.

Dragon's Lair II runs well on floppy disks, but even better on hard disk. The best feature of all is the ability to link *Dragon's Lair II* to the first Amiga conversion for a lengthy, challenging game. Graphics and special effects are excellent. The sounds are taken right from the game, and the animations blend in well with the digitized backgrounds.

Until the advent of CD-ROM technology is applied to this classic, *Escape From Singe's Castle* is the closest thing to the arcade hit available for play on computer.

—Russ Ceccola

Bethesda
15235 Shady Grove Road, Suite 100
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 926-8300

Imperium

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Atari ST (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Imperium is a very nice strategy game of planetary conquest and development coupled with empire management. Unfortunately, the game is presented with almost no sound and black-and-white graphics. This takes away from its attractiveness, but in no way detracts from the excellent play. *Imperium* is for the serious strategist who wants to spend many hours in front of the computer considering options that range from whether to invade a planet to the best way to keep citizens happy and safe.

The player takes the role of Amarillus, the leader of the Thyrogyn Empire. The ultimate goal of the game is to keep the Thyrogyns prosperous for 1,000 years or until all other empires are destroyed. The latter only happens with great difficulty.

In order for human beings to survive for long periods of time, every year they must consume levels of Nostrum, a life-extension drug. Nostrum is found on certain planets and mined on others. The key to winning is to develop alliances with other empires quickly, invade and colonize

continued on page 114

THIS TINY GAME HAS 1,253 ENEMY SOLDIERS, 392 TIME DELAY BOMBS, 140 LASER CANNONS, 28 SINKHOLES, AND ONE KICKBUTT ATTITUDE.



BUT IT STILL HAS ROOM FOR YOU.

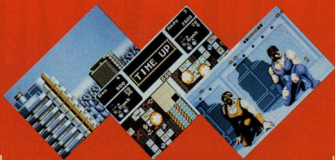
Give or take a few enemies, time delay bombs, laser cannons, and sinkholes, but who's counting. Because you'll need all your skills, good judgement, and quick reflexes to crack this game.

In Crack Down, you must accept a top-secret mission to re-take control of a heavily guarded facility where artificial life systems are created. The only problem is that their evil leader wants to use them to take over the world. And they don't appreciate well-armed, visitors, spoiling their plans.

Once inside, you'll have a limited amount of time to set off time delay bombs at key locations inside the compound and get past the patrolling guards.

If you need help, use the two-player split-screen mode. This special option allows you and a friend to blast away with your weapons as two separate teams within the facility.

So if you want a game that has an attitude, make a reservation to play Crack Down. We have just enough room to fit you in.



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12062 Valley View, Suite 250/ Garden Grove, CA 92645/ (714) 893-0309

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CLQAW

continued from page 110

planets that contain Nostrium, keep economic progress high and build a fleet and defensive forces. There are also many other factors to consider, so these are just general strategies that a player should employ.

Imperium allows the player to select difficulty levels and assign certain tasks to the computer and subordinates to keep watch over. The easy-to-use interface facilitates quick game play. The gamer takes his time to set a course of action throughout his empire and only then sets things in motion.

Actions are performed for a period of up to ten years, so the number of game turns varies between 100 and 1,000. A row of 16 icons appears at the top of the screen. Each icon brings up a window of appropriate information/options. One allows control of military decisions, another offers economic data and another switches to a map screen.

The map is the only color screen in the game. It depicts the many solar systems or the planets in a particular solar system. Each can be rotated for different viewing angles. Information about solar systems or planets is transferred to the main screen via a clipboard. Despite the large number of windows and factors to consider, the completely mouse-controlled interface makes the large task at hand much easier.

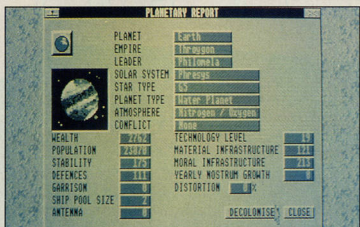
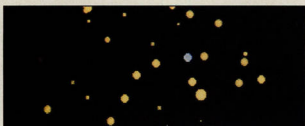
Imperium moves slowly at first, but picks up as time goes on. Around the year 2036, the player must handle an invasion by the Phroygon Empire, so it's imperative to build up forces and colonize planets as quickly as possible in the first 15 years.

The game plays a little tune while you read reports at the beginning of each game turn. Other than this, there is no sound. Usually, it's not a necessity for strategy games. However, the graphics should have been given some color. Staring at a black-and-white screen for more than an hour gets hard on the eyes.

Imperium is a must buy for die-hard strategists and wargamers alike.

—R. C.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171



***Imperium* is a strategy game of planetary conquest coupled with empire management.**



***Lucasfilm's The Secret of Monkey Island* is an intermediate-level adventure that falls between its predecessors in terms of difficulty.**

The Secret of Monkey Island

LUCASFILM GAMES

Versions: Amiga (\$59.95), Atari ST (\$59.95), IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Lucasfilm Games, best known for a line of historical flight simulators (*Battlehawks 1942*, *Battle of Britain* and *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*), is a name that has become synonymous with quality computer entertainment. Both of their previous role-playing releases, *Loom* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, were phenomenally successful, despite the fact that the former suffered from a lack of endurance. *The Secret of Monkey Island* is an intermediate-level adventure that falls between its predecessors in terms of difficulty, a benefit it gains from an extremely friendly interface.

Players assume the role of Guybrush Threepwood, an intrepid young man in search of fame and fortune, somewhat misguided and influenced by the less savory inhabitants of the Scum Tavern. Our man aspires to become a pirate by completing three quests: stealing an idol from the governor's mansion, finding some lost treasure and defeating the Sword Master in combat.

Naturally, the first order of business is to explore the surroundings. Fortunately for those who detest mapping, elaborate note-taking is not required for most of this adventure. Several areas are not readily accessible to the player initially, such as the governor's mansion. In addition, even after the Sword Master is found, she will have nothing to do with the player (Lucasfilm should be applauded for using a female character in a role that many would consider only appropriate for a male hero). Solving these dilemmas is just part of the fun.

The initial problem to face is the severe lack of funds. To correct this, take a trip out of town to explore the wonders of nature. Somewhere out there lies a circus. Get an act together, and it might be possible to make enough money to buy the treasure map and a few digging tools.

While journeying abroad, the player comes upon a bridge guarded by, of all things, a troll. Combat is not in order here, which is good, since the character has yet

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to develop a proficiency at swordsmanship. Instead, try to appease the troll by getting what he is looking for. You will then be able to cross the bridge, where combat skills may be learned. While abroad, it is also possible to find something of use to fend off the dogs guarding the governor's mansion.

Once the initial three quests are solved, the ghost of the infamous pirate LeChuck appears and kidnaps the governor. The player must now initiate the rescue. This requires a ship and crew. Finding a boat is the easy part, one has only to visit "Stan's Previously Owned Vessels." The crew can be recruited from the various vagrants that remain on the island, but don't expect to sail the Spanish Main with these inferior tars.

From this point onward comes the meat-and-potatoes portion of the game, and it would be unfair to spell things out too explicitly.

The control interface for *Monkey Island* is superb. Standard adventuring commands appear on a control bar under the main display. Also, the player can point and click on items on-screen to have their character walk over and take them. The frustrations experienced in other games, where one has to lead their characters through furniture-strewn rooms to stand on precisely the right pixel, are not part of this game.

The colorful locations used are just as colorfully illustrated, particularly in VGA, and the overall thrust of both the content and graphics reminded me of the Disney ride *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

The Secret of Monkey Island is an amusing game and is fun to play as well. All gamers who even remotely enjoy this type of adventure will delight in hours of fantasy enjoyment.

—Ed Dille

Lucasfilm Games
P. O. Box 10307
San Rafael, CA 94912
(415) 662-1864

Command HQ

MICROPROSE/OZARK SOFTSCAPE
Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Are *Risk* and *Empire* fun, but too simple? Does the name Gary Grigsby send shivers up your spine? If this description

fits your affliction (wargaming), then *Command HQ* is the cure.

Command HQ is actually five highly addictive global strategic scenarios that share both a common interface and command structure. Of course, both 1918 and 1942 are represented. The former limits players to infantry, cruisers and submarines. The latter adds carriers, aircraft and tanks to the mix.

Hypothetical World War III and World War IV scenarios also include nukes, satellites, satellite killers, intelligence scans and the ability to sway neutrals with foreign aid. The final scenario, cryptically entitled "???", presumes that the world order has disintegrated into city states, much like ancient Greece, and players must assume an "Alexander the Great" mentality to conquer the world. At this stage, all the

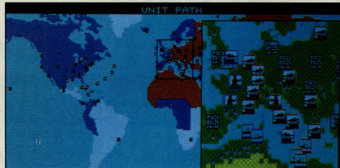
ingenious weapons that got the world in this mess to begin with (i.e., nukes, satellites, etc.), are things of the past.

Karl Von Clausewitz would love this game. It reinforces his axioms that logistics and economics win wars, not guns. Although the game may be

won by occupying the enemy's capitals, *Command HQ* is far more than a slick rendition of "capture the flag." Players must build a strong economic base and adequate resources to fuel their war machine.

The economic model is vastly simplified for ease of play: oil wells provide fuel, and each city generates \$5 million per turn to the owner's coffers for the purchase of new units. Each unit ranges from \$5 to \$20 billion in cost, so winning players develop an appreciation for the principle of "economy of force" and do not squander units on unnecessary assaults.

New units are used in the same turn they're built, but production limitations disallow the particular building city from placing additional units for a period of time. Thus, even with unlimited funds, it is impossible to build an invasion force in one area overnight. This forces players to use some strategic foresight in their planning. Finally, units damaged in combat



Command HQ contains five highly addictive strategic war-gaming scenarios in which players must build a strong economic base and adequate resources to fuel their war machine.

may retreat, garrison in friendly cities or bases and regenerate their strength at no cost to the player, a much better option than purchasing replacements.

Even with units depicted as simplified versions of the weapon mix one would expect in the real world, combined arms tactics are possible, and recommended. Also, one should strive to achieve "concentration of force," attacking an entrenched enemy in the flanks or rear after pinning him with a frontal assault. Armor can conduct overrun attacks for additional damage, and air power is capable of dropping infantry behind the lines to further disrupt the enemy. Air power can also eliminate units at sea, but only reduce targeted land units to half strength. Advanced tactics, like "Amphibious Assault," are simplified by allowing land units to move at sea, albeit at a slower rate, without requiring transports to be loaded and unloaded.

The screen presentation is a "war room." The top two-thirds are a world view, which may be zoomed and re-sized to focus on any theater, and the lower third is divided into four "monitors" on which various information and animations appear. The animations of battles are a nice touch, but once they've been seen a couple of times, they can be toggled off.

Other features that add to the long-term replay value are hidden movement (the fog of war is preserved), variable difficulty settings for the computer opponent and the capability for null or online modem play. The latter includes a "chat" mode for message passing. A mouse is not required but is strongly recommended. The documentation is thorough, contains two tutorials and also serves as the copy protection for the program.

Command HQ is not intended to be a primer for serious strategists, but it does remain faithful to a lot of strategic principles. Unfortunately, most players won't realize this because they'll be too busy having fun!

—R. C.

Microprose
180 Lake Front Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21039
(301) 771-1151



Gamers interested in a well-designed tactical war game will enjoy The Crescent Hawks' Revenge.

BattleTech: The Crescent Hawks' Revenge

INFOCOM

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95),
IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In Infocom's second *BattleTech* installment, Jason Youngblood returns to continue the search for his father. Though the storyline continues faithfully into this sequel, nothing else about the original *BattleTech* is evident.

The designers of *The Crescent Hawks' Revenge* decided to rewrite the entire command structure to provide an easy-to-use entry system that allows gamers to control a larger number of units than ever before.

Changing the concept of an already successful game is risky, but it seems to have played off this time.

As play starts, gamers are brought into the story and carried through each scenario by a collection of gorgeous VGA pictures and some interesting sound effects. Players watch their scoutcraft get ambushed by enemy fighters and consequently crash land on the planet below. So begins the adventure. The gamer must now command all remaining Mechs to safety as the enemy approaches.

After the scenic storyline is complete, it is replaced with a grid map of the area in which players will launch their attack. All commands are entered by key, and the system is surprisingly simple to use. Function keys correspond to each Mech, and players simply call up a warrior and decide what he is to do.

Mechs can be instructed in a variety of movement and firing patterns, all of which must be selected based on the Mech's capability. Improper use of a Mech can result in ammunition loss, overheating or even a meltdown.

The most intriguing aspect of game play is the allied warriors' ability to act independently once their orders are fulfilled. If gamers don't issue a Mech further or-

ders once his initial setup is complete, he then acts on his own, moving and even firing on the enemy at will. The quality of his decisions is based on his experience in the field, and he is rated from "green" to "veteran." Players will find that the veteran Mechs need little or no orders.

Throughout the battle, Jason is kept abreast of what's happening elsewhere by means of remote communications from his other Mechs. Each unit calls in with a digitized voice of its own to let the gamer know where he or she stands. If a unit is damaged, it radios in to request help. This independent aspect of the Mech's behavior makes game play more realistic.

The only real problem with *BattleTech* is in the graphics on the game grid versus the visual interludes. Since the back of the box shows nothing but the beautiful pictures players see during intermission, people may be misled to believe the entire game is played in this colorful VGA world. On the contrary. The game is played on a two-dimensional map with graphics that don't come close to what you see on the back of the box. While the lack of breath-taking visuals during combat may prove a disappointment to some, those more interested in a well-designed tactical war game, will find that *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawks' Revenge* is a must.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

Infocom
3885 Bohannon Drive
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(415) 329-0800

Buck Rogers: Countdown to Doomsday

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.

Versions: Amiga (\$49.99),

Commodore 64 (\$39.95),

IBM PC (\$49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Forget the Sunday papers' Buck Rogers of yore. Forget Buster Crabbe, even Gil Gerard. There is no Killer Kane here, nor a Princess Allura. Nor is there a cute robot or a slightly befuddled professor. If the truth be told, in this sprawling adventure game, even the legendary Buck himself is mostly offstage. He and Wilma Deering may show up as NPCs (nonplayer characters) in the course of the game, if the player is prepared to stay with it long enough. But Buck's presence for much of the game is more hearsay than tangible.

What does remain of the original is its

**In Buck Rogers:
Countdown to
Doomsday, as with
most of SSI's works,
the perspective is
primarily military,
and the player is
expected to
assemble an elite
commando team that
will, eventually,
defeat the enemy.**



chronological locale in the 25th century, a time when Mars and Venus have been terra-formed, and thriving cultures have evolved there, as well as on Luna, Mercury, in the asteroids and even floating on the edges of Jupiter's gas clouds. Rocket ships readily travel throughout the solar system. Strange new genetically engineered life forms (Gennies) are tailored for a variety of environments and purposes, including war.

As with most of SSI's major works, the perspective is primarily military, and the player is expected to assemble an elite commando team that will, eventually, defuse a planet-shattering attack from the enemy. As *Countdown to Doomsday* is expected to be the beginning of a series, the enemy-alliance RAM will almost certainly not meet final defeat at this time.

The selections are enormous for characters' skills and careers and for weapons and other equipment. For example, among the manuals (a rule book, log book and system data card, plus a separately available clue book) are endless pages describing the various available skills. Some are specific to particular careers, such as those needed by medics, while others may

be shared, such as the ability to use a jet pack, shared by both rocket jocks and warriors. All skills are rated by points, as are the standard set of ability ratings for strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence and charisma, plus ratings for wisdom and tech ability. As you might guess, the weapons list is also extensive, forming the largest portion of the "gear" listings.

There are different screen views depending on locale and activity, such as 3-D and area views for moving through towns, rocket ships, etc., combat views for the incessant battles, map-like overviews for crossing a planetary surface, and even a solar map view for travel between planets and outposts. One note of reality is that the planets are indeed moving in their orbits around the sun. The rockets move quickly, but be on the lookout for pirates and enemy warships!

One element that the player does share with Buck Rogers is the need to learn to deal with a new and frequently hostile environment. This game is for players who have the time and the inclination to commit to getting involved in the workings of a detailed, military-oriented adventure in a novel-length story that could reach epic proportions.

—Ross Chamberlain

Strategic Simulations
675 Almaron Ave., Suite 291
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 737-6800

Shadow of the Beast II

PSYGNOSIS

Version: Amiga (\$59.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In *Shadow of the Beast*, the main character was able to defeat the evil lord and restore his human body. In the sequel, our hero's sister is spirited off to be subjected to years of forced cultivation, eventually becoming the new warrior messenger of the Beast Lord. Now she must be rescued from his clutches.

Shadow of the Beast II follows the atmospheric tradition established by its forerunner. The music is suitably spooky, and the graphics are dark and eerie, but the main change comes in game play. There is a multitude of interaction and some of the enemies react semi-intelligently. The authors claim that this was made possible by simplifying some of the



Shadow of the Beast II, by Psygnosis, follows in the atmospheric tradition of its forerunner by using dark and eerie graphics combined with spooky audio.

fancier graphic techniques. While parallax is still used, only a few levels are supported. Game screens now move in all directions, along with the player's sprite.

Characters throughout the game may be either friend or foe. Some attack, while others answer questions to reveal essential clues to solving puzzles.



While *Beast II* strives for more involving game play, it surely isn't any easier and has no progressive levels of difficulty. It is just plain hard from the word "go." The game is complex in how the puzzles are scattered throughout the

fantasy world. Many of the sequences rely on hair-trigger joystick reactions to be successful. In view of all this, it is frustrating that the sequel still lacks "password reentry" or a "save game" function.

Another flaw with *Shadow of the Beast II* is its frequent and painfully long disk-accessing time. This is due to the game being developed in Europe, where one megabyte of memory is not standard in the Amiga. The "game over" sequence can be disabled, but even the options screen takes too long to reload.

The graphics, while less complex, are beautiful, and the animation is fantastic. Since the software makes use of the Amiga's blitter and hardware's scrolling capabilities, everything moves smoothly, without any flicker. The music is wonderful, but sound effects are such a low priority they are almost nonexistent. The only audio option is to completely disable all sound, which is obviously no advantage.

Shadow of the Beast II makes an excellent demo, but only the best players will enjoy it as a game. It is doubtful even they will be able to complete *Beast II* without the help or the patience of a saint.

—Frank Eva

Psygnosis
29 St. Mary's Court
Brookline, MA 02146
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Ballots will be tabulated and the results presented in a future issue of the magazine. All individual replies will be held in strict confidence.

Please spend a few minutes to fill out the ballot, and send it to VG&CE at this address: 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. (Photocopies accepted.)

SEX: Male Female

AGE: Under 12 12-16 17-25 26-40 Over 40

FAMILY INCOME: Under \$20,000 \$20,000-\$39,000
\$40,000-\$60,000 Over \$60,000

I regularly play:

Video Games Computer Games Both

I spend ___ hours per week playing electronic games.

Under 2 2-5 6-10 More Than 10

I spend under ___ per week on computer and video games.

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Sega Master	___	___
Atari 7800	___	___
Genesis	___	___
Game Boy	___	___
Lynx	___	___
TurboGrafx-16	___	___
Super Famicom/Super NES	___	___
Neo•Geo	___	___
Other Video Game System	___	___
Amiga	___	___
Atari ST	___	___
Macintosh	___	___
IBM PC	___	___
Other Computer	___	___

I ___ buy a CD-ROM gaming system in 1991.

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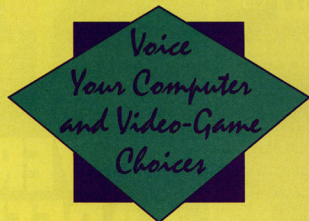
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CIRCLE #152 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Total semantic confusion reigns in adult electronic gaming. You know there's trouble when people can't even agree on what constitutes an adult game, much less what makes a good one.

In movies and magazines, "adult" is code for "explicit sex and/or violence." That's also the sense in which most software execs use the word.

Are no-holds-barred sex and violence the only ways to reach adult gamers? The broad definition of adult electronic games includes any contest that, in the words of HAL America's Shawn Glisson, "engages the mind as well as the fingers."

Most computer-entertainment software falls within this definition. The average computerist is over 30, so most leisure programs are geared to the tastes and perceptions of that age bracket. That's why computer games are generally more complex than cartridges. A majority of older players, no longer as nimble as in their youth, get more fun out of exercising their brains than their synaptic responses.

Paradoxically, computer games have always soft-pedaled sex and violence. The distorted image of computer gaming as a kids' pastime resists all efforts to conform to reality. Publishers know that marketing a salacious or grisly game exposes them to nasty allegations that they are polluting our nation's youth. Such charges can damage a company even when they are untrue or exaggerated. It's no wonder that software companies are cautious about challenging community standards for violent or sexual material.

Video gaming is, of course, primarily the domain of teenagers. Plenty of adults enjoy these games, but like comic books, cartridges are targeted at the 10-16 age group.

As the Second Golden Age of Video Gaming reached full bloom in late 1989, the search for additional sales gains led publishers to widen the scope of their cartridge libraries. *Tetris*, *Phantasy Star II* and *John Madden Football* are three of many recent releases calculated to win the hearts of adult players. Titles like *SimCity* (Maxis) and *Vegas Dream* (HAL America) are neither sexy nor violent, but



ADULTS ONLY

by Arnie Katz

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This time he focuses on games for adults.

clearly appeal more to a 25-year-old than a grade-schooler.

Which brings us back to the controversial subject of games with lots of

sex and violence. Here's a slice-of-life episode for your consideration:

You find yourself on the seedier side of town. The sun is down, but the flashing lights from the lounges, pawn shops and girlie-magazine emporiums bathe the street in garish, pulsing light. Suddenly, from a shadowy doorway, you hear:

"Psssst. Psssst! Yeah, you. C'mere." The figure in the trench coat beckons you to his spot in the shadowy doorway. Curiosity defeats caution. What will he offer? Stolen merchandise? Illegal drugs? On suddenly shaky legs, you move into the doorway beside the man.

"Wanna buy some adult games? I have video cartridges and computer disks. Real hot stuff. CD? You don't wanna mess with that stuff yet. So whaddaya want, Amiga or NES?"

Wake up! You're dreaming! The vast, murky market for professionally produced erotica, so important in the video software and magazine businesses, simply doesn't exist in the electronic-gaming world. Good taste undoubtedly plays a role, but there are solid reasons for steering clear of highly explicit sexual content:

- **Distribution Difficulties**—Sexy material runs into roadblocks at some key retail chains and in some sections of the country.

- **Poor Track Record**—It is interesting to note that all efforts to market a racy video game failed during the 1970s and 1980s. Swedish Erotica cartridges for the Atari 2600 combined blatant prurience with overtones of pornographic violence and female submission, the equivalent of mass-market printed or video erotica. Yet, except for *Custer's Revenge*, which benefitted from publicity generated by headline-crashing protesters, no title in the line sold as many as 25,000 units at a time when any ordinary video game would automatically be expected to sell at least 100,000. Even *Custer*, which rewards winners with the chance to rape a bound American Indian woman, sold less than the average game cartridge released that year.

- **Hardware Limitation**—Bad taste aside, the chief reason that 2600 games didn't succeed is that the system couldn't produce graphics with



Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, by Accolade, contains spine-chilling shock horror scenes.

enough connection to reality to actually titillate the player. *Strip Poker* (Artworx) transcended the limitations of 6502-based machines like the Apple II with clever design and an intrinsically appealing concept. But it wasn't until Artworx began substituting digitized photos of real nude models that *Strip Poker* and the even more entertaining *Centerfold Squares* began to rival newsstand men's magazines in eye appeal. A big reason more companies are now publishing sexy games is that the machines can finally generate the complex images needed to depict romance and sexuality.

Amateur adult computer games abound. A few years ago there was even a mail order catalog operation that dealt exclusively in sexually oriented computer programs. No one will ever count the available public domain and shareware programs that feature sex, violence or themes aimed strictly at adults. Sign onto any local BBS (bulletin board service) that restricts minors' access, and it's likely that the files area contains pictures and stories of a sexual nature. A few boards exist for nothing else.

Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards (Sierra) is easily the most celebrated sexually oriented adult computer game. Sierra President Ken Williams' earlier *SoftPorn Adventure*, a text quest, had basically the same plot and goals, but *Leisure Suit Larry* shows how developers can turn the same idea into two sharply different games. The flexible interface, charming visuals and expanded game-world elevates *Leisure Suit Larry* far above its ancestor.

How adult are *Leisure Suit Larry* and its two sequels? Not very, I'd say. This is high school—or maybe even fraternity house—sexual humor, full of leers, smirks and snickers. Men will be boys at times, though, and few electronic games are better known to the general public than these sophomoric sexual odysseys.

Leisure Suit Larry succeeded where sexist junk like *Beat 'Em and Eat 'Em* flopped, partly because Sierra showed excellent judgment. Every medium has

standards based on community reaction. Violating those limits often ignites sales-destroying resistance from timid retailers and distributors.

The graphics in *Leisure Suit Larry* are no more than risqué. It employs innuendo and inference, both very important in creating the lurid game world. That is likely responsible for a lot of its undeniable popularity; Sierra knows just how far to let these

to the later *Leisure Suit Larry*. It sold a slew of copies, largely thanks to one of the greatest titles ever slapped on a computer adventure, but few mature adventurers cite it as their favorite.

There are other ways to portray sex, some more dignified and, in that sense, more truly adult. For instance, *Defender of the Crown* (Cinemaware) has a sensitively done love scene. It's completely appropriate, because it's a logical outgrowth of the game action.

Our society is more tolerant of mayhem than making out, so a game must go further to earn the adult tag. Most video and computer games are already pretty violent. The death

throes of characters in *Techno Cop* may strike some adults as excessive, but *Personal Nightmare* and *Elvira* (Accolade), both by Mike Woodruff, would be ridiculous without the spine-chilling shock horror scenes.

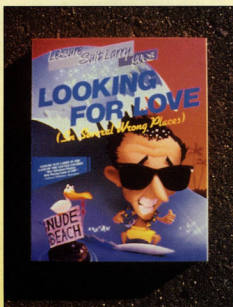
Violence that might seem appalling in a more realistic context fits comfortably with these two adventures' B-movie horror ambience. Parents may want to consider whether they want to expose preteens to this level of gore, but *Personal Nightmare* is no more objectionable, and perhaps considerably less, than last week's crop of slasher flicks.

More intense violence is ticketed for the video-game field. Razorsoft's forthcoming releases include games based on the stories of macabre master Clive Barker, and Razorsoft intends to pull no punches to create frightening funware for the adult market.

I don't think games with heavy sex and violence will do much to promote electronic gaming by adults. Adults-only material is a specialized market, and the wildest computer and video games are pretty mild compared to competing material.

Shawn Glisson's approach is more promising. By all means, let games have sex and violence appropriate to theme and implementation. Both are part of life and, therefore, have a legitimate place in electronic gaming.

But it would be a mistake for electronic gaming to wallow in so-called adult content while neglecting to upgrade the sophistication, depth and intellectual content of those games. It is such games, adult in the sweeping meaning of the term, that have the power to enthrall mature participants in the electronic-gaming hobby. ♀



Top left: Sierra's *Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards*. Top right: Cinemaware's *Defender of the Crown*. Center: Accolade's *Personal Nightmare*. Bottom: Artworx's *Centerfold Squares*.

graphics adventures go to keep them spicy but acceptable to the mass market. Lots of folks may think *Leisure Suit Larry* is a bit childish, but few would seriously label it pornographic.

By contrast, an adventure that seemed to promise more than it actually delivered was *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* (Infocom). Even at its steamiest setting, *Leather Goddesses* is tame, almost antiseptic, compared

COMPUTER STRATEGIES

Staying Alive as The Immortal

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Versions: Amiga, Apple IIGS, Atari ST

The Immortal invites the player to assume the role of a young wizard who must brave a 60-room dungeon in an effort to rescue the wise, old sorcerer Mordamir.

Gamers travel through a three-dimensional perspective dungeon that's patterned much like *Zaxxon* of old. Each room holds different obstacles. Many rooms have enemy creatures that must be overcome by using a dagger or magic spells that are acquired along the way. As the game progresses, the size and threat of the enemy is greater.

First, concentrate on a successful navigation of the dungeon. Learn to control the wizard. This is slightly tricky at first because of the 3-D perspective. The wizard will walk through a door, or up a ladder if he is next to one, so try not to ride too close to the walls. Otherwise, the gamer may inadvertently enter a room full of trouble.

This 3-D view also makes it difficult to deal with the enemy creatures encountered along the way. The best way to compensate for this is to draw a line from the stone the wizard is standing on to the enemy's feet. If there is a straight line of stones, players are on target to launch a fireball or any other attack.

The next strategy to master is hand-to-hand combat. Again, stay in a straight line with the opponent, and allow him to move to one stone's length away. Once the enemy is there, immediately jab to put him on the defensive. Next, use the stab technique to do some real damage. Try to

alternate between moves to keep the enemy guessing.

When the creature raises its weapon, you must assume a defensive posture. Stop swinging and look at where the weapon is raised in relation to the enemy's head. If it is on his right, then he is swinging from right to left, and you must lean to the right in order to counter his move. The opposite holds true for a left-to-right swing. This may seem a bit confusing at first, but after a while it becomes second nature.

While traveling, search everything possible. This includes all rooms and every corpse encountered. Players will often find the most unusual objects in the strangest places. Use the maps and diagrams in the book to avoid traps in the first few levels, especially the course that's indicated in the arrow room.

To climb a ladder, simply walk next to it. Going down ladders requires special care. Only

approach a down ladder from the side the ladder is leaning against. Approaching from any other side will result in a fatal plummet.

Another potential means of death is accidentally falling into a pit trap. When this happens, the wizard hangs suspended from his staff for about ten seconds before falling to his death. During this time, players can save the sorcerer by moving the stick in an even motion from left to right, swinging him up and out of trouble. The program is very fussy about the motion; it must be performed nearly perfectly for the escape to be successful. This technique is only mastered with practice.



Electronic Arts' *The Immortal* is a fantasy-adventure game in which the player travels through a three-dimensional perspective dungeon that is reminiscent of *Zaxxon*.

Should a puzzle seem impossible to solve, use and drop everything inside the sack. If none of the objects work, something was probably missed. Don't worry about using something that seems unlikely. There's no penalty for trial and error. When in doubt, try everything.

Dying seems to happen quite often in this game, even if you are (theoretically) The Immortal. To overcome death, remember to write the code down for each level. Immortality in this game is only really acquired by ensuring a return.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

Getting Into The Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess

DRACONIAN

Versions: Amiga, IBM PC

In this strange and often humorous action/adventure, the game player becomes Raven, a rebel fighting to overthrow the evil Protozorg regime. Unfortunately, the slimy creatures have captured Raven's counterpart, the princess Sci-Fi, and have taken her to their temple. Armed with the Sci-powers, the player must make it to the temple to solve its mysteries, rescue Sci-Fi and destroy the evil Protozorg plot. Naturally, this must all be done before it's too late.

When the game begins, pay close attention to the object that the Master of Ordeals gives to Raven and where he says to use it. Then head either left or right into the ring, and continue around until Raven reaches the location the Master mentioned. This is the first puzzle to solve.

When traveling, Raven runs into other creatures such as aspirants or Protozorgs. The aspirants look just like Raven, and you should converse with them whenever possible. They sometimes offer words of wisdom, or maybe even an item that might be useful later on.

The Protozorgs are nasty and seldom give out advice. The method for overcoming them is to attack one early on when Raven's Sci-powers are high. Use extreme violence to pummel the enemy, then search his body quickly to attain a zap-stick. Once armed with a zap-stick, Raven can master most adversaries. Remember

In *Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess*, the player must rescue the princess Sci-Fi and destroy the evil Protozorg empire.



that violence is prohibited in the ring, so make sure no one else is around when attacking a Protozorg guard.

Once Raven reaches an ordeal room, he must solve the puzzle inside to attain the skull. Since solving these ordeals is the best part of the game, it's best not to give away anything important. However, a few hints can't hurt.

Move the cursor slowly over all areas of the screen, and note the descriptions that appear on the bottom. This will reveal all objects that can be manipulated or inspected. If the item light is on, find and retrieve the object that is lying there.

Next, use the Sci-power of Zone Scan to spot any traps or secret passages. Finally, click on all the items in the room, one at a time. When an object is selected, the brain appears with a number of options Raven has available. Try everything, no matter how ridiculous it seems.

One can't possibly solve all five ordeals in one sitting, so dying once or twice is no big deal if it helps lead to the correct answer to a puzzle. If trying something causes an incident that doesn't kill Raven, or produces a message which says "good," then it's probably a step in the right direction.

If no item in the room can be manipu-



lated correctly, try using any item Raven is carrying on everything in the room. Finally, if all else fails, take a break and try a different ordeal for now. It may be that Raven does not have the specific

object necessary to complete the current ordeal.

When things seem hopeless, try asking the Hitachi-Guass located in the upper left of the screen. His answers look like a foreign language, but under careful analysis, they may be useful messages given out by the poorest of spellers. "Half pay shunts!"

—F. T., Jr.

We have so many good questions this time out it's incredible! You folks are really impressing the heck out of me. Each issue, more and more fascinating mail arrives! So let's stop wasting time and get on with it.

question

Besides the Genesis reviews, your column is what I read first! I'm a Genesis owner, and I have a few questions to ask about the Genesis and the Japanese Mega Drive.

- 1) Are Mega Drive games and hardware compatible with the Genesis?
- 2) I've heard about the portable system "Game Gear" by Sega. Will it be comparable to or better than NEC's handheld TurboExpress?
- 3) I know there isn't a CD-ROM for the Mega Drive, but is there one in the future of the Genesis?
- 4) Will the Mega Drive be out in America? If so, when?

—Loren Peed
Issaquah, Washington

answer

Here are your answers, Loren:

- 1) The only difference between the Mega Drive and Genesis is the actual casing that houses the technology. As a result, Mega Drive software can be played on a Genesis, but the Genesis cartridge slot must be modified slightly (widened), or the top section of the casing must be removed in order to use Mega Drive software.
- 2) The Game Gear is an excellent handheld programmable game system that was just announced in the U.S. Its games are comparable to (or superior to) but not compatible with Sega Master System software. The TurboExpress is basically a portable version of the TurboGrafx-16.

The good aspect of this compatibility is a wide selection of software; the downside is that these games were designed to be played on a full-size screen, and many don't translate well



ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS THAT TRY MENS' SOULS

by
the Game Doctor

to the small screen. Scores and other peripheral data sometimes disappear or become unreadable.

3) A CD-ROM drive is reportedly in development for the Genesis/Mega Drive, but Sega of America insists it will not be released in this country until there is a solid software base of support.

4) Obviously, since the Mega Drive and Genesis are the same system, it would be redundant to release the Mega Drive in the US.

I'm thoroughly ticked that the most exciting electronic breakthroughs are in video-game technology, since television is apparently being totally ignored. I'm talking about LCD, 3-D glasses, like those used with the Sega Master System. The flawless, utterly convincing illusion of depth that they create is far more graphically exciting than any new 16-bit system.

When I played *Space Harrier 3-D* it actually looked like an impossible, fantastic reality instead of a TV image. None of the new 16-bit games that I've

played even come close to that.

Glasses like these should be available for every system, and all of the games could be programmed with a 3-D option. What if the multilayered backgrounds in Genesis games like *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* actually had real depth? Can you imagine a 16-bit *Afterburner* in 3-D?

Yet none of that is happening. Only a handful of 3-D games were released for the SMS, and they are now virtually a thing of the past. I am aware that a company makes such glasses for computers, but I haven't seen them anywhere, nor am I aware of any titles that support them. What happened there?

It makes me sick to think that I won't be able to experience that kind of excitement with more games on more advanced systems. Can anything be done?

—John Tucker
Jackson, Mississippi

answer

The lens-shutter system developed for the SMS 3-D system was a technological triumph and a commercial failure. We have yet to see 3-D technology exploited with commercial success. While the system you refer to was indeed remarkable, it did not catch on with users. Gamers who wear glasses find 3-D glasses difficult to wear, and the lens-shutter system also required them to be "wired in" to the game system.

The Sega system features shutters for each eye that are dropped and lifted at a high speed so that the illusion of depth is produced. As of now, no software publisher has expressed an interest in supporting this technology in home computers, and Sega has no current plans to bring its 3-D system to the Genesis.

question

I recently purchased a computer, and I love playing games on it, but my

GONE SOFT ON THE BRAIN ?

You're not playing Daedalian Opus



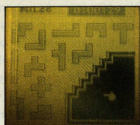
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Don't turn this page until you've played Daedalian Opus.

system's sound output is terrible. I thought about getting a better sound board, but there are so many, and some of them are really expensive. I was wondering if you could direct me in the right direction as to one that's compatible with lots of games and isn't too expensive.

—Sean Lee
San Lorenzo, California

answer

I presume you own an IBM PC (or a clone), in which case the least expensive sound board with the widest support is the Ad Lib. The Sound Blaster costs about a \$100 more, but is compatible with all Ad Lib-based software and features several other excellent capabilities (speech simulation and editing) and options (MIDI compatible—but not Roland MIDI compatible).

At the top of the line are the Roland boards, the MT-32 and LAPC-1, but they are very expensive and are not as widely supported. Check out the article on IBM PC soundboards in the March '91 issue of VG&CE for more detailed information on this subject.

question

I noticed that all of the TurboGrafx-16 role-playing games use passwords instead of the save-memory feature. Since the TG-16's cards are so small, can they, in fact, have a lithium battery to save games?

—Rick Shiers
Atascadero, California

answer

Good question, Rick. Although the NEC games do rely on passwords, I can see no reason why batteries couldn't be installed on the card format of the TG-16. Not only do they now make batteries sufficiently small enough to fit inside a TG-16 card (similarly sized synthesizer cards are now available with such batteries installed), no reason immediately comes to mind why a battery couldn't be installed on the top of the card. For that matter, the card could actually be extended in length, since there's nothing in the

configuration of either the TurboGrafx-16 or the TurboExpress to prohibit it.

question

I'm the proud owner of a Sega Mega Drive and a Nintendo Game Boy. I would like to buy some new games for both machines, but they are extremely expensive here in Europe. An example would be *Columbs* for the Sega. In England, you can buy it for about \$60 to \$110, and I've seen an ad in VG&CE selling it for \$26 in the U.S.

The Sega Mega Drive was launched officially in Denmark a month ago, and the few games available are those old ones (*Rambo III*, *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*, *Mystic Defender*) costing more than

\$65 each. Also, the Game Boy has just been released for \$140 with the games coming in at \$45 each. As you can see, it's a lot cheaper to buy games in the U.S., even after the mailing expenses are paid. I've written to a couple of the advertisers in VG&CE, but none of them have answered.

—Nikolaj Rokke
Denmark

answer

The Doc put in a couple of phone calls to several of the leading mail order software outlets, and all guaranteed that they'll be happy to do business with you, Nikolaj. Try phoning the advertisers listed in VG&CE. ☺

Q & A QUICKIES

• Todd Kneedy of Glenview, Illinois, wants to know about the "MMC" chips that have been used to enhance NES software. These chips (I believe there are now six, designated MMC1 through MMC6) are actually tiny processors that are added to the cartridges in order to impart some special new function, such as scrolling and the ability to produce bit-mapped rather than tile-based graphics. Of course, these special chips also increase the cost of the cartridge. To the various readers who asked about "MIPS," it stands for "millions of instructions per second."

• Mike Coble of Goshen, Indiana, is looking for the best RPGs (Role-Playing Games) on the NES. A quick survey of RPGers brings recommendations for *Ultima IV* (FCI), *Crystalis* (SNK), *Dragon Warrior II* (Enix) and *Final Fantasy* (Nintendo). Also be on the lookout for a

pair of computer adventure classics, *King's Quest* and *Bard's Tale*, to show up soon on the NES.

• The "Meg vs. Meg" confusion continues, meanwhile, as readers continue to ask: "When is a Meg not a Meg?" The best bet is to use the following rule of thumb: In the computer universe, the term "Meg" always refers to megabytes; in the world of video games, "Meg" means megabits.

• Thanks to James Cannon of Dallas, Texas, and Paul J. "Killer" Kowalski of Brooklyn, New York, for their thoughtful letters on where gaming is going.

• Matt Hopper of Indianapolis, Indiana, wants to know how the NEC SuperGrafx compares to the TurboGrafx. The SuperGrafx is a superior system but is not likely to be released in this country and has limited software support, even in Japan.

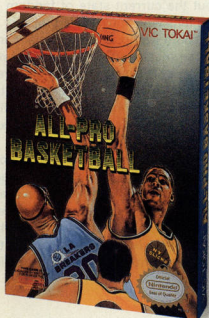
• Brandon Curless can't

figure out why he's seeing so many different prices listed for the TurboExpress, NEC's handheld version of the TG-16. The reason is that so few of the new handhelds were released that some retailers were charging whatever they felt they could get away with. Remember, it's only the "suggested" retail price.

• Mike Burch of Fairfield, Utah, is interested in corresponding with overseas gamers like Antoine Peltier. Any gamers (from the USA or Europe or wherever) wishing to join this international correspondents club should write to me with permission to reprint your full address.

That about wraps things up. Send your questions, comments and the inevitable corrections (any more opinions on the graphics resolution of the TG-16, for example? Hmmm?) to *Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. See you in thirtysomething.

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Electronic-gaming fandom has made great progress in its 18-month existence. People all over the nation are reading and producing fanzines, getting involved in their hobby in a way they never thought could be so much fun.

As you may know, other hobbies have spawned fandoms too. Science fiction fandom, for example, has flourished since 1930, and comic book fandom emerged in the early 1960s. Study of older fandoms is somewhat helpful in predicting the development of newer ones like ours. Signs now point to the possibility that electronic-gaming fandom, after an intense organizational period, is ready to evolve to its next stage of development.

Until now, all fanzines have been one- or at the most, two-person operations. Lively and interesting as they are, such fanzines are limited in scope and variety. Last month I held out the promise of a major combined effort. This time, let's look at the reality of the first issue of *cyberBeat*. But first, apologies to Lance Rice, editor of *The Subversive Sprite*, whose name was misspelled.

cyberBeat #1

Edited by Edward and Richard Karpp, Adam Query, Edward Finkler, Mike Ciletti and Russ Robinson

P.O. Box 317
La Jolla, CA 92038
\$1.50—No schedule listed
Eight pages

Simply the best electronic-gaming fanzine

WHAT IS FANDOM?

Electronic-gaming fandom is an informal network of people who share a knowledgeable interest in interactive electronic entertainment. Fanzines are the amateur publications that these fans produce as forums for the exchange of views on all aspects of the topic.

Getting involved in fandom is as easy as sending for sample copies of some of the titles mentioned each month in *Fandango*. Most fanzines are available for either a letter of comment on the previous issue, contribution of artwork or written material, trade for other fanzines or, of course, cash.



REVIEWS OF RECENT ELECTRONIC GAMING FANZINES

by Arnie Katz

produced so far. Six editors have pooled their talents to make *cyberBeat* a fanzine no dedicated gamer will want to miss. With its first issue, this newcomer has raised standards for the whole electronic-gaming fanzine field. (Let this be a gentle warning to readers that future reviews in *Fandango* may be a little more rigorous.)

No other fanzine combines the variety of hot news, intelligent analysis and solid reviews. Video games get most of the editorial space, but *cyberBeat* tries to

embrace the gamut of electronic gaming, including the coin-op arcades.

The lead item, "Parallax," contains editorials by editors Ed Karpp, Ed Finkler and Mike Ciletti. There's a clear community of interest among them, but each has a strong and independent voice. It's like eavesdropping on a bull session about the current state of fandom by three fans who know their subject.

Richard Karpp, a professional game programmer, contributes two noteworthy pieces. The description of his career provides realistic insights about the game industry, while his comparison of video-game systems provides a valuable consumer service.

First-issue problems abound, but none are serious or uncorrectable. The editorial cabal is still getting comfortable and forging lines of cooperation. When these six fans weld their abilities into a cohesive whole, *cyberBeat* could become the focal point fanzine of electronic-gaming fandom.

Arena, December 1990

Edited by Ralph Barbagallo III
3 Village Way
North Andover, MA 01845
\$10 for 10 Issues—Frequent
Nine pages

cyberBeat hasn't corralled all the fan talent. Ralph and ace contributor Cliff Bleszinski do a fine job too!

The holiday issue of this neatly produced fanzine discusses the current video-gaming scene by company, reviews a variety of new game cartridges, gives brief strategy hints and salutes the best video-game hardware and software of 1990. Ralph's editorial, though short, makes good points about potential sales dips in video gaming. I hope that

he'll express himself on such major topics at greater length in upcoming issues of *Arena*.

ATTENTION FANZINE READERS

If you want to see sample copies of many of the top current fanzines—or if you're a fanzine publisher looking for names for a mailing list—VIDEO GAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT can help you. The Fanzine Readers List is available to any fanzine editor who sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. Anyone can be included on the list by simply writing and asking. In either case, the address is Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

MEGAGAMING

A sample copy of *Megagaming*, the biweekly "Voice of Electronic Gaming," is available for \$1 from Worley (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). Each issue contains news, previews, fanzine critiques, a forum for fan-oriented questions, columns and more.

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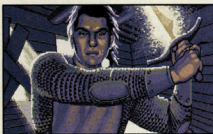
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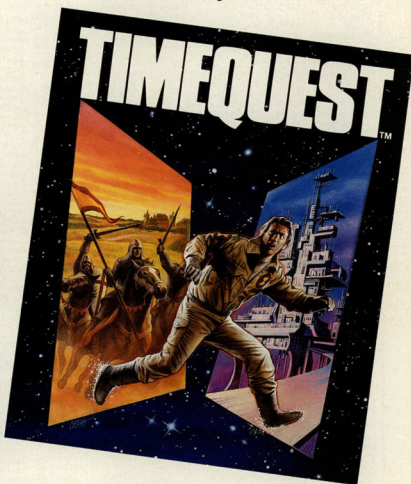
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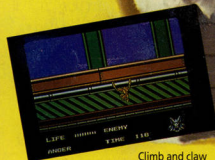
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