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September 1990

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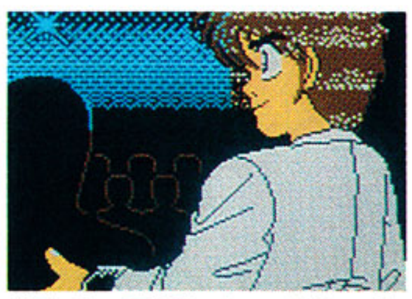

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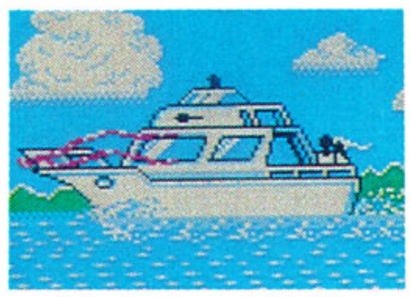
"In Wall Street Kid,™ confide in the rich and powerful."



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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: SNK's Neo•Geo video games, such as *Magician Lord*, sport fabulous graphics. We've illustrated a scene from this medieval battle, a classic fight of good versus evil. See our CES coverage for more news on when this system may hit our shores.

Background Art: Alan Hunter

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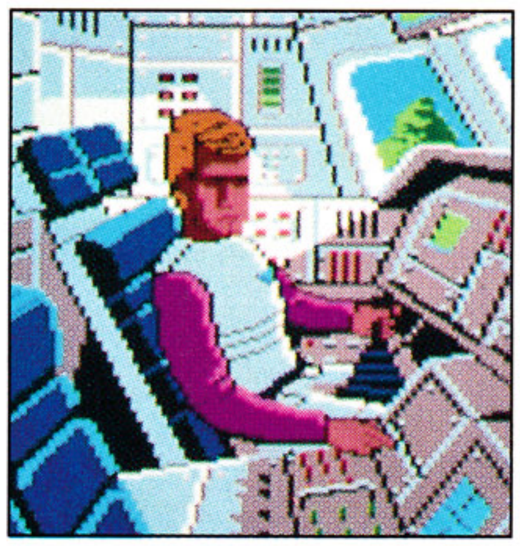

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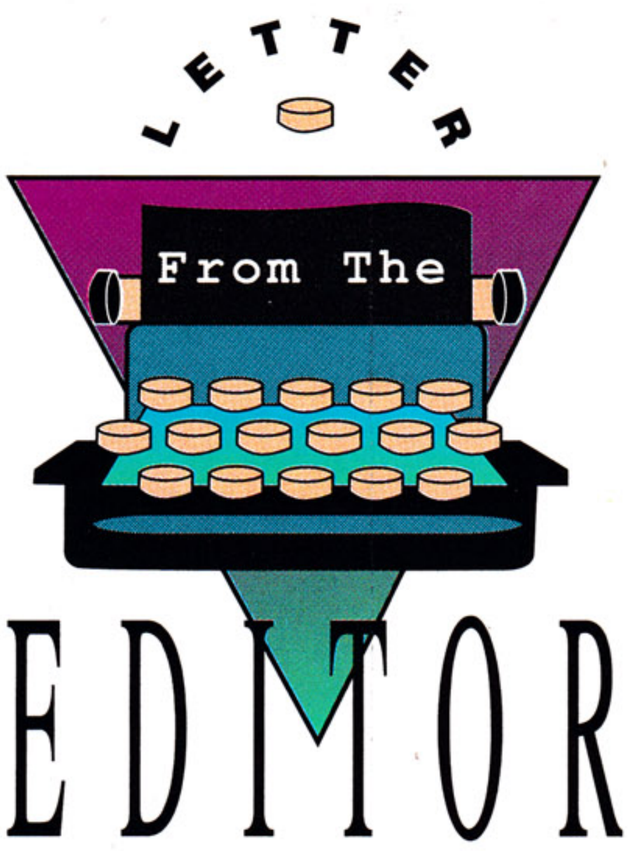
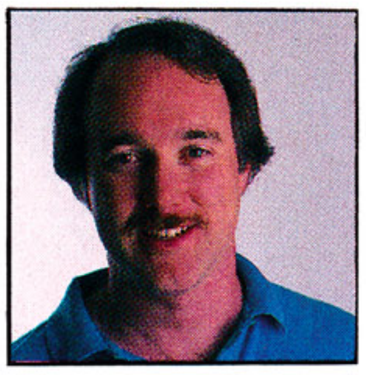


Viewers of NBC's *Saturday Night Live* are no doubt familiar with Kevin Nealon's hysterical storytelling during the "Weekend Update" segment of the show. In it he starts with a proverb or saying of some sort, then goes on to describe how that phrase is important to him. But inevitably he contradicts himself in some way and qualifies his mind change with a new motto.

While I was at the CES in Chicago during the first week of June, I got the same feeling from some of the attending video-game executives I spoke to. Let me use the Nealon method to explain it:



"The more, the merrier."

Nintendo is still adding licensees to their third-party list—currently the count is up to 56 NES software licensees. Similarly, Sega is working hard to build up their licensee program and has announced nearly 20 companies as licensees to develop product for the Genesis.

NEC is off to a slower start, though the situation is expected to change during the next year. The popularity of the PC Engine, the TurboGrafx-16 in Japan, means that there are lots of games that can be quickly translated and brought to America for the TG-16.

Certainly this has a cut-and-dried result right off the bat: lots of software for console owners to choose from when buying time comes. (Christmas is just few months away, and even the most casual game player wants to have *everything* that's on the local store shelves.)

While most gamers *want* a lot, they don't buy as much—usually under five games or so a year (though VG&CE readers are proven to have deeper pockets)....

Wait, did I say "the more, the merrier"? What I meant was:

"Too many cooks spoil the broth."

With too many companies vying for your software dollar, something sooner or later has to break and that will likely rear its ugly head imminently: Some of the developing companies will fall by the wayside. Rumor at CES was that some of Nintendo's licensees are barely squeaking by on credit lines.

The Sega side of the saga was echoed by a licensee who said that he's concerned the quality of Genesis software will suffer. His explanation was that Sega signed too many licensees too quickly and most of these companies are *racing* to get their products out. While this brings lots of new titles to market, the overall result might be shoddy software.

Nintendo has claimed from the start of its reign that it has to keep a careful eye on how many NES cartridges are being sold at any given time, but the previously mentioned events may naturally weed out the weaker companies. After all, you know the saying:

"Survival of the fittest."

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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Before the LAPC-1 Music Card

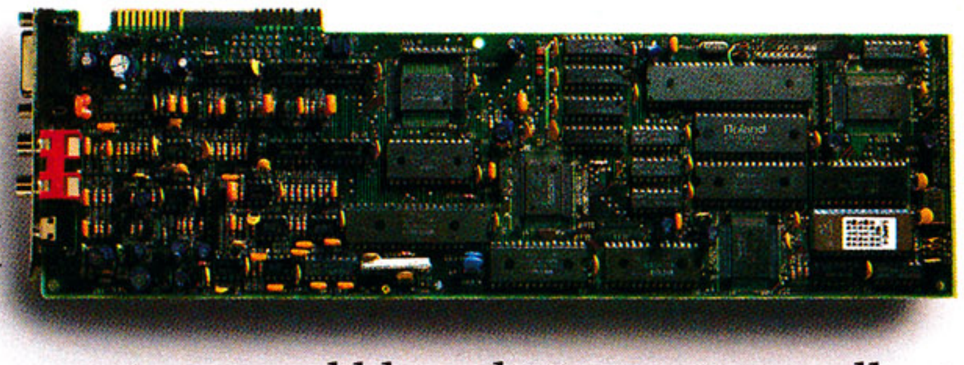
After the LAPC-1 Music Card

Actual results may vary.

If we were you, we sure as heck wouldn't run out and buy an LAPC-1 without knowing something about what it does. So if you give us a moment, we'll tell you.

The LAPC-1 is a music synthesizer card which, when you stick it into your computer, takes the pitifully anemic sounds computer games offer up and turns them into something quite extraordinary. Or, to put it another way, instead of going "plink" the way it does now, your computer will go "KA-PHLOOM" the way it's supposed to. And as luck and our ingenious engineers would have it, it'll do all this with the games from Sierra®, Activision®, MediaGenic®, Lucasfilm®, Access®, MicroProse®, and nearly everybody else.

And since the LAPC-1 uses the same L/A Synthesis circuitry we put in our professional musical equipment, combined with the only true MIDI interface on the market, it also provides you with something else—access to all of the tools you need for creating incredibly realistic music as well.



There. We're done. Now you can run out and buy one.

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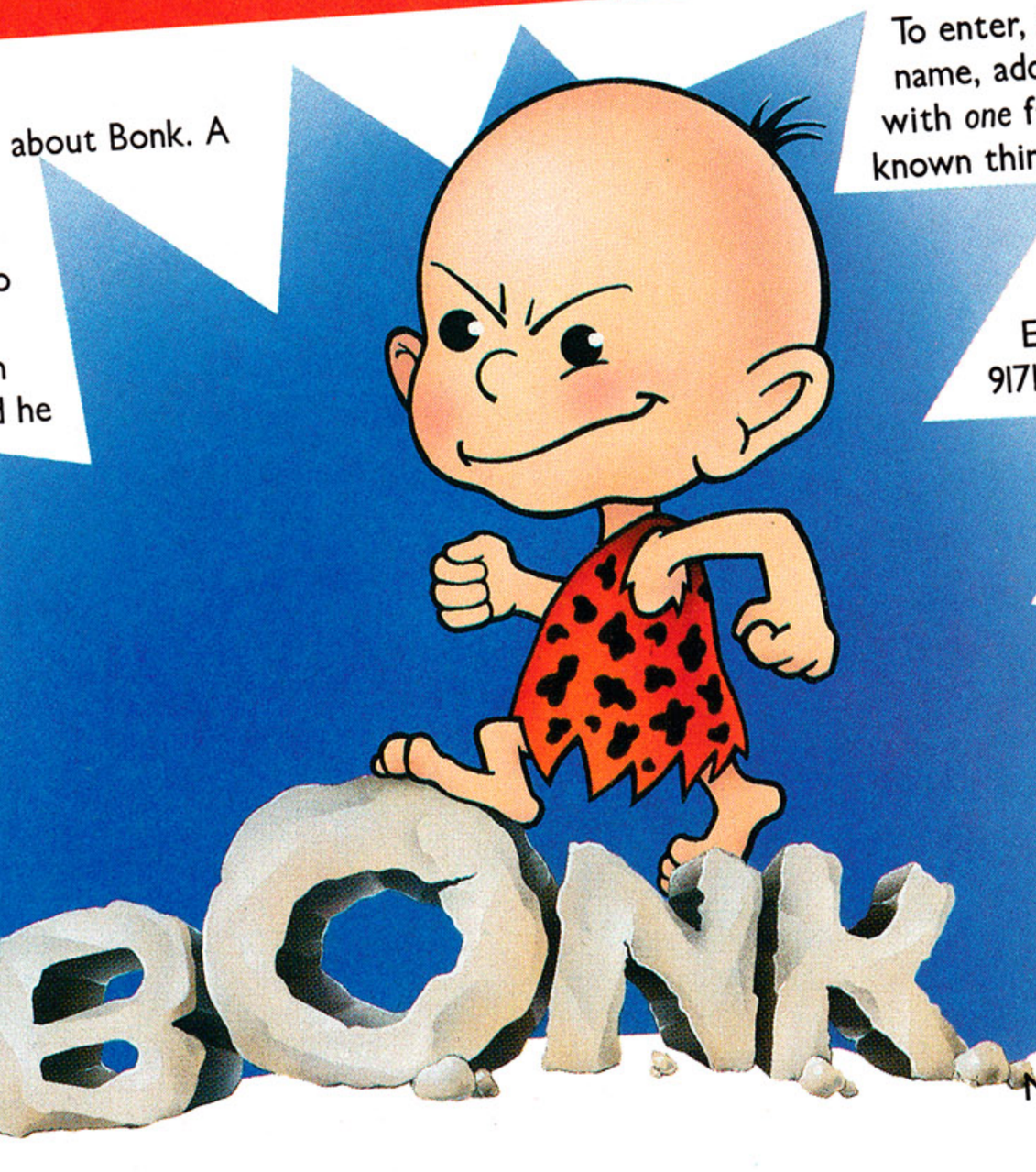
HELP BONK "BONK" THE BAD GUYS AND YOU COULD WIN A TURBOGRAFX-16 SYSTEM!

Who's the most outrageous person you know of? What's the dumbest thing you've ever seen? Tell VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, and you could win an outrageous new NEC TurboGrafx™-16 video game system, a TurboGrafx™-CD player and a *Bonk's Adventure* TurboChip™ game card!

By now, you've probably seen or heard about Bonk. A gnarly cave dude, he's been using his head to "bonk" the bad guys and protect the excellent-looking Princess Za in his video game, *Bonk's Adventure*. What a guy!

Now Bonk is ready to use his head on some real-life people and situations. And he knows there are plenty of dumb, wild and radical things to bonk, like athletes who use drugs, stupid TV programs and people who drink and drive.

Bonk is asking you to give him new ideas on who to bonk next. So tell him about the people and things you think should be bonked, and VG&CE will enter your name in a random drawing for an awesome TurboGrafx-16 video game system!



To enter, fill out a postcard with your name, address and phone number, along with *one* famous person and *one* well-known thing that deserves to be bonked, and mail it to

VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT
9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300
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Attn: Bonk Awards

Then, grab a January 1991 issue of VG&CE to check out what's getting bonked, and see if you're a winner.

Entries must be received by September 30, 1990. You may enter as many times as you wish.

No purchase necessary to enter.

FIRST PRIZE: TurboGrafx-16 system, TurboGrafx-CD Player, *Bonk's Adventure*
SECOND PRIZE: TurboGrafx-16 system, TurboStick™, *Bonk's Adventure*
THIRD PRIZE: TurboGrafx-16 system, *Bonk's Adventure*

GOOD LUCK!!

A NINTENDO FAN SPEAKS OUT

Dear VG&CE:

I've been a subscriber for three months now and have been reading your magazine for the past year or so. VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT is by far the most "mature" of the lot. (I'm 26 and if I see another exclamation point [!!!!], I'll go stark, raving mad.) Keep up the good work.

Apparently, your editors *despise* Nintendo. It's very obvious with the constant (and annoying) barrage of negative comments about Nintendo. I've put up with it long enough without saying anything. Well....

MORE NINTENDO! Knock off the whining, please! I've had my NES for two years now and *I love it.*

I find it ironic that you would stab in the back the very company that has put home video [games] back where it is today. I considered buying a Genesis or TurboGrafx-16, but the Genesis has no game selection (nine games at last count at Toys 'R' Us). I buy two to three games a month, so the Genesis was out of the question. And the TG-16 isn't even a 16-bitter—what a joke! Get with it, NEC. Bring on the 32-bit I keep hearing about. That will open some eyes.

I guess when the Super Famicom comes out, that will put to rest what the best machine is, won't it? Personally, I'm in no hurry to get the Super Famicom because with the new chip technology (MMC-3, MMC-5 and MMC-6), the graphics have gotten incredible in the last six months or so.

Your June issue prompted me to write this letter. Here's what I feel the average NES player would say to the comments of the editors and readers:

Dan Walimaq (*Reader Mail,* June '90)—"I used to own an NES, but after getting burned once too often by games not nearly worth what I paid for them, I sold the system." Comment: Too bad. Most players read as many reviews as they can get their hands on—or wait a couple of weeks after the game comes out, then rent it to make sure they like it. (It's curious that VG&CE didn't suggest this.)

John Stodolka (*Reader Mail,* June '90)—"I would like to see compatible software available [from other sources]." Comment: Nintendo has over *300* games in its library. John wants more? I suggest he make his own games.

Anthony Castiello (*Reader Mail,* June '90)—"I don't think any video game is worth over $40." Comment: All I have to say to that is go to your nearest arcade and see how long $40 lasts. Or find another hobby.

James Charne, Vice-President Legal and Business Affairs, Absolute Entertainment (*Reader Mail,* June '90). Comment: My hero! Thanks, James.

VG&CE—"Which game companies are allowed to produce more games and why?" Comment: Don't you think Nintendo has enough experience by now to decide what games will be hits and what games will not? I do. And if Nintendo is wrong, they can make more, you know.

VG&CE—"How much do licensees pay to Nintendo, per game, as a licensing fee?" Comment: To put it bluntly, as I own a business myself, this is none of your business! How much does VG&CE make per issue? See what I mean? You guys are nosy!

VG&CE—"Are rumors of intimidating retailers true?" Comment: Probably, but how would VG&CE like it if the other five publications I subscribed to wanted to put subscription cards for *their* magazines in VG&CE? It wouldn't happen, would it?

VG&CE—"Why can't Nintendo, given its wealth, start a U.S. manufacturing plant?" Comment: Apparently it is much better off staying in Japan. Open your eyes, you guys. Geez.

I guess that's all I have to say, and this letter is much too long to print, but I just got tired of VG&CE badmouthing the NES. Stop slapping Nintendo in the face and start shaking its hand. When the Super Famicom is released, the other guys will be history. Too bad. Sorry, VG&CE, Nintendo is here to stay—and I'm glad.

Thanks for your time.

—Darryl Fulk
Fayetteville, North Carolina

Well, Darryl, your letter is long, but hardly too long to print. We may have diametrically opposed views on the situation, but that's one of the reasons for this section of the magazine—to be a forum for our readers.

Unfortunately, in your strong comments we feel you're confusing our feelings about Nintendo's business practices with our feelings about its video-game products. Indeed, we won't hide behind a tree when accused of having sharp opinions about Nintendo's dealings throughout the industry, but we have few complaints about the NES system itself. You are right—Nintendo has revitalized an otherwise dead market, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't look at the other situations the company is involved in. VG&CE*'s reputation*

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

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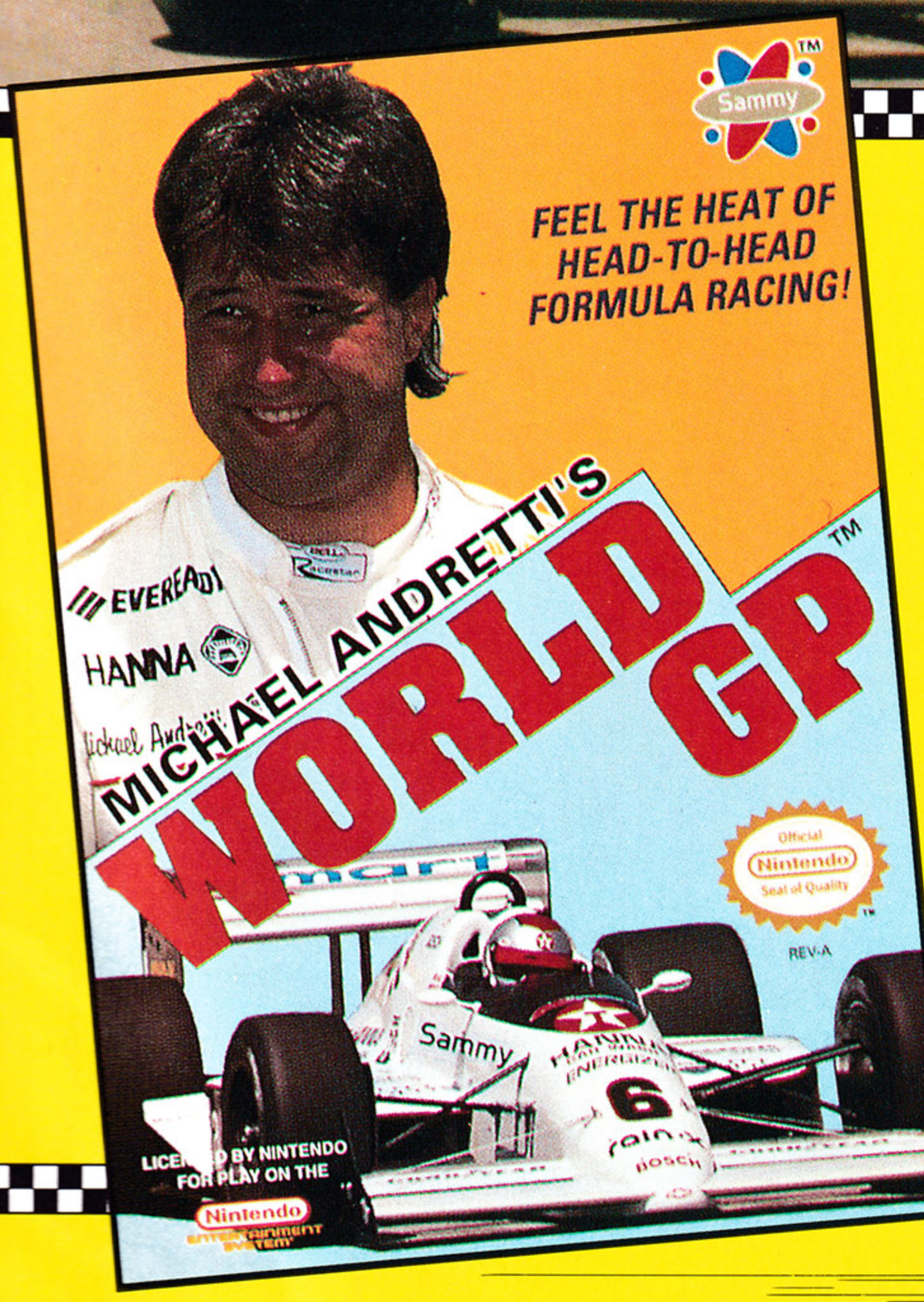
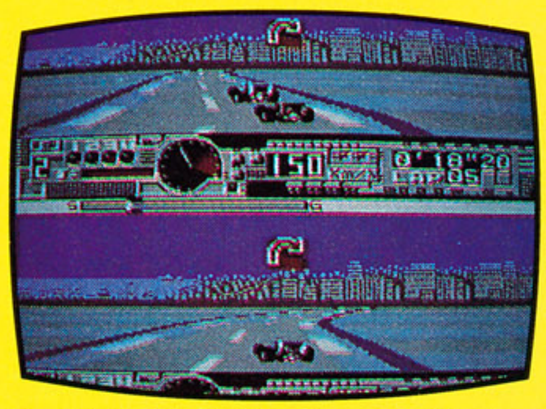


Michael Andretti will give you a few hot tips on Grand Prix circuit racing!



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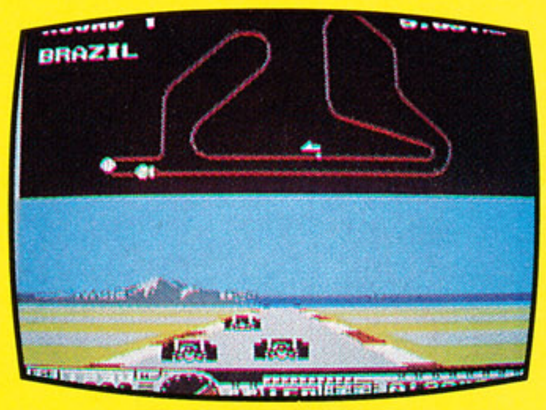

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is to ask revealing questions and offer hard-hitting articles on what is happening in the industry, rather than putting rose-colored glasses on and telling our readers how wonderful everything is in the marketplace. As members of the press, it is truly our business to look deep into the videogame industry and report on it. We feel that's made us the most respected magazine in our field, and most of our reader letters bear that out.

Your statements on the Genesis and TG-16 are somewhat inaccurate. Though both systems are lacking large software libraries, they are relatively new products, and it will take a while to build up the numbers that Nintendo has gotten in five years. And we seriously doubt that the Super Famicom will cause the other game consoles to dry up and blow away; on the contrary, the feeling is that Nintendo is missing a great opportunity to truly dominate the market (more than it already has) by not releasing the Super Famicom sooner.

Finally, while the MMC chips that you referred to (which we spoke about in the Yea & Nay *column of our August issue) will help the NES with regards to graphics and animation, they won't likely bring the type of graphic quality and capabilities that the next-generation machines have. Look at the independently scrolling backgrounds of games like* Legendary Axe *or* Thunder Force II*, and I doubt you'll find an NES game to compare.*

Thanks for your letter, Darryl. Here's another reader with some related comments.

16-BIT CONVERT

Dear VG&CE:

About three weeks ago I purchased probably the best NES cart to date, *Super Mario Bros. 3*, and was really not impressed. So I sold my system and all my games and got a Genesis. It was more than worth it. For $10 more than *Super Mario Bros. 3,* I got *Revenge of Shinobi*. It's about 20 times better than *SMB3* and definitely worth spending the extra money on.

The NES is lost. All hail Genesis.

—Jeramy Freimuth
Merchentville, New Jersey

The next-generation machines are truly exciting, offering lots of bang for the buck. But just because they are powerful products doesn't mean you'll always see that in the games you play. Here's a reader who wonders about just that situation.

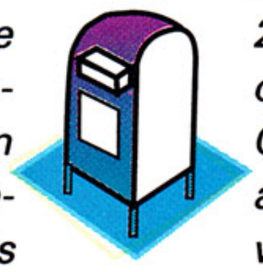
IS WHAT YOU SEE, WHAT YOU GET?

Dear VG&CE:

I recently bought a TurboGrafx-16. I compared it to a Sega Genesis and noticed that overall the Genesis' graphics were better. I was wondering if the TG-16 is actually a 16-bit system, or is the machine's potential not fully brought out in its programming?

—Richard Fowle
Leavenworth, Kansas

*As our article in the last issue, ("*Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 Take on the 16-Bit Computers"*) explained, the TG-16 supports a higher resolution than most of its early releases used. Similarly, the TG-16 is capable of 256 colors on-screen simultaneously out of a 512-color palette. Of course, that doesn't mean that a game programmer or designer will utilize them. The power of a game machine is demonstrated by its software, which is in turn dependent on the programmers' abilities and effort. Turn to any system, and you'll see good* and *bad games.*



SWAMP LAND FOR SALE

Dear VG&CE:

Have you ever heard of the Amiga Drive? It's a hardware device that slips into the Amiga's expansion port and converts Amiga software into a form that the Sega Genesis can use. Could you find out more information on this device and include it in a future article? It would be great for me because I own both an Amiga and a Genesis.

Enclosed is a page from a British magazine announcing the Amiga Drive. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

—Miguel A. Rodriguez
Bronx, New York

When your letter came, the excitement of playing Amiga titles on the Genesis danced through the heads of VG&CE*'s staff. Both machines use 68000 processors and have similar spec sheets. (For instance, though the Amiga has a larger palette, it can only display 32 simultaneous colors compared to the Genesis' 64.)*

That dream bubble was soon popped by reality. A call to the U.K. brought us down to earth—the news of an Amiga Drive was just an April Fools' joke. Darn....

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS WITH THE AMIGA

Dear VG&CE:

I'm writing in response to a part of an article, "Summer Computer Games Preview," in the May 1990 issue; specifically, where you call the Amiga a "game-oriented computer." This statement is very offensive to me, not to mention being totally incorrect.

The Amiga was created for professional video purposes. Also, have you seen the cover of the latest *Byte* magazine? In big, bold letters it says "Mainstream Amiga," referring to the newest Amiga 3000. It also talks about Amiga's setting new standards for multimedia productions.

Corrections

In the June 1990 VG&CE, the review of FCI's *Heroes of the Lance* was a major whoops-a-thon:

- Somehow a picture of Sega's *Slap Shot* snuck onto page 42.
- The photo caption on the same page lists *Heroes of the Lance* as a role-playing game. It's an action-adventure game.
- We were also informed that the game was taken back into the lab for further tuning, so the version we reviewed isn't the one that will hit the stores later this year.

VG&CE will print a brand new review in a future issue, when *Heroes of the Lance* is completed to FCI's satisfaction.

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Granted, the games created for the Amiga are quite flashy on the graphics side, but the Amiga is not a game-oriented computer.

—Michael Spurlock
Rougemont, North Carolina

In calling the Amiga a "game-oriented computer" we aren't saying that the machine isn't capable of a wide range of applications. Indeed, it's evolved into quite a darling to professionals in many fields. But it must be acknowledged that the Amiga is particularly known for its sound, graphics and animation—all important components of game play.

As an electronic-gaming magazine, we only deal with the gaming aspects of the Amiga, so the Amiga 3000 is somewhat outside our realm. At the same time, the Amiga line offers more than just the 3000, and many people have purchased the Amiga primarily for games. No offense was intended, and by concentrating on the play qualities of the Amiga, we don't mean to cut short its other uses.

JUST TOO MANY MISTEAKS

Dear VG&CE:

I love your magazine—it's the best on the market. Your strategy guides have helped me beyond belief. I own an NES, IBM PC, an "antique" Intellivision (which I actually still play) and I plan to get a 16-bit system soon.

I have a problem with video-game companies. I guess you could call it an editing problem. I recently bought Tecmo's *World Wrestling* for my NES. It's a fun game, but it has *the* worst grammar I have seen in a game. Problems like, "You'll have to get *passed* me," and other strangely arranged phrases and misspellings. I admit I'm not an expert on grammar, but it detracts from game play.

And that isn't the only game with errors either. In *Metal Gear,* when Solid Snake enters a truck that starts moving, he says, "Oh-oh the truck *have* started to move." Also, in *Exodus Ultima*, a prisoner says, "I am ashamed of my *crines.*" Now some of these programmers may be Japanese, and direct translations may not work correctly in the game, but they should at least get help.

—Michael Miller
Broomfield, Colorado

Thanks for your observations, Michael. Hopefully, game companies will start being a little more careful about what appears on a game screen. With the illiteracy rate already so high and some consumer groups objecting to electronic gaming as bad for our youth, the video-game industry doesn't need heat because of misspellings and poor grammar.

YOU'D BETTER CD DOCTOR, GAME DOCTOR

Dear VG&CE:

I am writing in response to the Game Doctor's answer to Jason P. Bennett's letter in the June 1990 issue of VG&CE. In his reply he stated that the TG-16's CD player only makes use of the CD in producing audio. This is totally untrue. If he spoke to NEC's staff, he would have found out that there is a game being produced by Cinemaware—*It Came From the Desert*—that uses digitized images of real actors to reputedly give the game much better graphics than most Amiga games, which are themselves praised for incredible graphics.

He also stated that its $400 price tag is too expensive, but he must take into account the fact that it also plays normal audio CDs as well as those with CD+G (compact disc with graphics). There is only one other CD player currently being sold in the U.S. that plays CD+G discs—JVC's XL-G512—and its price is approximately $500 dollars. If you own the TG-16, the CD unit is an extremely good bargain, especially if you were planning on purchasing a normal CD player.

—Chris Kelly
Riverdale, New York

If you look carefully at what the dear Doctor said, you'd see that he said that "current" software only used the CD for audio. You are correct, however, that other games are being produced that utilize the full power of the CD. In addition to Cinemaware's It Came From the Desert, *ICOM Simulations is developing a CD-based interactive mystery game for the TG-16 called* Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective. *Though it was demonstrated only on video tape at the Summer CES, it looked like a mini-movie. (See our highlights of the CES for more information, beginning on page 38.)*

Finally, it's true that the CD+G capability of the TurboGrafx-CD is a strong selling point and makes the $400 price tag more understandable. Unfortunately, there are few music CDs—though the number is increasing daily—that offer CD+G images. Be patient: It will take a while for NEC to sell people on its CD unit.

Modem owners! VG&CE can be reached online with comments and hints. We'd be happy to hear from you. Electronic Mail can be sent to us on the following systems:

CompuServe: 70007,3554
GEnie: VIDGAME
DELPHI: VIDGAMES
Prodigy: CKJB66A
MCI Mail: VIDGAMES

If you'd like more information on how these systems operate and how to sign up, give them a call and tell them VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT sent you!

CompuServe: (800) 848-8990
GEnie: (800) 638-9636
DELPHI: (800) 544-4005
Prodigy: (800) 822-6922 x556
MCI Mail: (800) 444-6245

Also, turn to page 117 for more information on the "World of Video Games," your online connection to VG&CE through Delphi!

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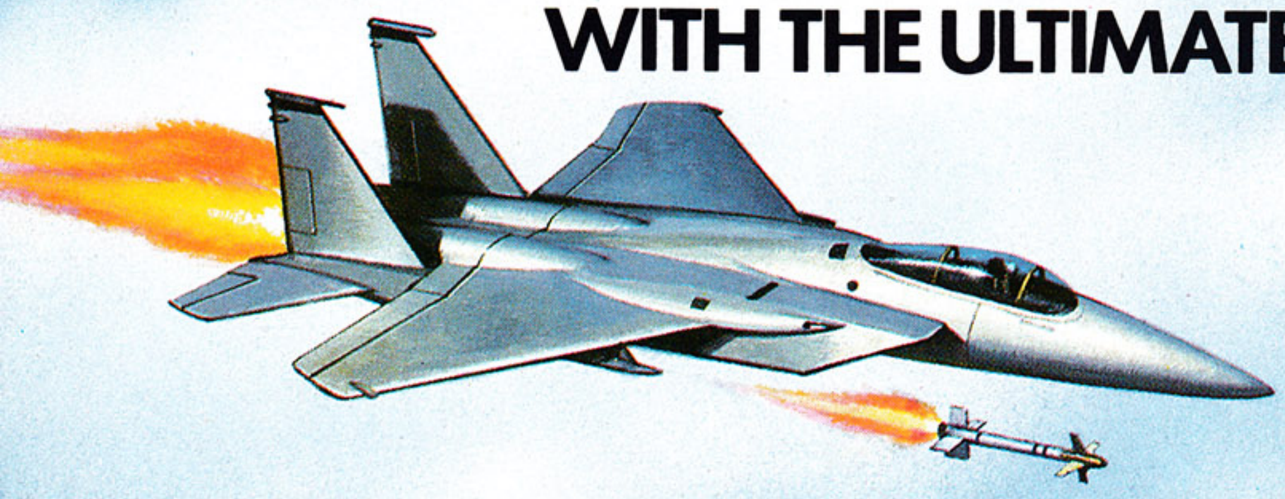
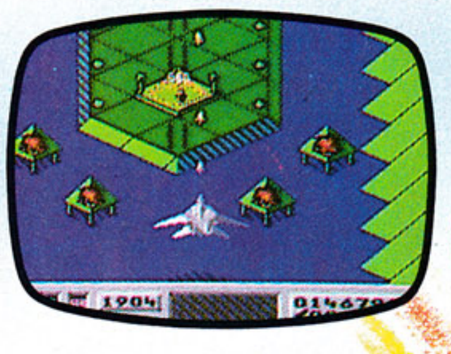
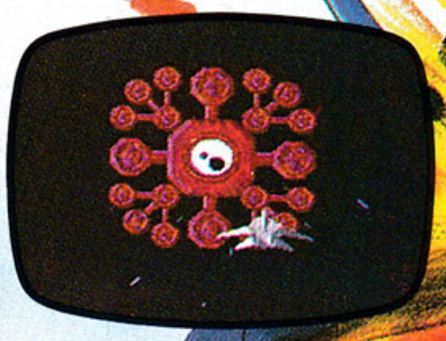


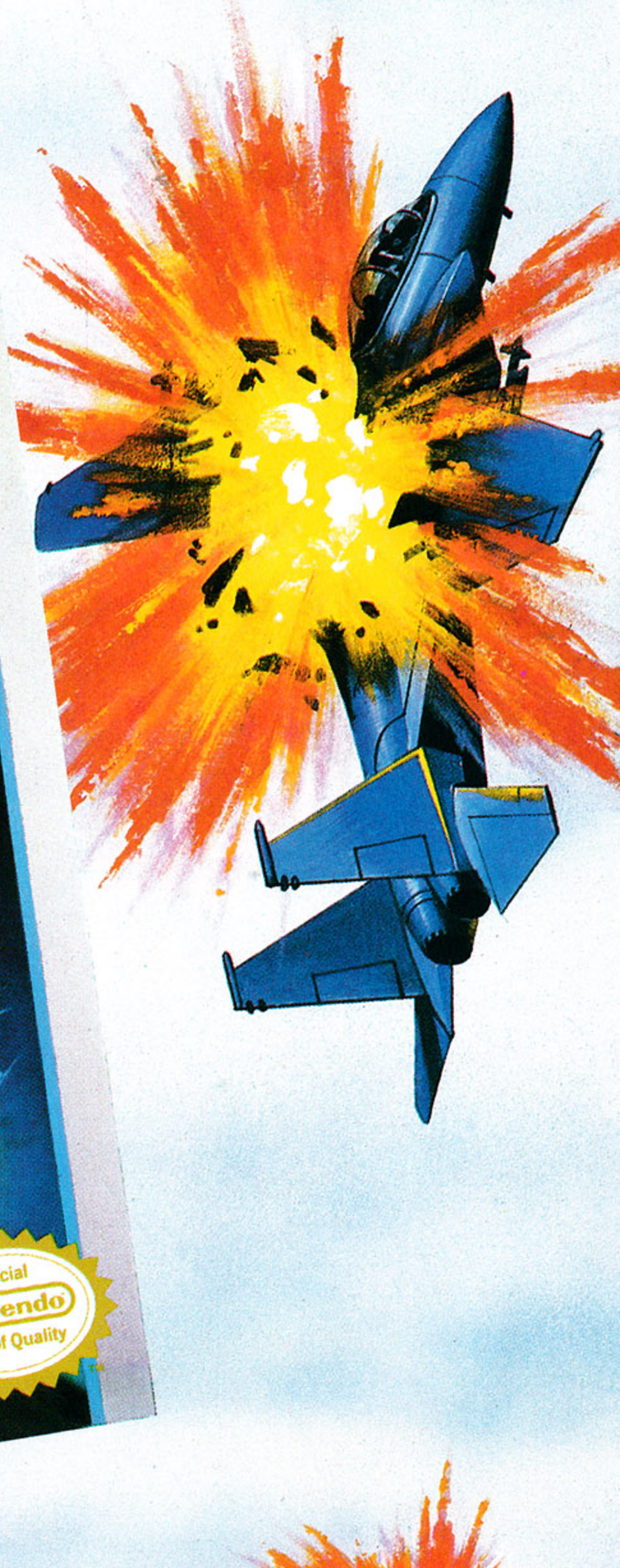
Air Drop Supplies



Rescue Scientists



Destroy Aliens



Strap yourself into the hottest fighter ever. No other game has more weapons and more missions over more terrain than this ace. Now air combat soars to incredible new heights with Captain Skyhawk.

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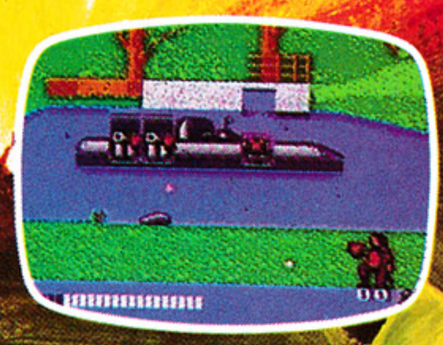
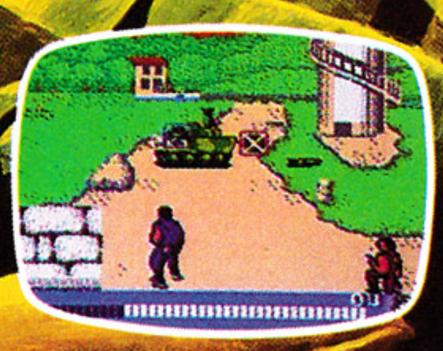


Sink Subs



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MB
MILTON BRADLEY

No Games Hit Harder.

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*

TIP SHEET

by Donn Nauert

Once in front of the Titan Warrior, simply jump and swing your sword, and he'll be finished in no time.

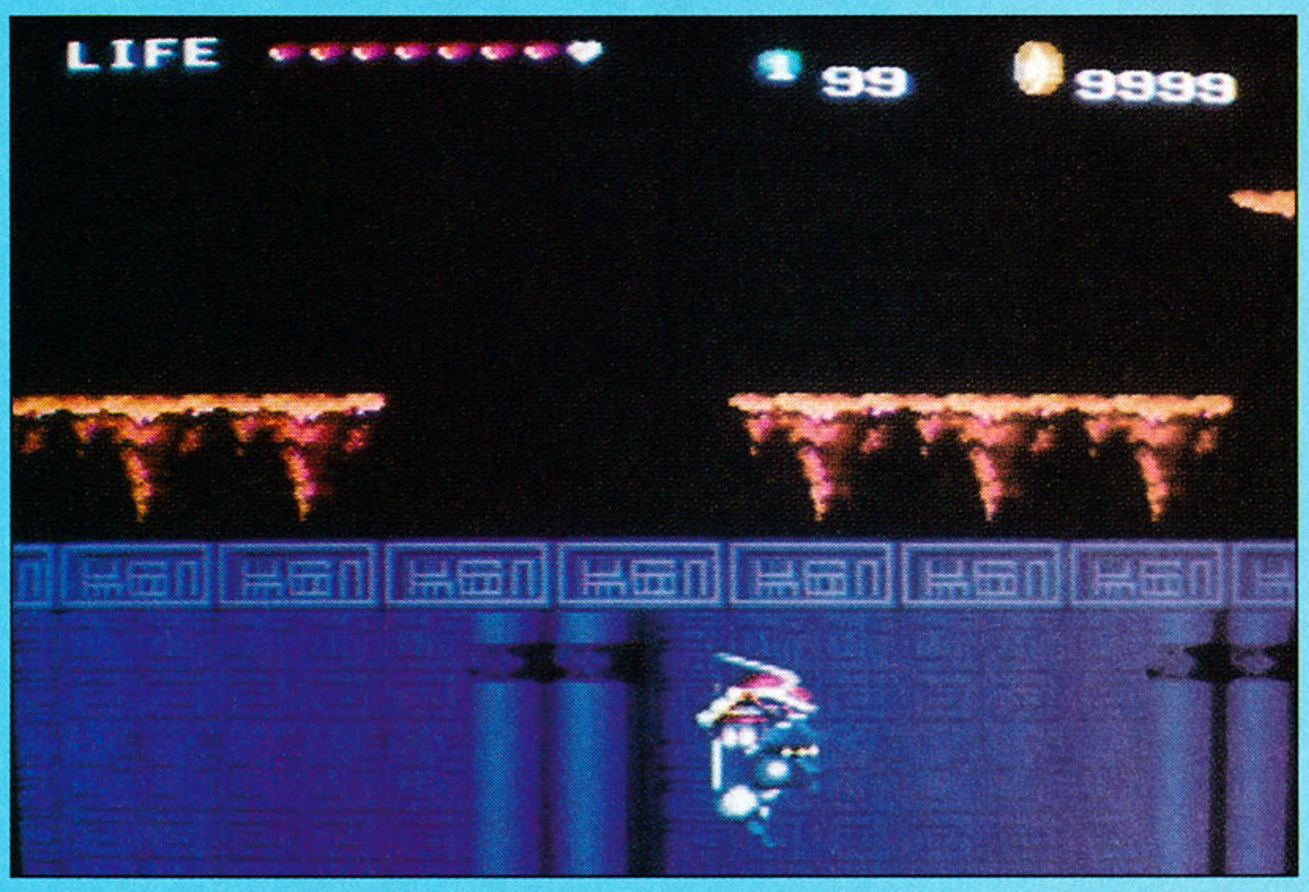
In *Keith Courage in Alpha Zones* (for the TurboGrafx-16), I've been struggling to beat Titan Warrior, the boss of Level 7. Can you tell me how to accomplish this feat?

—Richard Fowle
Leavenworth, Kansas

At the entrance to the end boss, stand on the left side of the entrance, and step off by pressing to the right.

There is a special way to defeat the Titan Warrior. Normally, in Keith Courage, *you would just fall off the ledges that lead to the end bosses and do battle with them, but in Level 7 if you try this particular method you'll meet a certain death.*

Once you reach the entrance to Titan Warrior, stand to the left of the hole. Then simply walk off the ledge to the right, and be sure to hold to the right your entire way down. If you do this correctly, you'll land in front of Titan Warrior. If you land too far from him, you will activate his sensors, and he will make a charge toward you. But by landing close to him you can defeat him without him ever moving.



Be sure to continue holding the control pad to the right as you fall so that your character lands squarely in front of the Titan Warrior.

I can only make it to the third track on *Victory Run*. Help!

—John Tabler
Kouts, Indiana

Sometimes it can be difficult to tell someone how to play a driving game without including the obvious "steer right, steer left, avoid the other cars" type of advice. Hopefully, these tips will help.

• The first thing you want to do is set up your replacement parts adequately enough so that you don't run out later in the race. (Try using 6/4/3/4/3 as your parts selection.)

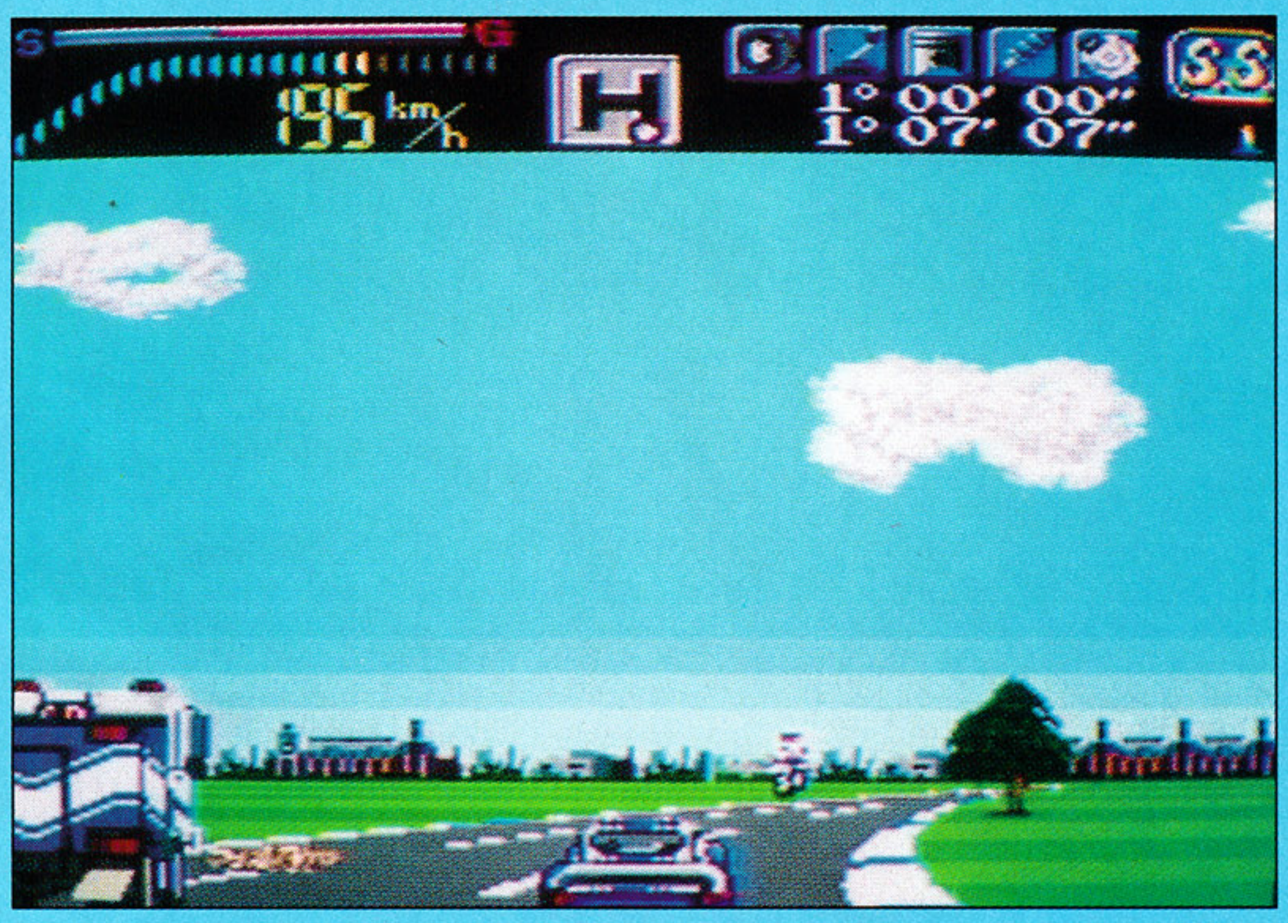
• One of the more tricky points is being able to avoid becoming airborne when you come to a hill. In most stages you want to maintain 255 mph, but when you come to a hill let off the accelerator at the base of the hill, slowing down to about 200 mph. This will save time and your suspension by keeping you on the road.

• Learn where the rocks and potholes are in the road.

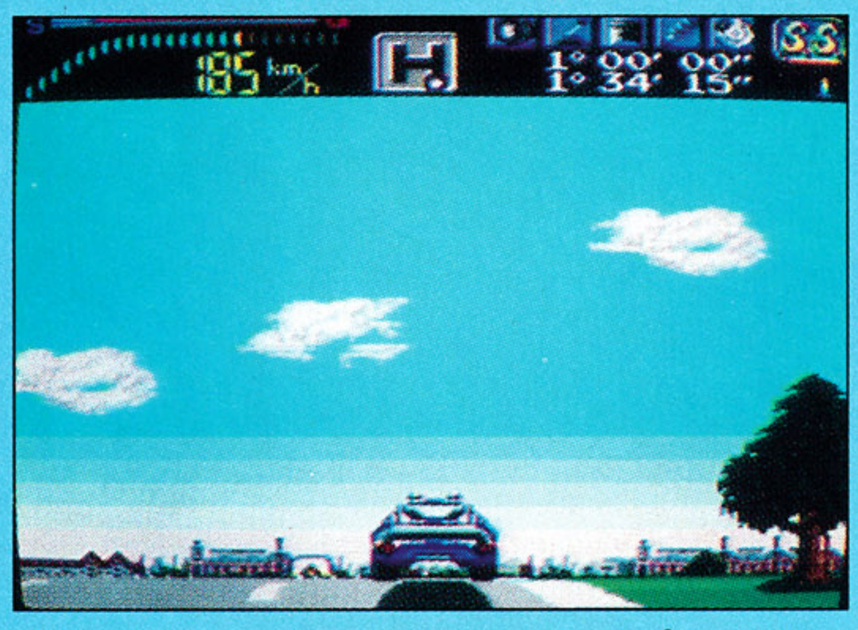
• If you watch the opposing traffic, you can learn when to take the inside and when to stay to the outside.

• Your main goal in the first three races is to finish with extra time, which is added to your reserve time. If you can finish in the top five—especially in the top two—you should be fine.

• Finally, remember that it's not necessary to shift into fourth gear in all stages. In the stages that have loose traction (such as the third), you might want to stay in third gear the entire way.



Top: Memorize the locations of particular road hazards, and know that opposing traffic will try to guide you away from them. Bottom: Finishing in the top five will add extra time. Doing this in the first three rounds will assure that you'll hit the final stages.



Top: Set up your spare parts as shown to keep your car in good working order. Bottom: To save your suspension, decrease your speed before hills.

The legend lives on.

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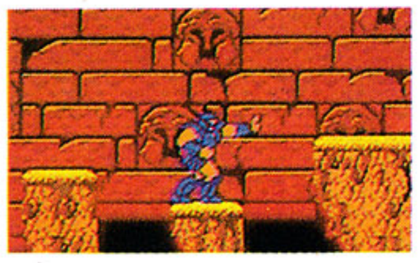
The name is **Astyanax**™—à-STĪ′-à-năx—and the game is unrelenting, mind-boggling action. Trapped in the nightmare world of Remlia, his only path back to reality is blocked by a hostile army of incredibly large and hostile monsters. His only hope: rescue Princess Rosebud from the clutches of the evil wizard Blackhorn.

A story in 12 stages of countless characters.

How do you kill the Living Dead? Put out the fire of the Flaming Polyp Plants? Chop off the heads of evil Caesar's mutant bodyguard? That's just a sampling of what **Astyanax** faces, and that's just Stage 1!



3 magic spells, fueled by 5 mystical power sources.

At your command are: Bind, to freeze your enemies in their tracks; Blast, a furious fireball which few can survive; Bolt, an awesome charge of deadly destruction. Choose your weapons carefully—axe, spear or sword. Wield them mightily to smash the Gold Statues and collect their power items: Power Supply increases your striking power; Potion restores lost life; 1-Up gives you an extra life; Wing enables you to swing your weapon faster; Cutie changes weapons or increases spell power.

Astyanax is filled with large, realistic creatures that rival the most detailed 16-bit characters on the screen today. There are 12 exciting stages of play and vertical and horizontal scrolling levels that constantly expand the kingdom of Remlia—features that place **Astyanax** high on the Nintendo Power Player Meter.®

If you'd go to the ends of the Earth in your search for the perfect video game for your NES,® you're certain to find a home in Remlia. With **Astyanax**

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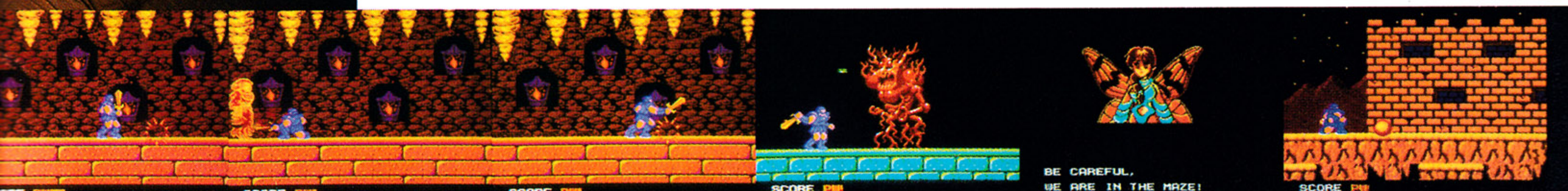

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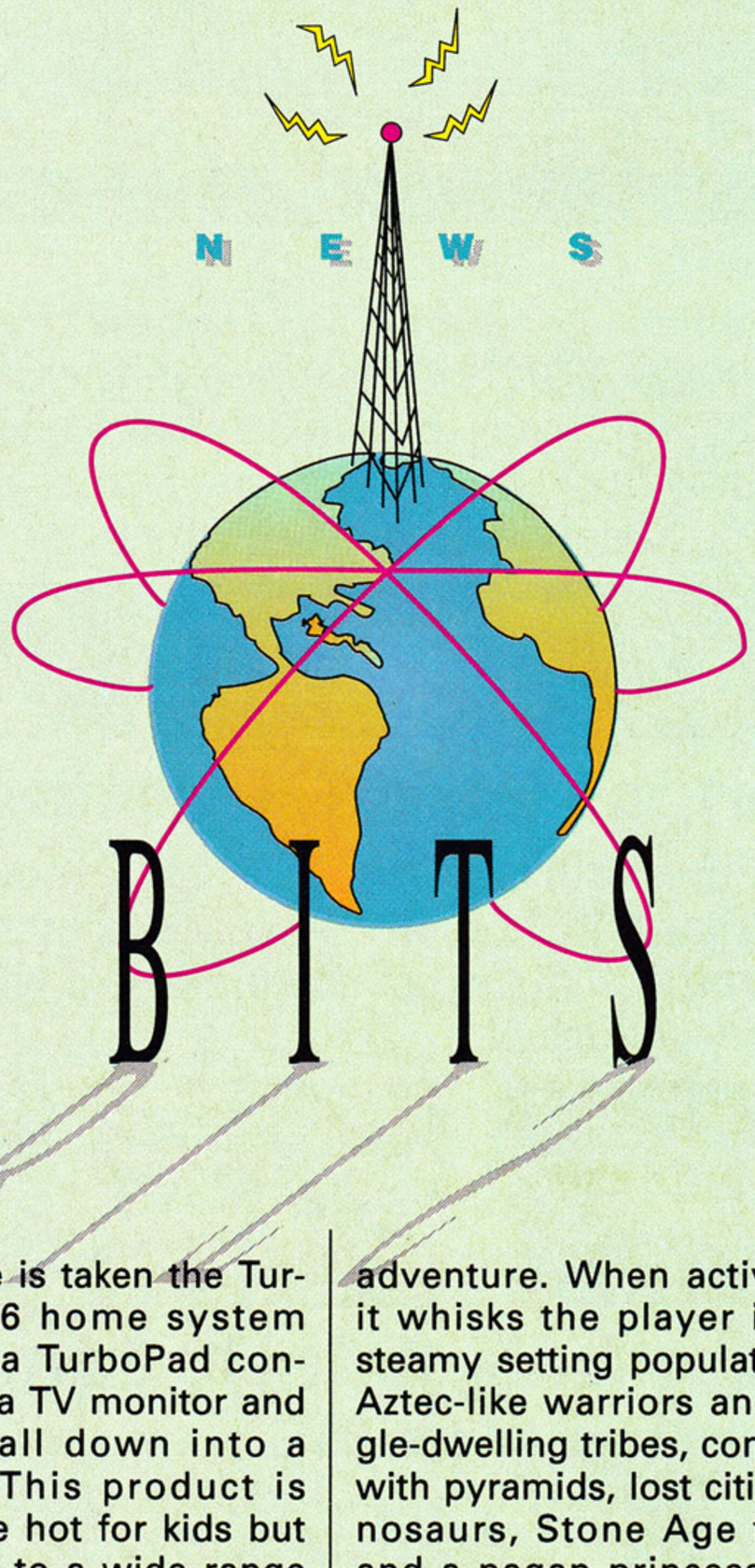
JOYCE WORLEY



NEC Names Handheld Game Player

NEC heated up the miniwars with the introduction of a color handheld gameplayer, which VG&CE detailed in the July 1990 issue. The TurboExpress is software-compatible with the TurboGrafx-16, which provides it with a software library that should reach 50 titles before the end of 1990.

The new portable uses active-matrix backlit liquid crystal technology. This produces an image that compares favorably with games played on television monitors. It's capable of displaying up to 512 colors onscreen simultaneously, using 238 by 312 pixels. It has a headphone jack so players can hear sound effects and music in stereo, measures 4.3 x 7.3 x 1.8 inches and weighs about 1 pound. Optional accessories include a communication link for two-player action, an AC adapter and a snap-on tuner with ports that allow it to be used as a portable TV or monitor.

Ken Wirt, NEC's vice-president of Home Entertainment, talked about the TurboExpress with great optimism. "Essentially what we've done is taken the TurboGrafx-16 home system hardware, a TurboPad controller and a TV monitor and shrunk it all down into a portable. This product is going to be hot for kids but will appeal to a wide range of users.... We felt an important consideration for parents was that no new investment in games would be required. Kids can pop any TurboGrafx-16 TurboChip game they now have into the handheld system and start playing immediately."

Ultima Goes to Savage Empire

Origin Systems has created a new adventure format, *The Worlds of Ultima*, to bring *Ultima* into a new realm. *The Savage Empire* uses the gaming system from *Ultima VI* in the first of a new series of adventure titles that will take the player into new settings.

The interactive thriller is triggered by a moonstone found in a previous *Ultima* adventure. When activated, it whisks the player into a steamy setting populated by Aztec-like warriors and jungle-dwelling tribes, complete with pyramids, lost cities, dinosaurs, Stone Age tribes and a pagan princess. *The Savage Empire* uses 256-color VGA graphics and a full-length soundtrack supporting most major sound boards. The *Ultima* conversation system has been expanded, and portrait graphics now show characters with greater detail.

Origin plans future releases in the *Worlds of Ultima* series and promises that each will further develop the game environment to take advantage of state-of-the-art technology.

Game Company Announces Windows Product

Artworx Software released what is believed to be the first entertainment product for the Microsoft *Windows* operating environment. *Kaleidokubes* takes advantage of the *Windows* graphic interface, including multitasking and overlapping windows.

Kaleidokubes is a one- or two-person puzzle game that requires the user to place randomly generated cubes on a board, matching the color sides with the kubes already there. It comes in both IBM PC and *Windows* versions and is keyboard- or mouse-controlled.

Top Coin-Ops of May 1990

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

Best Upright Videos

1. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Konami
2. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
3. *Cyberball 2072* by Atari
4. *Beast Busters* by SNK
5. *Final Lap* by Atari
6. *Off Road* by Leland
7. *Operation Thunderbolt* by Taito
8. *S.C.I.* by Taito
9. *Turbo Outrun* by Sega
10. *Klax* by Atari

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *D.J. Boy* by American Sammy
2. *Final Fight* by Capcom
3. *Aliens* by Konami
4. *WWF Superstars* by American Technos
5. *Badlands* by Atari
6. *Golden Axe* by Sega
7. *Task Force* by American Sammy
8. *Cadash* by Taito
9. *Buster Bros.* by Capcom
10. *Crime Fighters* by Konami

Best New Uprights

1. *Mercs* by Capcom
2. *Slick Shot* by Grand Products
3. *Four Trax* by Atari

Sega Tags Heroes to Headline Games

Sega's new sports games for play this fall on the Sega

DRIVE THE KING OF THE MONSTER TRUCKS!

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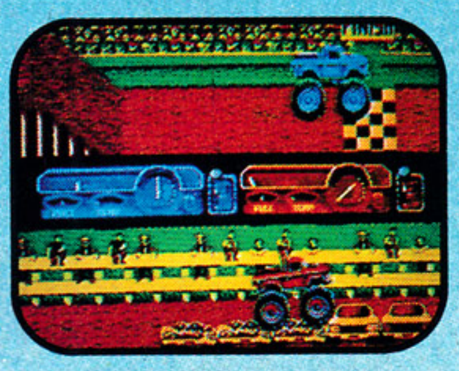
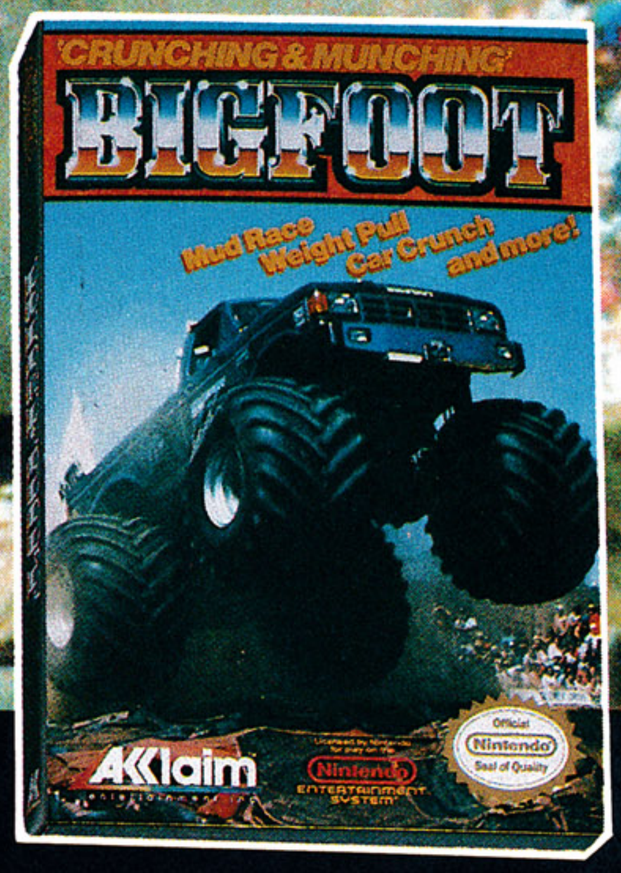


Track your speed, RPMs, temperature and more!

Crash and bash your way to the finish line!

GO HEAD-TO-HEAD IN THE MUD RACE, CAR CRUNCH AND OTHER MONSTER TRUCK EVENTS!



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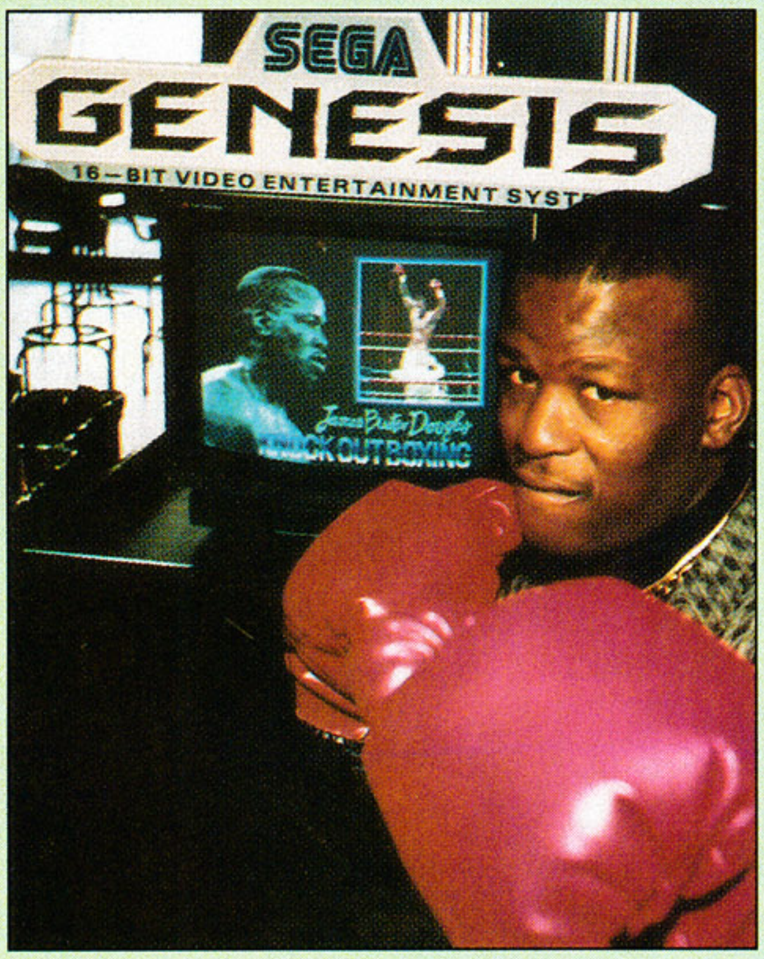
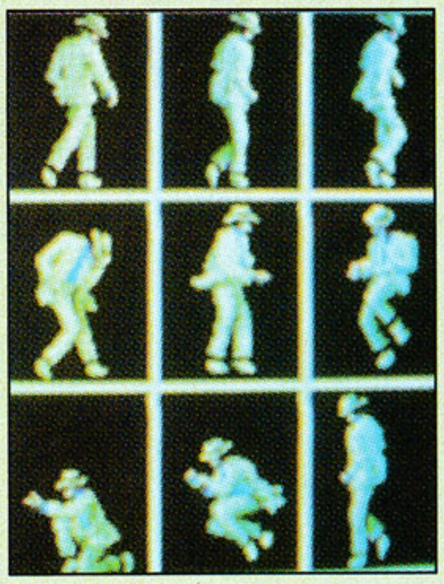


Master System and the Genesis 16-bit system will feature an all-star lineup of popular heroes.

Among the top sports names featured are Joe Montana (football); James "Buster" Douglas (*Knock Out Boxing*); ex-Lakers coach Pat Riley (basketball); Arnold Palmer (golf); and Tommy Lasorda (baseball).

Mega-star Michael Jackson worked with Sega's designers on *Moonwalker*,



which will high step its way into play-for-pay arcades at the same time it goes to the home systems. Based on the *Moonwalker* film and *Smooth Criminal* music video, it features dancing animations and hit songs and puts the player in control of Michael's fancy footwork against crime kingpin Mr. Big. (See the August 1990 VG&CE for the story of the *Moonwalker* cartridge.)

Software for Tree-Builders

FamWare (Salt Lake City, Utah) is preparing a program for hobbyists to chart their family trees. *Family Reunion* establishes a genealogy system, including pedigree and descendant charts and family group sheets. It then prepares birthday lists and address labels to keep dutiful descendants in touch with all the branches of the family tree.

The program is intended as a serious tool to help organize familial documents, such as birth, marriage and death certificates. Once the data is entered, it indexes all the information and presents it to the user in handy list or chart form. Special sections allow text input of biographical sketches, quotes and comments.

For those who'd like to seek out their own roots, the disk also includes information on how to do genealogical tracing.

TurboGrafx Gets American CD-ROMs

The first made-in-America entertainment CD-ROM programs for the TurboGrafx-CD Player will come from two development houses already well-known for their outstanding computer programs. Through special agreements with NEC, each company is currently working on games that should reach market before Christmas.

Cinemaware is currently working on the CD-ROM version of *It Came From the Desert*. Inspired by horror flicks of the '50s and '60s, it features multiple storylines. It's being created by videotaping live actors and digitizing the images, then adding spoken dialogue. The game, which was recently released for play on IBM PC machines, is a role-playing fight against giant, radioactive ants.

ICOM Simulations, best known for the computer thrillers *Déjà Vu*, *Shadowgate* and *Uninvited*, is developing *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective* for CD. ICOM also opted to use live actors in the three London-based mysteries included. The player must compete against the master sleuth to solve each.

Other CD-ROM games under development for play on the NEC TurboGrafx-CD include Cinemaware's *Lords of the Rising Sun*, a role-playing game set in 12th-century Japan, and ICOM's *Camp California*, an action-arcade sports adventure using cartoon-style animation sequences.

SSI Signs Buck Rogers

The science-fiction adventures of Buck Rogers are coming to home computer gaming as a result of a major agreement between Strategic Simulations, Inc., and TSR, Inc. The companies already work closely on products related to Advanced Dungeons & Dragons and now will cooperate in the same way on Buck Rogers computer titles.

Philip Francis Nowlan created Buck Rogers in a science-fiction story called *Armageddon 2419*. The movie serial with Buster Crabbe, Dick Calkins' comic strip and the more recent TV show have helped maintain Buck Rogers' popularity for over 50 years.

The first games, jointly developed by TSR and SSI, should reach stores by mid-1991. Among the first releases will be a science-fiction role-playing contest.

Champions Forever Reigns In Video-Game World

Champions Forever, the widely acclaimed video cassette that features boxers Ali, Foreman, Holmes, Frazier and Norton, is now the inspiration for a line of electronic games. NEC has licensed the property and will utilize it as the basis for both a video game and a CD for its TurboGrafx-16 videogame system.

As part of the same deal, NEC acquired the rights to the sequel of the original tape, a look at seven famous auto racers. Although plans are still tentative, the company expects to introduce a related video-game cartridge in late 1991.

Computer Game Sales End Year-Long Slump

The worst is over and sales are climbing in the computer-game business, reports the Software Publishers Association. First-quarter 1990 sales statistics released by the trade group show entertainment software up a healthy 17.9%, compared to the same 90-day period of the previous calendar year. January-March sales reached $65.7 million in 1990, versus $55.7 million in first quarter 1989.

An increase of 42% in IBM PC gameware more than offset continued declines in games for the Commodore 64 and Apple II systems. Macintosh games soared 76.8% during the

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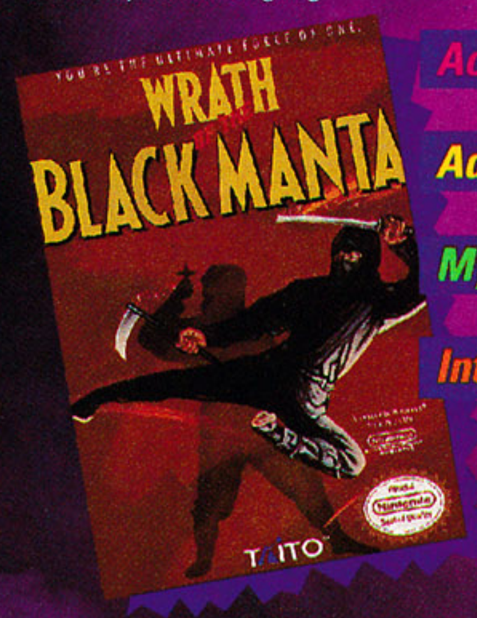

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Mystery!
Intrigue!

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Rated 4 out of 5 for graphics and sound, challenge and theme/fun on the Power Player Meter!

Nintendo Power, March/April 1990

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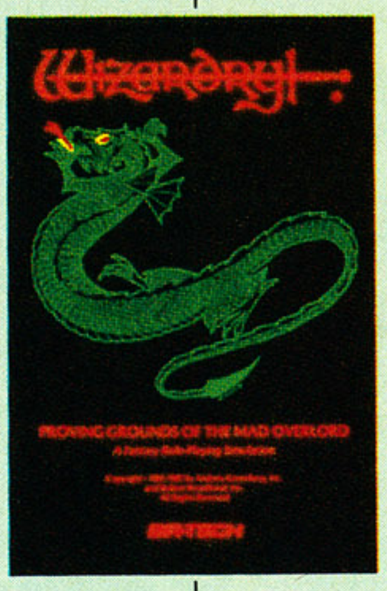
same three-month intervals, but sales of gameware for the machine account for only about 7% of the total.

Original Wizardry Gets Macintosh Face-Lift

The most popular computer fantasy role-playing game in history is getting an update for its Macintosh version. Sir-Tech Software has announced that *Wizardry: Proving Ground of the Mad Overlord* is available in an enhanced version for $59.95.



Sir-Tech collected many suggestions from players of the original Macintosh edition of the game, authored by Robert Woodhead and Andrew Greenberg, and has implemented the best ones. The improvements include full dungeon graphics, animated monsters and faster execution of many play-routines. *Wizardry* may be installed on a hard disk and requires no "key disk" for operation. Sir-Tech has removed disk-based copy protection to further improve operating performance.

Recycled Disks Help Charity

Covenant Recycling Services (Butler, New Jersey) is reconditioning used floppy disks, then recycling them and donating part of the proceeds to charity. "Floppy diskettes are composed of hydrocarbons, PVCs and other man-made materials," according to Deborah Bader, Covenant's director of recycling services, "and since they are not biodegradable they pose a substantial disposal problem, especially when you consider that literally thousands of diskettes are discarded daily by software publishers and other mass producers." She went on to explain that "...these discarded diskettes could readily be degaussed, relabeled and put back into useful circulation." After erasure, opaque labels are affixed and the recycled disks are distributed by Covenant.

Covenant pays publishers 12¢ for each 3.5" disk and 4¢ for each 5.25" disk. Fifty percent of the recycling payment is donated in the publisher's name to charity. Currently, the funds are being disbursed to Special Olympics International, Partners for Disabled Youth and the Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies.

New Pin Features Derby Action

The latest pinball from Williams Electronics introduces several innovations that the company feels significantly advance the state of the art for pinball machines. *Rollergames*, based on the theme of the television show, has "Deep Freeze Magna-Flip," a control that combines speech prompts and visual displays (a flashing magnet light on the playfield) to hold the ball in place at the top flipper long enough to guarantee the player a shot at special jackpots. It also has a programming innovation: a randomly timed feature that boosts the value of "the Wall" ramps to 1 million points. A high-score reward, "Rollermotion," lets players collect one of ten different values, ranging from instant multiball locks to extra balls.

Feds Nab Pirates

Acting on a SPA tip, federal marshalls representing plaintiffs Lotus, Microsoft and WordPerfect raided National Business Academy's Glendale, Inglewood and Van Nuys locations in California on May 8. The suit against NBA and its officers alleges that over $2.5 million in copyrighted software was duplicated and distributed illegally. The NBA did not oppose the preliminary injunction.

Prior to the raid, the adult vocational school illegally copied software and on a regular basis allowed students to take home the pirated copies.

"The software industry does not condone illegal use of its products in teaching students computer skills," said SPA Executive Director Ken Wasch. "Training facilities have an obligation to educate students, not only on the use of software products, but also on the rights and restrictions associated with the use of copyrighted works."

Thomas Lemberg, vice-president of Lotus Development Corp., added his comments: "Our industry does not condone piracy, and it is especially galling to see a training center run its operations on pirated software."

The Software Publishers Association established a Copyright Protection Fund in 1988 to coordinate an industry-united front against software pirates. Last year SPA established a toll-free hotline, (800) 388-PIR8, to be used to report piracy. Over 40 lawsuits have been filed since the antipiracy effort started.

NEC Offers Rebates

NEC has a couple of coupon books to save players money while they increase their games library. The *Save $100 Coupon Book* has rebate coupons that give $50 off on purchase of the TurboGrafx-CD player, $10 off on the TurboStick, $10 off on the TurboBooster, $5 off the TurboTap, plus five $5 software coupons.

The *Ten Free Game "Sell a Friend" Coupon Book*

You've got the strength. You've got the moves. You are the weapon!

The bone-crushing sequel to the original smash arcade hit, Renegade.

Put the brakes on the Skate Lords' boards.

Throw a wrench in the Sleazy Rider's motorcycle mayhem.

Face double-edge danger against the Dagger Dudes.

KA-POW!
OOMFPH!
ARRGH!

Sound effects so real you can feel the punches. A soundtrack so hot your ears will burn!

- More levels
- More screens
- More action

ACHILLES
All the charm of a used tire iron and a mean streak to back it up.

SIGGY
Don't let those baby blues fool you. This woman's dangerous!

BIG BOB
Look at him wrong and he'll pummel you into oblivion.

Graphics so real their looks could kill!

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seems certain to make Turbo-missionaries out of gamers. Convince a buddy to buy a TurboGrafx-16, and give him a coupon to send in along with his own proof of purchase. In return, you get a free piece of software from NEC. The book has ten coupons, so really enthusiastic Turbo owners can get the same number of free TurboChip games.

The coupon books are available in stores and by calling (800) 858-0100 before September 15.

Activision Video Line Goes Multi-System

Activision's video-game line has been expanded to support the NES, Game Boy and the Sega Genesis. The company will add to the existing group of NES games already available and will introduce new titles for the Game Boy and Genesis.

Thunderbirds puts NES in the cockpit of a jet, in a top-down air combat contest. *Tombs and Treasure*, created by Infocom, is said to be one of the most ambitious games ever done for the NES. Players explore Mayan ruins using an icon-driven interface.

Heavyweight Championship Boxing for the Game Boy takes the player through a series of fights until he becomes a title contender. *Ghostbusters II* prompts gaming boys (and girls) to save New York by sliming spirits and *Malibu Beach Volleyball* is a two-on-two beach contest for the GB.

Activision's entry for the Sega Genesis is *Mondu's Fight Palace*. This bizarre martial-arts contest pits aliens against each other in hand-to-hand combat.

Free T-Shirts Offer From FCI

Fujisankei Communications International (FCI) has a World Championship Wrestling T-shirt for anyone who purchases two of its NES games. The cotton tees are fronted with a full-color picture of Hawk and Animal, better known as the Road Warriors.

Mail-back coupons are packed in every FCI game box. To get a free shirt, send in two UPC symbols with the cash register receipts, plus $2 for handling. The offer expires December 31, 1990.

FCI will ship three role-playing games this year that were all megahits prevously in the computer world. Each has been redesigned for play on the NES console, including *The Bard's Tale*, *Ultima Quest of the Avatar* and *AD&D Heroes of the Lance.*

Atari Introduces First Eight-Player Contest

At the Summer Consumer Electronics Show, Atari introduced an eight-player game, *Slime World*, for play on the Lynx. (The Lynx is Atari's color, handheld, programmable video-game machine that was first introduced in November of 1989 and shown in the October 1989 VG&CE.)

Slime World is for eight Lynx players, each with their own unit. The units connect, so the players can explore caverns of slime. There are six separate adventures, ranging in difficulty, included in the game.

The company introduced an additional eight new software titles for the Lynx, to be marketed by Christmas. Several of these feature four-player capability for Lynx-linkers.

Atari Continues Support for 2600, 7800

Atari will continue to support the 7800 and 2600 home video-entertainment systems, according to its announcement at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show. The company plans five titles for the 2600 and 13 titles for the 7800 system for autumn availability.

The 2600 titles are *Ikari Warriors* (a two-player combat mission), *Fatal Run* (race an armed vehicle to deliver a vaccine), *MotoRodeo* (a truck demolition derby), *Xenophobe* (clear an alien infestation) and *Klax* (catch and stack falling bricks).

Titles for play on the 7800 include: *Ikari Warriors*, *Fatal Run*, *Planet Smashers* (space adventure), *Alien Brigade* (shooting game), *MotorPsycho* (motorcycle racing), *BasketBrawl* (inner-city basketball), *Mean 18 Ultimate Golf*, *Mat Mania Challenge* (two-player wrestling), *Electrocop* (save the city from wrongdoers), *Scrapyard Dog* (fight off nasties to save a kidnapped canine), *Klax, Midnight Mutants* (an adventure) and *Ninja Golf* (ninjas and dragons in a nine-hole adventure on the links).

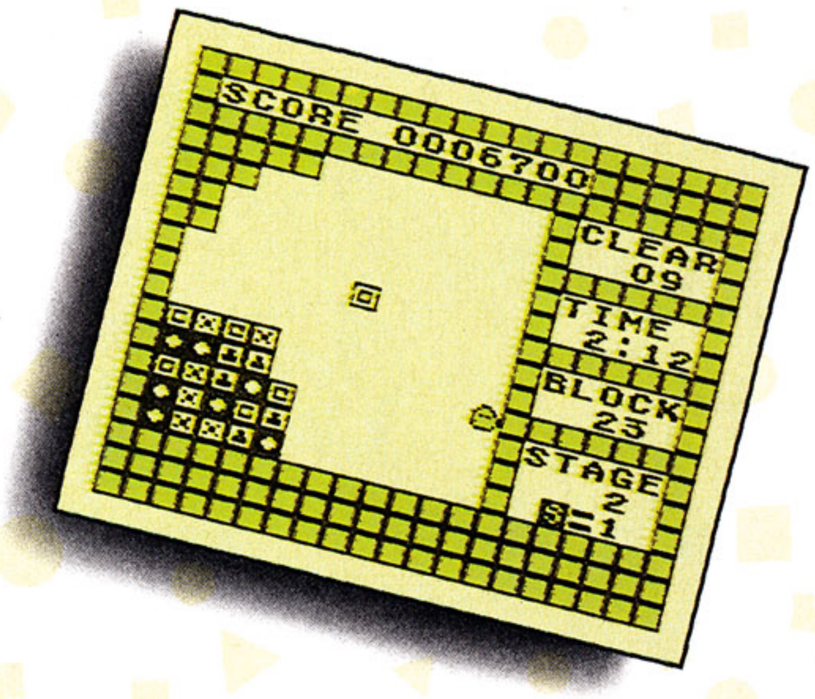
Ocean Software Signs With EA

Ocean Software, located in Manchester, England, has signed an exclusive distribution agreement with Electronic Arts. Under the agreement, EA will manufacture and distribute all Ocean's products in the US and Canada.

Ocean is currently the biggest software publisher in Europe, reportedly representing 30% of the software market there. Among Ocean's previous hits were computer versions of *Batman*, *Robocop* and *Platoon.*

The initial titles planned for U.S. release are *Billy the Kid* (the player takes the role of Billy or Sheriff Pat Garrett), *F29 Retaliator* (flight combat), *Battle Command* (tank warfare) and *Clive Barker's Nightbreed* (a game that combines role-playing with action-arcade conflicts against dark forces). All are for play on IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST computers.

Play against yourself or play against a friend.



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Blow out multiple cubes of the same kind to rack up big bonus points!

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Don't let your blob get bonked or it's all over!

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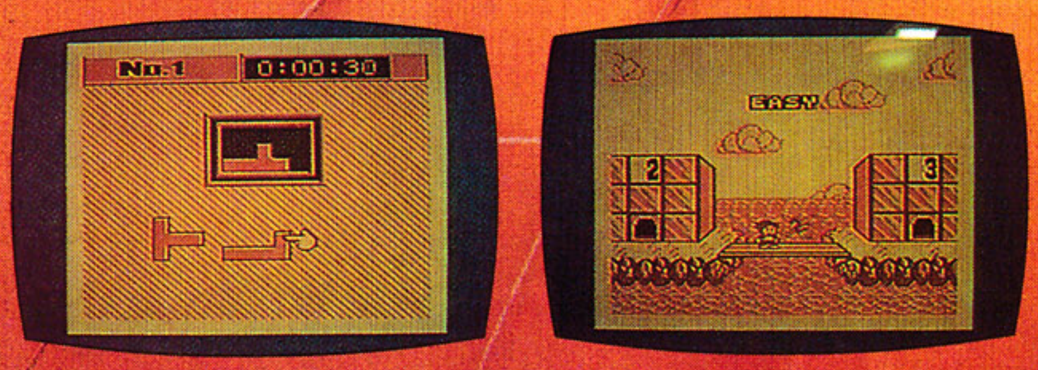
The ancient land of Daedalus is governed by symmetry and time. It is a land, where your progress will be severely tested by the challenge of myriad shapes and blocks. It will take the art of Daedalus and the power of your mind to solve the confounding riddles of the blocks. To master Daedalian Opus™ is to achieve the art of victory.

Daedalian Opus™ (dĭ-dā´lē·ən ō´pəs)



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- **Five winners fly to Los Angeles!**
- **Winners compete in "Daedalian Opus™" Tournament!**

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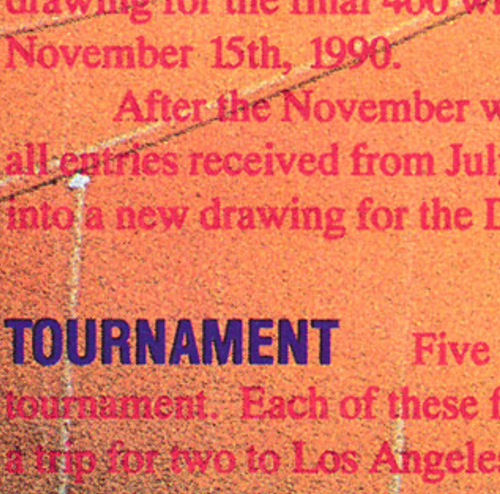
Each month, beginning July 15th, 1990, a drawing will determine 400 winners who will receive prizes including a Daedalian Opus™ jacket. The last drawing for the final 400 winners will occur on November 15th, 1990.

After the November winners have been drawn, all entries received from July through November will go into a new drawing for the Daedalian Opus™ tournament.

TOURNAMENT

Five entries will be drawn for the tournament. Each of these five winners will be awarded $1000 cash, a trip for two to Los Angeles (hotel accommodations and meals are included), two tickets to Disneyland, a Light Boy accessory for use with Game Boy™, and a chance to compete against each other in the Daedalian Opus™ tournament at a CAPTRON World of Nintendo center.



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The champion of the Daedalian Opus™ Tournament will win the following prizes:

- A 25 inch color television set
- A Nintendo Action Set®
- A Mountain bicycle
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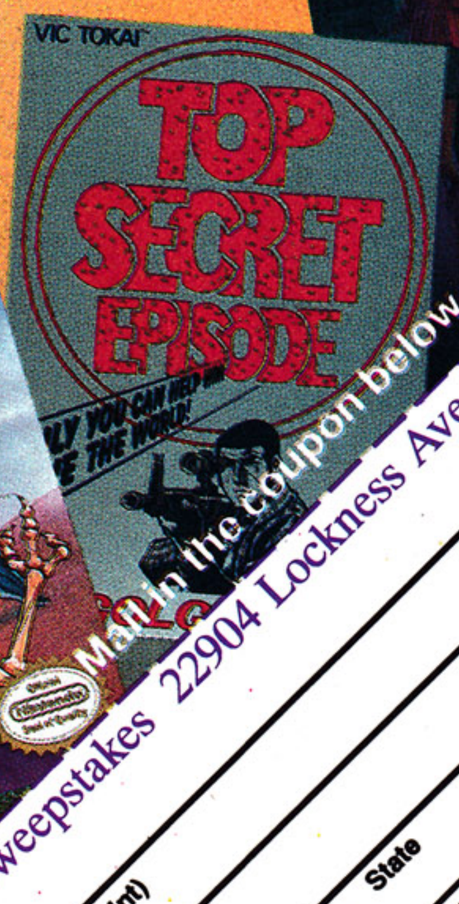
Hurry! Fill in the entry form for this month's sweepstakes and the Daedalian Opus Tournament !



Mail in the coupon below.

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Age

Shirt Size
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XL

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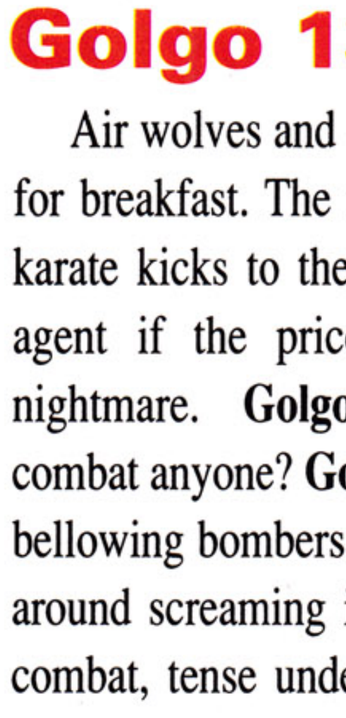
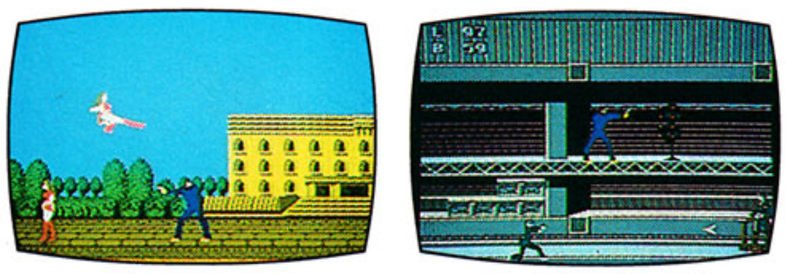
VIC TOKAI Revue!

Golgo 13™

Air wolves and iron tanks? Hey, this dude eats heavy metal for breakfast. The man likes to pack a custom M-16, but his karate kicks to the chops are just as deadly. He's anybody's agent if the price is right; and he's everybody's worst nightmare. **Golgo 13™** is the secret code for action. Air combat anyone? **Golgo 13™** takes you right up the tailpipes of bellowing bombers, right through the little choppers, and right around screaming interceptors. Whether it's crunching karate combat, tense underwater tank warfare, or the sizzling laser fights in the best mazes in video, **Golgo 13™** means action. In fact, there's so much action that you'll probably wear down the B-button.

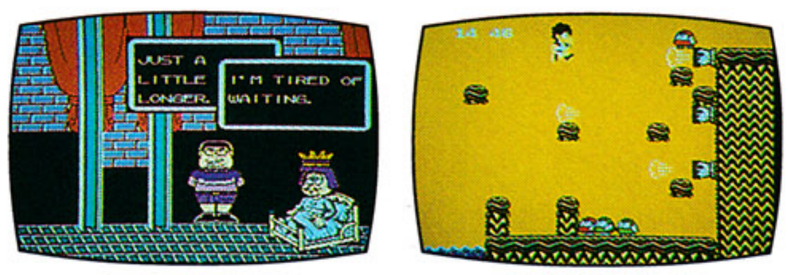




Kid Kool™

In a realm that might have been, in a time that could have been long ago, or just tomorrow, a good king lies dying. The enemies of the north are massing for an attack on his kingdom.

The good king's sorceror has been searching for magic and out of desperation pulls a rockin' rebel from the eighties back in time. **Kid Kool™** is sent on a quest to help retrieve the seven wonder herbs, the only hope to save the king.

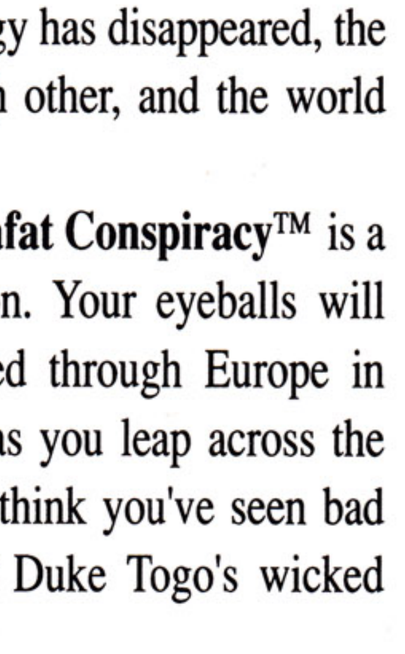


Conflict™

At the break of dawn, the eerie sounds of heavily-laden tanks pierce the morning calm. The metallic reflection in the distance only proves that the sun is bright, but who is it?

Are these tanks the armored support you called for, or has the red machine broken through? There is little time to react. Should you wait till your men are in range, or should you attack them now?

As Commander-in Chief, you've got no time to waste.



The Mafat Conspiracy™

A "StarWars" satellite has been snatched out of earth orbit, the inventor of satellite capture technology has disappeared, the C.I.A. and the K.G.B. are blaming each other, and the world edges toward nuclear oblivion.

Golgo 13 is back just in time. **The Mafat Conspiracy™** is a phantasmagora of action and interaction. Your eyeballs will stretch from their sockets as you speed through Europe in Golgo's Ferrari. Your bones will rattle as you leap across the cars on the Orient Express. And if you think you've seen bad dudes, wait till you feel the power of Duke Togo's wicked karate kick.

The Mafat Conspiracy™ is for those who demand the very best in video games. See it at World of Nintendo, and we'll prove it to you!

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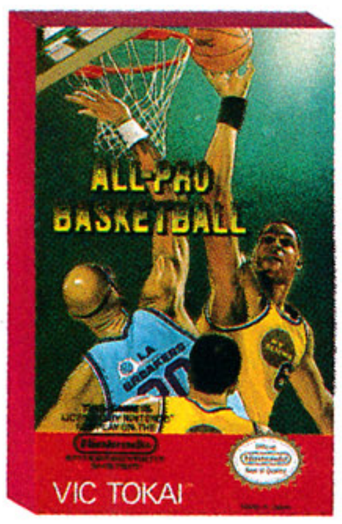
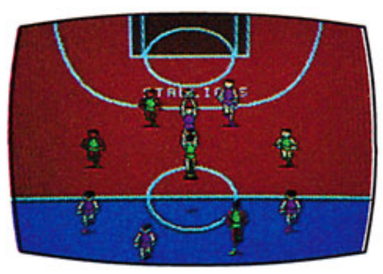
Bored with simple-minded one-on-one basketball? Disappointed that only three men on your team can dribble down court? In a foul mood because the guy who made the basketball game you bought seems to be using hockey rules?

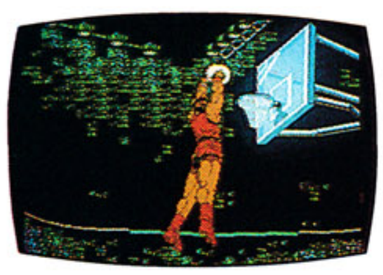
If you're a die-hard gym rat who can play the game, and expect your competition to be the same way, then it's time to play ball because **All-Pro Basketball™** has arrived.

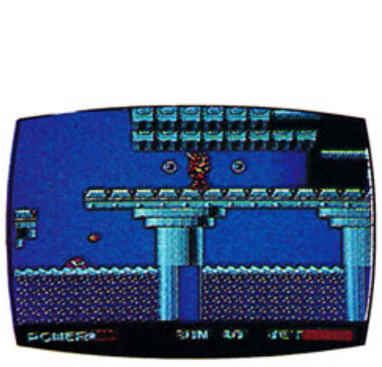
All-Pro is true all-court Five-On-Five basketball complete with long-range jumpers, in-your-face stuffs, passes, steals, rebounds, fouls, and even a half-time show.

If you're new to basketball, buy the other games. But if you're a real basketball junkie, leave that weak stuff on your home court, and let's get down to the pro game.









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Professor Plum and his designs for the dreaded, death-dealing doomsday device, Dead End, are in the clutches of the diabolical Lawbreakers–a sinister society dedicated to the destruction of mankind. It's only a matter of time before the Dead End Device is assembled and the final countdown to global Armageddon begins.

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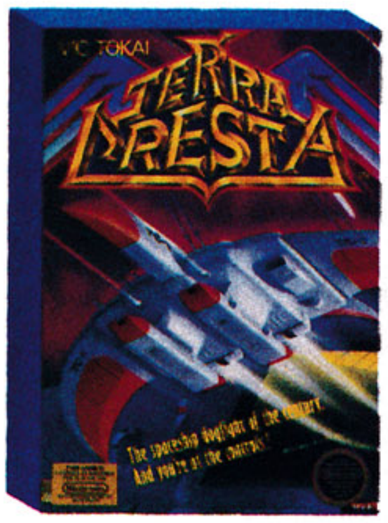

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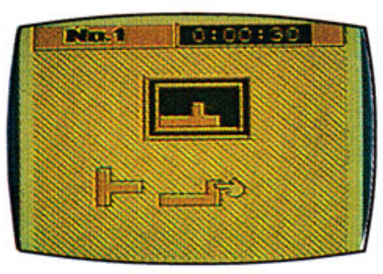

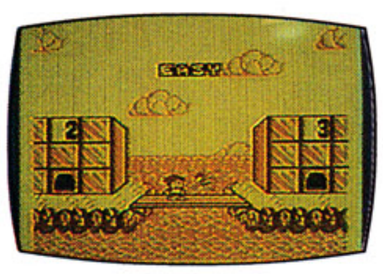

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SUM
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by the VG&CE

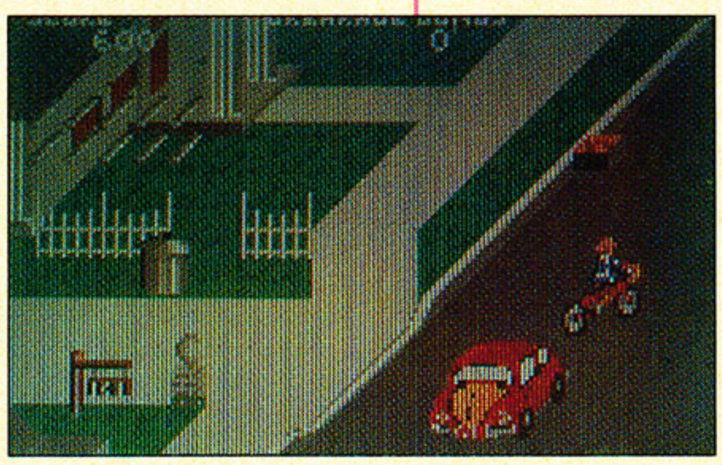
The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is held twice a year; summer in Chicago and winter in Las Vegas. It gathers together all the major producers of consumer-electronic goods—stereos, VCRs, camcorders and, yes, video and computer games—and gives them an opportunity to show their wares to potential buyers and the press.

The show is an exciting forum, particularly for the rapidly growing video-game market. In the past few years, Nintendo has been the big name, sporting booths over 30,000 square feet, but now NEC, Atari and particularly Sega have been making their presence felt with sizable displays of their own.

What follows is an overview of the products that caught our attention, both on the main floor and behind the scenes. There's no doubt that these will set the tone for the industry through 1990 and beyond, and because of them some striking announcements came out of the Summer CES.

SEGA IS A STRONG SECOND PLACE

The Sega booth was hopping to the sounds of Michael Jackson's *Smooth Criminal*, as well as Sega's latest slogan, "Genesis does what *Nintendon't*." And Sega has room to be optimistic: According to spokesmen, the Genesis should reach the 1-million-sold mark by the end of this year. Michael Katz compared the Genesis story to another toy industry giant: "First year Genesis sales have surpassed that of Teddy Ruxpin, the benchmark start-up success story in the toy industry." Sega also revealed another significant statistic: It seems that over 60% of their buyers are "[NES] players who are trading up."



***Paperboy* for the Atari Lynx**

To build the strength of the Genesis system, Sega is attempting to build software support. Sega plans to release 50 Genesis games this year, and more than 30 additional titles will come from third-party developers. So far the company has licensed almost 20 companies to produce Genesis software. The following is a list of licensees named to date: Activision, DreamWorks, Electronic Arts (which, contrary to our coverage in last month's issue, agreed to sign a license agreement with Sega), INTV, Kaneko Seisakusho Co., Kyugo Trading Co., Micronet USA, Namco America, Nuvision Entertainment, Razor Soft, Inc., Renovation Products, Inc., Sage's Creation, Seismic, Inc., Technosoft Company, Tengen, Treco USA and Video System Co.

Even though the Genesis has scored heavily with fans, Sega hopes to give its 8-bit system a new role this fall. The Sega Master System II is a one-controller, streamlined version of the original, and the two versions are totally compatible with each other. Furthermore, the system will come with an *Alex Kidd* game built-in.

The big news is the suggested retail price of $59 for the SMS II. In a related move, Sega announced that most future SMS cartridges will cost under $30. The plan is to make the Master System the first choice for newcomers to video games and those who haven't been able to afford other, more expensive systems.

ATARI TURNS ITS ATTENTION TO THE WEAK LYNX SOFTWARE

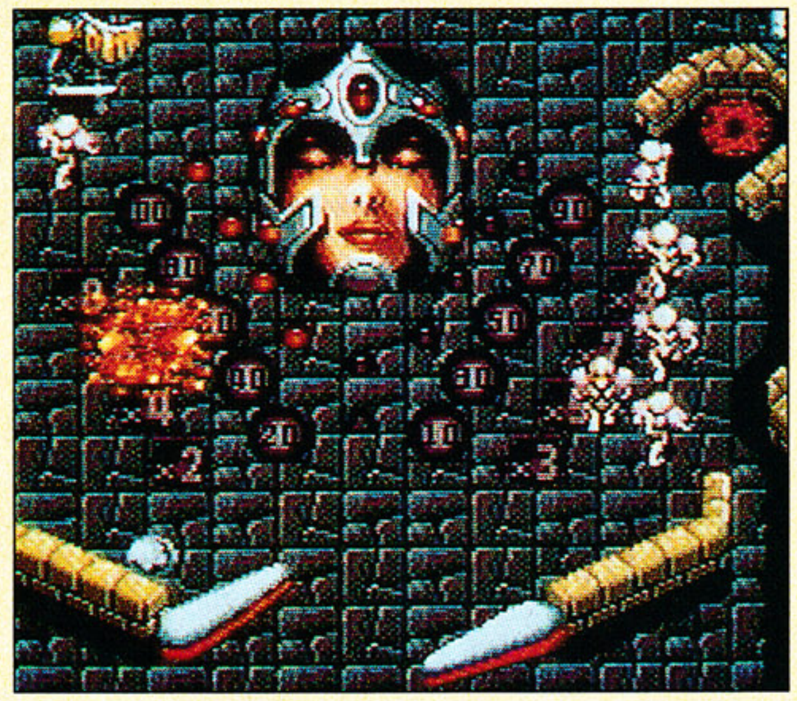
Atari had a lavish display of new software for their systems: the 2600, 7800 and the Lynx (the main exhibit).

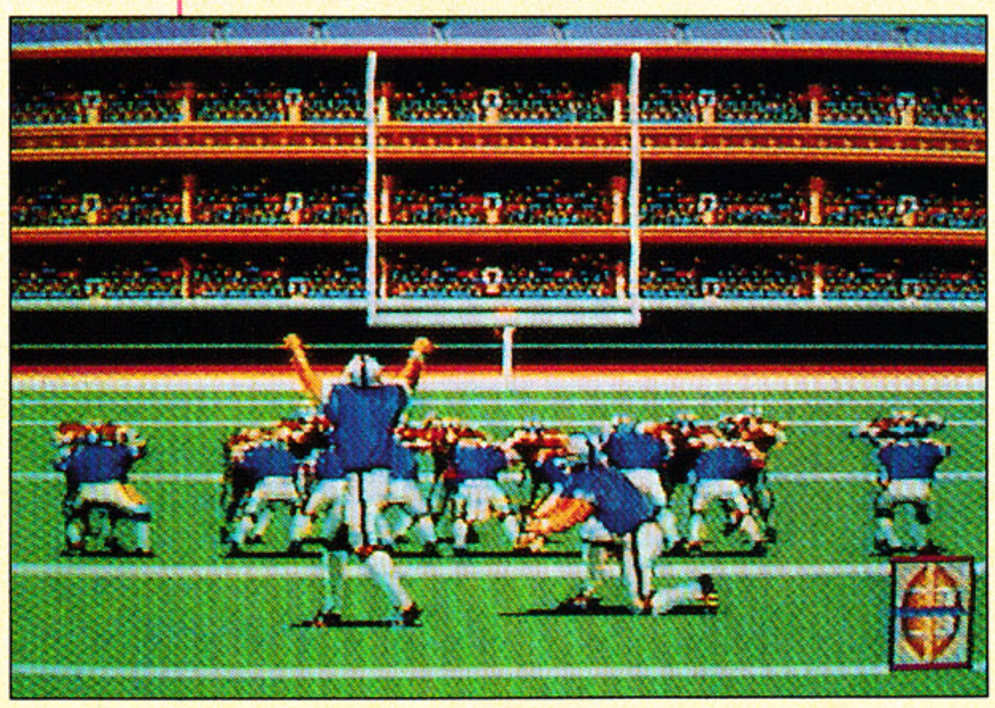
By the year's end, Atari will bring out some highly anticipated Lynx titles, such as *Slime World*, a scrolling adventure game that allows up to eight gamers to play simultaneously; *Rampage*, the popular contest of mutant monster destruction; *Xenophobe*, a space adventure in which the player tries to halt the infestation of various space stations; and *Paperboy*, the classic arcade game that sends the player out in a neighborhood to deliver newspapers and avoid obstacles. Though not announced, Atari was in the process of trying to acquire a license to *Ms. Pac-Man*, the sequel to the blockbuster arcade hit.

NEC HOPS AN EXPRESS

With the TurboExpress (see VG&CE, July 1990) as the primary attention-getter at its booth, NEC also debuted some new titles to add to its TurboGrafx-16 software library. NEC claims it will have about 60 titles out for the TG-16 by the end of 1990.

The TurboExpress, NEC's handheld TG-16, was on display for all to see, and it wasn't hard to understand why there was a constant clamor around NEC's booth. Also shown was the TV tuner attachment, which really piqued some attendees' interest.





The rich details of *Devil's Crush* (top) and *TV Sports: Football* (bottom) for the TurboGrafx-16.

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video games began, was again strong at CES. Its booth—a whopping 52,500 square feet in size—had few surprises though, other than a few more licensees, bringing the total to 56. Among the new names in Nintendo's fold are American Softworks, Asuka Technologies, Electronic Arts, Enix America, Natsume and T.H.Q. Inc.

A portion of the over-50,000-square-foot booth that showed off Nintendo's wares.

In the software department, NEC was sitting strong behind its Bonk character, which is proving to be NEC's Mario. But NEC didn't neglect the other titles it's working on. Among them are Cinemaware's *TV Sports: Football*, a conversion of its popular computer title; *Legendary Axe II*, the sequel to the scrolling action game; *Splatterhouse*, a horror-themed arcade game; and *Devil Crush*, a follow-up to the *Alien Crush* video pinball game.

Also promising were the works-in-progress on the CD front. *It Came From the Desert*, by Cinemaware, reprises the computer-game hit it had in 1989, which brings the '50s, Grade B horror movie to the game screen. Another exciting game, *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective*, programmed by ICOM Simulations, will challenge the player to complete a mysterious case from the famous detective. Other CD games shown for the TG-16 were *Red Alert*, an arcade title with a militaristic theme; *Y's Book I and II*, an RPG game made famous on computer; and *Valis II*, which features six levels of sword-swinging action. NEC also has plans to bring out some educational CDs for use with the TurboGrafx-CD Player.

NINTENDO CONTINUES ITS WINNING WAYS

Nintendo, which has been king of the hill since the second generation of

KONAMI DEBUTS HELMET ZAPPER

In the same sense that the Power Glove and U-FORCE make video gaming more "personal" by converting your motions to on-screen movements, Konami is hoping to do the same with its new Laser Scope peripheral. Compatible with any light-gun game for the NES, the Laser Scope is a helmet you put on your head. A crosshair is seen through the "scope," though the display doesn't block your vision and seems to hang in mid-air in front of you. As a further twist, a microphone monitors any sound you make—be it "Fire," "Shoot" or "Oatmeal"—turning it into a command to blast. Finally, the Laser Scope has built-in headphones that will feed the NES audio straight to the player's ears. In addition, when not hooked to the NES, the helmet can be employed as stereo headphones for use with a Game Boy or personal stereo.

A live demonstration of Konami's Laser Scope, a voice-activated helmet "gun."

The Laser Scope will hit the market this fall and will be priced at $39.95.

FOR NES CHAIR POTATOES

In an effort to combine comfort and game playing, Simulator Technology

Simulator Technology's Simulator-1, an interesting joystick chair.

Inc., of Bella Vista, Arkansas, has devised the Simulator 1, a "live-action chair." Expected to be widely available by Christmas, the Simulator 1 strives to eliminate the control pad for the NES and SMS, instead letting the player turn movements within the chair into on-screen changes. To move your video-game character to the left, for example, you'd simply tilt the chair to the left. Similarly, two handles equipped with buttons come up on either side of the Simulator 1 and handle the "A" and "B" button duties.

The Simulator 1 will come in two configurations: Deluxe ($179 retail) and Economy ($149 retail). The difference is the chair itself: The Economy model has a molded plastic seat, while the Deluxe version sports a two-piece upholstered chair.

I DREAM OF GENIE....

Lewis Galoob Toys has announced a new video-game accessory that gives users incredible control over the features and difficulty of NES games. The Game Genie, developed by a pair of British programmers, uses special codes to modify the games according to the player's tastes and abilities.

Galoob Toys' Game Genie "enhances" your NES games through the granting of wishes.

The unit snaps over any NES-compatible cartridge, which is then inserted in the game slot in the normal manner. The Game Genie menu screen appears instead of the title page when the gamer turns on the console. This screen grants "three wishes." The choices vary from game to game, but always concern key elements. In *Super Mario Brothers*, for example, players can give Mario infinite lives, super leaping or the ability to start at any level! Though the impression is that the Genie will only be used to make games easier to finish, it can also handicap players to even competition between gamers of unequal skill levels by allowing different difficulty settings.

The Genie comes with a code book containing codes for 150 current NES games. (There are 43 codes for *Super Mario Bros. 3* alone!) Galoob also promises updates for new games and is looking into the possibility of producing Genies for other game systems, including the Sega Genesis.

(In an expected move, Nintendo and Galoob are suing each other as a result of the Game Genie. Nintendo is trying to prevent the product from coming out on the market, claiming it ruins the life span of a game, allowing the player to set out in invincibility mode and scroll through unscathed. Nintendo lost its first court effort, which prevented it from securing a temporary restraining order against Galoob. VG&CE will report on this situation as more information becomes available.)

BO KNOWS ONLINE GAMES

Data East's *Bo Jackson Baseball*, designed by Season Ticket for IBM PC computers, is becoming part of Gannett's *USA Today* Sports Center. The game uses real-life baseball statistics to influence the arcade action. Thanks to a recently concluded agreement between Data East and Gannet, gamers will be able to download statistical updates from the Sports Center for use with *Bo Jackson Baseball.*

Season Ticket's first Data East release, *Monday Night Football*, will be revised for the Sports Center too. The new edition will be called *Monday Night Football 1.5.* Completing Data East's team sports trilogy will be *Dream Team*, a basketball game. The one- or two-player arcade-style game features competition against a three-man squad of Patrick Ewing, James Worthy and Dominique Wilkens.

DUAL PURPOSE COMPUTER PLAY IBM PC, NINTENDO

Play video *and* computer games on the same machine? It's possible with an unusual hardware product. The Duo-Computer, available in 640K and 1Mb configurations, puts a full-capability IBM PC compatible computer in the same case as a Nintendo Entertainment System. Both halves of the unit can operate through a standard television set or TV monitor.

DUO Computers, Inc., President Leigh Rothschild told VG&CE he believes the Duo-Computer is the answer to overcrowding at home workstations. "I can even run the IBM PC off a VGA monitor while I have the video game going on a separate TV set," he explained. The company does not expect any legal tangles with Nintendo over this device, because it utilizes a standard NES.

The Duo Computer, which combines an IBM PC clone and an NES game system.

The FC-Plus uses a 12 Mhz 80286 processor, with 1 Mb of memory, VGA graphics, Ad Lib music card and a 5.25" disk drive. It also includes a 20 Mb hard card, which comes loaded with software, including *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Lucasfilm), *Cardinal of the Kremlin* and *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* (both from Capstone), *Trump Castle: The Ultimate Casino Simulation, Space Math* and *Appointment Calendar Plus* (from IntraCorp). In addition, the unit accepts all Nintendo Entertainment System cartridges.

Rothschild explained why his company produced the dual-purpose machine: "Now in addition to playing [NES] game cartridges, there is a whole new world of IBM compatible, IBM PC software—thousands of additional applications—to appeal to the entire family.... I believe that DUO represents a technological breakthrough that will get computers out of the office and into the family rooms."

MIRACLE KEYBOARD PLAYS THROUGH NES

Software Toolworks, known for entertainment and productivity software, is venturing into uncharted waters with its first hardware product, the Miracle Keyboard. This fully touch-sensitive electronic instrument has a MIDI interface and keys as large as a Steinway grand piano.

VG&CE's Editor-in-Chief Lee Pappas shares a laugh with Dudley Moore, spokesman for Software Toolworks' Miracle Keyboard.

Software Toolworks has developed a special program for the Miracle Keyboard that also allows the MIDI Keyboard to mate with a regular Nintendo Entertainment System. It's a two-way connection: The user can either play the keyboard into the video-game system or channel the console's output through the keyboard.

A "learn to play the piano" cartridge, somewhat along the lines of *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing*, is in development for use with the keyboard. It employs games and diagnostic tests to teach piano up to the intermediate student level.

Software Toolworks' Les Crane has announced that Dudley Moore, comedian and concert pianist, will be the spokesman for the Miracle Keyboard. The suggested retail price is $249.

COMPACT DISC SHOOTS FOR MASS MARKET ACCEPTANCE

CD was one of the big stories at the Consumer Electronics Show. Even though hardware isn't readily available in the U.S., the existing overseas market and potential sales here have many companies working on CD projects.

• Access Software's first anthology, *The Collectors Edition*, for use with an IBM PC machine with CD drive, has all the publisher's top hits for $99. Titles on the disk include *Crime Wave*, *Mean Streets*, *World Class Leader Board* (along with all three course disks) and *Echelon.* In addition to the games, the CD-ROM has a slide show of the inner workings of Access, including footage on making games.

Access pressed only a thousand

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copies of the milestone disk, to be distributed to CD-ROM dealers. Plans to market it to end-users are not yet firm due to the limited number of CD-ROM players now in existence for IBM PC computers.

Access President Bruce Carver explained why his company decided to create a program: "I believe CD-ROM is a technology ready to blossom. Access wants to be in on the ground floor of this innovative technology. By providing entertainment products in this format, dealers will be able to show off more of the benefits of CD-ROM to their customers."

• Sierra will have two CD-ROM products on retailers' shelves by Christmas, according to Sierra President Ken Williams. The first two titles will be *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* and *King's Quest V.*

Origin Systems' *Wingleader*, a spectacular cinematic space game for the IBM PC.

Each CD stores as much information as 1800 floppy diskettes. The new technology makes possible the introduction of more graphics and new soundtracks, plus digitized speech and songs. (*Mixed-Up Mother Goose* has a stereo soundtrack that supports most major music cards.) This breathtaking program blew the doors off everything else at the show. Forget word balloons and bits of synthetic speech as state-of-the-art—every character in *Goose* speaks in a clearly understandable human voice, like in a movie or television show, and the artwork is absolutely beautiful. Backgrounds are done in the style of a Golden Book, while the animation of the characters compares favorably with Disney cartoons.

King's Quest V, also to be available for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Macintosh computers, brings back King Graham with ten megabytes of game data. The new adventure uses CD technology to deliver digitized speech, 256-color VGA graphics and an original soundtrack.

Williams explained his company's early entry into the CD-ROM market by saying, "Our games have basically outgrown what can be put in one box. When you are shipping 15 disks per game, the question of space becomes critical...to reach the heights we want in terms of quality and true interaction, the logical next step was CD-ROM."

• The most exciting CD-based product was in the Commodore booth, which introduced its CDTV (Commodore Dynamic Total Vision). Though still in prototype form, CDTV is being billed as the next home-entertainment/information device that Commodore hopes will sit comfortably next to—and interact with—the TV and stereo inside the average American living room.

CDTV takes a customized keyboardless Amiga 500 and mates it to a CD-ROM unit for entertainment and databasing applications. The disc capacity of 550 megabytes, the equivalent of 700 Amiga floppies, will give developers a lot of room for both multimedia presentations and elaborately designed gameware.

After its release, a slew of optional CDTV accessories will hit the market, such as a modem, a printer, external disk drives, a wireless trackball, a wireless joystick and a keyboard. Also, the MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) ports will allow CDTV to hook up with compatible devices for musical applications.

The various components that make up Commodore's CDTV system.

Due to hit the market before the end of 1990, CDTV (code-named "The Baby") is expected to have a retail price of under $1,000.

OLD NAMES WITH A FRESH LOOK

New versions of classic computer games may be the next hot software trend judging by the summer CES. Brøderbund has *Carmen Deluxe* (IBM PC), which introduces sharply improved graphics, more cities and enhanced game play to the original design for *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?*

Fans of the *King's Quest* series of fantasy adventures will be delighted by the new edition of the first *King's Quest* that Sierra is preparing for IBM PC machines. It keeps the Roberta Williams plot and characters intact, but the revised edition adds lavish VGA graphics, support for sound boards and a game system derived from the current *King's Quest IV.* The idea is to bring all titles in this electronic epic up to Sierra's latest standards so that the entire line will stay fresh for newcomers.

Stellar 7, a first-person, science fiction shoot-'em-up, was a big favorite among Apple II action aces back in the early 1980s. When Dynamix reacquired the rights to this multistage combat classic, it decided to redo the design—in the best 1990 style. The result is a new version of *Stellar 7* for IBM PC computers that features sensational VGA graphics, more sound and music and the same slam-bang action.

CERTAINLY NOT WINGING IT

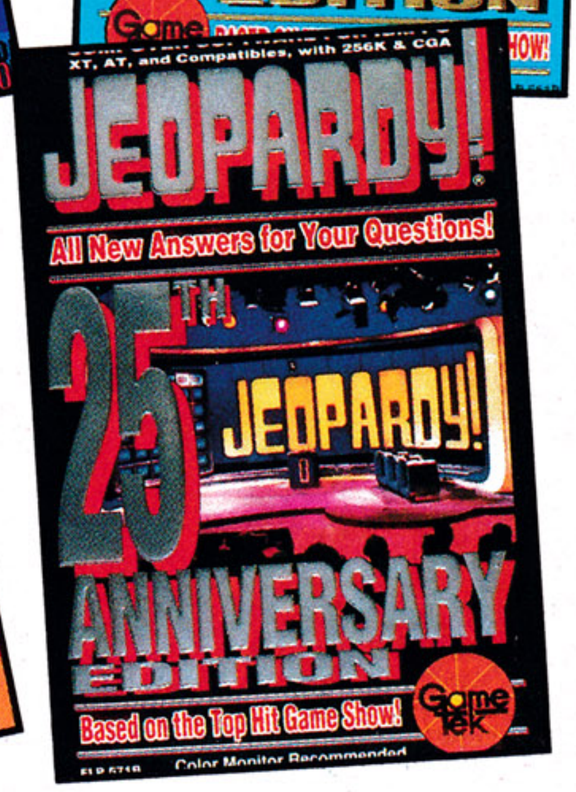
Origin Systems, long known for quality computer software with such products as the *Ultima* series, has created a stunning shoot-'em-up for the IBM PC called *Wingleader.* The "3-D space-combat simulator" features "rotoscoped" cinematic sequences, similar to those found in the animated movie *Lord of the Rings*, and wonderful audio (compatible with most sound boards). The soundtrack was professionally composed by George Alistair Sanger, better known as the Fat Man, who's been commissioned by such companies as Lucasfilm Games, Electronic Arts and Mattel.

Chris Roberts, who made his success behind games like *Times of Lore* and *Bad Blood*, set out to make *Wingleader* the fastest arcade action game yet to appear. Our own first peeks at this product tell us to leave some room in our balloting for Best Computer Game of 1990 in our awards issue.

CES coverage continues on page 44

A scene from Sierra On-Line's CD version of *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*, which features great graphics and digitized voices.

GET WITH THE PROGRAM!



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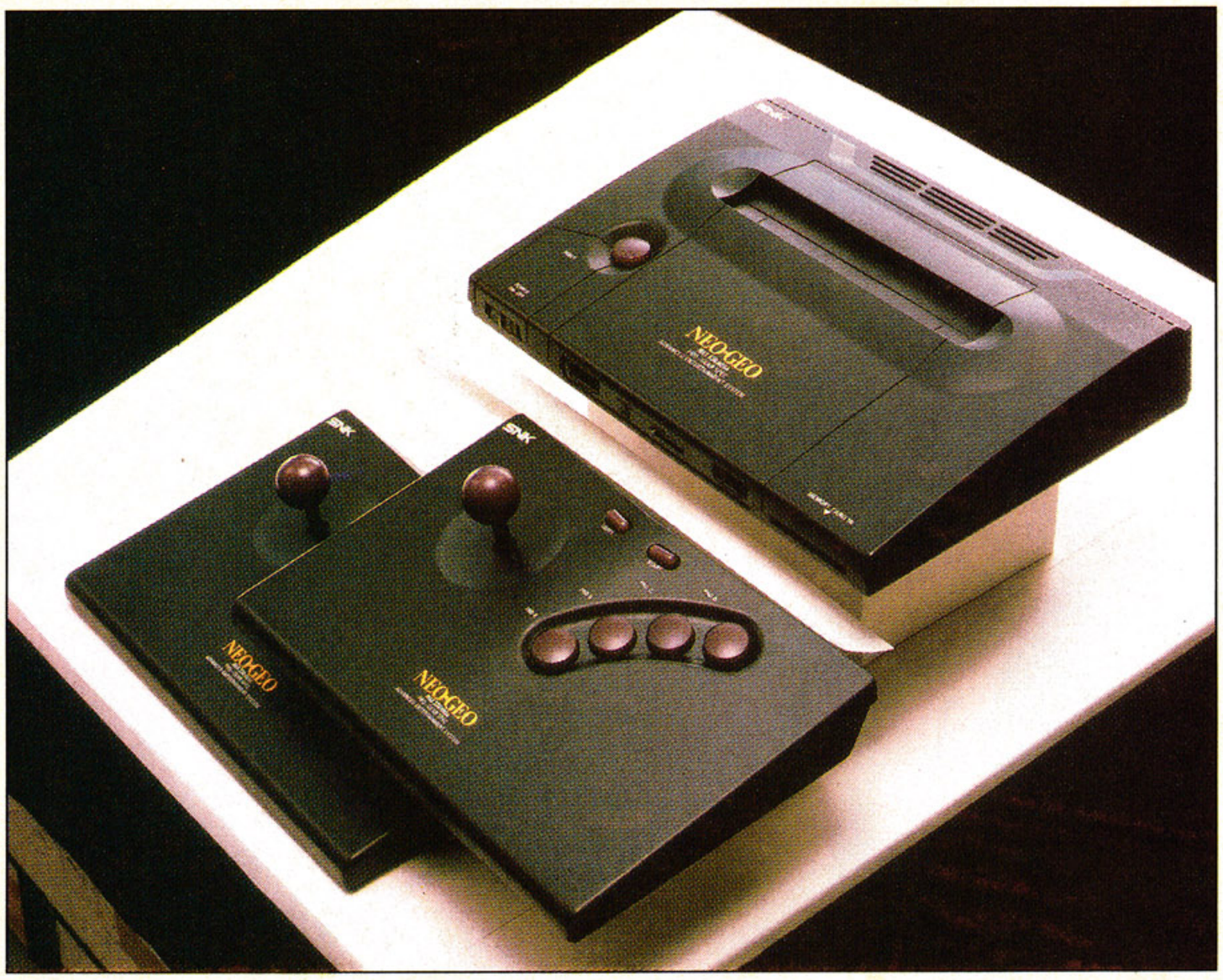
Here Comes the Neo•Geo

BY ANDY EDDY

Avid arcade players probably have already been exposed to SNK's Neo•Geo system, which has been released as a coin-op. This quarter-sucker was designed to hold up to five game cartridges for the player to choose from.

The system, similar to the Nintendo PlayChoice system, made quite an impression at the AMOA show (see our coverage in the June 1990 VG&CE) for a number of reasons. The main one is that SNK, an NES licensee with such popular games as *Baseball Stars* and *Iron Tank*, has released the system in Japan as a home-rental console, no less powerful than its arcade counterpart.



Here's a look at SNK's Neo•Geo video-game system, along with the controller that comes with it. It features two processors that contribute to its super graphics and sound capabilities.

Power is a key word. The Neo•Geo has some strong specifications to help it create some elaborate sound and graphics in its games:

- It has two separate processors: a 16-bit 68000 (as found in the Macintosh, Amiga and Genesis) and an 8-bit Z80A (found in the Sega Master System).
- It can display 4,096 simultaneous colors out of a palette of 65,536. (In comparison, the TG-16 can display 512 simultaneous colors; the Genesis only 64.)
- It can display 380 sprites simultaneously, and sprites can be as big as 16 x 512 pixels. (The TG-16 can display up to 64 sprites with a maximum size of 32 x 64, while the Genesis can handle 80 sprites of 32 x 32.)
- The Neo•Geo can output sounds from 15 different channels, seven alone devoted to digitized speech, a prominent feature of its software. (The Genesis has ten sound channels to work with; the TG-16 has only six.)
- Perhaps the most exciting spec is that games, which come on carts the size of a video cassette, can be up to *330 megabits* in size!

What About Us?

With the advent of 16-bit game technology, through the Genesis and TurboGrafx-16, SNK felt it could also get in on it, and it has the product to do it. In fact, the system was shown at a private suite during the Summer CES, and VG&CE's editors had a chance to view it in-depth.

Though the details are still a bit sketchy, this is what we've learned so far about the Neo•Geo coming to America:

1) SNK will definitely release the Neo•Geo as a home system in the U.S., most likely by the end of 1990. The system will carry a stiff price of $395, and cart costs will be equally steep at about $125 per game.

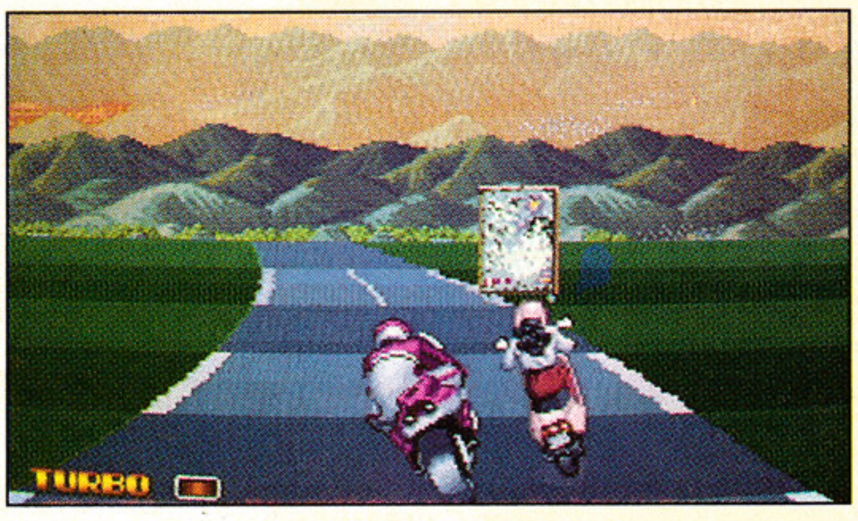
2) SNK will drop out of the NES licensing program to concentrate on Neo•Geo marketing and development. It's been confirmed that SNK will *not* be in Nintendo's booth at the Winter CES in Las Vegas in January 1991.

3) Major retailers have seen the unit and are very optimistic of its success. Many of their stores are likely to end up carrying the Neo•Geo on their shelves.

Software

Currently there are seven games released for the system, five of which are available on the U.S. arcade version.

- *Riding Hero*— Here's a motorcy-



The shading in* Riding Hero *gives great depth to the mountains in the background.

continued on page 123

GARGOYLE'S QUEST

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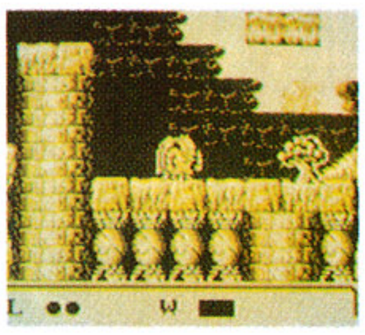
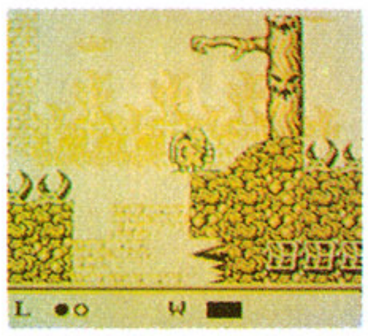
Prepare to do battle as Firebrand, the last Guardian Gargoyle of the Ghoul Realm. You must act quickly to defend your world against an invading army of Destroyers. Fight your way through enemy forces to reach the dimensional portal that leads to your home world. Once there, the true nature of the quest begins.





The King of the Ghoul Realm has been kidnapped and it's up to you to save him. Blast the attackers with fiery breath as you fly through their defenses. Unravel the mysteries of this multilevel universe to succeed in conquering the Destroyers and freeing the captive King.

- Highly-detailed artwork sets new standards for the Game Boy!
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AND ONLY ONE OF YOU.

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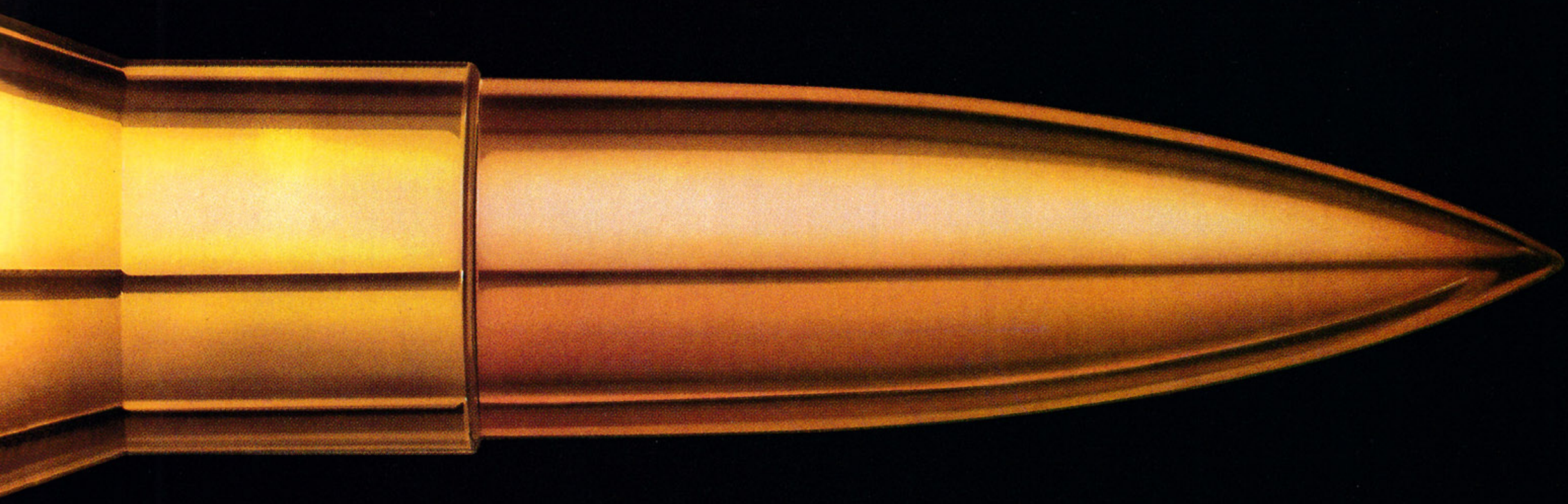
You'd better eat a good breakfast.



BLOODY WOLF, THE EXPLOSIVE ARCADE GAME FROM DATA EAST IS NOW ON THE TURBOGRAFX-16 SYSTEM.

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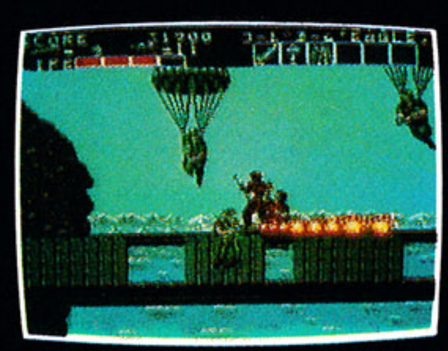
The odds are hundreds-to-one against you. Steal firepower from enemy ammo dumps.

So this is what they mean by "death from above!" Keep moving and shooting until this bird is cooked, and you're on the way to your next battle.

Ahh, the smell of napalm in the morning. Keep moving or the flame thrower boss will dry roast you.



When it rains terrorists, an umbrella won't do you much good. But a flame thrower will.

Hope you like heavy metal. Blow this tin can to bits, or die.

TURBO 16 GRAFX

NEC

This has not been a good day for your Commander-in-Chief.

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Manufacturer's suggested retail price for the TurboGrafx-16 system is $159.99.

CIRCLE #123 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

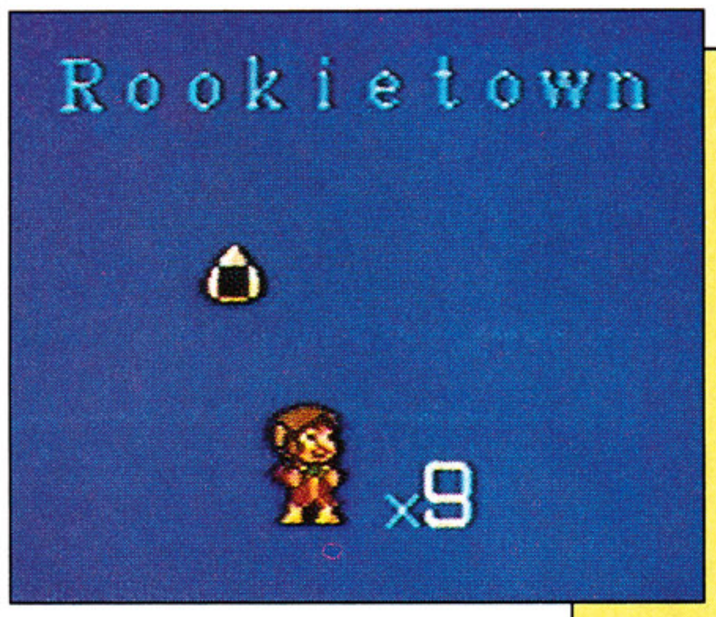
EASTER EGG HUNT

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:

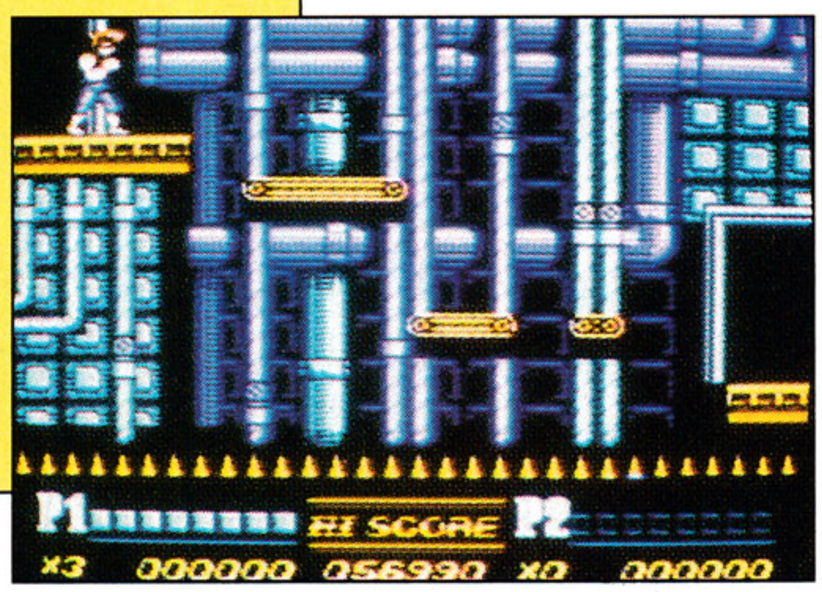
U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button



Double Dragon 2

(Acclaim for the NES)

Jason Fowler of Mayer, Arizona, has come up with a continue for Missions 7, 8 and 9. When "Game Over" appears on the screen, press A, A, B, B, D, U, R, L on Controller 2, then press **START** on Controller 1. Thanks for the great Easter egg, Jason.



Alex Kidd in the Enchanted Castle

(Sega for the Genesis)

To receive unlimited lives for Alex Kidd, when you see the title screen, pull the cartridge out of the system with the power on. Then put the cartridge back in (with the power still on) and press **RESET**. After pressing **START** to begin play, you'll notice you have nine lives; this will never decrease as long as you don't collect an extra life. If you do collect an extra life, the counter will reset to zero. Thanks to Mike Citro of South Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for this Easter egg.

(Keep in mind that Sega warns not to remove cartridges with the power on, so try this at your own risk.)

Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf

(Sega for the Genesis)

Here is the code for Round 12. You'll be in first place with twice the money of your closest competitor (the computer). Thanks to Alexis Morgenstern of Miami, Florida, for this *long* code.

F1nLvJoNaAFA+Sqz
Q3AoDG6Wi3wFIKEN
IG9+

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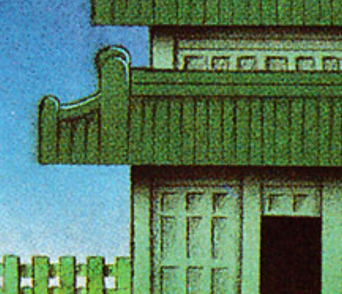

Phantom Fighter is the martial arts game with a *big* difference. It's the new action game that lets you chop and kick against ghostly enemies with supernatural powers! These zombie phantoms get even bigger and stronger as your skill improves. (But don't worry—you've got some magic of your own.) You'll be challenged by some tricky questions. Ghosts, puzzles, and dialogue make this Kung Fu challenge more unpredictable. Get your kicks with Phantom Fighter!

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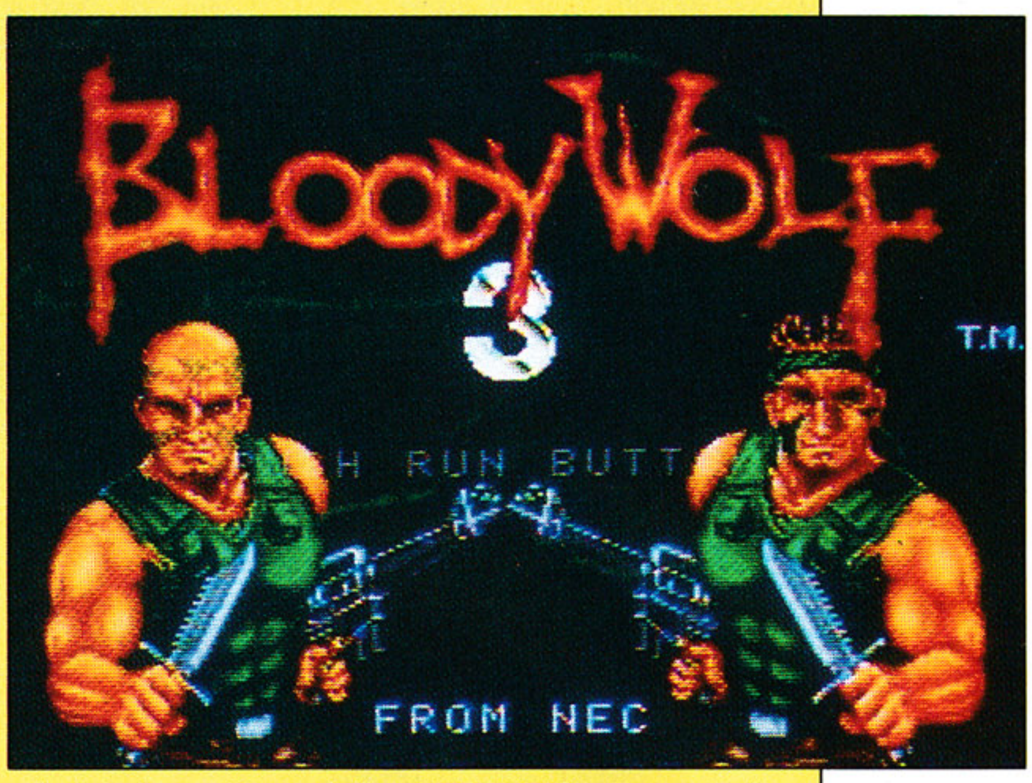
Bloody Wolf

(NEC for the TG-16)



Here's a list of the different features that can be found in *Bloody Wolf:*

Stage Select: When the title screen appears, press 2, 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 2, 1, then push the directional pad to the level that you want to play.

1
8 2
7 * 3
6 4
5

Sound Test: When the title screen appears, press U then hold down 2 and the **SELECT** button at the same time.

Extra Firepower: When your character's strength is at two, climb up a fence or truck etc., and:

Press R, 1, 2 at the same time for shotgun shots.
Press L, 1, 2 at the same time for 50 bazooka shots.

Special Weapons: When your character's strength is at one, climb on the barricade and press:

U, R, **RUN** and 2 at the same time for ten shots of flash bomb.

For ten shots of a more powerful grenade, press:

D, L, **RUN** and 2 at the same time.

Flamethrower: When you're parachuting down at the beginning of Rounds 2 and 5, press:

U, 1, 2 and **RUN** at the same time.

If you've done this correctly, you'll receive 50 rounds of ammunition on the flamethrower.

Hover Mode: When the title screen appears, press:

D, U, L, L, 2, 2, 1, **SELECT** and the **RUN** button.

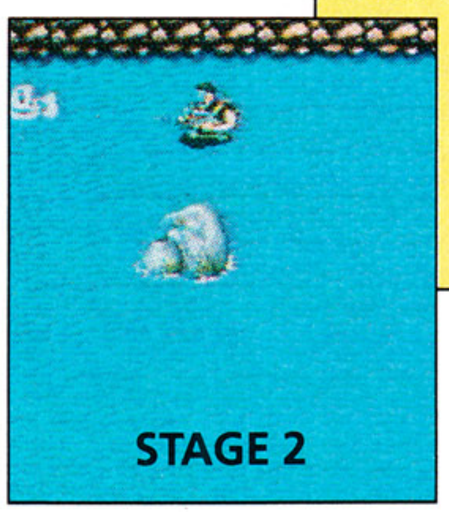
Instead of jumping up and down, hold down the jump button, and you can now make your man hover. (You'll see Bloody Wolf 3 on the title screen if you did it correctly.)

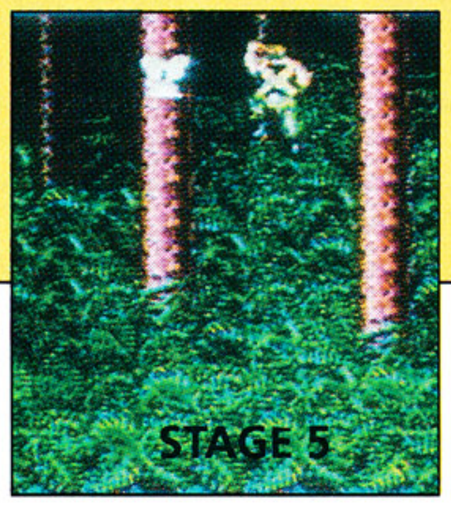
Fast Mode: When the title screen appears, press:

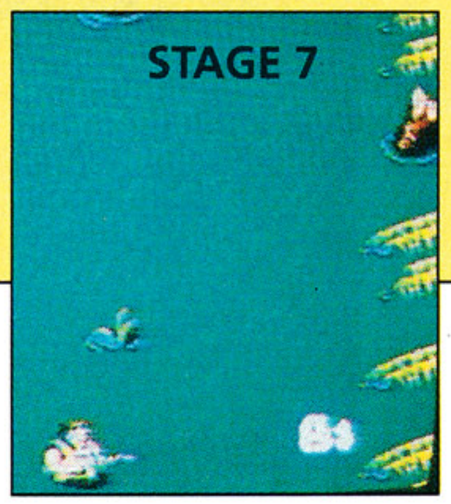
U, D, R, R, 1, 1, 2, **SELECT** and the **RUN** button.

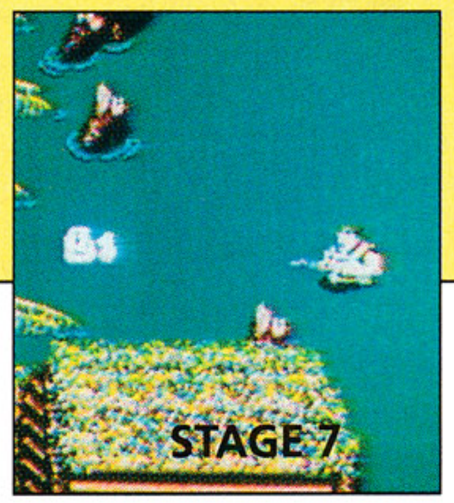
This trick makes your man run faster. (You'll see Bloody Wolf 2 on the title screen to show you did this correctly.)

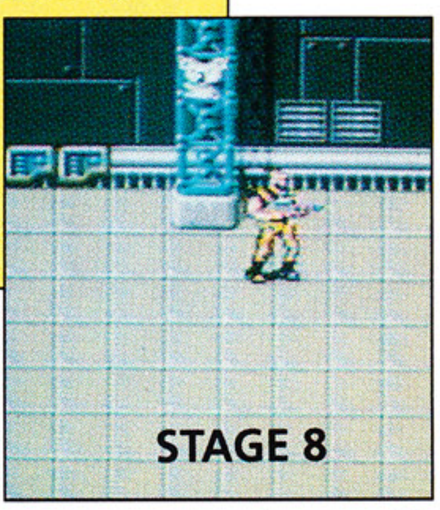
Hidden Characters: Throughout *Bloody Wolf* special icons can be obtained to enhance your player. If you shoot certain locations in Rounds 2 and 7, a seal will appear. The seal will give you 99 shots. If you climb certain obstacles in Rounds 5 and 8, a Koala bear will appear. (See photos for exact locations.)











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2-D SCENE

3-D SCENE

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CIRCLE #125 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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Alex Kidd: High Tech World

(Sega for the SMS)

Aaron Burroughs of San Antonio, Texas, sent in this interesting Easter egg. When dialing the telephone, enter 911 and Alex will make a crank call to the police. I wonder what other phone numbers will work?

After Burner II

(Sega for the Genesis)

If you'd like to start as high as Stage 20, during the title screen press and hold the A, B, and C buttons then press **START**. The words "Select Stage" will appear in the middle of the screen with the current stage indicated at the bottom. To select a stage, press the D-button to the left or right.

You can also obtain 100 missiles if you input the correct command during the reloading scene.

For Stages 3 and 13, hold L and B
For Stages 5, 11, 16 and 21, hold R and B
For Stages 9 and 19, hold B

Cyber Core

(NEC for the TG-16)

In *Cyber Core*, if you hold L and press SELECT during the title screen, you can input some special passwords. For a sound test, input SCSI; for a vertical screen, input MAKIRIN; and for a special weapon, input NAOMI.

To be able to select any level, try these passwords:

Level 2—EMI
Level 3—YUUMI
Level 4—PERSIA
Level 5—YU
Level 6—MAMI
Level 7—MIHO
Level 8—LALAMOTO

Press button number 1 after inputting the desired password.

Chip's Challenge

(Atari for the Lynx)

The programmers of this game included a fractal-generator program that can be accessed by inputting MAND, which stands for Benoit Mandelbrot, the person who discovered fractals.

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continued from page 53

Herzog Zwei

(Sega for the Genesis)

Seth Dixon of Napa, California, sent in this code for the next to the last level: JLJOIGNAOKL. This will take you to Waldung (the Jungle) Type D. Beat this level and you'll see a truly remarkable ending.

Gates of Zendocon

(Atari for the Lynx)

Ralph Archuleta of Salinas, California, sent in codes for all 51 levels. Here are the codes for a few of them.

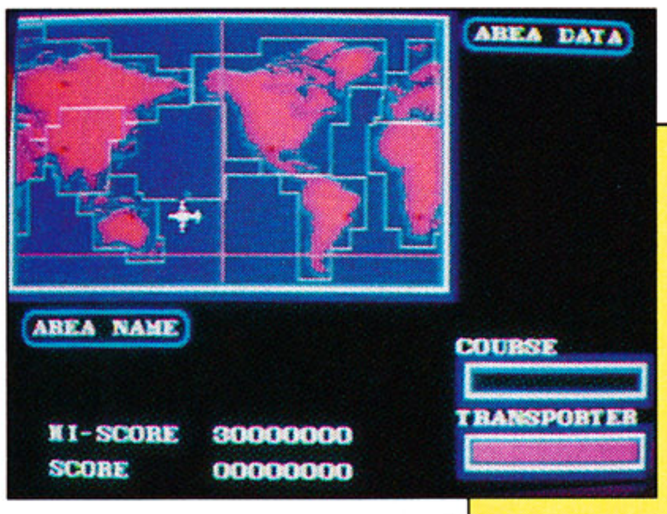
Level 30: NEXA
Level 40: ZEST
Level 51: ZETA

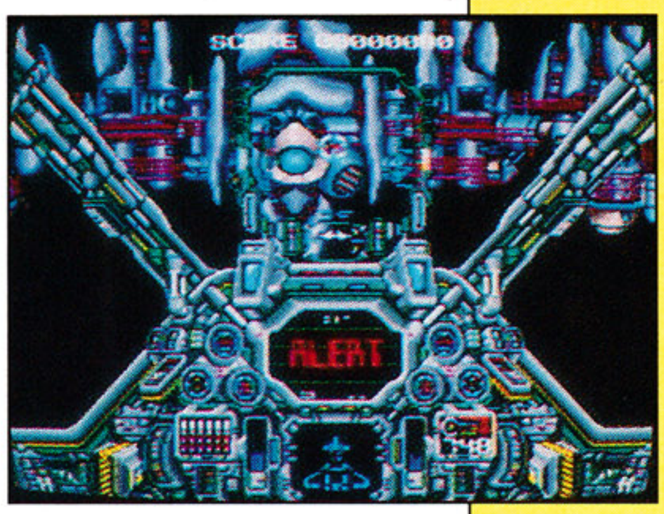
ADVENTURES OF LOLO II

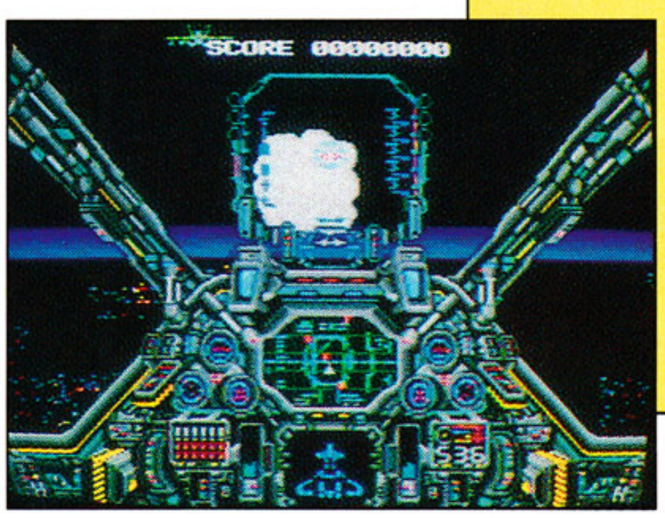
(HAL America for the NES)

Here are codes for four expert rounds hidden in the game. Input PROA, PROB, PROC, PROD for the new rounds.

SPLATTERHOUSE







AirDiver

(Seismic for the Genesis)

To access four hidden features in this game you must first move the crosshair to an area with no enemies. Press and hold **START** then press A, B, C, B, A, A, B, C, B, A, B and release **START**. Once you release **START**, you can hold A to become a Fighter Ace; hold B to go up against the Mothership; hold C to fight the last boss; or hold **START** to become invincible. Don't release the button until after you have left the hanger. You can also repeat these tricks for each level.

Nemesis

(Ultra for the Gameboy)

If you've ever played *Gradius*, by Konami, then you might recognize *Nemesis* as being the same game under a different name. Greg Colton, of Deerfield, Illinois, did and wrote to tell us that the same power-up code works as well. During play press **START** to pause, then input U, U, D, D, L, R, L, R, B, A to get the missile, laser, two options and the force field. But remember: It only works once per game. Thanks for a great find, Greg.

NINJA GAIDEN II

(Tecmo for the NES)

To bring up the sound test, during the title screen press and hold U, then L, **SELECT**, A, B and **START**.

is coming.

TURBO 16 GRAFX NEC

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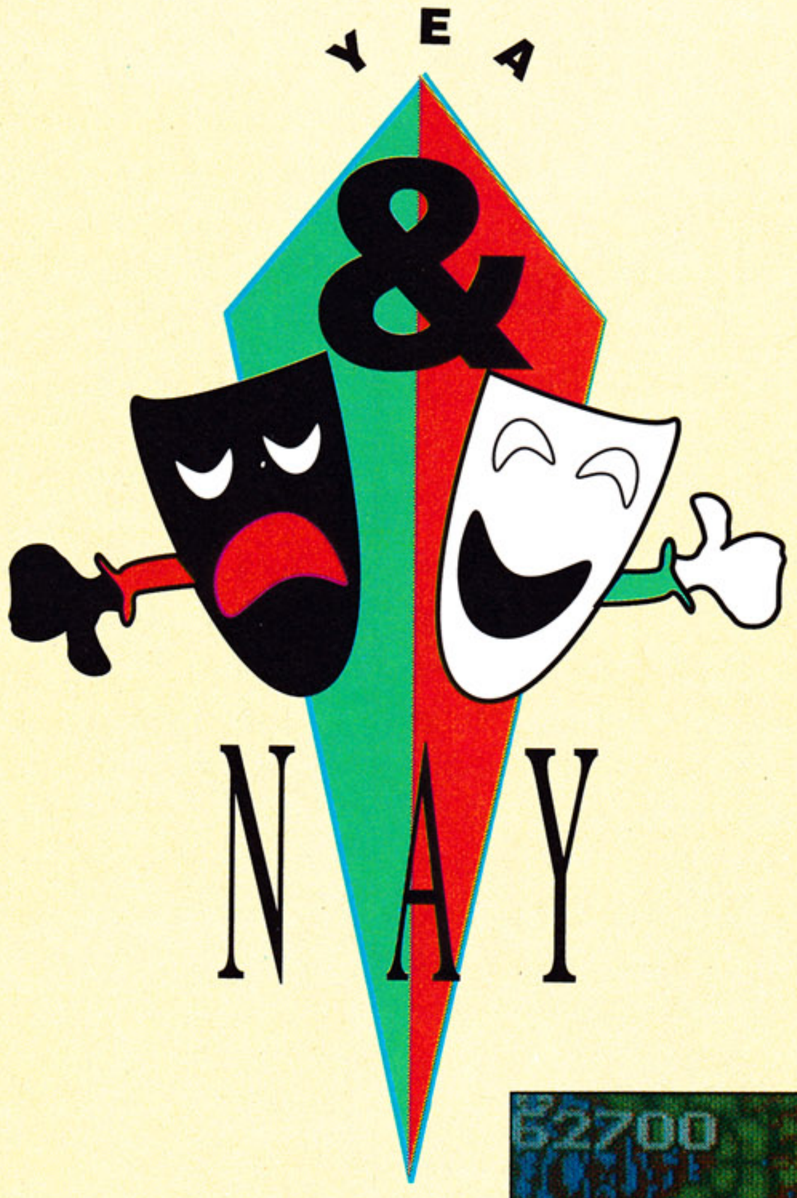
CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Yea & Nay *is an inside look at the high and low points in the electronic-game industry. It's an opportunity for the companies that decide what games we'll be playing to be patted on the back or slammed to the mat for what they do.*

If you want to give credit where credit is due—whether the company belongs in the Hall of Fame or Hall of Shame—send your opinions to **VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Yea & Nay.** *Let's hear how you feel!*



YEA

We saw—and heard—a demo of Origin's *Wingleader* (see the CES preview starting on page 38 for more details), and all we can say is "Wow!" Not only does the game use rotoscoping, an animation technique that is being used more extensively in games, for a realistic, cinematic appearance, but the state-of-the-art 3-D graphics used are simply fabulous. Furthermore, the professional musical score and sound effects, especially when pumped out through one of the PC-compatible sound boards, are stunning. We can only hope the game play is as good as these other elements.

Here's some hearty applause for Chris Roberts (*Wingleader*'s designer), his development team and Origin for not sitting back.

YEA

Again, our CES report bears out what we've been waiting to hear: Software is coming for the Lynx. And not only software, but *good* software.

Better yet, a new game, *Slime World*, boasts being the first eight-player simultaneous game. We have been playing it as a two-player game, and this is one involved contest! The map keeps track of all players too.

Now that Atari is advertising the Lynx, we hope it can keep up a decent flow of titles. (We're anxious for *MIDI-Maze*, a network game that was the rage on the ST for a while, to be brought over to the Lynx system. For those not familiar with it, the original title should adequately explain this maze battle: *Kill a Happy Face.*)

NAY

We've said it before, but after going to CES it becomes more obvious: An annoying sameness is creeping into video-game software. As the *Letter From the Editor* in this issue alludes to, if some companies aren't careful, they'll get reputations as developers with a lack of innovation, and no one will be interested in buying their products.

YEA

This might be getting boring, but Nintendo is again taking on another company. The difference is that this time it might have met its match. Lewis Galoob Toys Inc., manufacturer of the Game Genie (see the CES preview), is being sued by Nintendo in an effort to keep the "video-game enhancer" from hitting store shelves. Nintendo's claim is that the Game Genie will ruin the life span of a cartridge.

Our view follows that of Galoob's lawyers: Once you own something, you have the right to alter it. If I buy a blue car, does the car company have a right to prevent me from painting it red?

Essentially, that's all the Game Genie does. If you want to breeze through a game under invincibility, that's your right. But similarly, if you want to handicap yourself by not using more than one life to finish a game, you can.

It's a fine line between an easy game and a challenging one, and the Game Genie lets the player tailor a cartridge's game play to his or her abilities.

Frankly, that doesn't seem that bad, does it? We'd like to hear your comments on the issue.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BEACH VOLLEYBALL

1 TO 4 PLAYERS

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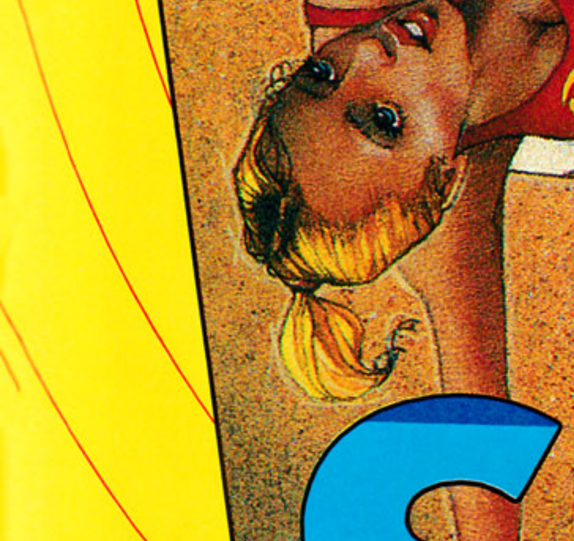
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BEACH VOLLEYBALL



The action sizzles in **SONIC SPIKE,™** on the front line of the world's most brutal volleyball game. Blast the ball over the net…bump, spike, dig, jump, quick-fake a return. Orbital lobs soar to the sun; earth pounding spikes vibrate the ground. Score…or eat sand.

Select and create your own teams from 24 athletes from six nations. Pit gals against guys in a battle of the sexes, or fight the competition of the century with Japan, China, Australia, Brazil, USA, or USSR. ***It's co-ed!***

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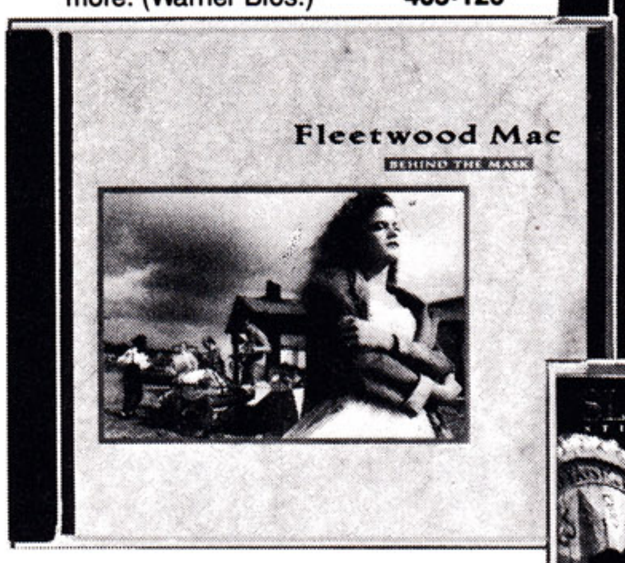

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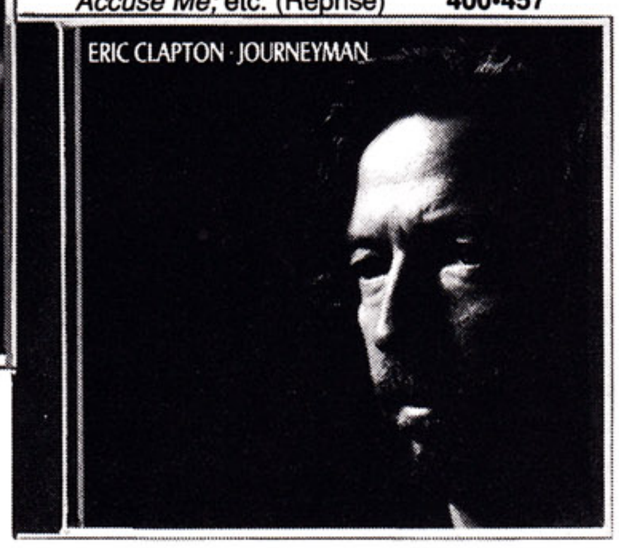

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The B-52's—Cosmic Thing (Reprise) 383•877

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The Kinks—UK Jive (MCA) 403•303

Jody Watley—You Wanna Dance With Me? (MCA) 402•610

Bobby Brown—Dance! ... Ya Know It!(MCA) 402•602

Lenny Kravitz—Let Love Rule (Virgin) 401•893

Basia—London Warsaw New York (Epic) 401•752

Rush—Presto (Atlantic) 401•695

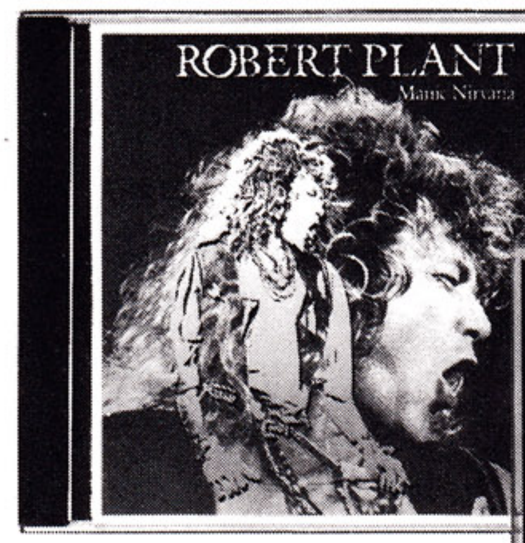
Pat Benatar—Best Shots (Chrysalis) 401•646

Survivor—Greatest Hits (Scotti Brothers) 401•521

Kenny G Live (Arista) 401•505/391•508

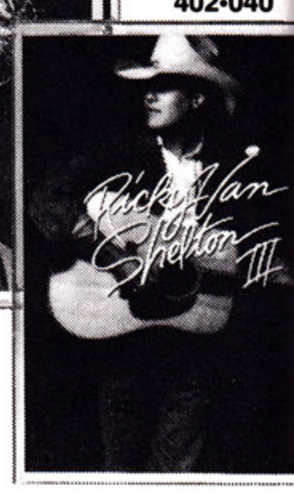
Ace Frehley—Trouble Walkin' (Al/Megaforce Worldwide) 401•299

Ozzy Osbourne—Just Say Ozzy (CBS Associated) 401•265



Robert Plant–Manic Nirvana. *Hurting Kind; Tie Dye On The Highway; I Cried; Big Love;* etc. (Es Paranza) **405•019**

Ricky Van Shelton–RVS III. *Statue Of A Fool;* etc. (Columbia) **402•040**



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After 7 (Virgin) 407•585

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Bruce Dickinson—Tattooed Millionaire (Columbia) 406•629

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The London Quireboys—A Bit Of What You Fancy (Capitol) 405•894

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Jeff Healy Band—Hell To Pay (Arista) 407•569

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Born On The Fourth Of July—Original Soundtrack (MCA) 404•947

Killer Dwarfs—Dirty Weapons (Epic) 404•921

Sanctuary—Into The Mirror Black (Epic) 404•913

Sheena Easton—The Collection (EMI America) 404•863

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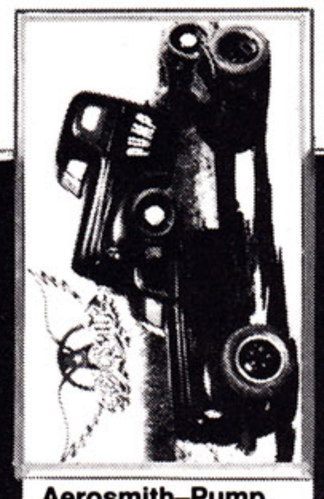
Paul Simon—Negotiations And Love Songs (Warner Bros.) 400•721/390•724

Linda Ronstadt–Cry Like A Rainstorm, Howl Like The Wind. With Aaron Neville: *Don't Know Much & All My Life; plus Adios; So Right, So Wrong;* etc. (Elektra) **389•874**



Aerosmith–Pump. *Love In An Elevator; Janie's Got A Gun;* etc. (Geffen) **388•009**

Michael Bolton–Soul Provider. *How Am I Supposed To Live Without You; How Can We Be Lovers;* many more. (Columbia) **383•083**

Public Enemy—Fear Of A Black Planet (Columbia) 406•710

Tanya Tucker—Tennessee Woman (Capitol) 406•421

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Cher—Heart Of Stone (Geffen) 383·893

Don Henley—The End Of The Innocence (Geffen) 383·802

Beastie Boys—Paul's Boutique (Capitol) 383·786

Night Ranger—Greatest Hits (MCA) 383·729

M.C. Hammer—Please Hammer, Don't Hurt 'Em (Capitol) 403·477

Renaissance—Tales Of 1001 Nights Volume I (Warner Bros.) 406·025

Crosby, Stills, Nash And Young—Deja Vu (Atlantic) 404·202

Jim Croce—Jim Croce Live: The Final Tour (Saja) 403·154

Alice Cooper—School's Out (Warner Bros.) 402·644

The Best Of The Dregs—Divided We Stand (Arista) 386·979

Grateful Dead—Skeletons From The Closet (Warner Bros.) 378·406

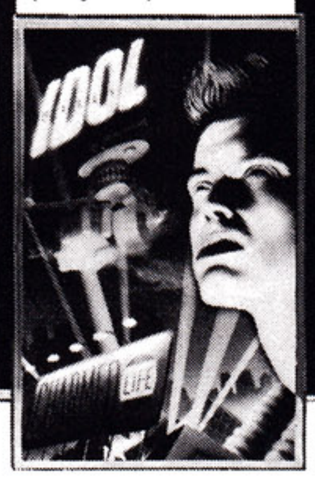
Roy Orbison—The All-Time Hits, Vols. 1 & 2 (Columbia Special Prod.) 377·945

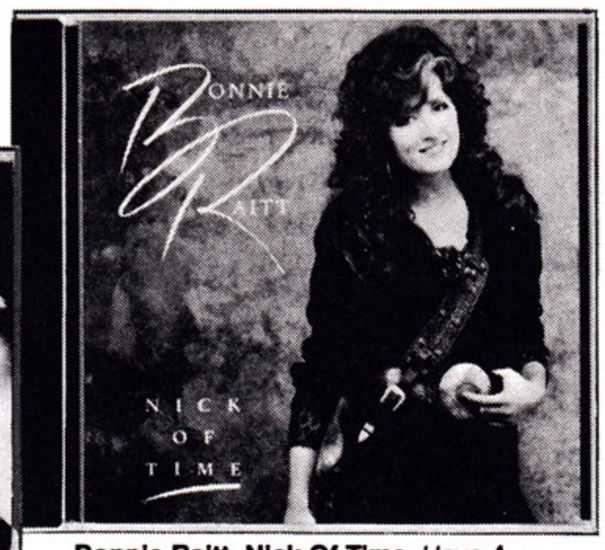
The Who—Who's Better, Who's Best (MCA) 376·657/396·655

Simon & Garfunkel—Greatest Hits (Columbia) 219·477

Janet Jackson–Rhythm Nation 1814. Title cut plus *Miss You Much; Escapade; Alright;* many more. (A&M) **388·918**

Billy Idol–Charmed Life. *Cradle Of Love; LA Woman;* more. (Chrysalis) **386·789**





Bonnie Raitt–Nick Of Time. *Have A Heart; Thing Called Love; Love Letter; Too Soon To Tell;* etc. (Capitol) **381·087**

Joan Jett—The Hit List (CBS Asso./Blackheart) 402·628

Gloria Estefan—Cuts Both Ways (Epic) 382·341

Steppenwolf—16 Greatest Hits (MCA) 372·425

The Doors (Elektra) 369·991

Van Halen—OU812 (Warner Bros.) 369·371

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Humble Pie—Smokin' (A&M) 367·573

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Jimi Hendrix—Axis Bold As Love (Reprise) 363·564

Little Feat—Dixie Chicken (Warner Bros.) 363·515

Lynyrd Skynyrd—Legend (MCA) 361·303

Grateful Dead—American Beauty (Warner Bros.) 358·895

Soul II Soul—Keep On Movin' (Virgin) 386·037

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Elton John—Greatest Hits (MCA) 319·541

Creedence Clearwater Revival—20 Greatest Hits (Fantasy) 308·049/398·040

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Lynyrd Skynyrd Band—Gold & Platinum (MCA) 307·447/397·448

Cheap Trick—At Budokan (Epic) 292·326

Jackson Browne—The Pretender (Asylum) 292·243

Led Zeppelin—Physical Graffiti (Swan Song) 291·682/391·680

Alice Cooper—Greatest Hits (Warner Bros.) 291·476

Led Zeppelin IV (Atlantic) 291·435

The Steve Miller Band—Greatest Hits 1974-78 (Capitol) 290·171

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Bad English (Epic) 383·463

Alice Cooper—Trash (Epic) 382·366

Roxette—Look Sharp! (EMI) 381·939

The Neville Brothers—Yellow Moon (A&M) 381·889

Richard Marx—Repeat Offender (EMI) 380·915

Jeff Beck—Guitar Shop With Terry Bozzio And Tony Hymas (Epic) 380·303

Warrant—Dirty Rotten Filthy Stinking Rich (Columbia) 379·644

Skid Row (Atlantic) 379·602

Madonna—Like A Prayer (Sire) 379·594

Hooters—Zig-Zag (Columbia) 379·396

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VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

Skate or Die 2

ELECTRONIC ARTS

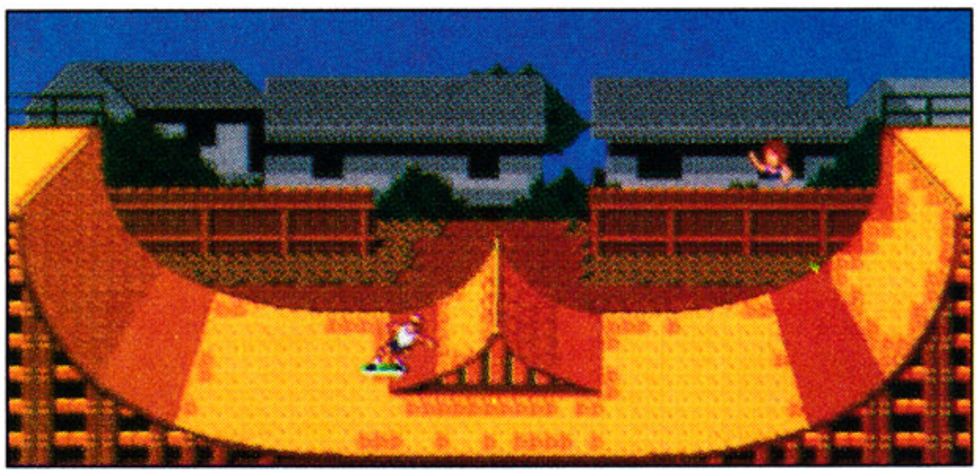
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (NA)

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

When in doubt, make a sequel. That's what Electronic Arts did in their first NES outing, capitalizing on the name of their most popular title—*Skate or Die*. Nope, they didn't make *Ski or Die*; it's *Skate or Die 2* with which they chose to bless us.

Skate or Die 2 is an adventure contest—your typical NES game format. The final fifth screen is a giant double halfpipe where you demonstrate your freestyle video-boarding. The first four levels require you to secure the funds and city permit to build this thrasher's dream, christened "Double Trouble." Thankfully, the programmers put in an option to let eager thrashers skip all this game-quest stuff and go directly to Double Trouble.

The cartoon at the game's start is one of the most *intentionally* hilarious scenarios on the NES. The narrative depicts your on-screen persona doing some "serious shredding" in the quiet town of Elwood. As your rival, the big and ugly Icepick, calls you "poseur" (a derogatory term for anyone who "poses" as a skater), you turn to him, challenging his remark while still moving. But you don't notice the mayor's wife and her poodle, Fifi. *Splat*—Fifi becomes road-kill. The mayor's wife, horrified, makes her husband ban all skateboarding in Elwood. "Major bummer, dude!" a digitized voice lethargically comments at the end.



Skate or Die 2, Electronic Arts' first foray into video games, takes you through many different scenarios, from finding the building plans for a skate ramp to saving your girlfriend, CJ.

Then it's off to where you must skate your character through city streets and in and out of buildings and sewers. Your mission here is to stock up on supplies like cassette tapes, CDs, tacos and heartburn-inducing chili fries. These items can be traded with Rodney and Lester (the father and son duo from *Skate or Die*) for better skateboards and tricks that Lester will teach your character to perform.

Hazards to avoid include sewer rats, boxing alligators and rabid pit bulls. Then there are Icepick's skateboarding henchmen, who shoot you with paint guns and pelt you with eggs and M-80s. Fortunately, you can do the same to them and replenish your life points by running over happy faces.

To advance to the next level, you must seek out the mayor's wife in one of the buildings. It seems that, after Fifi's death, she's gone bonkers. Once you find her, it's your duty to put her out of her misery...by barraging her with eggs, M-80s and/or paint pellets. Hit her continuously, and she'll blow up into pieces, after which the sun rises over idyllic Elwood. Macabre humor on the NES? You bet.

The second cartoon shows a bulldozer mowing down the halfpipe you share with your fellow skateboarders. The stereotypical workman in his overbearing paunchiness explains, "Da mayor sez you don't have a permit." Thus, it's off to Royandale Mall, where you'll make deliveries from store to store, avoiding "zombie shoppers" and an easily agitated security guard, in order to earn enough money to purchase a building permit.

On the third level, the building plans to Double Trouble must be recovered before they blow off the boardwalk. Seagulls, crabs and roller-skating bikini bimbos with no sense of direction impede your way. Finally, you have to save your girlfriend, CJ (who looks like Ariel, the title character from Disney's *The Little Mermaid*), and the building permit from Icepick, who has taken and hidden both in an abandoned multifloored warehouse.

All of this just because he called you "poseur."

As you can tell, *Skate or Die 2* is wildly amusing. (Stores in the mall have names like "Pizza-by-the-Ton" and "Just Lids.") It's this kind of humor that's lacking in most video games. Fact is, many of the overly dramatic scenarios that game designers today dream up are usually hokey as anything. Like *A Boy and His Blob*, *Skate or Die 2* doesn't take itself too seriously but rather does what's fun. And after all, that's what video gaming is all about, right?

—Howard H. Wen

Electronic Arts
P.O Box 7578
San Mateo, CA 94403-7578
(800) 245-4525

Target Earth

DREAMWORKS

For the Sega Genesis ($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

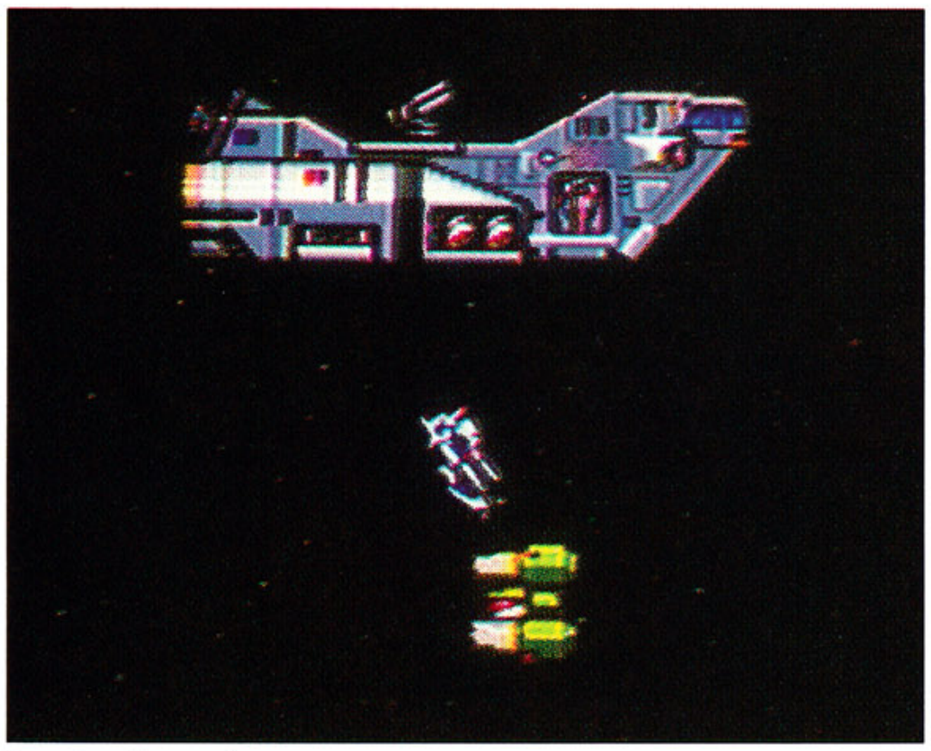
Target Earth, by DreamWorks, is best described as a sci-fi *Mario Bros.*-like shoot-'em-up. (I hope that's helpful.) What we have here is your basic running, jumping, shooting arcade adventure, with the familiar theme: Mars attacks Earth, and you are the only one capable of defending her. Your human body is aided by an armored suit and weapons of varying destructive potential. You can switch between them by pressing the "C" button, which cycles through your arsenal while the action continues, or by pressing **START**, which pauses the action and allows you to choose at your leisure.

Action is frequently interrupted by messages from scouts that warn of the imminent arrival of more deadly enemies. The messages are printed a character at a time to the status box at the bottom of the screen. This is annoying because it puts the game on hold—you must press a button to cancel each line of text.

Target Earth is a single-player linear adventure; each level must be completed in order. A player has only one life, but can take multiple hits. A readout keeps track of shield collapse (life force drain), and when it runs out, play starts over from the very beginning. A limited number of continues allows only the best players a chance to solve unconquered levels without immediately returning to Stage 1. Password reentry would have been the ideal alternative.

Target Earth purports to require a certain amount of strategy in order to complete each level. Early on, this strategy amounts to no more than determining which of your enemies to attack and which ones to avoid.

The control system is a difficult one to master. The directional rosette on the Genesis control pad is used not only to move forward and backward, but also to aim the current weapon in any of eight directions. While this mechanic can be mastered by a die-hard adventurer, the frustration factor is high. The "A" button is used to fire the current weapon, and there is a limited supply of ammunition available for each weapon in your inventory. The "B" button is used to jump, like Superman, over tall buildings, mountain ranges, etc.—even as high as the low-flying assault ships of the enemy. This novelty seems to be of little use, aside from the fact that it makes it easier to avoid some enemies and may improve your chances of destroying the assault ships by greatly limiting the field of fire.



DreamWorks' *Target Earth*, the company's second game for the Genesis, will appeal to the die-hard "shooter" fan.

Only one adjective can accurately describe the game's main graphics: ho-hum! The background is drawn in simulated 3-D, but is otherwise unremarkable. The lackluster sprites are animated adequately, but the actual artwork is dominated by browns and greens, in an effort to make identifying members of the opposing armies easier. Why this is so important I will never know, because firing at your own side has no detrimental effect anyway!

There are a few unique wrinkles here, like a hovering assault ship that offers to provide supporting cover and music that isn't so high a priority that sound effects are occasionally lost, but there's little else to write home about. Overall, it's a disappointing effort—one that will only appeal to starved "shooter" addicts.

—Frank Eva

DreamWorks
150 Woodbridge Plaza
10201 Wayzata Boulevard
Minnetonka, MN 55343
(612) 591-1494

Wizardry—Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord

NEXOFT

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($55)

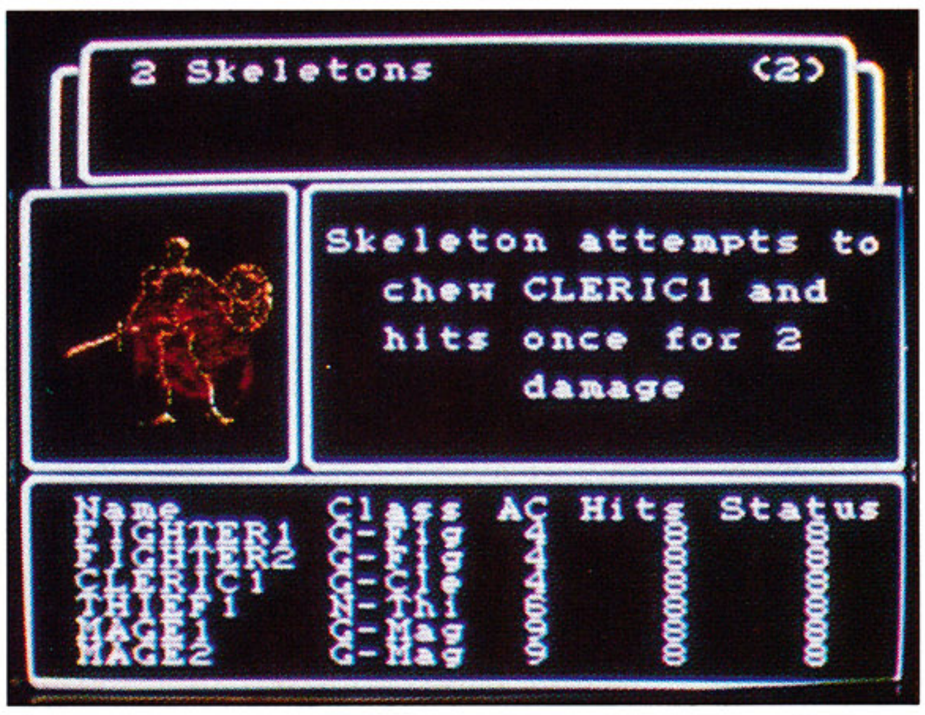
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

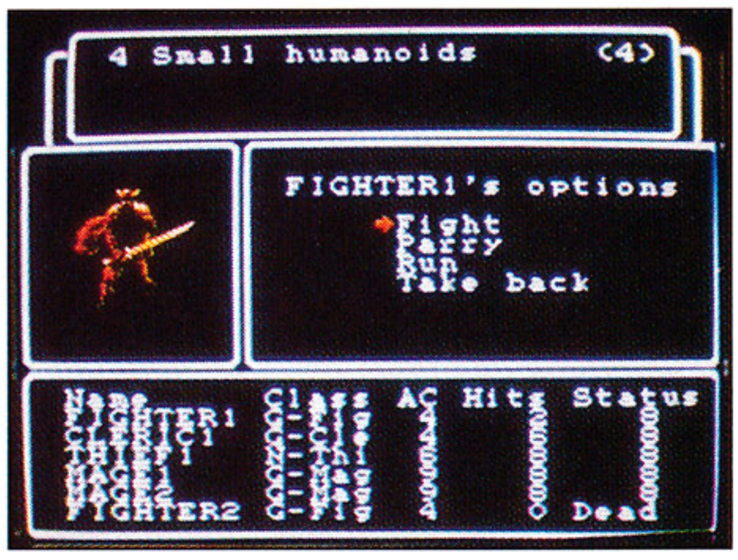
Wizardry, while a new addition for the NES, is a familiar title to players in the computer world. Since appearing in 1981, it has been translated to most popular computer systems and has spawned four sequels.

Wizardry is a fantasy role-playing game that follows the pattern of Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) to some extent. From one to six players may conceivably participate, though one player is the norm. The cartridge is backed up by a battery, and up to 20 different characters may be stored at one time.

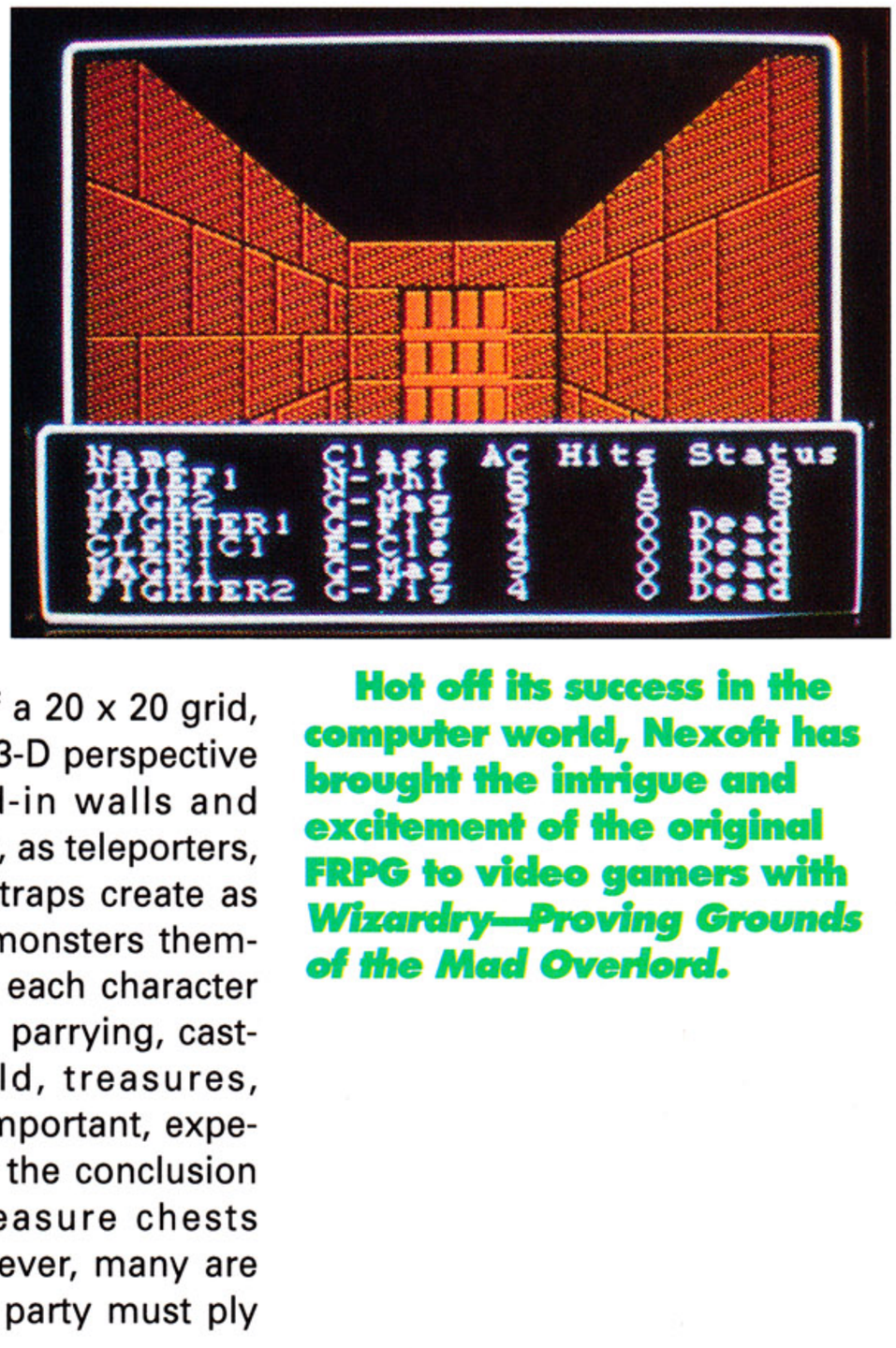
As the story goes, Trebor the Mad Overlord has had an amulet stolen from him by a wizard known as Werdna. Angered by the theft and Werdna's taunts, Trebor announces a reward for the return of the amulet. The quest will not be easy by any means, however. Werdna has hidden himself at the bottom of a ten-level dungeon, full of monsters and other nasty surprises, to catch unwary adventurers. By creating from one to six characters, the player must attempt to reach Werdna (a difficult goal in itself), defeat him and return the amulet to the Mad Overlord.

A variety of possible characters are available, as there are five races (humans, elves, dwarfs, gnomes and hobbits) and eight different professions (fighter, mage, cleric, thief, wizard, samurai, lord and ninja) available for each character. Every aspect is taken into consideration for each character: age, attributes, armor class, hit points, alignment and so on.





A large variety of monsters, weapons, armor and over 40 spells make this a detailed and intricate game. Along with the dungeon itself, there is a tavern where characters band together in preparation for the dungeon, an inn to rest up from injury, a temple for healing and resurrection, a trading post for the implements of battle and the training grounds where characters are created.



Hot off its success in the computer world, Nexoft has brought the intrigue and excitement of the original FRPG to video gamers with *Wizardry—Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord.*

The maze itself consists of a 20 x 20 grid, represented in a first-person 3-D perspective either by outlines or filled-in walls and doors. Mapping is a necessity, as teleporters, secret doors, pits and other traps create as much of a challenge as the monsters themselves. As battle takes place, each character has such options as fighting, parrying, casting spells or running. Gold, treasures, weapons, armor and, most important, experience points are awarded at the conclusion of a successful battle. Treasure chests appear in certain areas; however, many are trapped, and the thief of the party must ply his trade in order to find out what lies inside.

This game is not a graphics-dependent game, but the monsters that are displayed during each battle are done well. All in all, the graphics support the atmosphere of the game and are more than adequate. Music and sound may be turned off and on and are equally well-created. A stirring theme has been created for each area of the game, as well as during the travel through the maze itself. All aspects of the game are easy to control, and this NES version is an excellent translation.

Wizardry is recommended for ages 16 and up, and I would definitely agree. This game requires patience for even seasoned players, as there is a definite strategy to advancing in the game, and blundering about will yield poor results. If you thought *Zelda* was boring, tackle this one. You'll find a very addicting game with plenty of challenge to keep it fresh for a long time to come.

—Brent Walker

Nexoft
11105 Dana Circle
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 373-2072

After Burner II

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis ($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 regards to actual game play, the original arcade game *After Burner* offered nothing new; it was basically your typical aerial shoot-'em-up. "Simplistic" would probably be the best way to describe it. But the graphics—man, the graphics were really *cool*, simply put. Fact is, it was the superb graphics and accompanying animation that salvaged *After Burner* from the sea of mediocrity.

Ever since its arcade release in the mid-'80s, there seems to have been an effort in the video-gaming industry to produce as many home versions of *After Burner* as possible. First came the Sega Master System version, then translations for the home computers. Almost all these versions have decent graphics, but animation was either "flickermatic" or downright sluggish. More

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recently, there was Tengen's rendition for the NES—an attempt that proved to be more amiable than successful.

Now, of course, there's *After Burner* for Sega's Genesis—specifically titled, *After Burner II*. But don't get the mistaken impression that this is a sequel to the arcade version of *After Burner* because, well, *graphics-wise* it isn't. (I'll explain later.)

The premise to *After Burner II*—and games similar to it—is an easy, almost primitive, one to understand: You must pilot an F-14 fighter jet through enemy territory. Scores of bad guy jets attack you in defense, swooping into formation, as you annihilate them from the skies with your Vulcan machine-gun cannons. Other targets available for your mega pea-shooting pleasure include choppers and various ground bases and inviting weapons to turn into craters.

For those times when your enemies gang up on you, presenting you with a cavalcade of their finest heat-seeking missiles, your jet can perform a dizzying barrel roll. This maneuver spins the horizon 360 degrees and is convenient for throwing off most incoming missiles but not for aiding your own sense of perspective. And let's not forget those afterburners built into your fighter plane (the origin of the game's title). These engines can be used to speed up or slow down your plane—not much use other than for those times when you're impatient and/or suicidal.

With the game scenario taken care of, let's get to what we *really* care about: What are the graphics like? Are they just like the arcade coin-op's? Does it compare to the original the way *Altered Beast* and *Golden Axe* did to theirs? Has the Sega Genesis, with its whopping 16-bit graphics and sound chips backed with a genuine 16-bit microprocessor, finally brought a true-to-arcade *After Burner* for us to marvel over on our game screens at home?

Nope.

Unfortunately, where the Genesis' *After Burner II* improved in animation, they sacrificed in graphics. Specifically, the landscape looks dull. A sense of depth-of-field is missing. What were once vast forests of trees in the arcade version have been reduced to specks of shrubbery that make bonsais look like sequoias. And the clouds have all but dissipated. Perhaps this *After Burner* takes place in the near future when such things have become extinct due to humankind's continual abuse of the environment. This would be good since there probably is a market for environmentally conscious video games. Or, maybe the graphics were drastically cut down in order to speed up animation and eliminate on-screen flickering altogether. Take your pick.

The premise of Sega's *After Burner II*, for the Genesis, is nothing new to avid gamers: Take an F-14 fighter plane, and cruise the skies in search of enemy targets to annihilate.

Normally, graphics shouldn't be the first thing examined when reviewing a game. Yet, considering how heavily dependent the original *After Burner*'s game play is on its visuals, there's not much else to look into. *After Burner II* isn't necessarily terrible; it's just a disappointingly average title in the Genesis library. For those who want to experience the best version of *After Burner* in existence, there's still only one place to go: the arcade.

—H. H. W.

Sega of America
573 Forbes Boulevard
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(800) USA-SEGA

Crystalis

SNK

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($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

In October 1997, most of the Earth's population will be wiped out by a savage, global nuclear war. The survivors of this tragic turn of events will pledge their lives against evil and leave the Earth's surface to live in a giant, utopian tower that floats in the sky. Back home, a new race of humans will struggle to rebuild the planet and fight off the mutated creatures that have dominated the globe in the aftermath of destruction.

That's the premise of SNK's *Crystalis*, the latest release in the grand tradition of NES role-playing adventure games. Using your own name, you play the part of a brave adventurer who has been frozen in a cryogenic chamber since the war ended. Now, 100 years later, you thaw out and emerge to join in the battle against evil.

Though your adventures take place in the future, the nuclear holocaust has resulted in a marked absence of the technology and crowded, high-tech cityscapes that are most commonly associated with visions of the years to come. You'll pass through the usual

continued on page 69

GENESIS® DOES

WHAT NIN

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1. Battle over the desert, keeping an eye on the number of missiles left, in bottom of screen.

2. The thrill of night combat creates new challenges and new dimensions.

3. Execute a victory roll on final approach to a carrier landing.

Take command of two of the hottest arcade hits around. Jump into the cockpit of the fastest tactical jet fighter in the world. Or put your hands on the wheel of a sleek Formula I racer. And prepare yourself for the ultimate in raw speed.

Feel the intensity of aerial combat as you lock your missiles onto the enemy target and fire away. Experience the near vertigo as you kick-in the afterburner and roll into a 360 degree loop to avoid the onslaught of six relentless enemy planes.

In your rear view mirror, you see another Formula I car closing in on you. With your adrenaline flowing, shift into 7th gear and hit 220 mph on the backstretch at Monaco. Your tires screech as you hit the chicane and enter the tunnel on your way to the checkered flag.

And with new Arcade Power Stick™ your points will add up faster thanks to the triple

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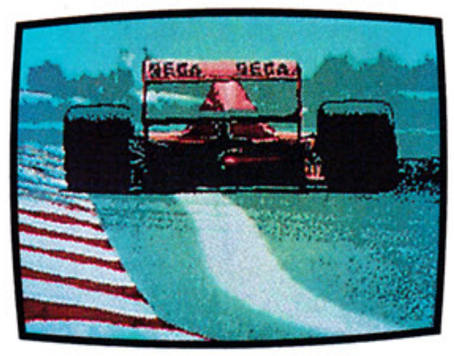
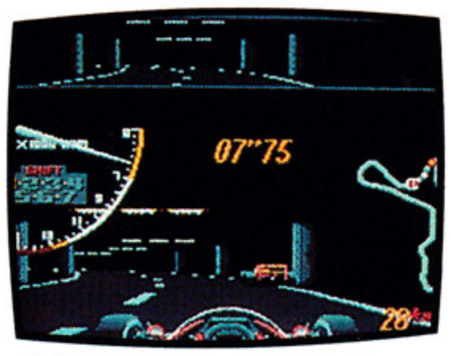
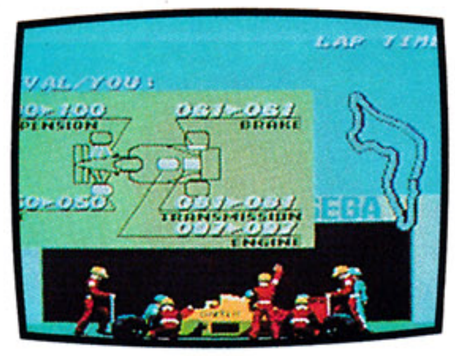


1. Downshift for the tight hairpin turn, keeping your RPM's up on the tach.



2. Make the rapid adjustment to total blackness as you enter the tunnel.



3. Your pit crew puts on a new set of rubber and tops off your tanks.

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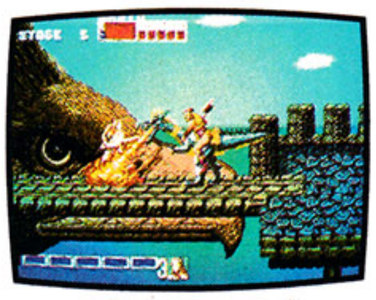
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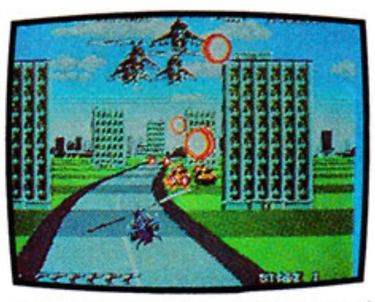
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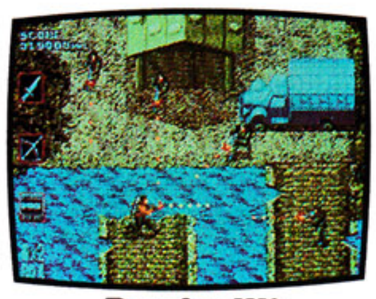
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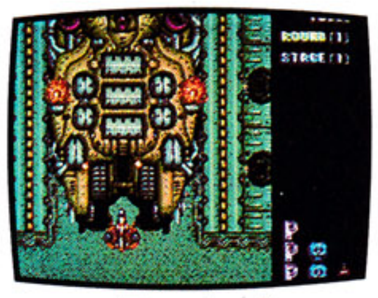
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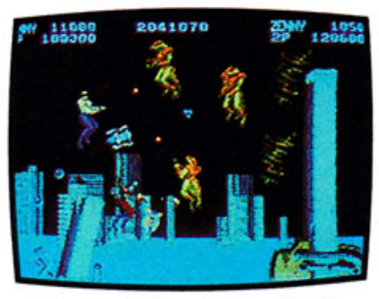
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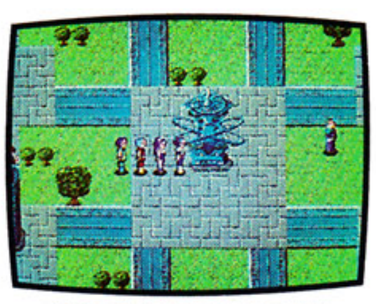
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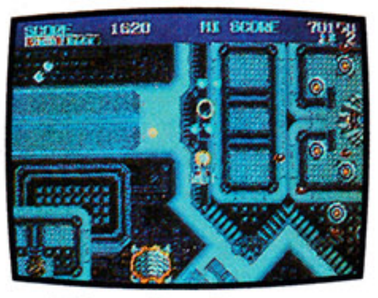
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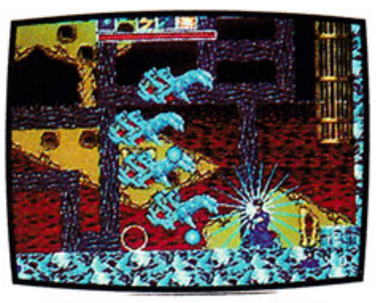
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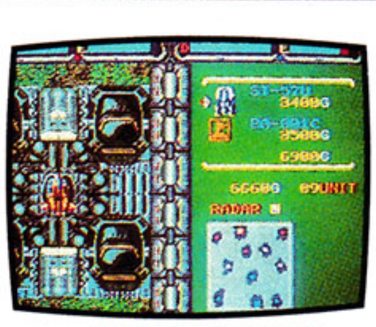
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continued from page 64

forestry, mountains and buildings of ancient architecture as you fight and gossip your way to the game's end. Gossip? Yes, as in many role-playing titles, it's not uncommon for total strangers to confide in you without even being formally introduced, babbling on about town folklore, the latest tidbits from the rumor mill or even personal details about their family life. The off-the-wall remarks you'll hear during these one-sided conversations are often cryptic, but usually helpful.

Crystalis has more than enough of the ingredients that guarantee a great adventure: lots of different types of weapons, armor, magical spells, useful tools, secret passageways, good friends and colorful villains. It's also a well-executed, nice-looking game, with sharp graphics, good music and a quick pace that never lets you get bogged down in unnecessary details.

But the main thing that sets this title apart from most other role-playing games is its tremendous depth. I've never seen a game with so many places to explore—the land seems to go on for miles in any direction, with plenty of villages, caves, castles and mountains wherever you go. There are literally hundreds of people to meet; not only does each person have something to say, but many of them will say something different if you encounter them again later in the game.

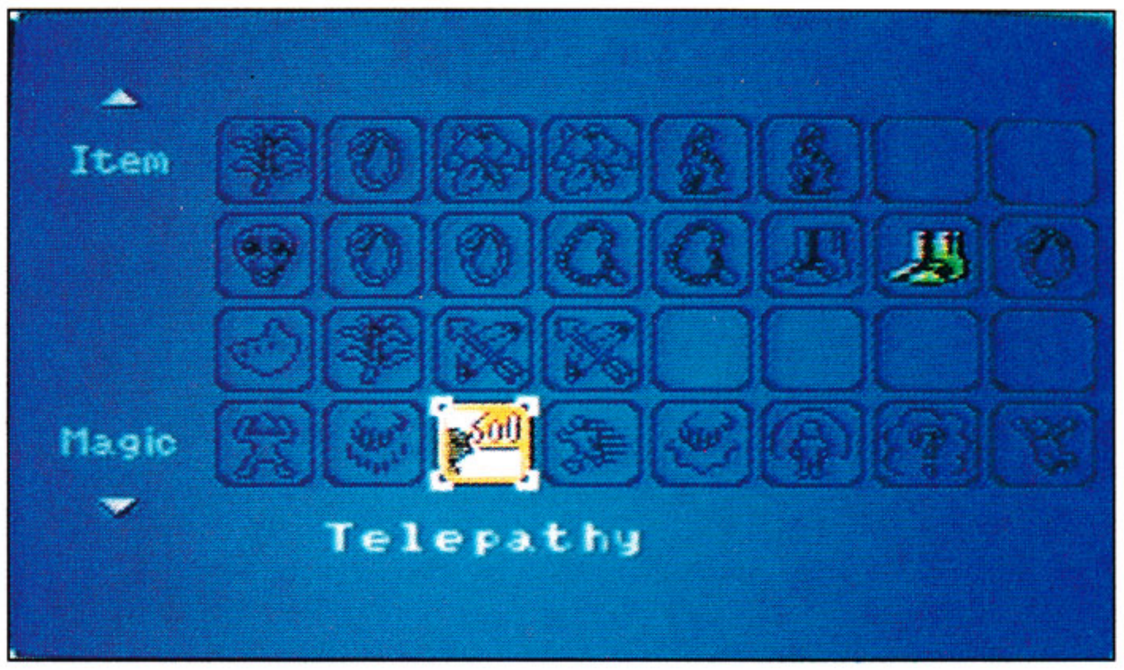
Using the **SELECT** and **START** buttons calls up a set of information windows that tell you all you need to know about your current attributes, abilities and inventory. Two separate games can be saved in progress by a battery back-up system—no need to worry about keeping track of long, complicated passwords and codes!

There is at least one point in the game where you'll face an opponent whose defeat is extremely difficult without the use of a controller equipped with rapid fire. This seems a bit unfair to those who prefer the standard NES controllers, which are otherwise perfectly suitable for playing *Crystalis.* Later, there are long periods of playing time during which it is necessary to constantly switch the sword you're using with another sword in your possession. This can get pretty annoying after a while. Fortunately, small complaints like these are practically insignificant in light of the game's general excellence.

If you've ever been dragged, bleary-eyed and nearly arthritic, from a marathon eight-hour session of playing *The Legend of Zelda*, you know how totally involving a video game can be. Now, *Crystalis* has demonstrated that games like *Zelda* may have been the tip of the iceberg. It's not immediately addictive the way *Tetris* is; in fact, some people are turned off by the role-playing genre as a whole and may never experience a game as satisfying as this. But if you can afford to spend many long hours immersing yourself in a video game, getting yourself completely, irretrievably lost in the *Crystalis* experience, you may never want to come back again.

—Chris Bieniek

SNK Corporation of America
246 Sobrante Way
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 736-8844



Crystalis, SNK's RPG game for the NES, throws you into the unsettling position of protecting the remaining colonists of a post-nuclear war Earth.

Fantasy Zone

TENGEN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.95)

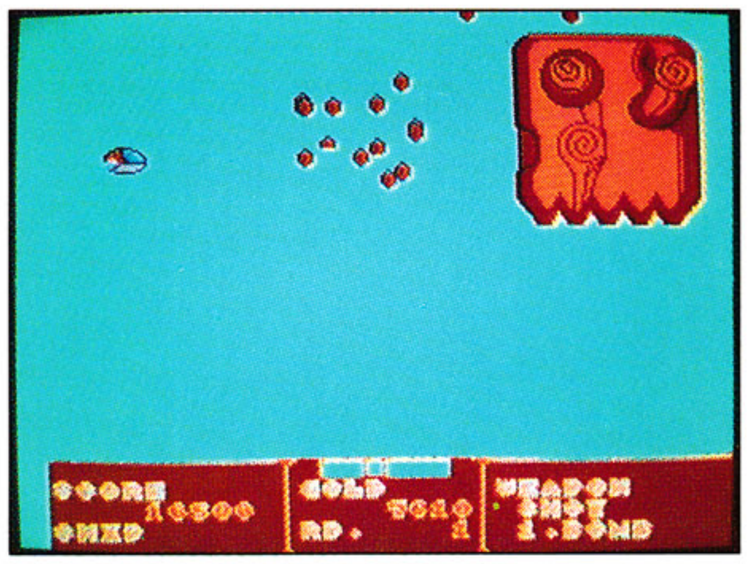
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

For NES owners who had a tough time choosing between the Nintendo Entertainment System and the Sega Master System, the news that Tengen would be releasing games licensed from Sega was exciting indeed. *Fantasy Zone* is the latest Sega title to appear on the NES.

On both systems, *Fantasy Zone* is a cute shoot-'em-up, the plotless adventure of an egg-shaped spaceship that fires missiles and drops bombs. The ship, called *Opa-Opa*, floats carelessly through a colorful series of horizontally scrolling landscapes, fighting cartoonish bad guys and the occasional "boss" character. It's like *Defender* for players who have switched to decaf.

One of the game's strongest selling points, the soft-focus, pastel color scheme seen in other versions, is reproduced as closely as possible here, considering that NES programmers reportedly don't have as many colors to choose from. The pale blues, yellows and pinks are easy on the eyes and make a nice change from the hard-edged look of most shooting games.

Most of your enemies drop coins when they're destroyed, enabling you to purchase special weapons and optional items from a floating "weapons shop" that appears sporadically. Unfortunately, these improvements don't last long, and you must wait for a floating "select" balloon to appear before you can take advantage of any other power-ups in your possession. That's a frustrating restriction—why spend your hard-earned cash on a laser gun or a jet engine if you don't have the ability to use it whenever you want to?



The battle with the "boss" at the end of each level is satisfying and involves a bit of strategy: Each one has an Achilles' heel that will lead to its demise if you find and exploit it. Some of these characters are easy to defeat, if you can keep from running into them—kamikaze attacks are *not* recommended. Others may surprise you; after sitting still for several minutes, the "boss" of Level 2 will start to chase you around the screen if you don't kill him quickly enough.

If Tengen's *Fantasy Zone* does well on the NES, you may soon see lots more Sega titles being licensed for play on other videogame machines.

Considering the large number of NES-compatible cartridges that have been released by Tengen in the past year, it's not surprising that *Fantasy Zone* looks a bit rushed. From the moment you press the **START** button, it's nothing but bare-bones game play. A demonstration mode would have been nice, and I would have settled for some music behind the stark title screen. The bottom of the display shows your score, remaining lives and other pertinent data, but it's hard to read during the "end boss" battles because of a fuzzy character set and poorly chosen background colors.

There are other minor flaws, such as the ubiquitous "flickering" or the occasionally jerky scrolling that make accurate maneuvering difficult. It's possible that these small quirks are due to the shortcomings of the NES hardware, but I doubt that's the case. We've all seen what the NES can do, and *Fantasy Zone* doesn't come close to its limitations.

Aside from the thrill of discovering the weakness of each "boss" character, *Fantasy Zone* hasn't got much to offer. Its reputation as a successful shoot-'em-up in other formats is likely to generate some excitement, which is something that the game alone could not do without the benefit of a familiar name. Though Tengen should not be discouraged from licensing more Sega titles, this one just doesn't cut the mustard.

—C. B.

Tengen Inc.
1623 Buckeye Drive
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 473-9400

Klax

TENGEN

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($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

My name is Clay Walnum, and I'm an addict.

There. I've said it. Now everybody knows. No more putting up a false front. No more smiling in spite of this crippling disease. Don't you laugh! It could happen to you.

Let my fate be a warning. This disease—this horrid addiction—comes first grinning to your door. Fun! it says. Try it. You'll like it. So you do. And it is fun. A lot of fun. Soon you can't break away. That grinning thing you invited into your home has wrapped its talons around your throat, and it won't let go.

Listen. I don't have much time. They're coming soon to escort me to a nice place with tile floors and clean white walls—a place where the beast can't reach me. But before I go, listen carefully. The disease has a name. Lean closer. I'll whisper in your ear. It's called *Klax*.

When it first arrives, it's innocuous enough. A game, just a game. Different-colored blocks come flopping down a conveyor belt toward you. You catch them and drop them into one of five bins. If you get three blocks of the same color in a row—horizontally, vertically or diagonally—you've created a Klax. The Klax blocks disappear, and you continue until you've attained that level's goal.

The game starts off easy. First, all you must do is create three Klaxes. Of course, there are complications. You're allowed to miss catching only a certain number of blocks. And the bins can stack only eight blocks total. If you run out of room or drop too many blocks, the game ends.

The easy levels completed—the hook in place—the game worms into your psyche by forcing you to try new and more difficult

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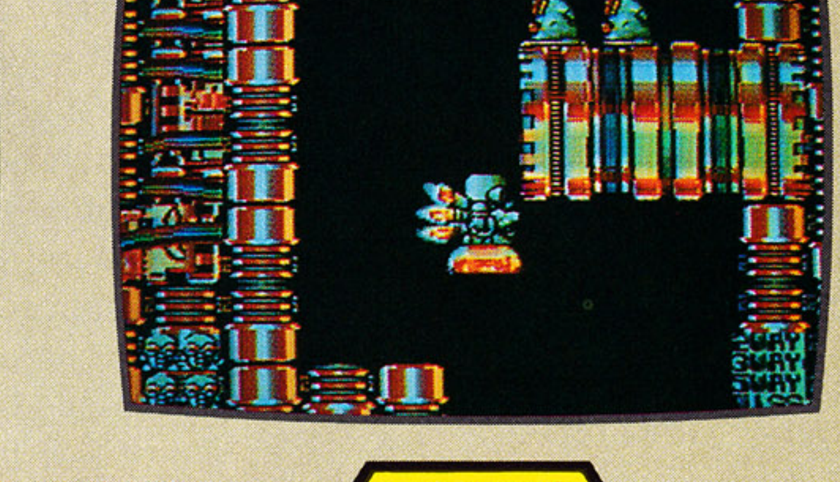

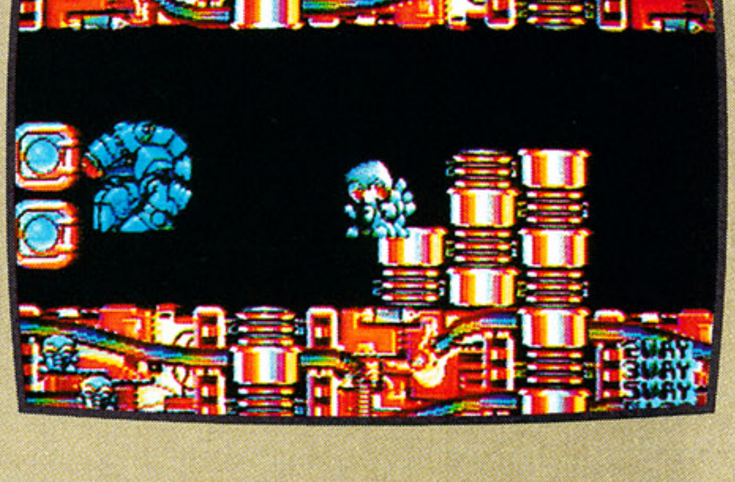

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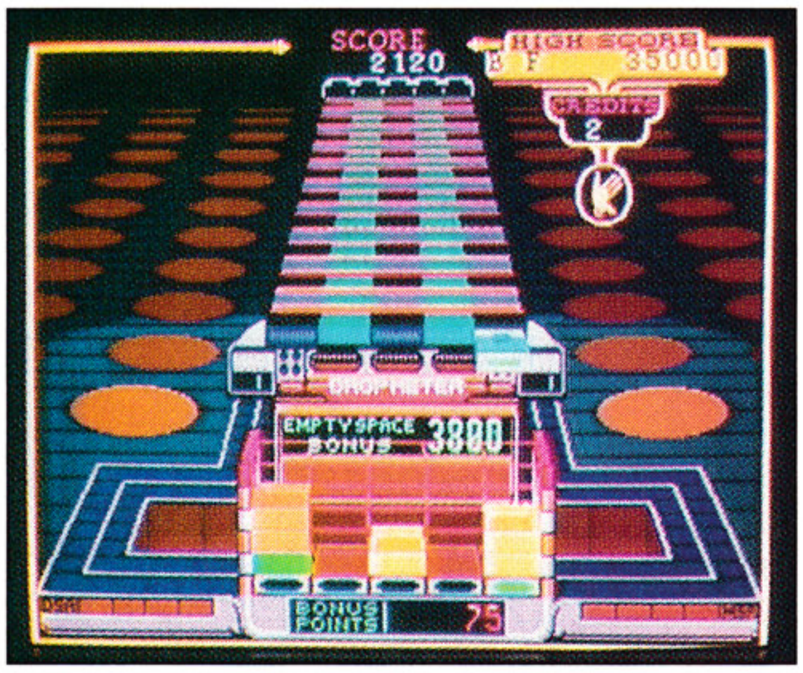
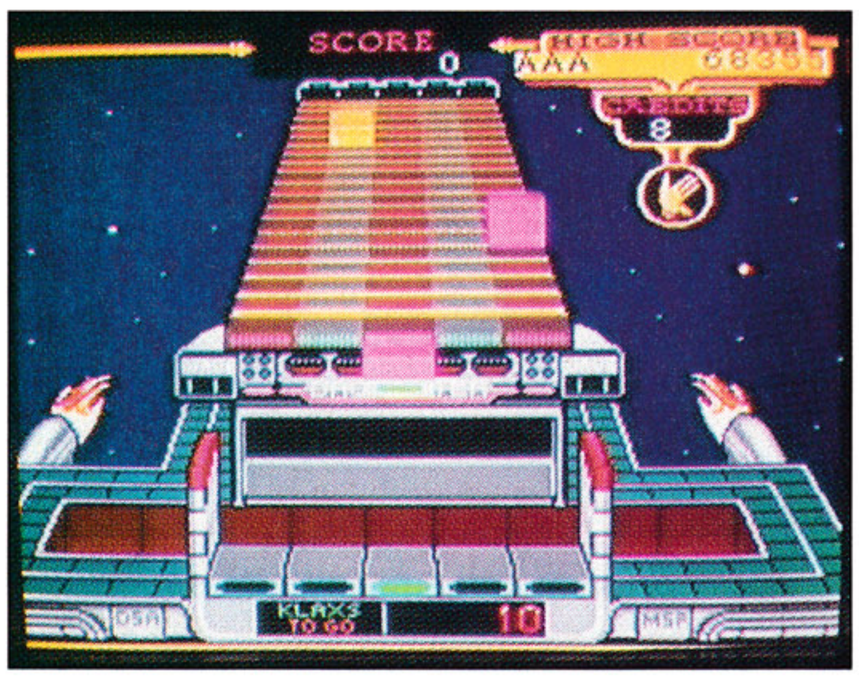
strategies. Oh, it's a subtle, devious disease! Now, not only must you form three Klaxes, but they must be diagonals. In the next level, you must accumulate 10,000 points, which means you can't depend on simple vertical Klaxes. They're worth only 50 points each. So you try for the big-point Klaxes: diagonals, stacks of four, an "X" pattern.

Each level is more difficult than the previous. In order to cope, you devise clever strategies. You save your blocks on the catcher (it'll hold up to five) so you can distribute them into the bins when you have a better idea of what you have to work with. The sweating begins. The disease has you. Soon you're chanting the mantra of the addicted: Just one more time. Just one more time. Just one more time.





You can run but you can't hide! Tengen's *Klax* (shown here on the TurboGrafx-16) is a thoroughly addicting puzzler that's already a hit in the arcade and will soon be available for the Genesis, NES and Lynx as well.

Any chance you have of walking away is lost when you hear the arresting sound effects. Each block flops down the conveyor with a unique sound. An audience of digital voices cheers your moves. Thunderous applause greets your victories. You're not in your living room. This is the video olympics. And you're a star.

But there's hope. *Klax* has a defect: less than state-of-the-art graphics. The stacks of blocks in the bins are confusing. It's difficult, when under the pressure of fast-moving blocks, to quickly discern your status. Are those two pink blocks already in a diagonal pattern? Or is the one on the left too high? Eventually, the squinting blurs your vision and, at last, you're forced to quit.

But you'll be back. Yes, you will.

Uh-oh. They're here. I hear the intruders rattling the back door. White coats. Gosh, look at that. I'm one block from an X! And here comes the blue block I need for the center! No! Stay away! I'm warning you: I bite. Don't touch that switch! No! *No!*

—Clayton Walnum

Tengen, Inc.
1623 Buckeye Drive
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 473-9400

Bloody Wolf

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

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

Good grief! The President of the United States has been kidnapped by insane South American drug lords. The President, along with many other captives, is counting on you, as a member of the famous Bloody Wolf combat team, to infiltrate the enemy's stronghold and get him out. You'll have to make your way through enemy outposts, jungles, rivers and everything South America can throw in your path.

Essentially, *Bloody Wolf* is a one-player shoot-'em-up. You control your on-screen counterpart through the horizontally and vertically scrolling scenes, blasting everything that gets in your way.

To help you through the fight, you'll find various special weapons. Locate them by rescuing prisoners, opening boxes or searching the jungle. Many power-up items are also hidden throughout the game.

Weapons include a knife for close-in fighting; a machine gun, which has unlimited ammo; a shotgun, which can fire in seven directions simultaneously; and a bazooka, which causes powerful explosions. Also available are hand grenades, flame throwers and flash bombs.

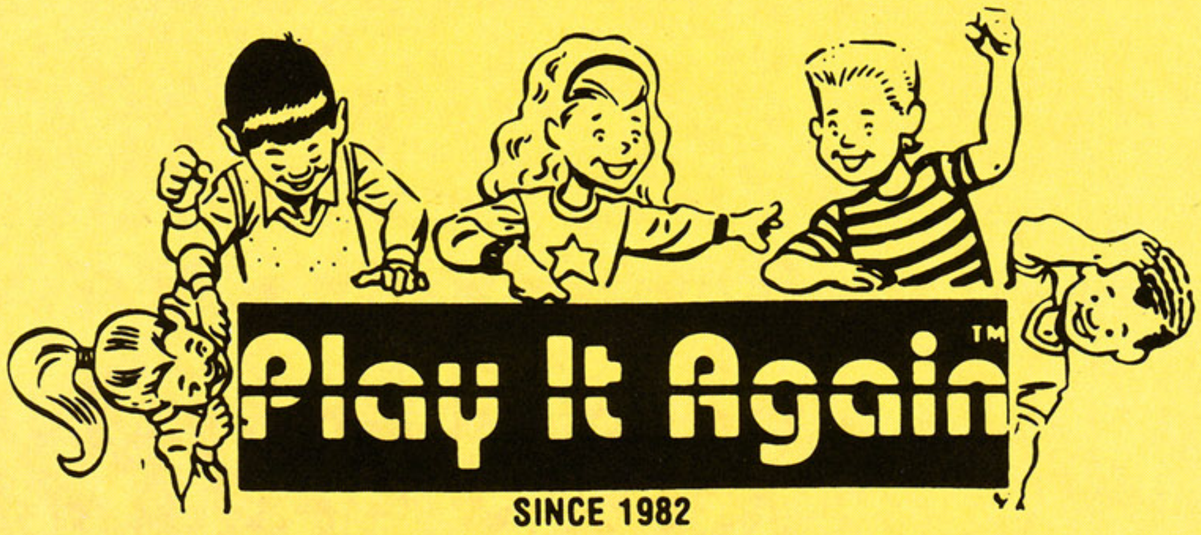
Many special items are necessary if you're to complete your mission. Keys open boxes, which contain nice surprises; fins enable you to cross rivers; the infrared scope helps find traps; and the body armor protects you from attack. In addition, when riding a motorcycle, you are invincible until the fuel runs out, at which time the vehicle explodes. (Get off quickly!)

The entire mission takes you through eight stages: recon, the jungle, the bridge, enemy camp, rescue hostages, river rafting, marshes and enemy headquarters. In these various areas, you'll fight paratroopers, green soldiers, blue soldiers, red soldiers, motorcycle soldiers, armored soldiers and others. Each enemy has their own type of weapon and their own attack pattern.

The scenes in *Bloody Wolf* are vivid and detailed, and the displays take full advantage of the TurboGrafx-16's exceptional graphics hardware. Although this is a scrolling blastathon, each level is drawn in simulated 3-D with amazing realism.

The game play is smooth and responsive. Your on-screen character moves, turns,

continued on page 77



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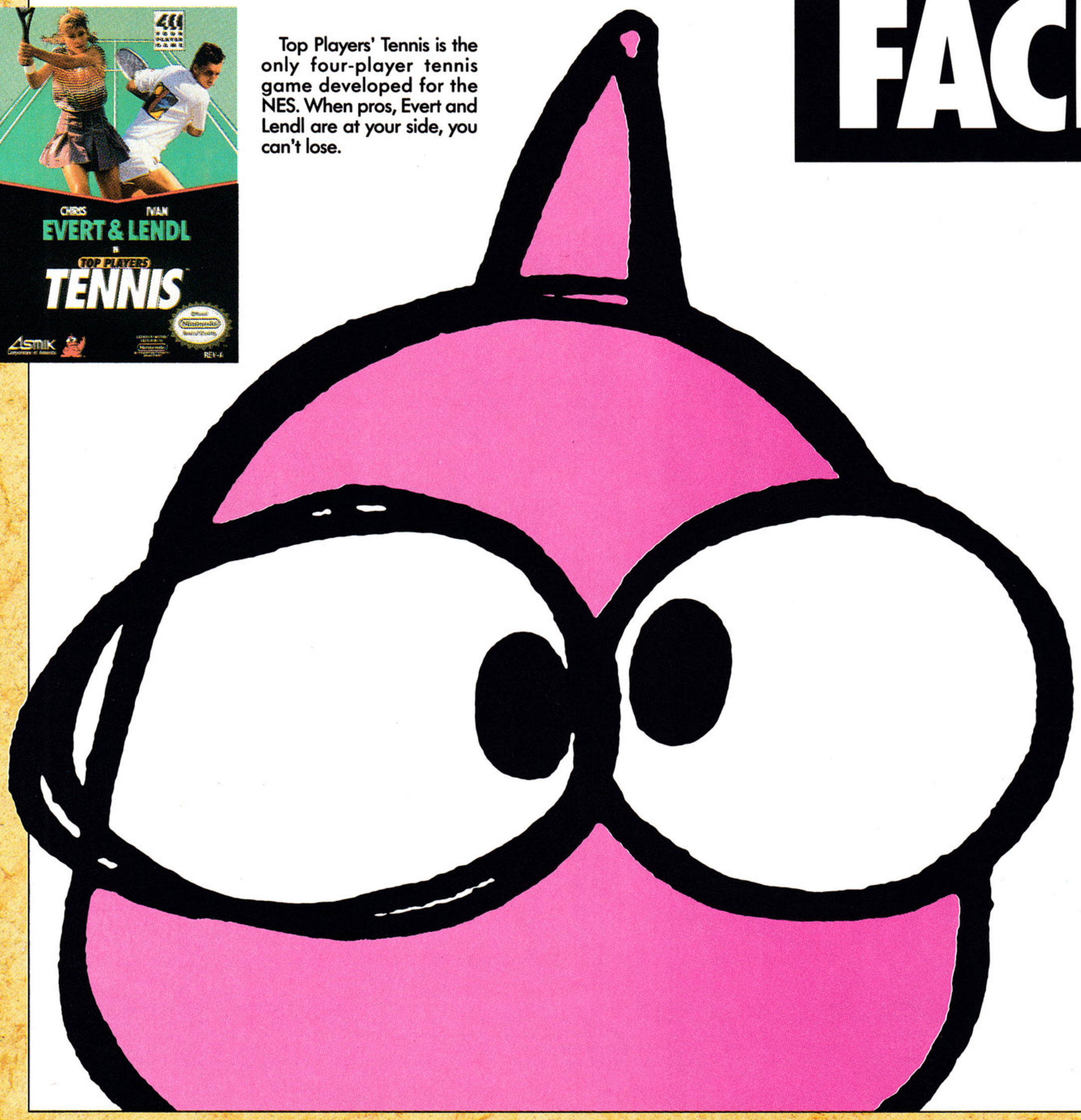

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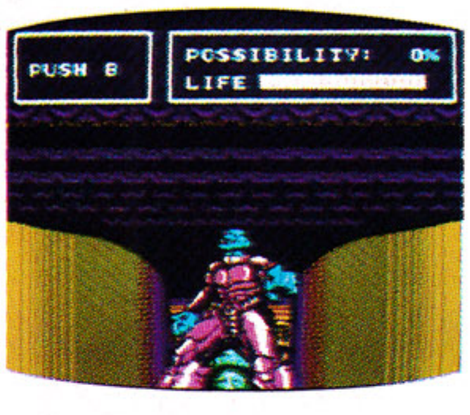

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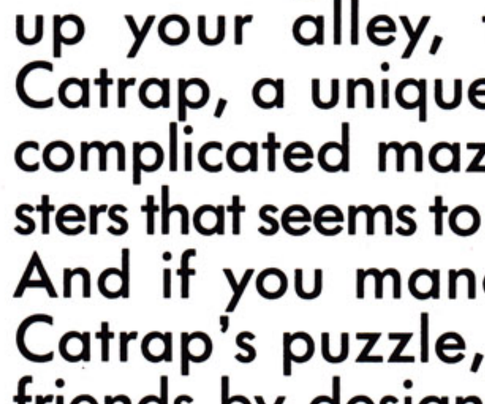

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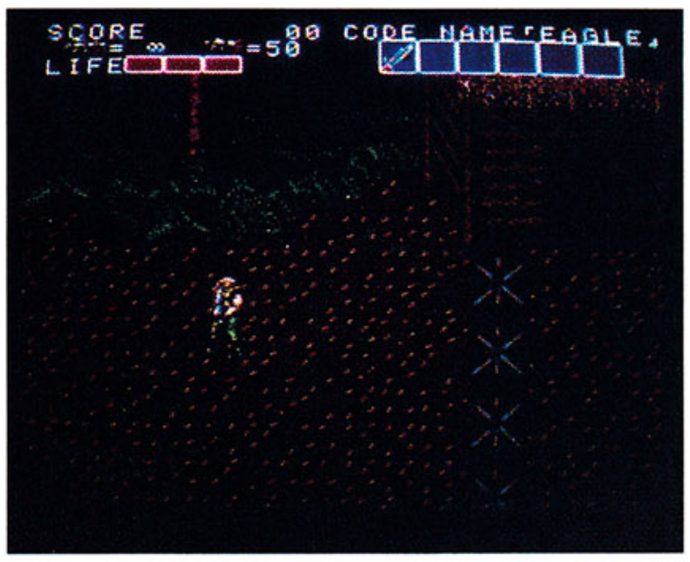
continued from page 72

jumps and attacks with a tap of a button, following your orders instantly—important in high-action games like this.

The sound effects and the music are wonderful. All the extras are here. For example, shoot out a window. All that glass-breaking sounds almost digitized, doesn't it? (For all I know, it is digitized.) The music sets the perfect mood for each level. What's more, it's inventive and good listening.



Although *Bloody Wolf* has no password reentry system, it does boast unlimited continues. That's right, folks. Given enough time and patience, this is one game you can actually win. (When you get tired, do what I do: Leave the console running with your TV off!)

To sum up, *Bloody Wolf* explodes with action. Although you need good reflexes and planning to rescue the President, the finely detailed scenes, hot action and great sound and music will keep you in the fight, anxious to see what comes next.

Yeah, war is tough. But *Bloody Wolf* is no bomb.

—C. W.

NEC Technologies, Inc.
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In NEC's *Bloody Wolf*, for the TG-16, you're a member of the elite combat team that's been enlisted to save the President from his drug-lord captors. Can you handle the assignment?

Double Dare

GAMETEK

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($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

Ah, that great American pastime—the TV game show. They're hipper and slicker today than their pioneering ancestors were. And, thanks to MTV Networks—the people who blessed the '80s with MTV, game shows are attracting a younger crowd. One of their brainchilds is *Double Dare*, seen on Nickelodeon and syndicated nationally on local channels.

It used to be when you wanted to play your favorite game show at home, you had to buy the official board-game version that the show's host would routinely hawk. Fortunately, living in these modern days, we now also have the option of purchasing a computer- or video-game version. That's what GameTek offers NES owners; they specialize in translations of popular TV game shows, one of their recent titles being the aforementioned *Double Dare*.

Double Dare, the game show, pits two teams—each made up of a pair of kids—against one another in a series of multiple-choice question rounds. The questions given by the host range anywhere from the historical and scientific to the trivial and mundane.

What makes *Double Dare* special, though, are the "physical challenges." If a team can't answer a question posed to them, they can "dare" their opponents to answer it. If the other team answers correctly, they get the points. But if they *also* can't answer the question (which happens *a lot* on the show), they can "double dare" the first team. The original kids then either have to answer the question correctly or compete in the physical challenge.

These challenges require a team to engage in some sort of physical activity that they must accomplish within a certain time limit. Yet many of these athletic contests aren't kid's stuff. Jumpsuits, protective bike helmets and those OSHA-approved goggles are required dress, as many of the challenges involve gallons of semi-fluid material like chocolate syrup, whipped cream and—that American favorite—JELL-O®. Basically anything that will stick to your body—but won't kill you—is pretty standard prop material in *Double Dare.*

The winning team at the end of the second round of questioning— after all the daring, double daring and physical challenging—gets to go through the final obstacle course. This apex of semi-fluid disgust consists of multiple jungle gyms that the kids must go through to retrieve hidden flags. If they get a flag, they win the corresponding prize that goes with it. If they get all the flags, they win the grand prize—typically a trip to some well-known amusement park.

GameTek has faithfully brought this mess home onto the NES. You play either against a friend or the computer, but *Double Dare* is specially meant for two players. The computer is neither convincing as a dullard or fair as a game pro.

A "speed-angle" bar gauge is implemented in most of the physical challenges. This "unique" play interface is particularly frustrating to use at first but soon becomes easier to handle the more you play.

There are eight physical challenges in all. One requires you to catch a cake in midair

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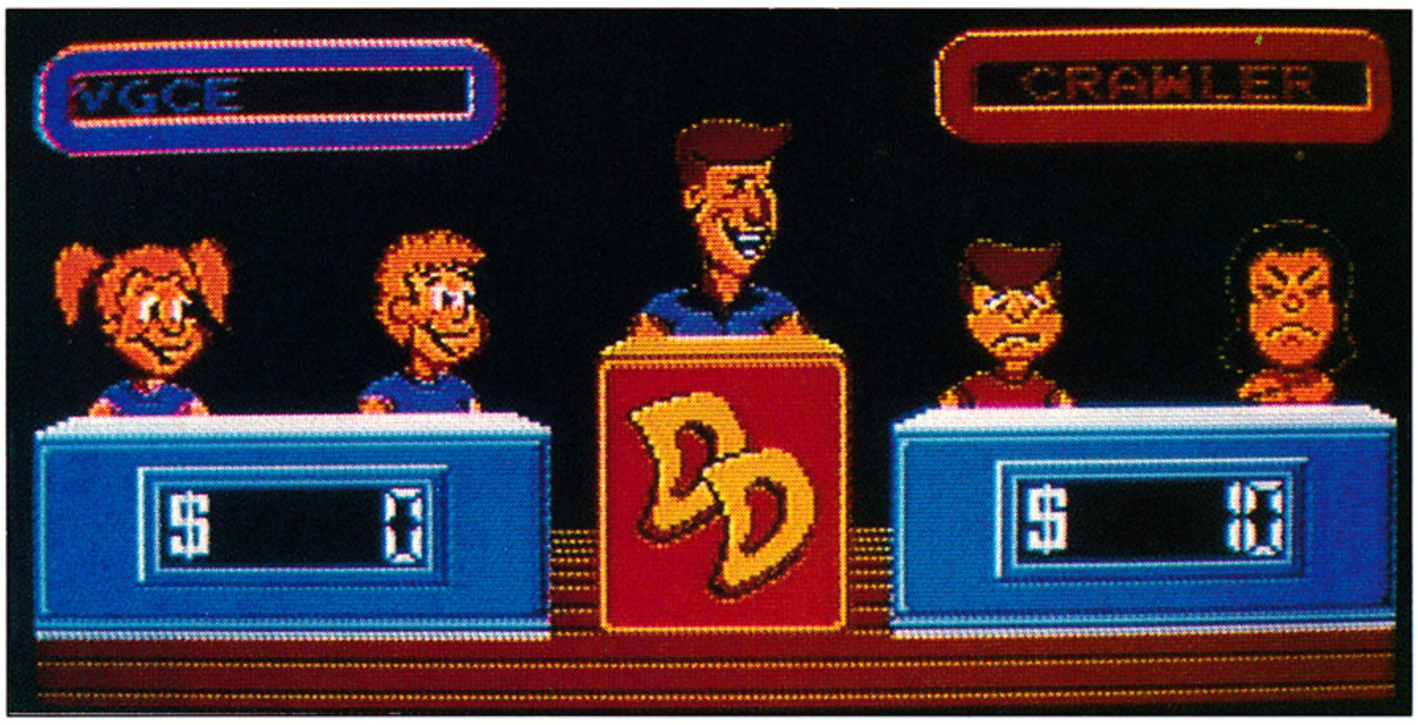

First seen on the Nickelodeon cable channel, then as a syndicated program and, finally, as a game for the NES, GameTek has brought all the game show elements of *Double Dare*'s super-sloppy fun to video-game screens.

while bouncing on a trampoline, as your video partner pitches it to you. And—this I found hysterical—there's the Spaghetti Shoot, where you blast your companion out of a cannon to hit a meatball on a giant plate of spaghetti.

The final obstacle course plays similarly to the running events in games like *Track 'n' Field* and *Summer Games*. Prizes that you can "win" include a BMX bike, a Walkman and, somewhat ironically, an NES.

Like the original show's premise, GameTek's *Double Dare* will more than likely appeal to the real young crowd. This isn't for someone who likes *Jeopardy!*-style intense questioning. Fact is, the questions themselves in *Double Dare* don't serve much of a purpose; they're really an excuse to motivate kids to splatter one another with eggs, water balloons and cream-filled pies. Then again, that sounds better as a video-game anyway, doesn't it?

—H. H. W.

GameTek/IJE, Inc.
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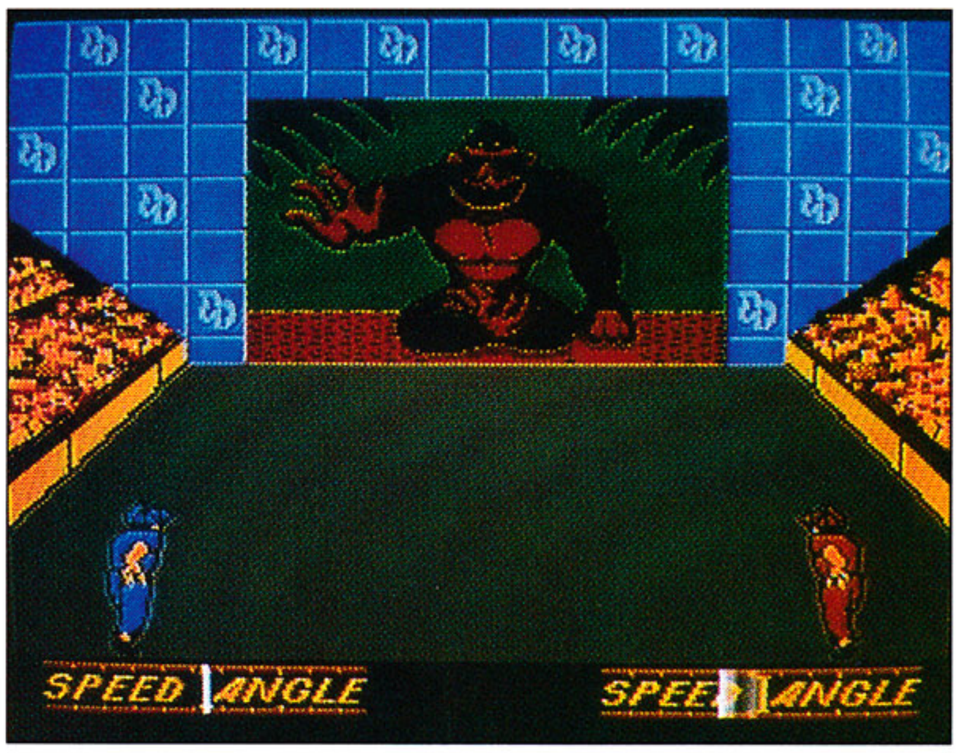

Cyberball

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis ($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

(These ratings were based on the prerelease version reviewed and would likely go up for the final production cartridge.)

Robo-Pigskin; the game of the 21st century. Yes, man has finally realized that the game is too violent and dangerous and established leagues of robot teams to battle away on Sunday afternoons and Monday nights.

Teams of seven robots each attempt to score touchdowns by moving a ball into the opposing team's end zone. There are a few wrinkles here, though. You can only get one first down, when you reach the fifty-yard line, which is called "de-fusing." After that, you must score a touchdown in five plays or forfeit the ball. A point after touchdown is not kicked; points are awarded for running or passing the ball into the end zone. Each period is 3 minutes long, and there are a total of six periods, with a brief intermission after the third. (The robot band gives a unique performance, to say the least!) There are few firm rules, other than those imposed by the software itself; i.e., you can't jump offsides.

The prerelease cartridge I reviewed was not accompanied by a single scrap of hard-copy documentation. Even so, the game mechanics were easy enough to grasp, and the game was almost instantly enjoyable. But, to make sure I hadn't missed something, I visited my local video-game emporium to take a look at the original arcade machine (by Atari Games). Fortunately for me, I was able to witness a two-player contest that was already in progress, and this helped me appreciate that I hadn't missed much of the original concept.

It was frustrating to play against the Genesis, but that's to be expected when artificial intelligence is employed in any computer game. Current technology places many constraints on the medium; the computer is always programmed to play at a much higher level than its human counterpart. I'm happy to report, though, that *Cyberball*'s computer did not play a flawless game. Random events, like incomplete passes and fumbles, made the game seem very realistic.

Unfortunately, Genesis' thumb controller made pinpoint passing a real nightmare! This is no black mark against *Cyberball*'s programming. I'm sure the new Genesis joy-

stick will improve *Cyberball* play by leaps and bounds. As to the accuracy of the overall translation, there can be no denial; it is more than adequate, and with the few minor omissions filled in and tweaking accomplished, *Cyberball* could be considered an exact duplicate of the original.

That may be too much to expect, though, considering the quality/complexity of the arcade machine. So, the programmers have taken—or are planning to take—the concept a step further by adding telecommunications capability, via the upcoming TeleGenesis modem. If the speed of the screen refresh and movements of sprites are not impaired, modem capability can only raise a good game of *Cyberball* to new heights. Password reentry and league play will take on new meanings!

—F. E.

Sega of America
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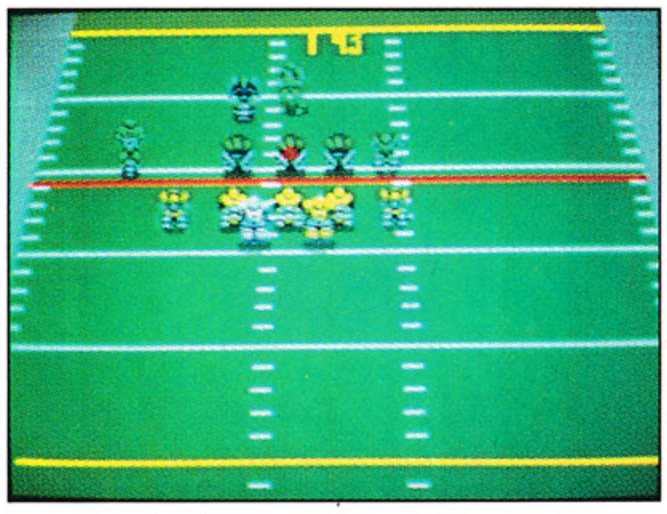
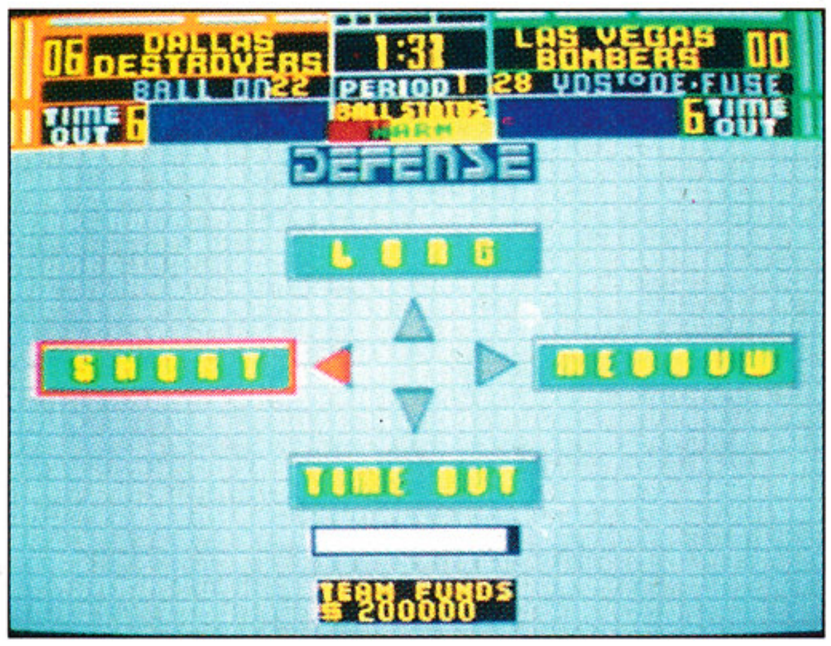




Sega's *Cyberball*, based on the Atari coin-op machine, takes football into the 21st century, where robots play in place of humans.

Swords and Serpents

ACCLAIM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

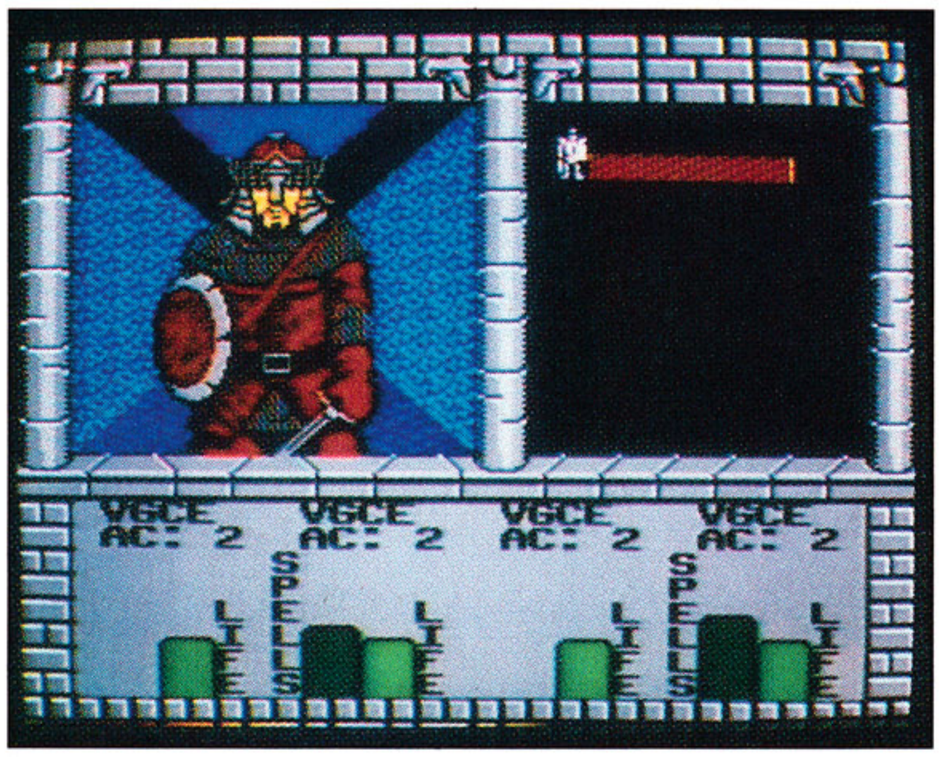
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

What's the story? Easy—just destroy the Serpent in its lair. Take four valiant adventurers, find the legendary ruby items with their ultimate power and protection, then conquer the last of the 16 levels of the Serpent's dungeon. Fight with sword and magic against a variety of ever more powerful foes, and reach the end with enough strength left to prevail. That's it in a nutshell—but it isn't so easy, and your route to victory is anything but direct.

Swords and Serpents is full of tricky traps, teleporters, invisible walls, healing temples, armories and interesting (if mostly simple) puzzles. It won't take a genius to figure this game out, but it will take plenty of patience and a wee bit of cleverness.

The basic action of this game takes place on a screen divided into three main sections. At the top is the first-person viewpoint of the maze. It's a detailed 3-D maze with nicely drawn walls and doorways. Simple, but effective.

To the right of the maze view is a map screen. This is one of the really nice features this game offers. The map fills in as you explore. However, the map does not last between playing sessions, and if you go two or more floors away from a level, the map is no longer there when you return. So it's still necessary to draw your own maps, but the program makes it very easy to do. During battles, the maze area contains an image of your enemy, and the map area shows you a graphic representation of the health of each attacker. As you fight, that health is gradually reduced until the monster is dead.



Acclaim's *Swords and Serpents*, a compelling adventure, will keep you busy with combat and spells.

Below the maze and the map area is the character-description area. You can see what the current armor class of your character is (how vulnerable he or she is to attack) and a graphic representation of your remaining life and magic points as well.

Swords and Serpents' creators have kept things simple. As an example, only three kinds of characters exist—magicians, warriors and thieves. It's probably best to have two magicians, one warrior and one thief in your party, though each player can make that choice.

There are also several subscreens in the game. For instance, pressing the "B" button lets you see a magician's spells and cast one of them. Pressing **SELECT** lets you see the statistics or inventory for the party or for each individual. While viewing the inventory screens, you can toggle from one character to another, making trading and equipping items easy. You can also examine any item you purchase or find to see what it does and who can use it.

One unique aspect of the game is that more than one player can participate at a time. In fact, you can play with one, two or four players simultaneously. In a two-player game, each player controls two members of the party; one is the leader (determines where you both go). During battles, each player controls his or her character.

Speaking of battles, there isn't a whole lot you can do. You can attack the head, body or legs, or you can cast magic spells. The game has several aspects I'm unsatisfied with, and magic is one of them. Although the noncombat spells are interesting and useful, the combat spells are, in my opinion, practically useless. You're much better off saving your magic points for healing and other important activities than using them for fighting. Find a good weapon and wail away—that's my motto.

My other complaint has to do with the way the battle sequences occur. During bat-

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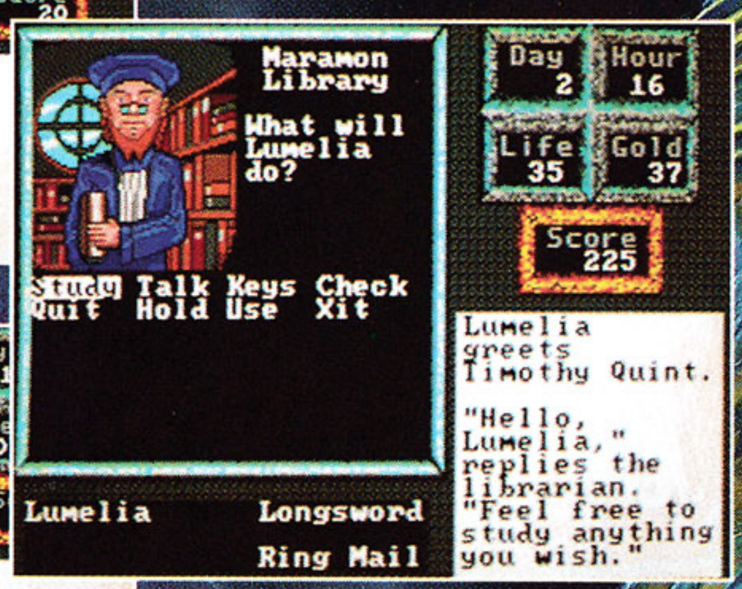

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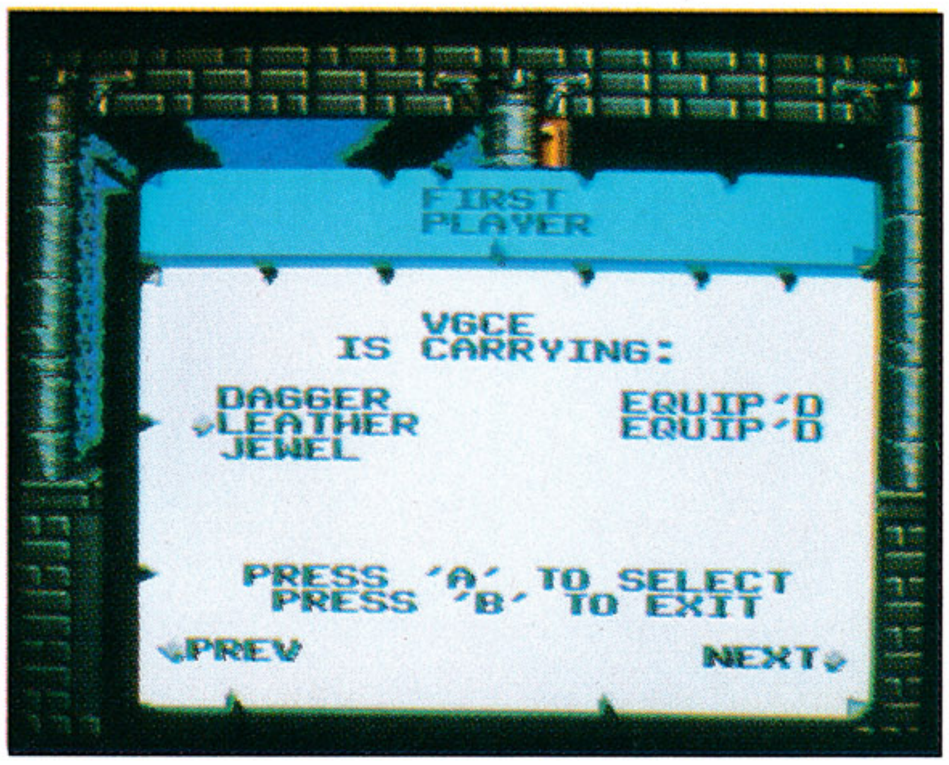
tle each monster takes turns beating on you. While they're doing this, you must wait for your turn. That's irritating at times, especially late in the game when you may face certain wizards who cast spells at each of your characters in turn. Meeting six or more of these wizards makes for a long, frustrating battle—and lots of waiting.

However, my real gripe is that you can't choose who to attack. If you have virtually wiped out one or two of your enemies, you should be able to deliver the *coup de grace* before they attack you again. All too often, though, your characters will attack a perfectly healthy monster, leaving the wounded ones alive to do more damage. Sadly, it's a part of the game, and you get used to it.

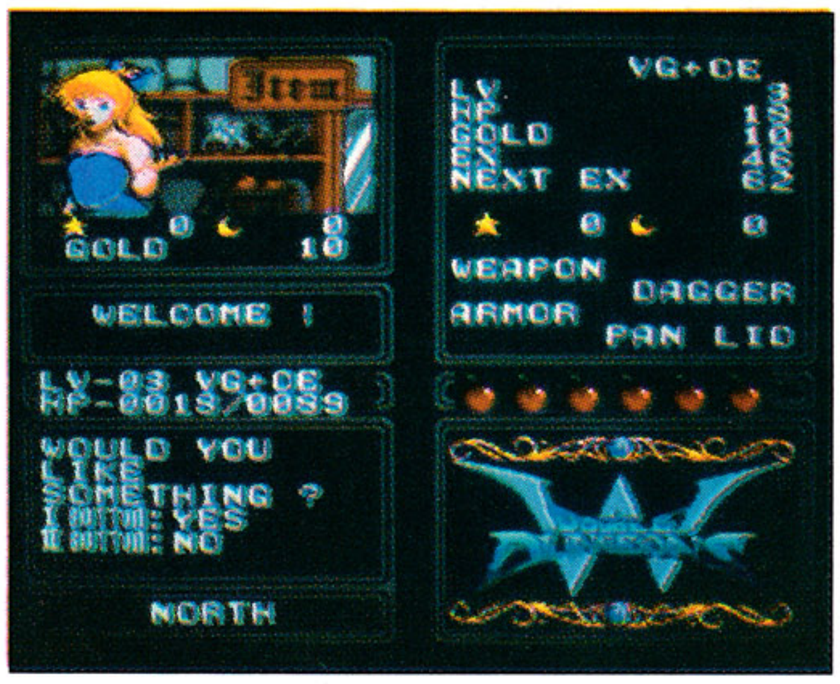
These little annoyances aside, *Swords and Serpents* is an excellent game. The graphics are stunning and imaginative, and the story is just intriguing enough to capture your interest. The early levels of this game are excellent training for beginning role-players, but the action toward the end is challenging for all RPGers. Though the ending of the game could have been more dramatic, I still vote a definite thumbs up for *Swords and Serpents*.

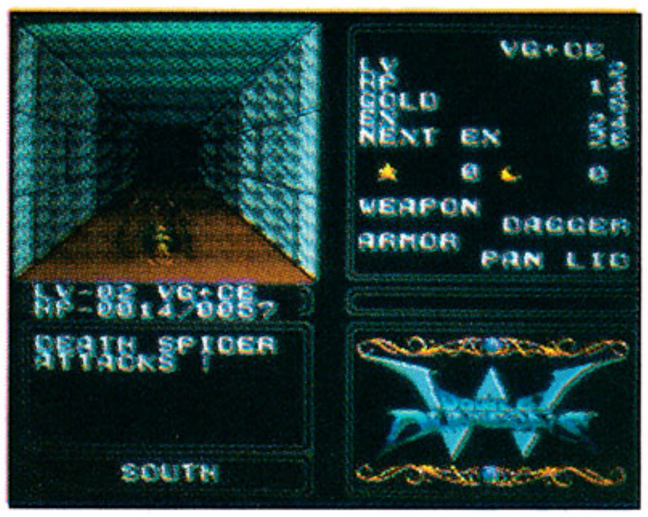
—Rusel DeMaria

Acclaim Entertainment
71 Audrey Avenue
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 922-2400



***Swords and Serpents* is filled with elaborate graphics that portray the labyrinth of corridors.**





NEC's *Double Dungeons* is a 3-D maze game that borrows elements from role-playing games.

Double Dungeons

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

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

Double Dungeons is a three-dimensional maze game for one or two players. You move through the maze, fighting enemies and gathering power-ups, as you search for shops in which to buy weapons and special items and inns in which to be healed. Although this is a typical 3-D maze game, the addition of power-ups, assorted weapons, a host of savage creatures and some role-playing characteristics help it transcend the ordinary.

The dungeons are shown from a forward-facing viewpoint, as though seen through your eyes. As you walk forward, the hallways move toward you with a 3-D effect. If you're a novice at this type of game, you may find the controls a little confusing at first. However, once you get the hang of it, navigating the dungeon hallways becomes intuitive and realistic.

In the two-player mode (which requires the TurboTap accessory and an additional TurboPad controller), the screen display is split down the middle, with each player getting his own view of the dungeon. In this mode the game can be played cooperatively or competitively.

As I mentioned, *Double Dungeons* borrows heavily from the role-playing genre of games. For example, you start off with a certain number of hit points, which drop each time you're injured until, at zero, your character dies. Similarly, you also have attack points, which determine the amount of damage you can inflict upon an enemy; defense points, which measure your resistance to enemy attacks; evasive strength, which determines your dodging abilities; and experience, which increases each time you defeat an enemy. Gaining experience points allows you to advance to the next level, at which time many of your other attributes are increased as well.

At the start of the game, you may choose which dungeon you'd like to play (with some limitations). Each dungeon is listed in the manual along with its average playing time: an easy dungeon requires about 30 minutes of playing time, and tough dungeons require as much as a whopping 16 hours. Each of the six levels comprises several different dungeons. There are 22 dungeons in all.

As you move through the maze hallways, you'll be attacked by various types of monsters, each of which has its own set of attributes. You'll fight slimes, killer bees, skeletons, spiders, sorcerers, snakes, hawks, goblins, ants, mummies and other creatures. If you manage to beat the enemy, you're awarded experience points and may also find food, gold or jewels.

Of course, each of the six levels sports its own boss creature. You'll match battle skills with Skeleton Master, Snowman, Mima, Sorcerer, Dark Elf and Witch.

Shops hidden in the dungeons provide you with the opportunity to purchase important supplies. There are also inns at which you can rest and recover your hit points.

continued on page 86

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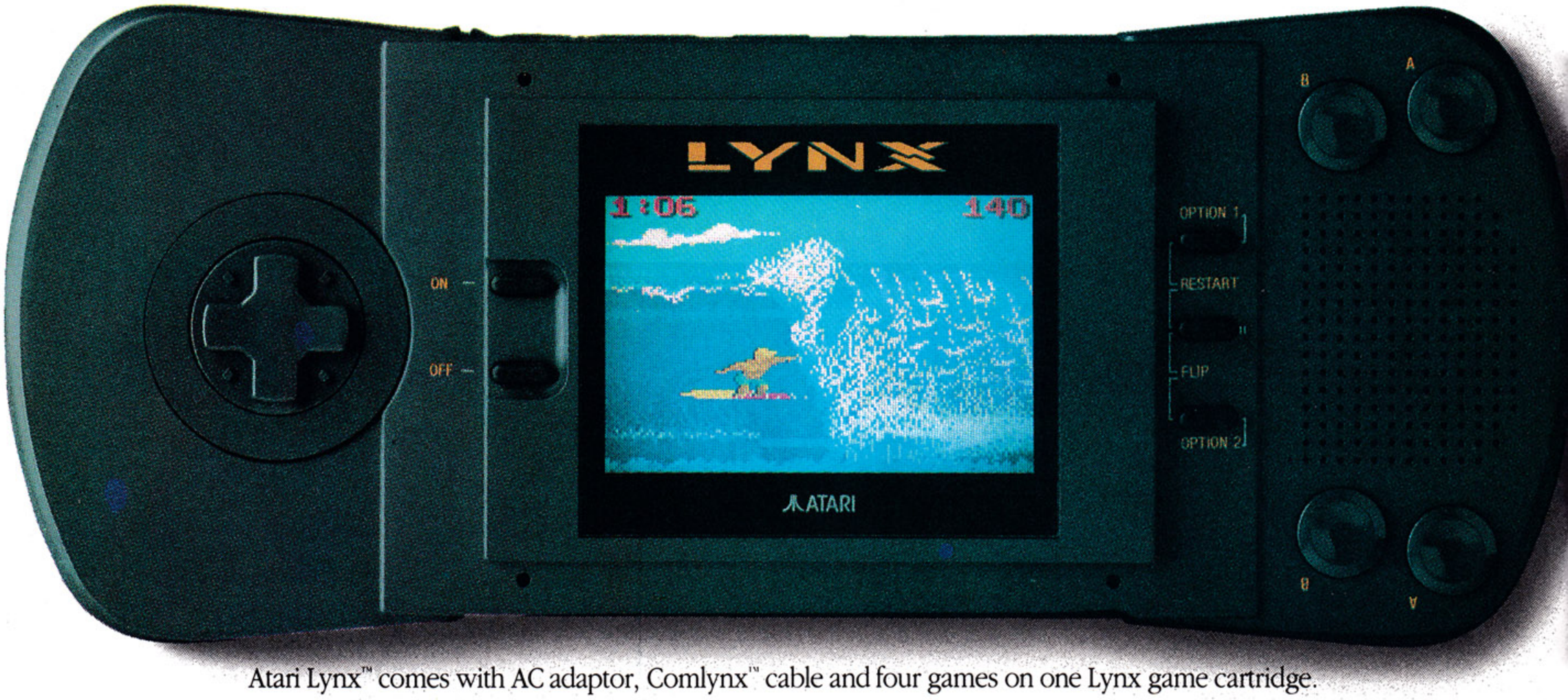
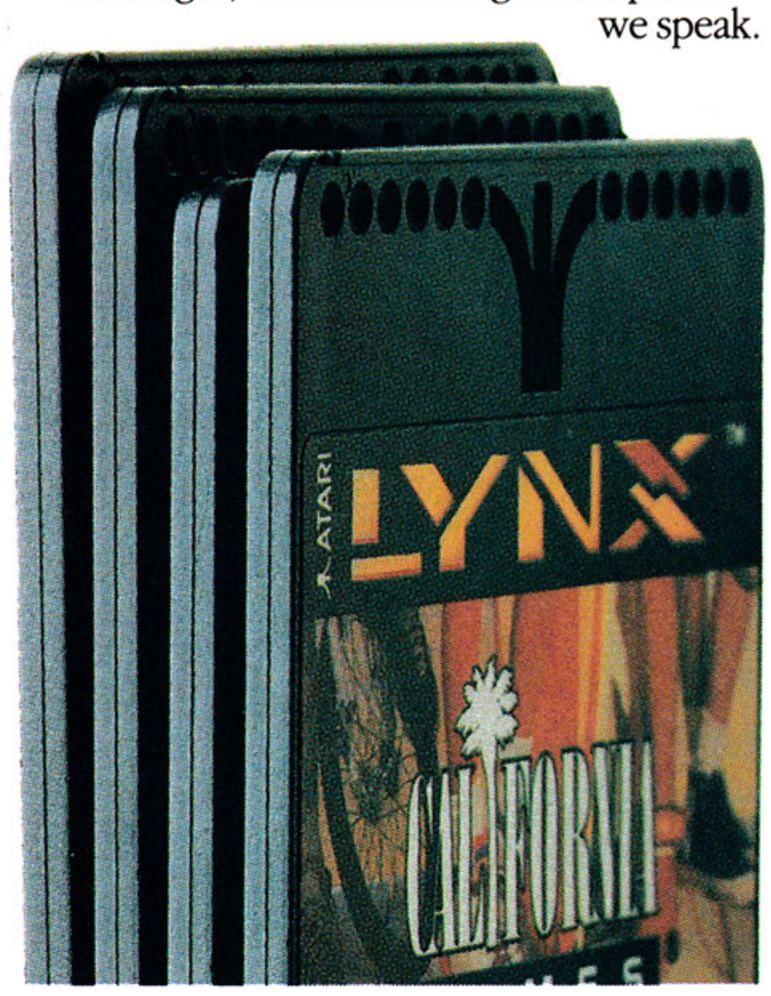
Chills, Dizziness And

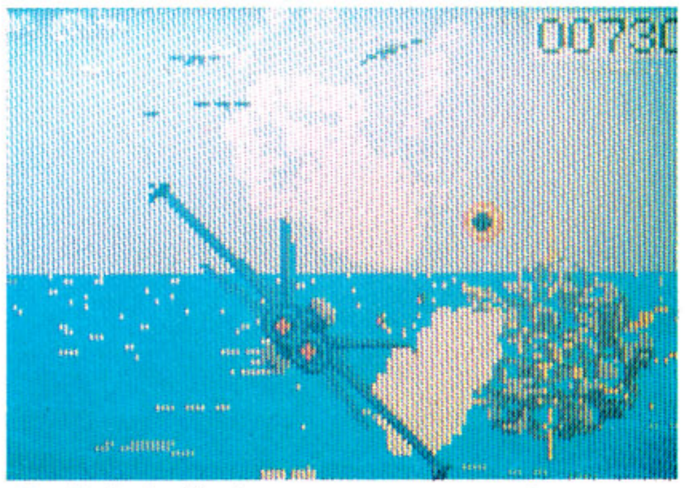


Atari Lynx™ comes with AC adaptor, Comlynx™ cable and four games on one Lynx game cartridge.

Gauntlet®: Smash arcade hit. The enchanted Star Gem has crashed to earth. Capture it from evil creatures before they use its magical strength to destroy man. 1 to 4 players.

Lots of games are available on compact cartridges, with more being developed as we speak.





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Plug any standard headset into the Lynx for more realistic 4 channel sound

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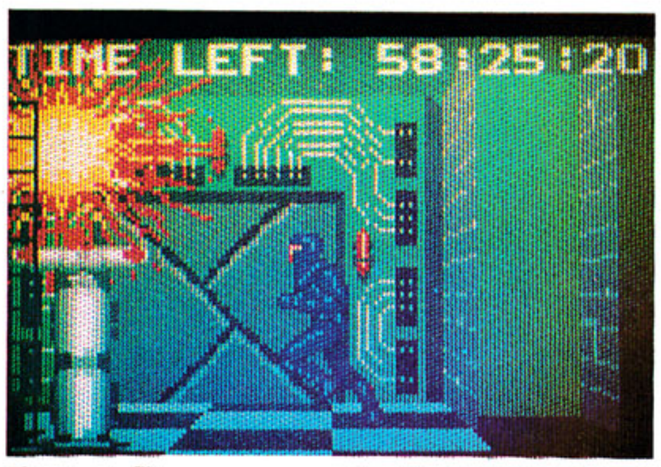
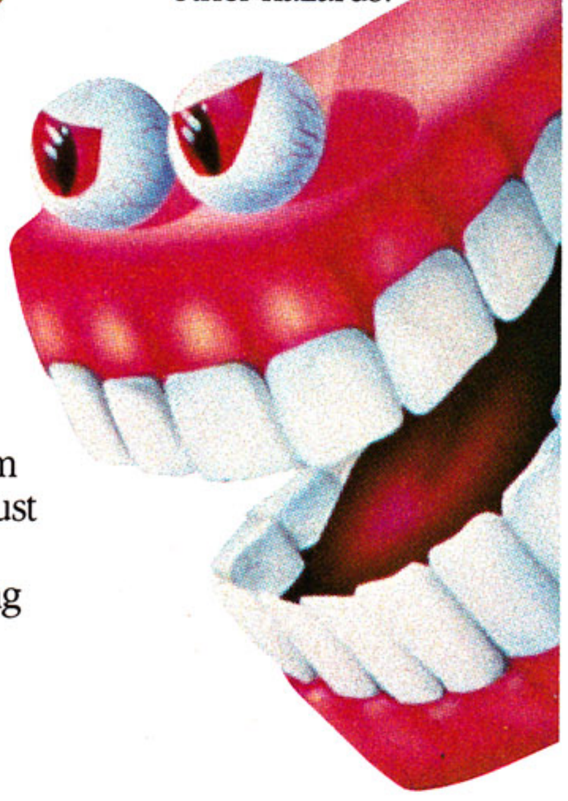
owing May Cause Shortness Of Breath.

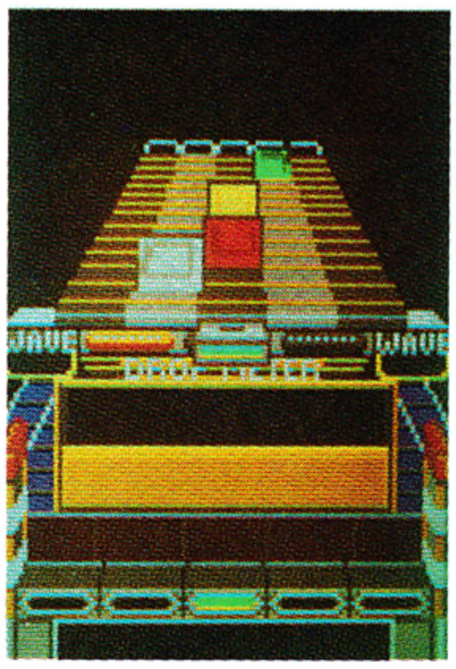


Electrocop™: Rescue the kidnapped daughter of the president. Invade the Steel Complex where dangerous robot traps protect the Criminal Brain.

California Games®: Surf your brains out. Skateboard the Half Pipe. Juggle the Foot Bag. Slam off the desert berms on your BMX bike.

Chip's Challenge™: Help Chip through 144 levels without getting nailed by cherry bombs, water-traps, and hundreds of other hazards.





KLAX™: The latest arcade mega-hit from Atari Games. You must form "Klax" from colored tiles tumbling down the conveyor belt. 100 levels.

Connect up to 8 Lynxes.
On some games, all 8 players can be on screen at once.

The Lynx portable game system is every bit as good as home systems.

It has great color and sharpness like a big screen TV.

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It's enough to give you chills.

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CIRCLE #136 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 82

In addition, there are many power-up items, which include mundane objects like apples and range all the way up to powerful magic spells. Some special items include energy burst, a rod used in battle; healing potion, which will restore some of your hit points; unicorn keys, which are used to open doors guarded by bosses; death thunder, which brings lightning down upon your enemies; earth shaker, which induces earthquakes; and others.

All in all, *Double Dungeons* takes the traditional 3-D maze game and enhances it enough to make an aging concept interesting again. Although not spectacular, this game returns a reasonable value for your video-game dollar.

—C. W.

NEC Technologies, Inc.
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(312) 860-9500

Alex Kidd in Shinobi World

SEGA

For the Sega Master System ($29.95)

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

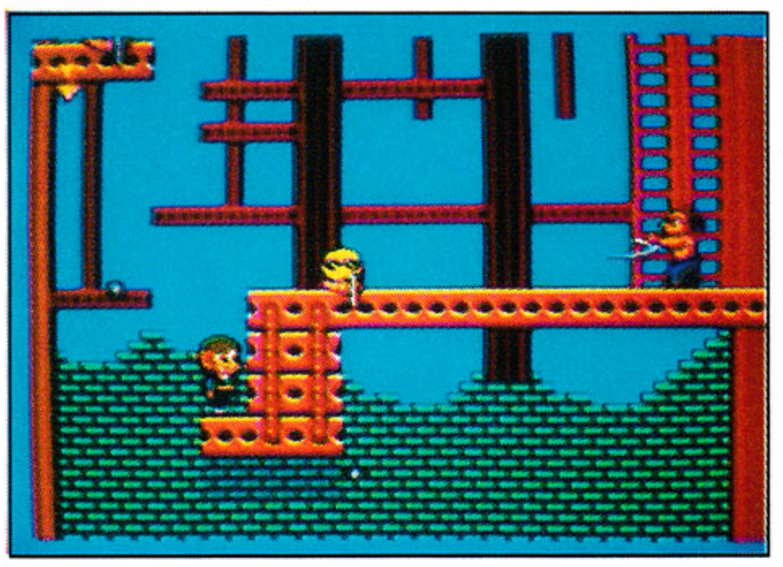
You've got to feel sorry for the little guy. I mean, poor Alex Kidd has endured more dangerous adventures than any electronic hero I've ever heard of. Now, just as Alex is settling down for a rest, the Dark Ninja decides to take over Miracle World. So, with a whole new bag of tricks, Alex Kidd is back on the road, this time attempting to save not only Miracle World, but also his girlfriend, a resident of the planet Shinobi.

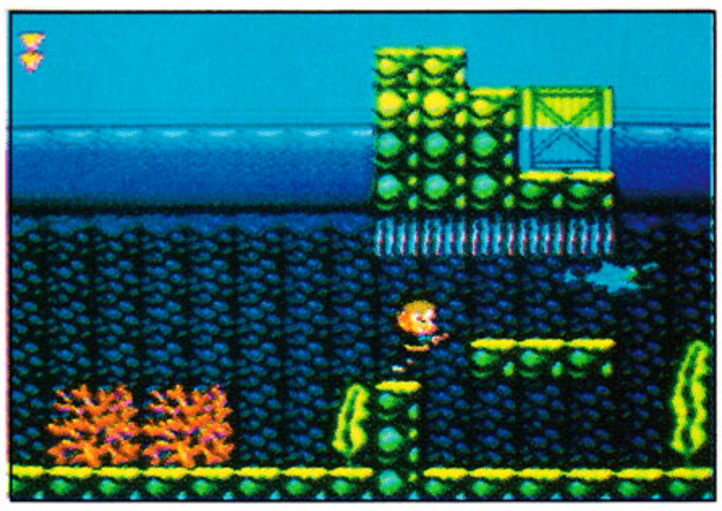
Although *Alex Kidd in Shinobi World* is obviously inspired by the popular *Shinobi* arcade game, it boasts enough new twists to make it original. Sure, some of the scenes look familiar. Most, however, are entirely new. The familiar scenes simply lend a nostalgic flavor.

The rounds through which Alex Kidd must battle are actually hybrids of scenes from *Shinobi* and past *Alex Kidd* adventures. Video gamers who have played either of the original games will feel right at home with this clever melding of two scenarios.

I said that Alex has a new bag of tricks, and indeed he does. Not only can Alex wield a sword or toss deadly darts, he can also change into a fireball and burn his way through gangs of enemies or sturdy brick walls. The fireball weapon is a blast to employ (yes, that's a pun), one of the neatest weapons I've run into in a game for the SMS. But the fireball isn't Alex's only magical weapon. He can also metamorphose into a roaring tornado, an angry storm that'll engulf everything in its path.

As Alex searches for his girlfriend and defeats all the ninja enemies that cross his path, he'll find several special items to increase his chances of victory. These items include hearts, which restore one notch to Alex's life line; darts, which give Alex the ability to throw arrows; power icons, which increase the power of Alex's weapons; crystal balls, which turn Alex into a tornado; and Alex dolls, which act as 1-Ups.





An unusually short game, *Alex Kidd in Shinobi World* offers up only four rounds of action, each of which is divided into three mini-rounds. Round 1, Kabuto, plunges Alex into the streets of an enemy-ridden city. Round 2, Raid of the Helicopters, has Alex fighting above and below water. Round 3, The Jungle, gives Alex a chance to show off his cleverness as he tries to avoid strange creatures and deadly traps. Finally, in Level 4, The Battle of the Dark Ninja, Alex faces the Dark Ninja himself in an attempt to rescue his girlfriend.

Mixing components from *Shinobi* and previous *Alex Kidd* adventures, Sega has created a hybrid game, *Alex Kidd in Shinobi World*, that Master System owners will feel right at home with.

The first two rounds are fairly easy to complete. The real challenge doesn't begin until Round 3. When you toss in an unlimited continue feature, the veteran video gamer will have little difficulty quickly completing all four levels, maybe even on his first try.

With its vivid graphics, easy game play and intriguing scenes, *Alex Kidd in Shinobi World* is a sure kid-pleaser, perfect for the younger control-pad jockeys in your family. Experienced players will find little challenge here, but may enjoy a quick romp through *Shinobi World* anyway.

—C. W.

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THE JAPANESE MASTERPIECE

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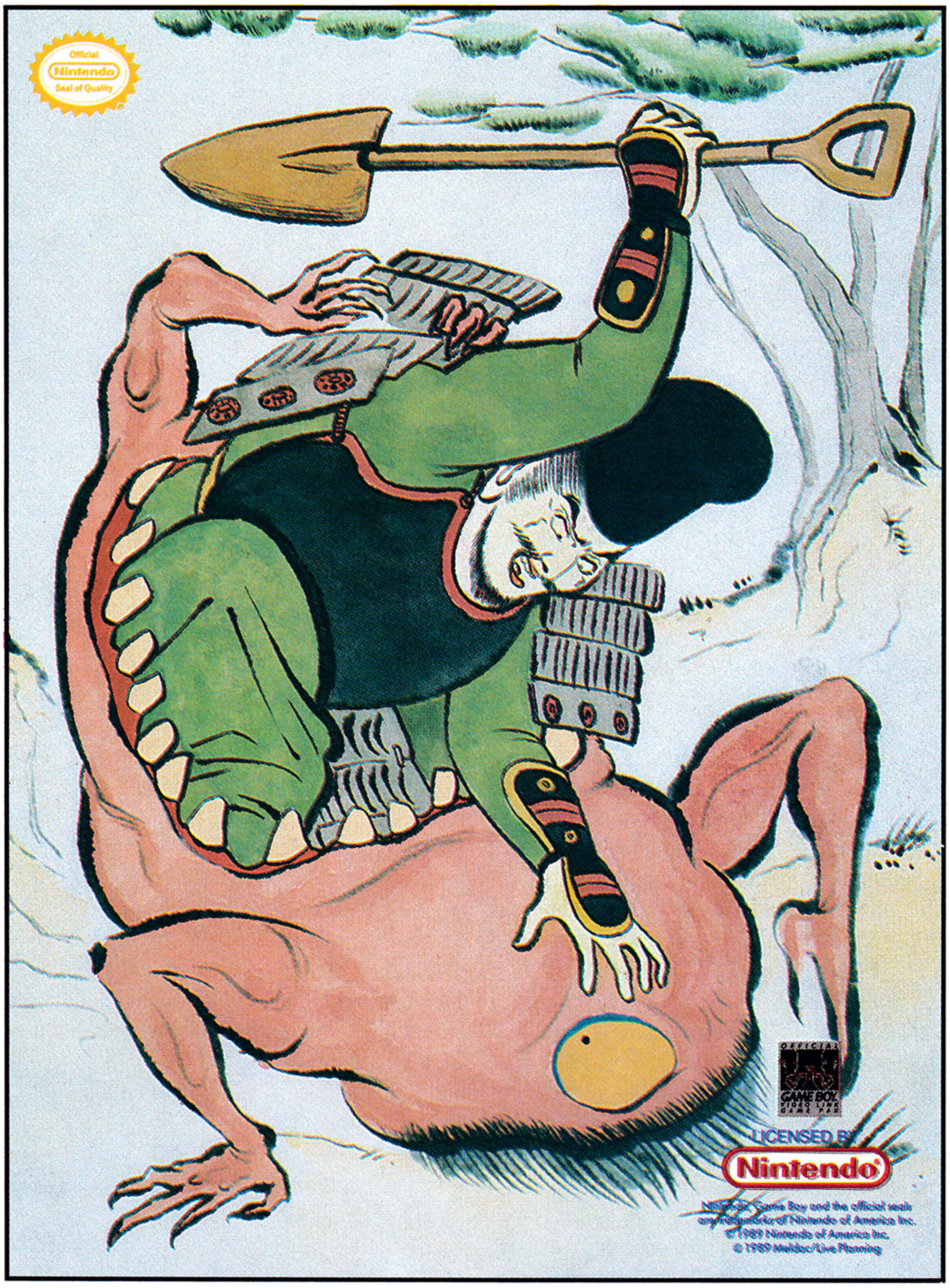
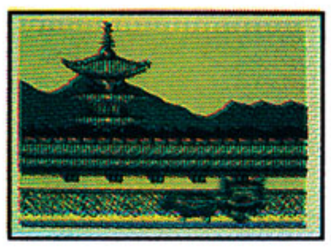
This is the classic video game that took Japan by storm ten years ago. This new **HEIANKYO ALIEN** program, made especially for Game Boy, has the added attraction of providing you with two different versions for twice as much excitement and double the fun!

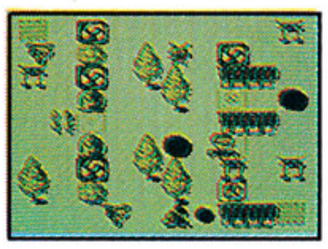
HEIANKYO ALIEN features the Multi Matrix Sound System (MMSS), the latest advancement in audio high technology.

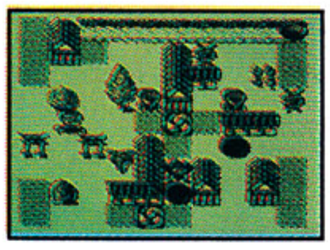
In addition, with the new two player opponent mode, available only on Game Boy software, two players can enjoy the thrills of this exciting game simultaneously!

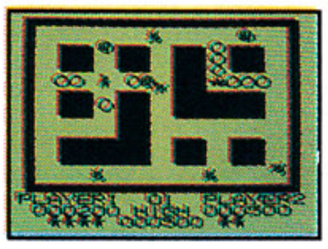
HEIANKYO ALIEN, the Japanese masterpiece, is a game everyone will enjoy.











meldac

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1801 Century Park East,
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(213) 286-7040

contact: **Robert Leitgeb**

CIRCLE #137 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

STORY OF A NINTENDO LICENSEE

BY HOWARD H. WEN

How a family-owned-and-operated vending-machine company became one of the hottest NES third-party developers in the nation's fruitcake capital.

Forty miles south of Dallas, Texas, along Interstate 45 lies the town of Corsicana. The long drive to this small community goes through miles of rolling ranges, the epitome of Texas' beautiful landscape. It's the kind of route the average American family might travel along on a summer road trip through the continental U.S. In other words, there is not much to see along the way other than three suburban-rare Dairy Queens and countless poor little critters on the road.

Corsicana, though, is special. Somewhat larger than the typical Texas small town, this place with a population of 25,761 is home of the Collin Street Bakery. A designated Texas landmark, this famous industry is known nationally as home of the best fruitcakes—and probably the butt of countless uneaten-holiday-fruitcake jokes too.

Today the fruitcake capital is also gaining popularity in another industry, electronic entertainment. Corsicana is headquarters for Tradewest, Inc., a company that millions of NESers are no doubt familiar with.

What sets Tradewest apart—and warrants investigation—is that it's one of the few successful *American* NES licensees. Sure, there are lots of Nintendo third parties based in the U.S., but many of these companies haven't hit it *big*—as big as Tradewest, which produced a cool $50 million last year. This amount easily matches that for licensees originating from Japan.

So how did Tradewest do it? Through patience and intrepid research we managed to find out, during an interview with President Byron Cook and marketing director Terry King. How could somebody start up their own NES-licensee company and swim in $50 million—the Tradewest way? Interested? Well, if you're serious, first:

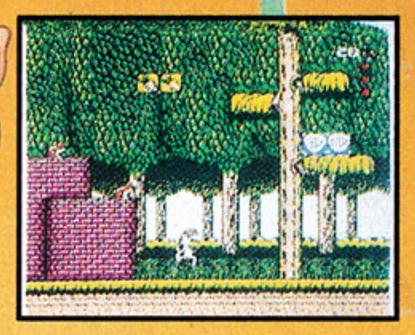
- Quit your job. That's what Mr. Cook's father, Leland Cook, did in 1975. He quit his job with the *Corsicana Daily Sun*. Hey, you think competing in an industry as cutthroat as electronic entertainment is part-time? Get real. Once you've turned in your resignation, the next logical step is to...
- Buy a vending-machine company. Sure this costs a lot of money, but you should have been saving your paychecks from the job you just quit. With his job out of the way, the senior Cook then purchased a

Maurice LeGrand (vice-president and chief financial officer), the man who helps to gauge Tradewest's success through numbers and spreadsheets.

Leland Cook (chief executive officer), Byron Cook (president and chief operations officer), Earvin "Magic" Johnson of the Los Angeles Lakers and John Rowe (president of the Leland Corp.) introduce Magic Johnson's Fast Break *at the L.A. Forum.*

GETTING TO THIS PARTY ISN'T EXACTLY A PIECE OF CAKE.

A major party has been planned for Bugs Bunny's 50th birthday. Trouble is, none of his jealous Looney Tunes™ friends were invited. Now all 25 of them are out to keep Bugs from getting to the fun. It's up to you to outmaneuver and outwun those wascals through 18 different skill levels. You'd better be good — because The Bugs Bunny™ Birthday Blowout® party is an invitation to trouble.



THE BUGS BUNNY™ BIRTHDAY BLOWOUT

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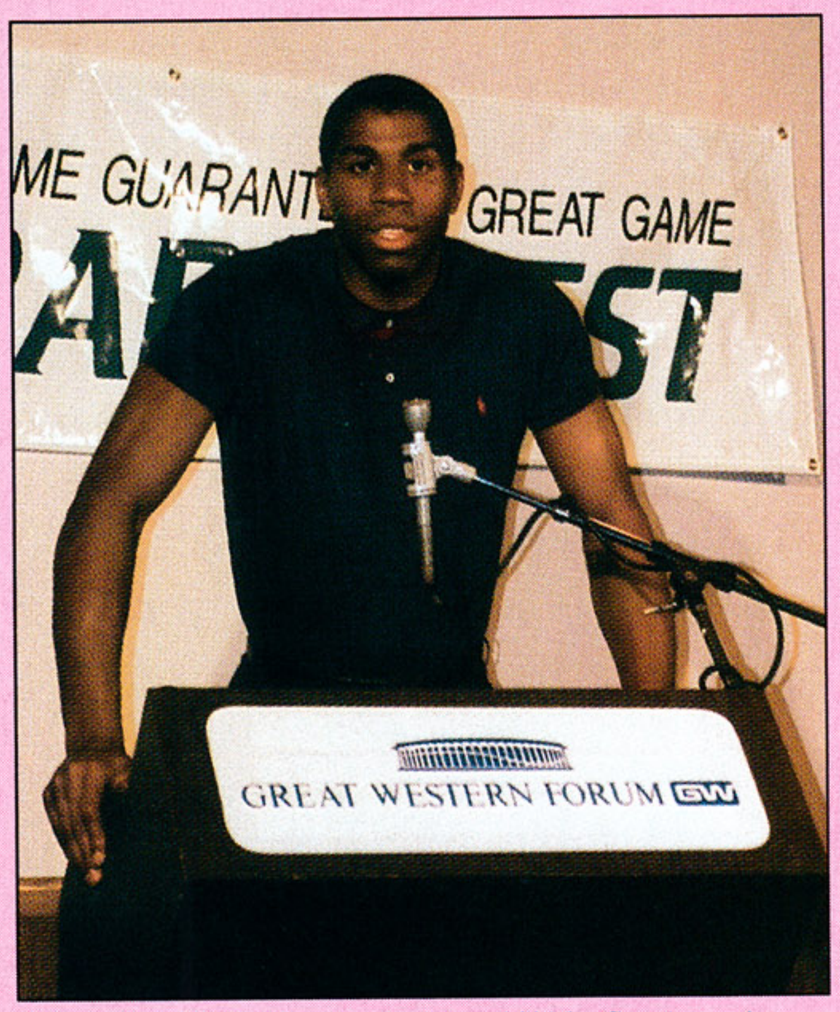


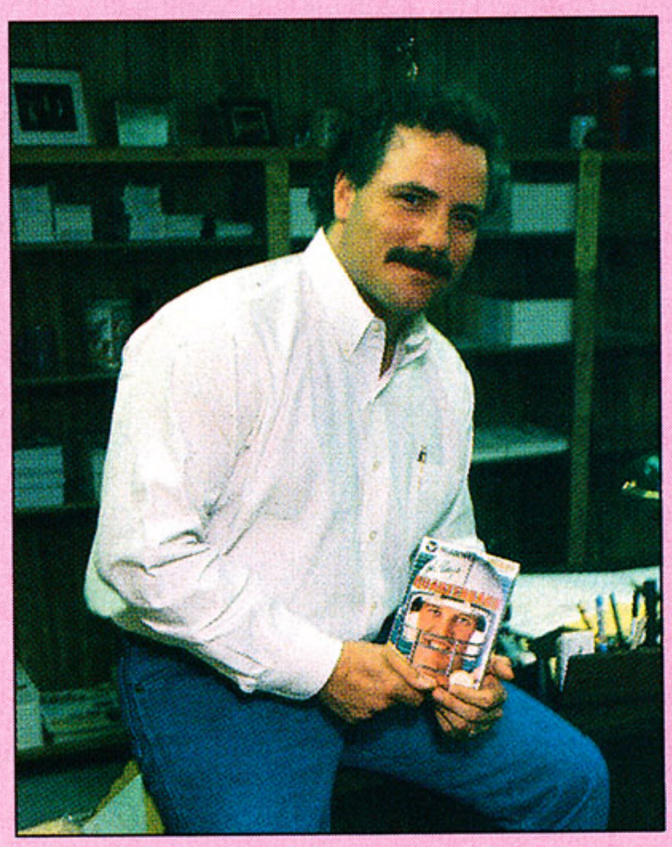
Above: Melani Bain (director of sales) and Shirley Carr (executive assistant) try to ignore the clamor of Tradewest's constantly ringing phones long enough to pose for this picture.
Below: Magic Johnson promoting the NES system at the L.A. Forum.

vending company that maintained soda and candy machines. Luckily, the business also came with a small arcade-game outfit. With the aid of an arcade coin-op division, you can then...

• License, license, license. Careful selection of what *kind* of game to purchase is essential here. You don't want to blow your bucks on a title that will be a stateside megaflop, even if it was popular in Japan. The Cooks' first choice was *Ikari Warriors*, which became an arcade hit in 1986. They scored another arcade coup with *Double Dragon*.

Now that you have rights to hit coin-op titles, you can convert them over to the NES for success on the home-gaming front as well. But you say you don't know how to program and have no programming experience at all? No problem, just...

• Hire somebody to design and program your games for you. There are lots of production companies that will



Above: Joey Territo (production manager) with Tradewest's popular NES football game, John Elway's Quarterback.

do this. Tradewest employs a British-based company to produce many of its NES titles. Thanks to freelancing businesses like these, cumbersome programming skills aren't necessary. Instead, you should concentrate on getting...

• A celebrity to endorse your game. A famous person's name and face will help sell any product. Tradewest got basketball star Magic Johnson to promote its *Fast Break*. Likewise, Sega signed Tommy Lasorda to plug their new baseball title for the Genesis. Though Lasorda doesn't *play* baseball himself anymore, it's the fact that he's famous that counts.

Speaking of signing on famous names, if you want to reduce costs, then think about...

• Implementing corporate sponsorship. Tradewest made video-gaming history by putting a Pepsi logo in *Fast Break*. This was done, Byron Cook said, because he felt it would be a "neat thing" to do. In return, Pepsi picked up some of the responsibilities for promoting the game. Now, *that* is neat.

The next step is to announce the premiere of your new game. To do this, you should...

• Hold a press party. This can be done at a CES show or a rented meeting hall in a hotel. Invite the press to write about your new game, and have them hobnob with your celebrity endorser. Months after the festivities are over, though, be sure your game manages to...

• Sell over 1 million copies. The more you sell, the more money you make. But it's not easy to get a million consumers to each buy a copy of your game. Tradewest did this with their NES *Double Dragon*, and if you can too, you'll be able to...

• License your game characters out, which Nintendo itself does heavily. Coming soon: an animated series, comic book and maybe even a movie based on Tradewest's *Double Dragon*. The nice thing about this is that licensing will help bring in even more dollars, but you should always...

• Expand your horizons. Success is short-lived in the video-gaming industry, where companies must constantly keep attuned to the latest technological advancements. For a Nintendo licensee, this fact usually means two simple words—Game Boy. Tradewest is going at the portable market hard with a version of *Double Dragon*, which should be out as you read this.

But because success is short-lived, a consistent flow of new games must be created for both the NES and Game Boy. This time next year, you can bet that Leland and the gang will be warming up new irons for their fire. And I somehow doubt it will involve fruitcake.

Leland and Byron Cook stand in front of their Ivan Stewart's Off Road *arcade game.*

SAVING THE WORLD NEVER USED TO BE THIS TOUGH.

All you had to do was find the bad guys and punch their lights out.

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CIRCLE #139 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

BEHIND THE NINTENDO SEAL OF QUALITY

If game designers and programmers can't receive a competitive income, the quality of video games will decline. So goes the argument that's been frequently thrown into heated debates concerning Nintendo's policy toward its third-party licensees. Though it's a valid theory, it's an unsound one as well. It has hardly anything to do with the real issue at hand: the question of whether or not consumers actually benefit from Nintendo's control over its market.

Would the quality of NES games *really* decline if Nintendo loosened its grip? Consider this strong analogy: What about the computer-entertainment industry? It's an area of electronic gaming with numerous independent third-party developers supporting various computer systems.

To clear up things, here are a few answers to the questions that are asked most concerning Nintendo:

1) ***Are NES licensees restricted in the number of titles they can produce yearly? Likewise, is there a quota imposed by Nintendo?***

It's likely that the answer to both questions is "no." Before the NES hit it big in America, there was probably a quota system. This might have been implemented to stimulate production of new titles, since there were not as many Nintendo licensees as there are now today (almost 60). The required number of titles per year was believed to be around six.

However, times seem to have changed. NES-licensee catalogs list only three or four new/upcoming titles. Other companies, such as Absolute Entertainment and Tradewest, apparently release games at their own pace. Tradewest President Byron Cook says taking the extra time to produce a unique product is more important now because of increased competition among Nintendo licensees.

Yet, are licensees in fact *restricted* from producing too many titles? This question probably hasn't been put to the test yet. After all, the more games a company releases in a year, the more they themselves risk a possible financial loss. However, independent third-party developer Tengen will place over ten brand-new titles in the market this year.

2) ***What percentage do licensees pay to Nintendo per cartridge?***

It has been said that licensees keep about 30% of the wholesale price of a cartridge while the rest goes to Nintendo. The average retail price of a new NES game pak today is about $45. The licensee sells the cartridge wholesale to the retailer for about $30. Of this amount, the licensee keeps about $9, while Nintendo receives the remaining $21.

It's no secret that there's controversy surrounding Nintendo's control over its third parties. But exactly how much control and say does Nintendo have? The answer remains a secret.

Many sources have listed this percentage or numbers close to it, but licensees have denied speculations—not necessarily the percentages themselves, but the immediate assumptions about them. Nintendo gets a cut, they state, in return for providing materials for the game paks and manufacturing them. But doesn't Nintendo make a profit from this? Besides, where does it earn the bulk of its money anyway? Services like this don't come free, do they?

3) ***Who determines the number of copies, distribution, availability and release date of a game—Nintendo or the licensee?***

Nintendo. Once the licensee completes the numerous details of a new title, it's the Big N's responsibility to see that it makes it to store shelves. Perhaps this too is determined as yet another service it "provides" to its licensees and figured into its overall percentage.

Another player involved in this, yet rarely figured in, is the retailer. Smaller stores with limited shelf space might sell only a few titles, usually the predicted best sellers. As Cook stated, this is where competition, between Nintendo licensees especially, comes into play.

4) ***Are retailers pressured not to sell products by independents like Tengen and Color Dreams?***

This is a question that almost all those involved choose not to answer—or, for some reason, can't. Here are a few observations: Nationwide, Toys 'R' Us and Children's Palace do not carry either Tengen or Color Dreams products, nor does G & G, a chain of mall shops specializing in Nintendo products. Suncoast Motion Picture Company stores carry Tengen products, but the independent third-party's products are obviously segregated from the other NES titles. Only a few places, such as the Southwest's Babbage's Software chain, integrate Tengen games with NES products. Color Dreams titles are even harder to find; they're usually found only for rent in video stores.

5) ***How does a game earn the "Nintendo Seal of Quality"? Is there an actual approval process?***

Most believe that Nintendo's Seal of Quality refers to the actual quality of a game. Not so. There *is* an approval process a new game must go through before it's given the seal. But it's merely a test to determine whether there are any bugs in the game's programming. Of course, Nintendo probably wouldn't approve of a game with a controversial or explicitly adult theme. The Seal of Quality only indicates that Nintendo's testers found no programming bugs or defects in the game. It is *not* a badge that indicates superior play value.

6) ***Are Nintendo licensees restricted from developing games for other competing video-game systems?***

This is a very likely "yes." However, licensees *can* produce titles for home-computer systems. Konami, Ultra Games and Data East, for instance, are in the computer-entertainment business. But when it comes to all aspects of home video-gaming, NES licensees are committed only to Nintendo—probably contractually.

7) ***What advantages are there to being under Nintendo's wing?***

"What are there not?" asks Cook. He might have a point. Besides not getting sued, being an official NES licensee reduces the costs of cartridge production and makes access to retailers' store shelves easier. This is great if you're a small company. If you're big one, you might feel stifled by Nintendo's control. Nintendo's licensee policies seem to benefit smaller companies the most while frustrating larger ones.

CONCLUSIONS

Let's be fair; Nintendo has, at least, allowed the existence of third parties to develop products for its game systems. Until only recently, Sega opted not to allow any such licensees. Thus, the NES library is undeniably much larger in number and more varied than Sega's selection for both of its systems.

But will Nintendo's third-party licensee policy still be beneficial to consumers in the near future? Considering the potentially volatile video-gaming marketplace of today, this is the one question that's still left to be answered.

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But hey, they don't call you Dash for nothing. You can jump and run faster than anyone in the universe. And that should help as you blast your way to the Control Complex in search of the alien spaceship — your only hope for escape. But can you find it — before you run out of air? Time to make some tracks and blow this looney bin — because the chase is on and it's out of this world!

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STRATEGY GUIDE

Ninja Gaiden II

PART ONE

by Donn Nauert

In the first episode you learned how Ryu Hayabusa came to America to avenge his father's death, of the powers held by the mysterious light and dark statues of an evil demon and of the being Jaquio, who sought to control these statues and the universe.

Ryu is back in what is sure to be one of the hottest games of 1990 for the Nintendo Entertainment System, *Ninja Gaiden II*. This time you'll learn the true, untold story of Ashtar, the evil lord and true mastermind behind the devious plan to rule all of mankind. Another addition to the Tecmo Theater Series, *Ninja Gaiden II* uses the "Cinema Display" technique, which combines the storyline with great movielike animation to increase the overall appeal of the game. The first three stages have been carefully displayed here to give you a better idea of what lies ahead. So get ready to guide Ryu to victory, as the never-ending battle between good and evil continues. (In the next issue, we'll complete our look at *Ninja Gaiden II* with maps and tips for the final levels.)

General Hints

- Learn to use the extra images you get from the splitting body item. They're great to use against the flying enemies and foes that sneak up behind you and especially useful when taking on an end boss.
- There are a lot of areas where you'll have to know how to use the swift kick-off jump; for instance, if you have misjudged the distance between two ledges or in any circumstance where you find yourself dangling from the side of a wall. To perform this jump, you must first climb to the top of the wall and jump away from it. Then, quickly move the control pad in the opposite direction—toward the wall—to safety. This is one of the more difficult techniques to learn, so you might want to spend a little practice time in Stage 1-1 to master the move.
- To make the windmill throwing star more effective, after tossing the weapon, avoid catching it because it comes back around. This will cause it to fly around the screen eliminating any enemies it comes in contact with.
- Try not to move backward. The enemies appear when Ryu passes certain points in the game. If you move backward, the same enemies will reappear, which makes getting through a stage more difficult.

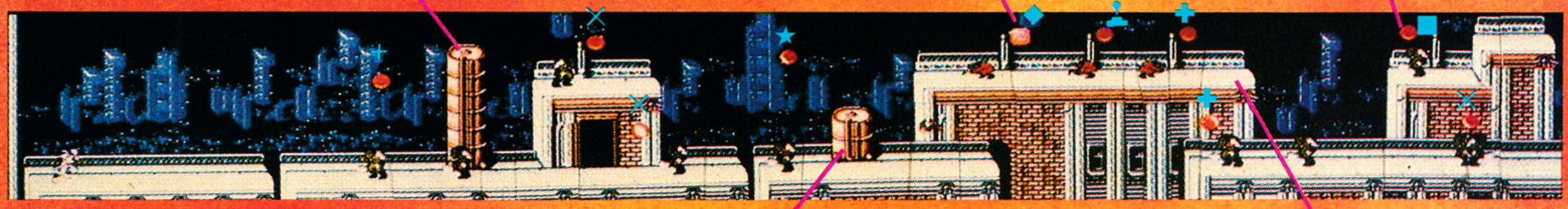
FOR THE
N
NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Use this tower to get the fire dragon balls to the left and to jump onto the building at the right.

Get the red ninja power hidden in this crystal ball to increase your ninja power to its maximum.

Be sure to get the splitting body whenever possible, because you can always use the extra help.

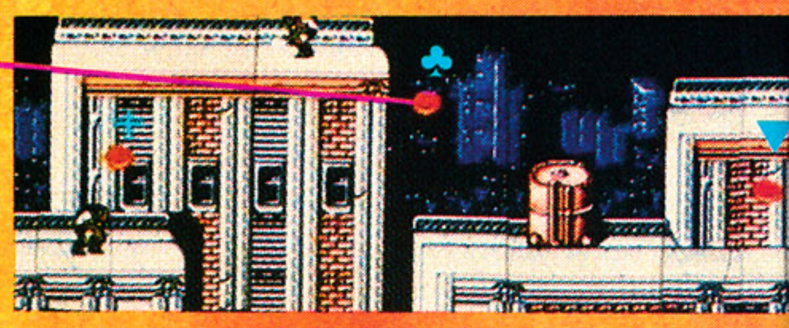
STAGE 1-1



Watch out for the bat that appears when you reach this point.

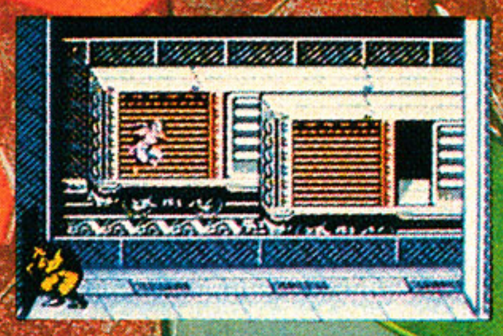
Take your time, and try to land on the building below after the second guard has passed.

Another handy power to have, the invincible fire wheel, will protect for a short period of time.



STAGE 1: DANDO

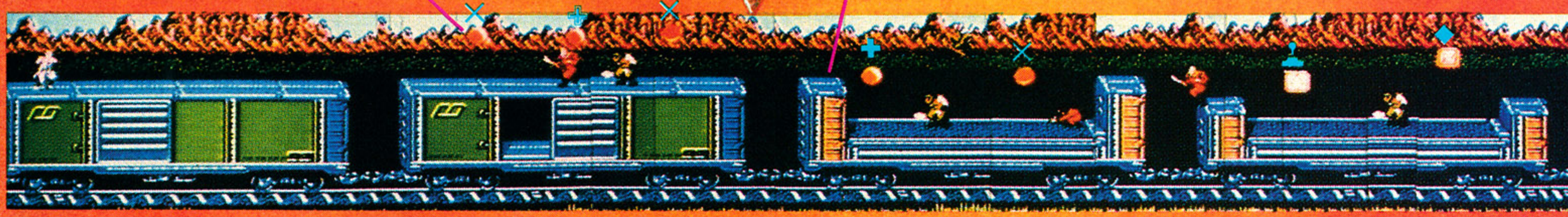
Dando will slowly move toward you, but as soon as he gets halfway across the screen, he'll rush at you. When you first appear on the screen, move close to him and strike with your sword. As Dando nears the halfway point, run back to the left, and climb the wall to the highest point possible. When Dando gets to the wall, he will ram it with his body, causing the whole area to shake. If you're still on the wall when this happens, you'll fall on top of him, which will result in three units of damage to you. To avoid this damage, jump behind Dando when he's against the wall, and continue to strike him with your sword. You'll have to repeat the process a couple of times to defeat him without using your ninja power.

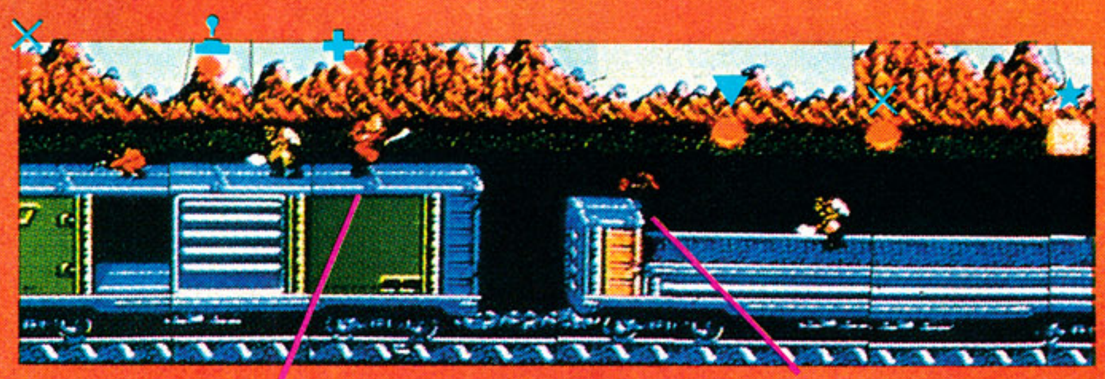


Do you remember the eagles from the original *Ninja Gaiden*? Well, guess who's back? Your first glimpse of the bird comes when you jump onto this car.

And, yes, your ninja power does reset back to ten points, so you're going to have to build it back up.

STAGE 2-1





Whoa, where did he come from?

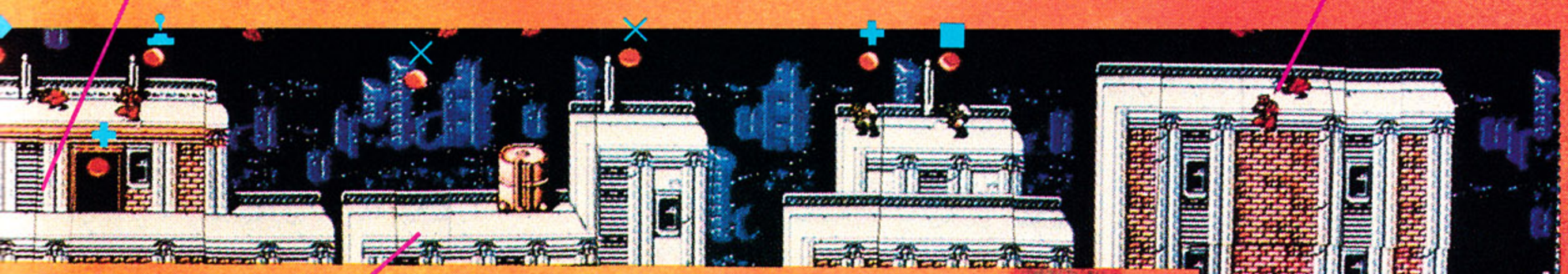
Be aware of enemies that like to sneak up behind you.

LEGEND

- ✕ Blue Ninja Power
- ■ Splitting Body
- ✚ Red Bonus
- ★ Windmill Throwing Star
- ◆ Red Ninja Power
- ● Medicine
- ▼ Blue Bonus
- Art of the Fire Wheel
- ♣ Invincible Fire Wheel
- ○ Scroll
- ☆ Extra Man
- ❑ Throwing Star
- Fire Dragon Balls

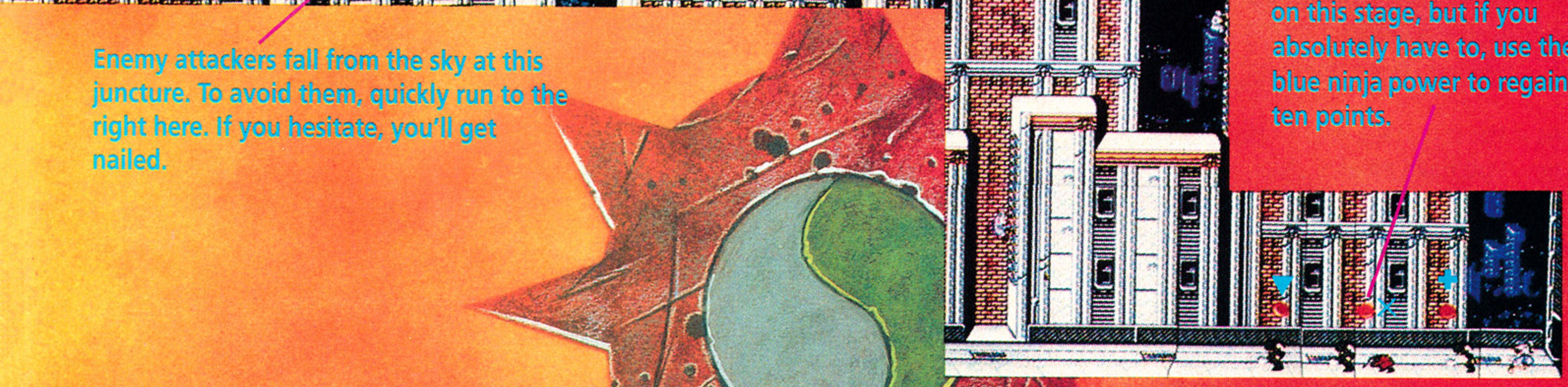
Watch out for the two ninjas that appear as soon as you reach this point. After throwing ninja stars, they'll quickly disappear—but not for long!

There's that ninja again.



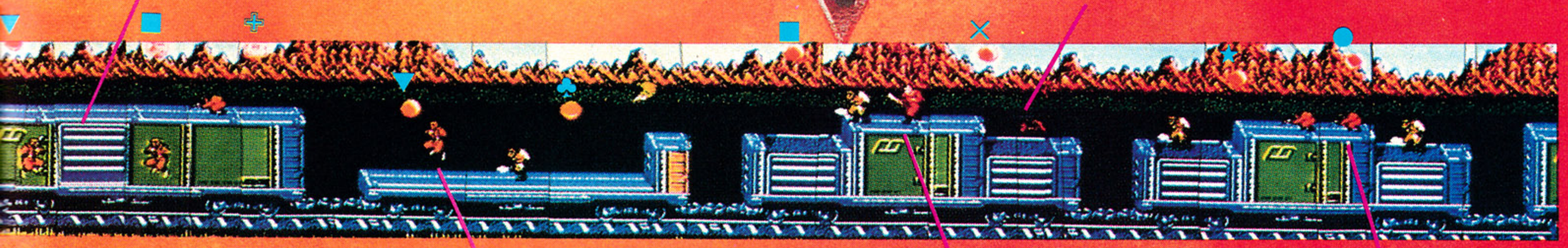
Enemy attackers fall from the sky at this juncture. To avoid them, quickly run to the right here. If you hesitate, you'll get nailed.

You shouldn't have had to use any of your ninja powers on this stage, but if you absolutely have to, use the blue ninja power to regain ten points.



Wait a second! Someone seems to be following you. This time the red ninjas will come out one at a time.

Be on the lookout for bats. Sometimes they blend in with the background.

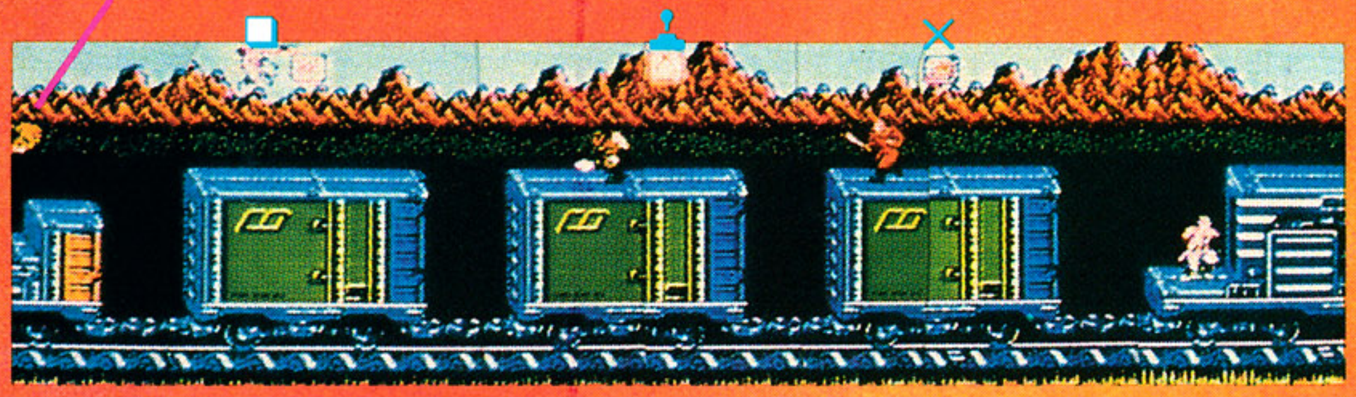


Yep, here's another one.

Remember, a lot of the enemies like to rush at you as soon as you land on the cars.

Ah, precious life. If you're starting to feel kind of low, get this item to perk you up.

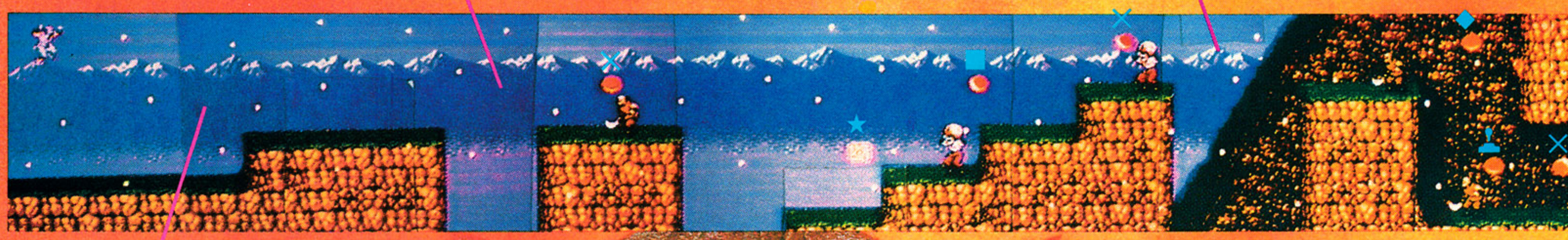
Did you ever get the feeling someone was out to get you?



Take your time when making jumps to be sure the wind doesn't change while you're in midair. It's best to wait for the wind to blow straight down or to the right.

To make this jump, you'll have to wait for the wind to blow to the right.

STAGE 2-2

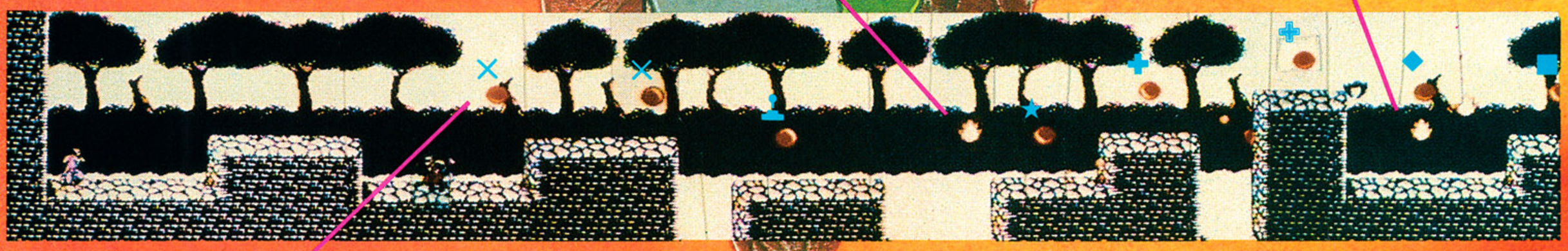


As if the last stage wasn't bad enough, now you have an ever-changing wind to deal with.

What's this? A floating fireball. Use your sword.

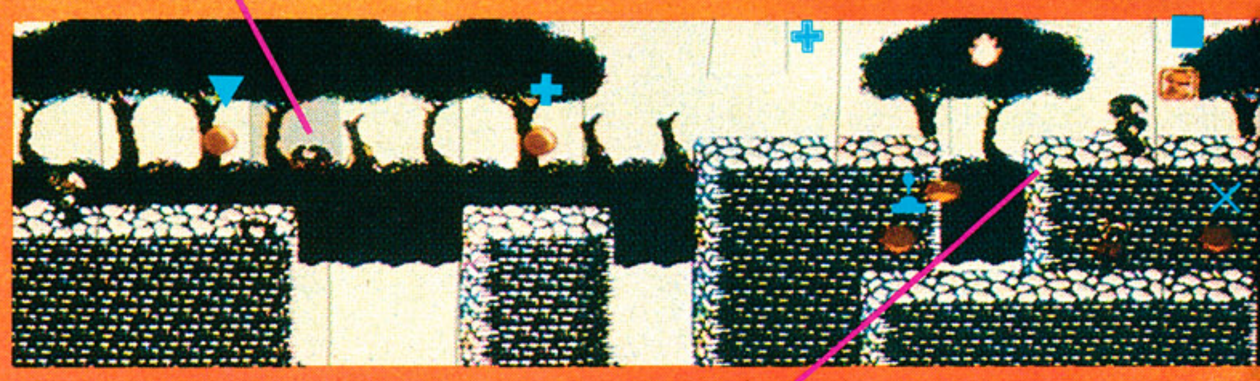
Was it something I said? Gulp.

STAGE 3



Don't forget the ninja power, because you're going to have to build it back again.

Bats, bats and more bats.

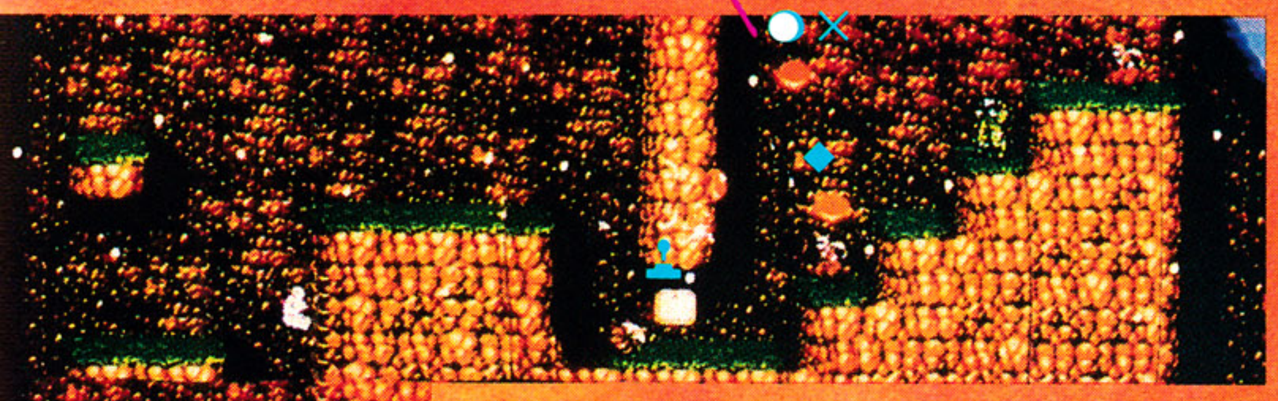


I guess it *was* something I said.

STAGE 2: BARON SPIDER

From high on his perch, Baron Spider will throw his pet monster spiders down on you. Position yourself on the wall as shown in the photo. After his pet spiders have landed on either side, climb higher on the wall if you are using the fire dragon balls or ninja power; stay where you are if you are using the art of the fire wheel. As part of Baron Spider's pattern, he will jump from his ledge to the ground and back again, so once you have used all your ninja power, use your sword.

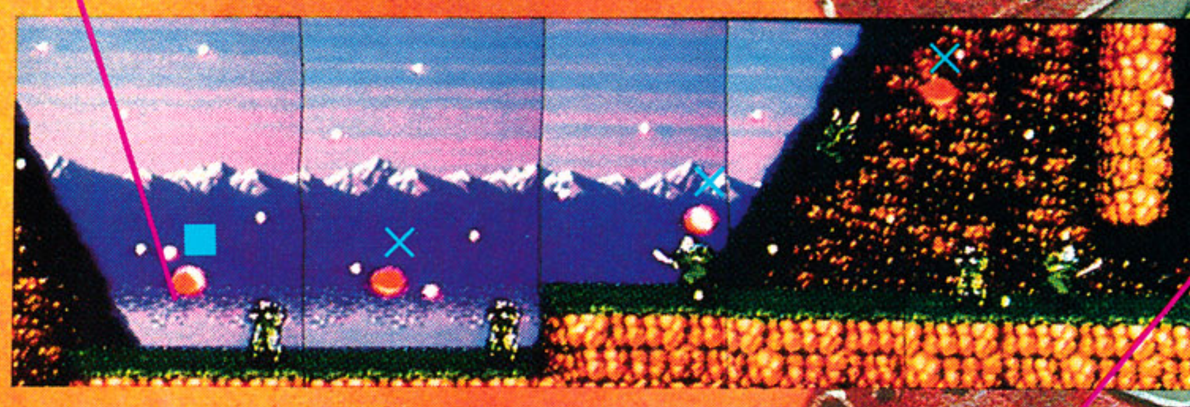
Get the scroll to increase the amount of ninja power you can have. A blue ninja power will appear in the crystal if you lose a man and have to repeat this section. The scroll will reappear only if you continue your game.



The last feeble attempt at trying to keep you from reaching Baron Spider.

Get the medicine first by using your ninja power, then go back up and get the blue ninja power.

As soon as you land, you'll be greeted by a hail of bullets.

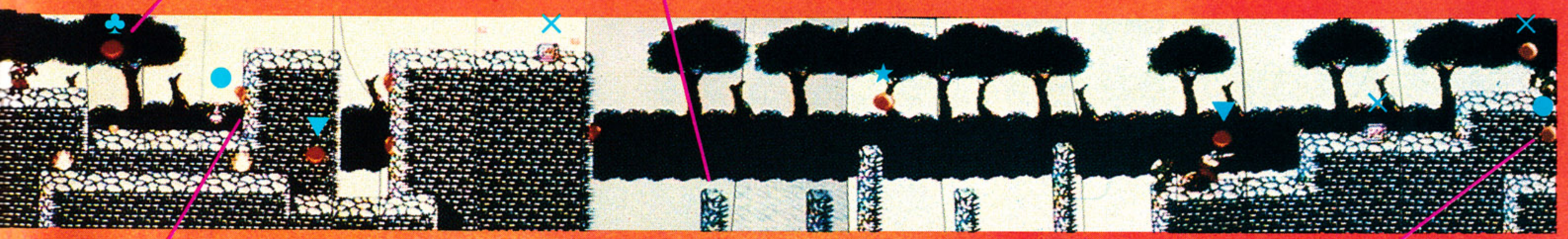


Anybody for an extra man?

It'll take a wind-aided jump to make it over this gorge.

Don't be afraid to use the invincible fire wheel in this area.

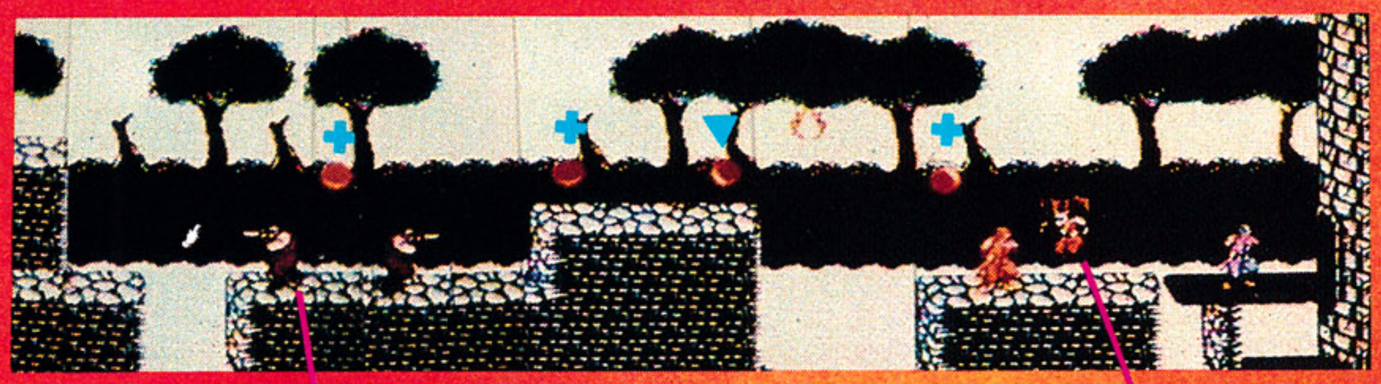
Be careful now. One false move and you'll be fish bait.



After getting the medicine, take the lower path. It's easier and quicker.

What's this? More medicine?

STAGE 3-1



Watch out for this guy. He likes to make his move just about the same time you try to jump across.

Be ready to use your sword when you land. Now it's time for Funky Dynamite's castle.

STAGE 3-2

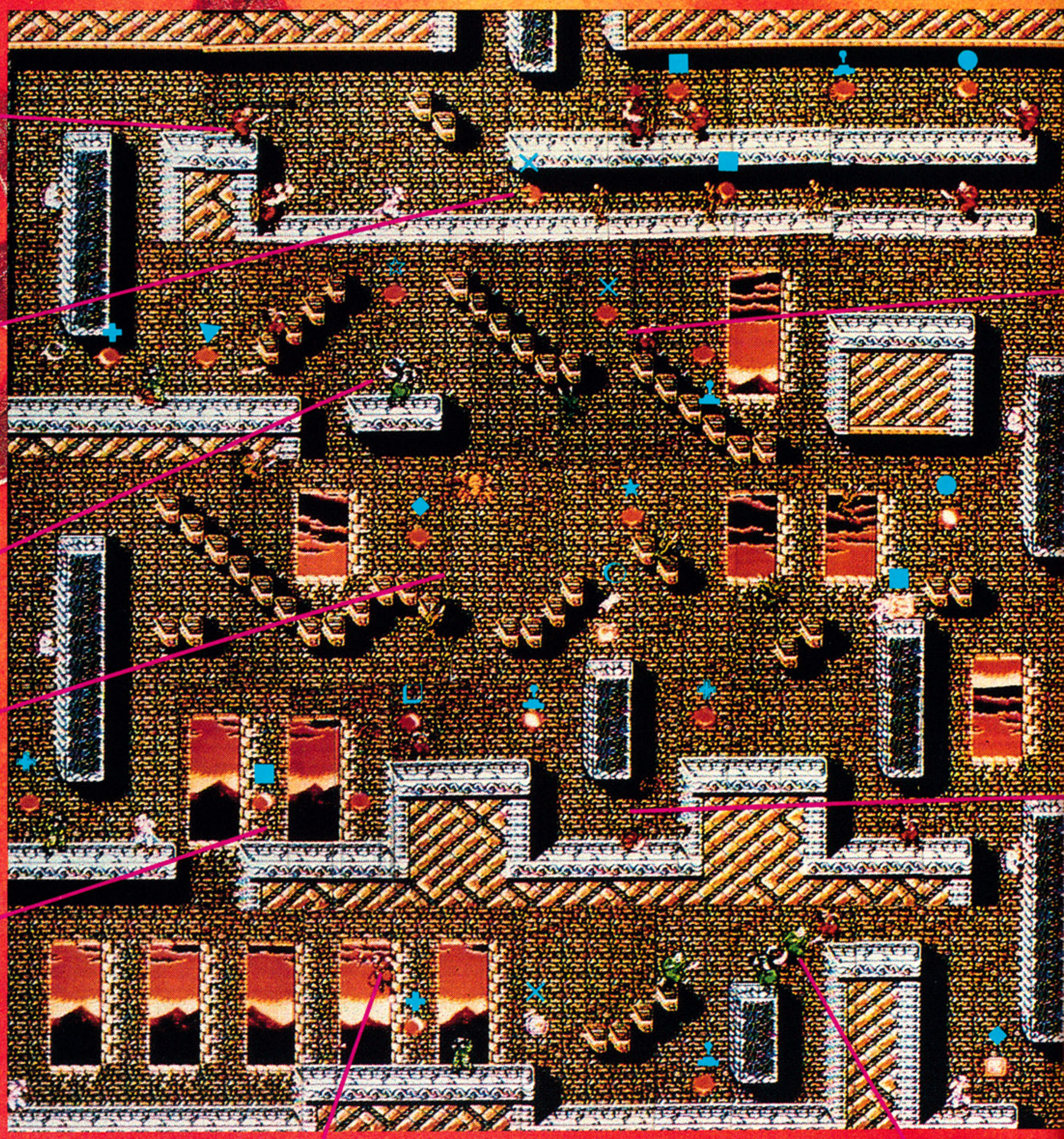
When you get to this point, move to the right far enough that the boomerang-throwing dude is on the screen. Then slowly move back to the left, and you'll be able to draw him closer to the wall, allowing you to safely jump over him.

In this entire section, if you get an item, you can go back down the stairs then up again, and the items will return. This is especially useful if you're running low on ninja power or health.

Here's another extra man, but you're going to have to get rid of this mean-looking foe if you want to get to it.

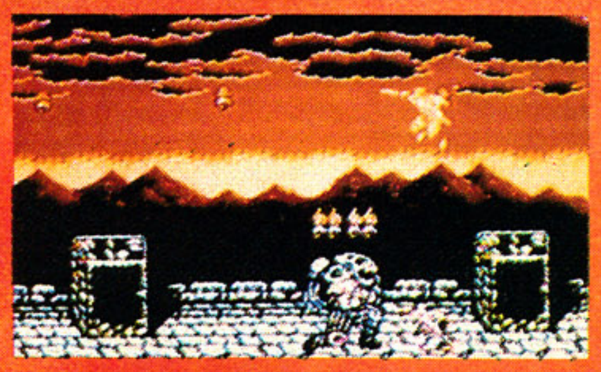
To get rid of this big spider, simply get to the last step, and he'll magically disappear.

Keep the throwing star, and from the right side of the screen use it on the gun-toting villain. When you land, there'll be another one waiting for you.



Whoever this guy is, he sure does hop around a lot. If you're ready for him, you can time a jump and attack him with your sword. If not, use your ninja power.

Go ahead and use the art of the fire wheel to take care of all the bad guys. You'll get a red ninja power on the other side of the wall.



STAGE 3: FUNKY DYNAMITE

Whenever you face an end boss, you should have as many splitting bodies as possible; especially when you go up against Funky Dynamite. If using all your ninja power—art of the fire wheel works best—hasn't taken care of him, move to the block on the right and jump. Not only should you strike with your sword, but you should try to land in the area shown in the photo. With at least one extra image in the air, you'll have no trouble getting past this dynamite-chucking lizard.

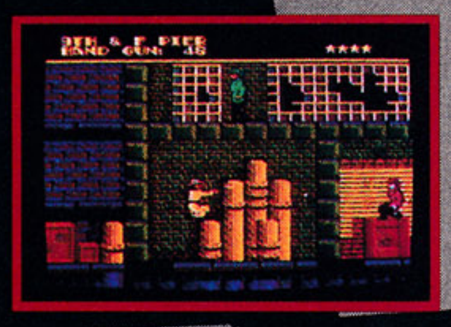
Try to land on the first step, and you'll be ready for all enemies that might come your way.

Use the fire dragon balls to take out the guy down on the floor, then position yourself directly below the pillar to wipe out the newcomers. After jumping up to left, be ready to turn back to the right for two more coming your way.

BANDAI

DICK TRACY

"Calling all Nintendo players...!!"



The exciting new Dick Tracy video game is racing toward a Nintendo Dealer near you. Soon you'll be able to help America's greatest detective rid the crime-ridden city of Big Boy Caprice and his band of villainous thugs, including Pruneface, Itchy, and Flattop. Get on the case now, and ask your dealer for further details.

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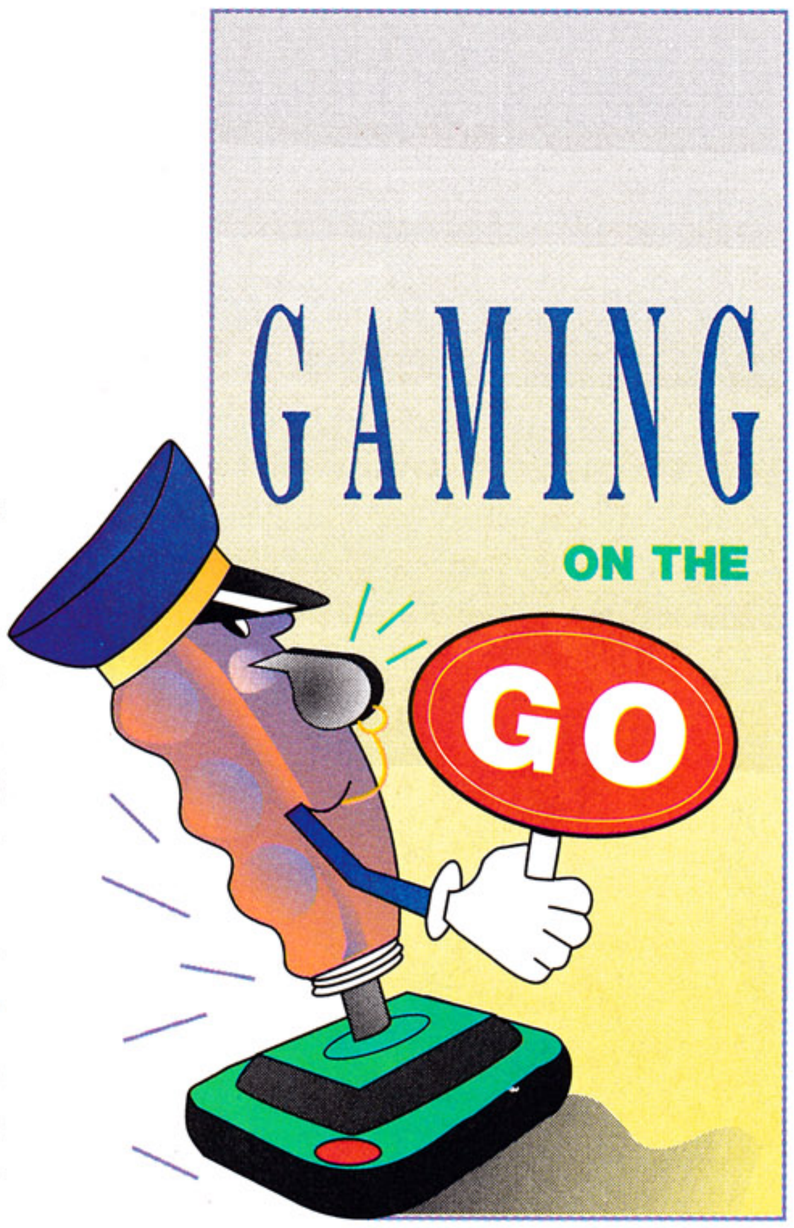


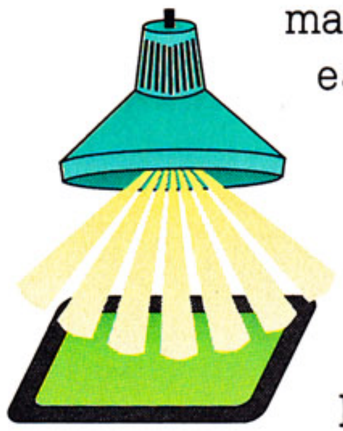
GAME BOY GOODIES AND THREE FOR THE LYNX

by
MAURICE MOLYNEAUX

News Flash!

Game Boy users, myself included, have always had one major complaint with the machine: the screen. It's *very* difficult to get the Game Boy adjusted and oriented so that all of the screen is clearly and brightly lit. Reflections, glare and general lighting unevenness make playing a Game Boy for a prolonged period a pain in the pupils.

Well, no more. Two Nintendo licensees, Greer & Associates and Vic Tokai, are (as I write this) getting ready to unveil accessories that promise to make Game Boy playing easier on the eyes: lighting units. That's right, both companies are getting ready to introduce small units to fit onto your Game Boy and provide a strong, steady light to make the screen easy to look at.



The Greer & Associates model is called "The Illuminator" and works pretty much like a book light in that it features an adjustable "neck" at the end of which is attached a small lamp. The neck is long enough to get the lamp itself out of your way and at the same time place the light far enough from the screen to get uniform lighting. The Illuminator runs on two AA batteries and will have a list price of about $19.95.

Vic Tokai is bringing out a lighting system for the Game Boy, called the Light Boy, that will also magnify the screen image, making it less of a strain on the player's eyes.

Vic Tokai's unit, called the "Light Boy," is a bit different. In addition to providing a light, it's also equipped with a magnifying lens to make the tiny Game Boy screen look bigger. Reportedly, there are lighting units on either side of the magnifier to ensure that the entire Game Boy screen is evenly illuminated and that no shadows are cast.

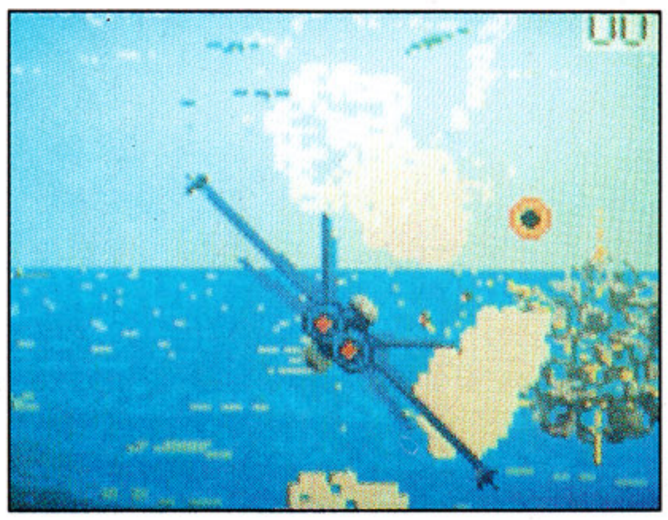
Also, light refraction and reflections are eliminated. The Light Boy is a slip-on attachment that folds up for portability when not in use. It runs on two AA batteries and will have a list price of about $24.95.

The First Lynx Games

When I first got my Atari Lynx, I was very impressed with the hardware, but a bit underwhelmed with the game that came with it. *California Games* might be a lot of fun for some people, but it got boring real fast for me. With the exception of the frustrating half-pipe skateboarding, the events were simple to master. Once past the initial flash, there wasn't much to see. Fortunately, within a month a few more games had found their way into my hands.

Blue Lightning by Epyx for Atari: An *After Burner* machine you can hold in your hand. That's the first impression I had when playing *Blue Lightning*. This is a jet-fighter combat game that pulls out all the stops. The game features nine missions (any of which can be accessed directly once you learn the proper code words) of varying makeup and difficulty. Some are as simple as strafing a few ground targets and blasting tons of jets. Others are so complex that they might require you to "sneak" deep into enemy territory and zip around and over closely packed hills as you try to eliminate enemy radar installations...in the darkness of *night*.

Blue Lightning puts all of the Lynx controls to use. The joypad turns/banks the plane left and right and performs climbs and dives. The "A" button fires your inexhaustible cannon, and the "B" button launches missiles (you only get 40 per mission, so don't fire willy-nilly). The **Option 1** button kicks on the plane's afterburners for 10 seconds, allowing you to catch up with fleeing enemy aircraft or speed up



Even in its diminutive form, Atari's *Blue Lightning* for the Lynx is one of the hottest aerial-combat video games.

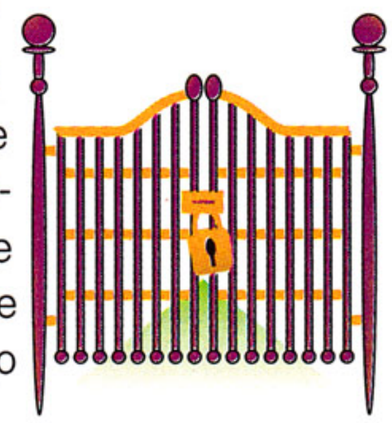
your time to a target. The **Option 2** button, if pressed while banking the plane, will cause your jet to roll. This is used to break enemy missile lock-ons.

This game is just loaded with details and clearly shows the Lynx's strengths in relation to other video-game systems. The game is one of the fastest and best pseudo-3-D types I've seen, taking full advantage of the Lynx's unique auto-scaling ability. Objects start off as mere flecks on the horizon, then quickly and smoothly resolve themselves into detailed enemies. *Everything moves.* Mountains, hills, roads, rivers and railroad tracks slide under your speeding jet. Missiles and jets scream through the sky. Heck, if there's cloud cover you can even climb up into and fly *through* them.

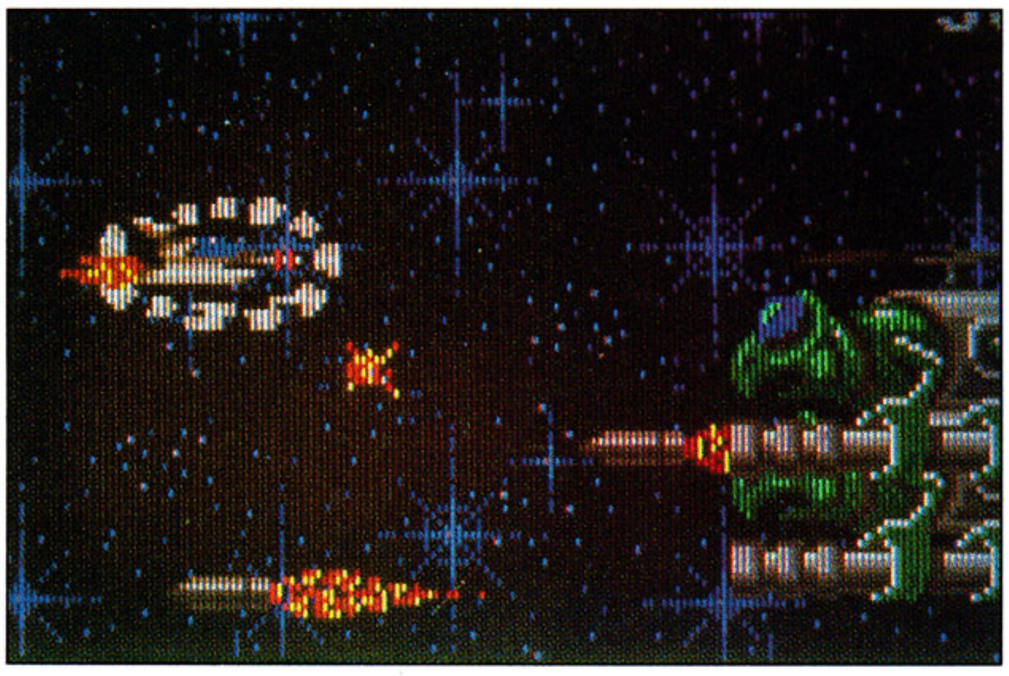
The ending is a little anticlimactic, and it's almost too easy to get to since you can restart from any level you want (provided you have the proper code word), but *Blue Lightning* is a sound investment.

The Gates of Zendocon by Epyx for Atari: This is one of those horizontally scrolling blast-'em-up contests where, justifications given in the manual aside, your chief concern is simply to survive...*and* cause as much carnage as humanly possible. Your long-term goal is to reach and survive the "Jaws of Death" and then confront the alien monster Zendocon. You pilot a small spacecraft, equipped with defensive shields, offensive lasers and bombs. You also have a "hidden" weapon, namely the exhaust from your ship's engines (try touching an enemy or obstacle with those). Taking one serious hit knocks your shield unit out. The next will eliminate your lasers. The third will take *you* out.

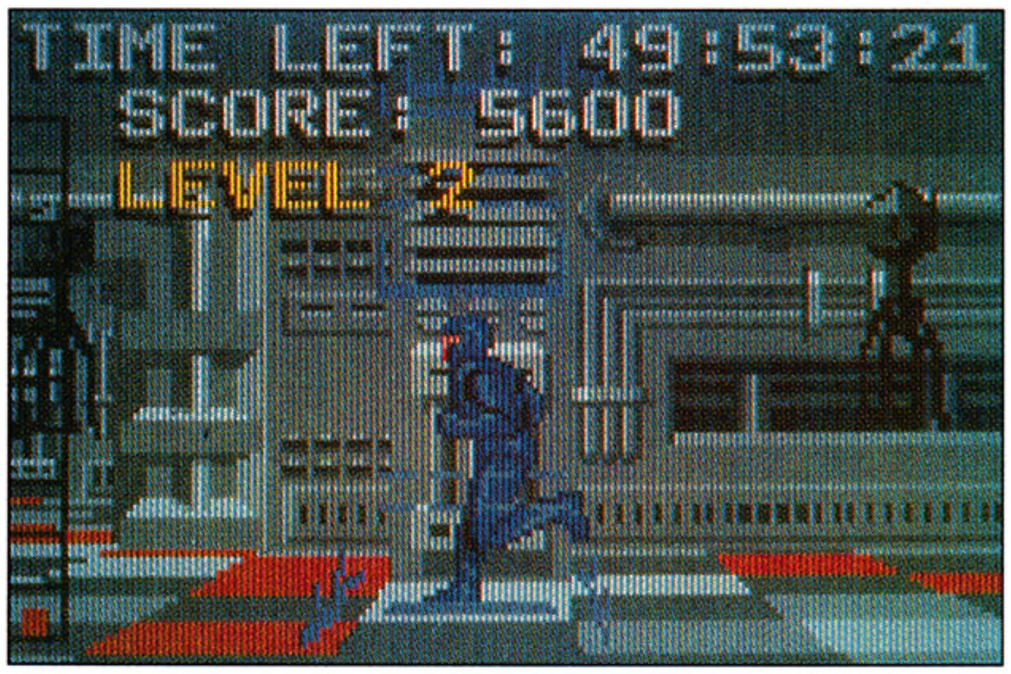
The game features over 50 levels, each entered through a "gate." These gates appear on each level, and some levels have more than one gate. It is therefore possible to bypass some levels entirely and reach the endgame without having to go through each and every level.



The levels are distinct, and there are a lot of weird, wonderful and downright *nasty* opponents to deal with. There are the usual flying saucers and missiles (are they ever *huge*!), in addition to bouncing eyeballs, alien mosquitoes with spinning abdomens, monstrous amoebas, pseudo-chinese dragons, giant atoms, tanks, crystals that form in the air and fall on your hapless ship, and so on.



The 50-plus levels of Atari's *Gates of Zendocon* will keep you busy, but you'll be amazed by the high quality sound effects.



***ElectroCop* is a challenging, 3-D-perspective race-against-the-clock complete with 12 levels of tension-filled maze battles.**

Fortunately, you're not entirely alone on this mission. On some levels you can discover alien "helpers," good guys who accompany your ship, adding their firepower necessary to yours. There are four such helpers, and if you can collect all four at once, enemies *watch out*! You'll have the kind of firepower to decimate an alien battalion.

Upon entering a gate, you're taken to a "transition" screen that features two landing pads. On one is a "new" ship. If your current ship is damaged, you just plunk it down on one pad, and your pilot will get out and ride the elevator to the other one. (I guess the ship you leave behind is repaired in your absence.)

Unfortunately, some pads are booby-trapped with periodic electric arcs that cross them. You have to time your landings just *perfectly* in such cases, or else it's *kaboom*! *The Gates of Zendocon* also features an "Easter egg" level (it's nameless, so you can't punch it in at the beginning). This level is fun *and* profitable, because not only is it easy (and downright silly), but you can collect all four alien helpers in one fell swoop! I won't tell you exactly how to get there, but here's a clue: On one of the levels there's a hidden "hole" in the floor through which you can pass. This hole is near the start of the level and can be located by dropping bombs until you see them going *through* the floor. A little careful joypad wiggling will get you through. Dodge a few obstacles and find the gate.

Finally, there's the special effects. *Gates* features one of the best sound effects I've ever heard in a video game. In the opening sequence Zendocon laughs. It sounds good enough through the Lynx speaker, but piped thorough a stereo—wow! Then there's the finale. If you can blast Zendocon to oblivion, you'll get zapped back to your home world, where you'll be greeted by fireworks and a pretty sunrise.

ElectroCop by Epyx for Atari: Now *this* is one mean video game! In it, you take the title role in a do-or-die mission

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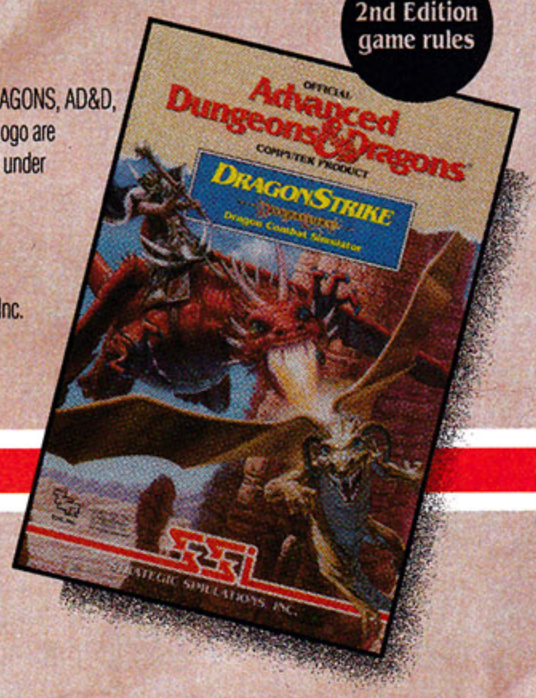

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to penetrate an "abandoned" facility and rescue the President's daughter, who has been kidnapped by a robot. As you might expect, it won't be easy. The complex is full of nasty defense robots and booby traps. Walkers stomp back and forth, viruses "infect" floors (electrifying them or making them slippery), cannons blast from walls and stingrays waylay you with ultra-powerful antimatter cannons. If you're not careful, you'll be reduced to a pile of blue powder before you can say "ouch!"

Did I mention you have only 60 minutes to accomplish this impossible feat? *ElectroCop* takes more than full advantage of the Lynx's rescaling abilities. This game is viewed in highly realistic 3-D. When you send ElectroCop "into" the screen, *everything* comes toward you. You literally run *into* and *out of* screens when traveling north and south. The effect is stunningly smooth and realistic. Also, when an object or wall is "between" ElectroCop and the screen, it is rendered as a see-through "ghost," allowing you to see things that would normally block your view.

You start the game armed only with a single peashooter laser that isn't of much use. A little scouting around will uncover different and more powerful weapons. Loading up on these will extend your life span greatly. Also of help are the computers scattered throughout the 12-level complex; with them you can repair damage to yourself and your weapons, crack the codes for sealed doors (write them down because they don't change), get information about enemies and your weapons or play games while you're waiting for the Ice Breaker program to crack the code to a stubborn door. There's even a Stasis program that will disable all of the enemies and defenses on a level for 30 seconds, so run for it!

ElectroCop is a hard game—and *very* frustrating. You struggle to find an exit to the next level and upon locating one, find yourself flung forward or backward to a level you didn't expect (or want). Actually, the easiest path to the endgame is sort of a forward-backward affair, jumping from early to later levels and then backing up toward your goal. So it's very important to carefully map each level, noting where weapons can be found, the locations and codes for computers and which exits lead to what levels. It's also a good idea to move slowly into unexplored territory. Running out into a doorway might bring you face to face with a stingray or a mine, resulting in your quick demise. Peek around corners, and if you don't see a stingray, move in front of the door and wait, allowing enemies in the room to show themselves instead of running in to meet them.

This game is tough, but worth it. I found that you can get to the end by passing through only nine of the 12 levels. With a decent set of maps the game can be completed in about 20 minutes! But the time it takes to *make* those maps will make *ElectroCop* well worth the money you spent for it.

The opening and ending scenes of this game deserve special mention. The opening features zooming titles and flying vehicles over a *Blade Runner*-esque city set to a neat musical score. There's a long scrolling "prologue" that explains your mission too. At the end of the game, there's a "spinning newspaper" that flies in, and the headline explains what happened; whether you died, rescued the President's daughter or whatnot. Also, even if you get to the girl, there are *three* different things that can happen, depending on if you shoot or not and if you *do* shoot, *what* you shoot at!

Due to the space taken by the Game Boy news, I had to drop *Chip's Challenge* from my list this time out. It'll appear next month with a look at *Gauntlet, the Third Encounter* for the Lynx and more new Game Boy games.

Gotta go! So many games and so little time!

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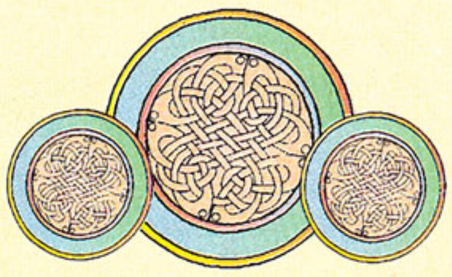
CIRCLE #143 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

A PLAYERS GUIDE TO

NEUTOPIA

PART II

by Clayton Walnum



***WARNING:** If you already own* **Neutopia,** *we suggest you play it before reading the information presented here. Studying our maps prematurely may decrease your enjoyment of the game. However, if you have yet to purchase* **Neutopia,** *it should be safe to browse through this article in order to decide if the game is something you'd enjoy. It's unlikely you'll remember many of the clues once you do start to play.*

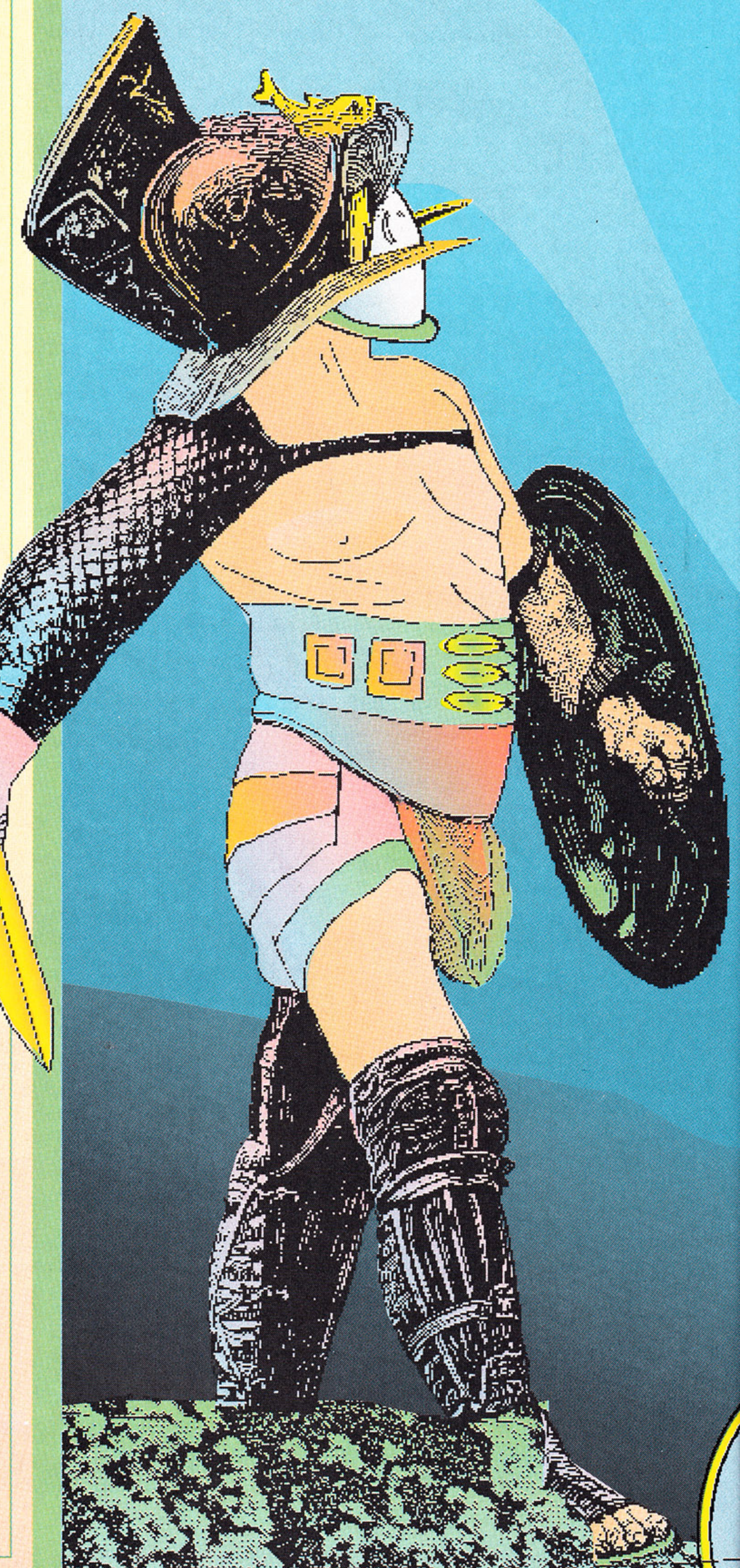
Last month we took a detailed look at the first half of this exciting *Zelda*like game for the TurboGrafx-16. Have you made it through the fourth labyrinth yet? If not, keep swinging that sword. In the meantime, here are complete maps to the second half of the game, as well as some helpful tips.

The maps that follow will help you navigate the complicated spheres and labyrinths that make up *Neutopia*. They'll also help you locate many of the important special items. The photo essay that accompanies the maps offers a colorful tour of *Neutopia* and supplies a few hints along the way.

If you haven't read the first part of this article, which was published last month, we urge you to do so. Much valuable information and general game play techniques were given there, most of which will not be repeated here.

For those who would like to see *Neutopia*'s ending, here's a password that'll take you to your final battle with Dirth: PeNaka6SqSFU US#dtY$oKFpG.

MEDALLIO



NS AND MAGIC

FOR THE

GENESIS

You start your quest of the Sphere in the Sea next to this shrine.

When possible, burn the pedestals in order to find the many hidden items in this sphere.

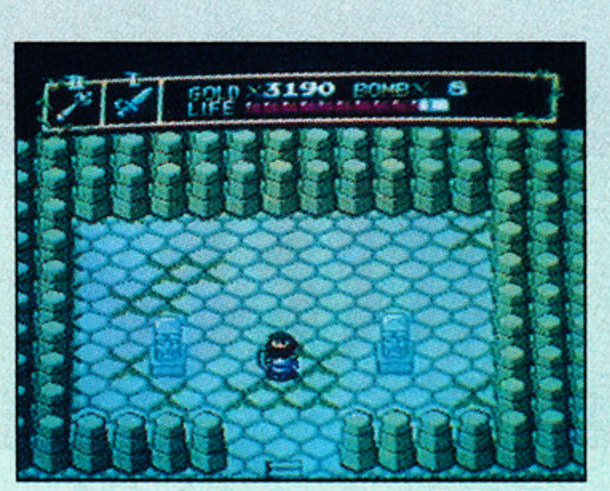
You'll find not only special weapons, but ways to increase your lifeline and bomb-carrying capacity.

Blast this rock door...

...and find the steel shield.

Be sure to kill all the creatures in each location. If you don't...

These soldiers are guarding the entrance to the fifth labyrinth. Just go up the ladder and...



...you'll be there. But wait a minute! Where's the entrance?

To reveal the entrance to the fifth labyrinth, first come here. Beyond this door...

The boss of the fifth labyrinth looks like a giant crab. You can hit him only when his mouth opens...

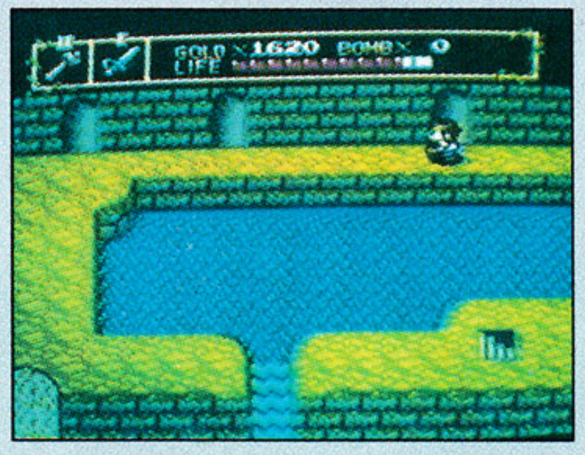
...to release these deadly bubbles. He won't open his mouth right away. Stay away from him until he does. If you try to follow him around, he'll keep his trap shut.

Here's the entrance to the sixth labyrinth. Got the falcon shoes?

Lots of new creatures populate this sphere.

These rock doorways sometimes conceal shops or people with clues. You need many bombs to find the real doorways.

Some areas in this sphere are like complex mazes.

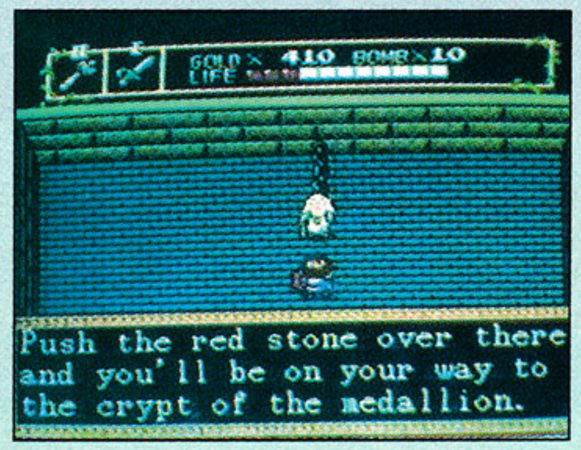


...you may miss important secret stairways. This stairway leads to...

...the falcon shoes, without which you cannot get into the sixth labyrinth.

This stairway will quickly teleport you to the other end of the sphere. A great way to travel!

...is what looks like a dungeon labyrinth. But there are only a couple of rooms. One of the rooms...



...contains this helpful old man. Do what he says, and the entrance to the fifth labyrinth will be revealed.

Inside the fifth labyrinth, you'll find the usual special items. You'll also find the silver sword.

The sorcerers in the sixth labyrinth are tough fighters. Use a magic ring to knock them down to size.

These snail-like creatures (in the center) shoot dangerous fireballs. Block the fireballs with your shield.

If you suspect a rock is booby-trapped, approach it slowly. When the spikes activate and retract, scoot on by.

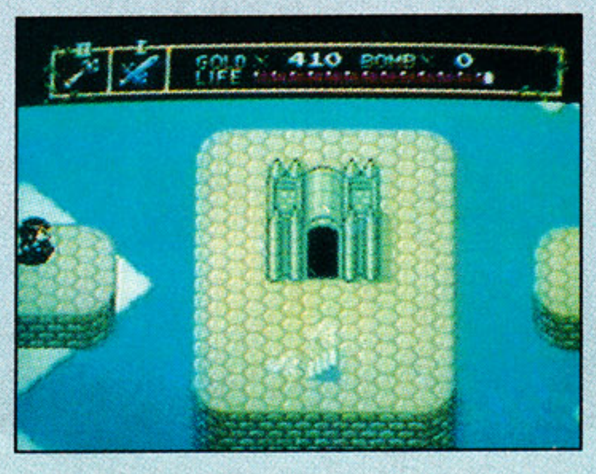
Some rooms have secret stairways that are revealed only when you defeat all the monsters or move the right rock.

The secret stairways lead down under the labyrinth, through these underground corridors.

In the sixth labyrinth, find the strongest armor.

The marble columns in this sphere are combustible and may hide many secrets.

One quadrant of the castle can be reached only by this special stairway.

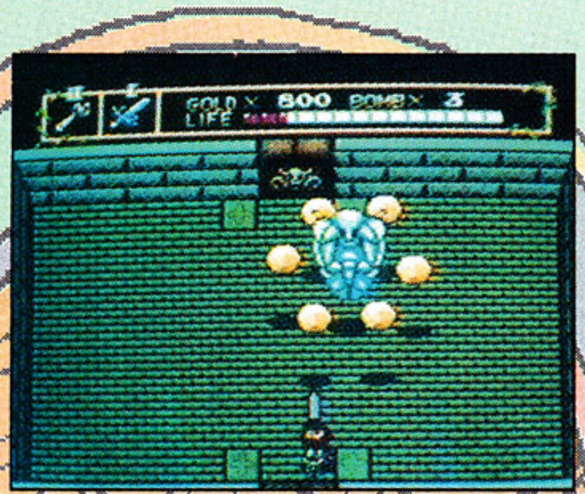


The strongest sword lies hidden in this shrine. But how can you get to the shrine? You need the Bell of the Sky.

Here's the entrance to the seventh labyrinth.

Always leave at least one of these winged reptiles alive. If you kill them all, a whole new crew will emerge from the hole.

The gargoyles in this room fill the air with fireballs. Worse, the skeletons can be killed only with your sword, meaning you'll have to get close. Still, you must get the treasure chest here, because...



Here's the boss of the seventh labyrinth.

You can hit him only when he unfolds and stands. Luckily, he can be killed with only a few hits.

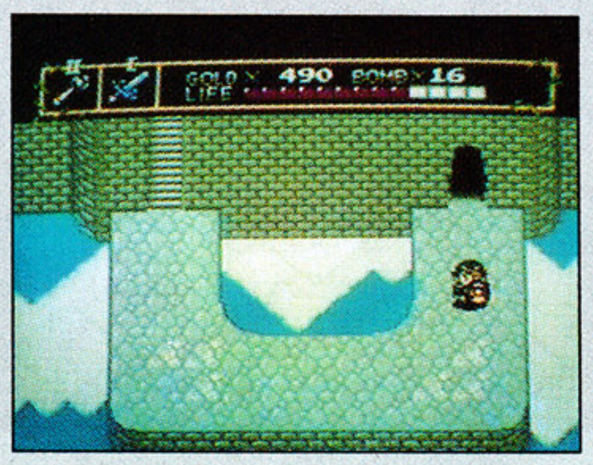
The entrance to the eighth and final labyrinth is near these floating islands.

The boss of the sixth labyrinth is a giant three-headed turtle. When you fight him...

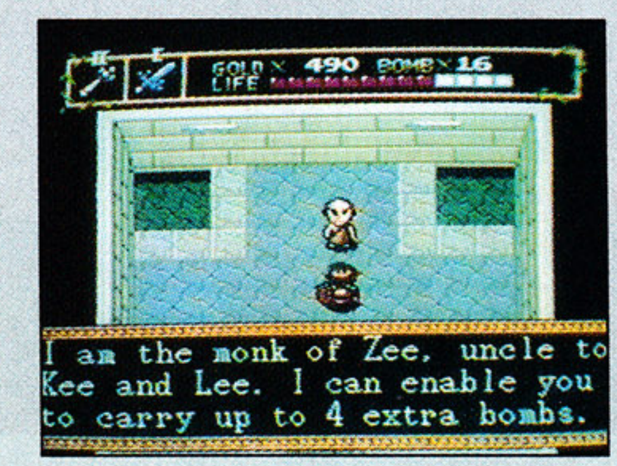
...his heads will attack separately from his body. Use your fire wand to lay down walls of flames or to shoot from a distance.

After completing the fifth and sixth labyrinths, you can enter the Castle in the Sky.

Some enemies in the castle are tough to beat. These goofy characters bounce around unpredictably.

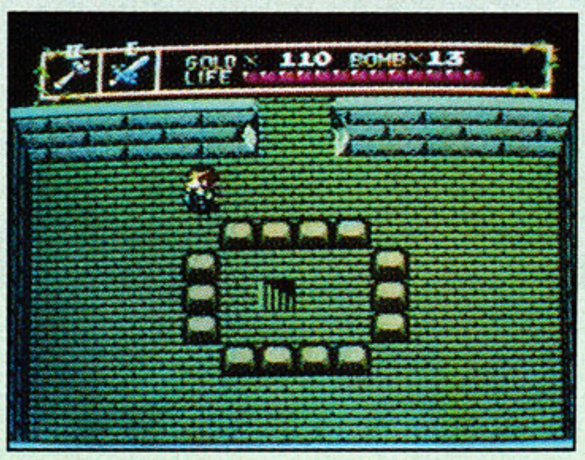


Beyond this door...



...you'll get the ability to carry extra bombs.

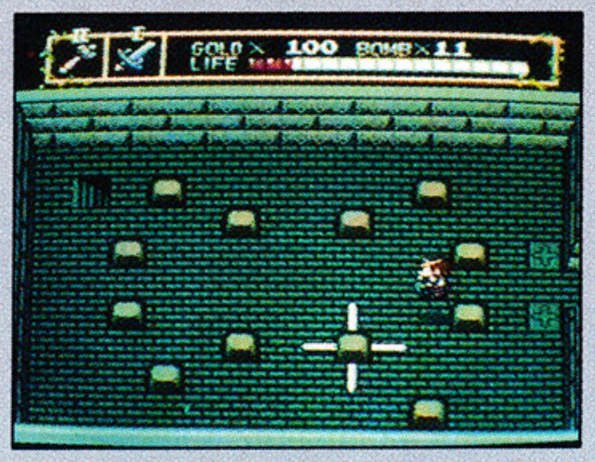
...it contains the strongest shield.



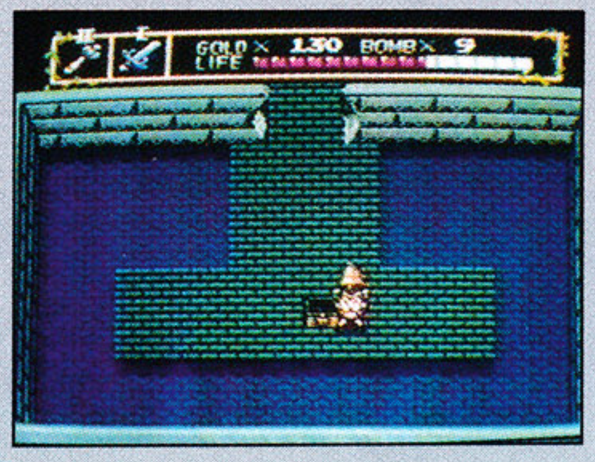
Some rooms have stairways that can be reached only by moving the right blocks. This one is easy to figure out. Some rooms like this, however, will require thought to determine the right pattern in which to maneuver the blocks.

One of these blocks opens the doors. But which one? Try them all!

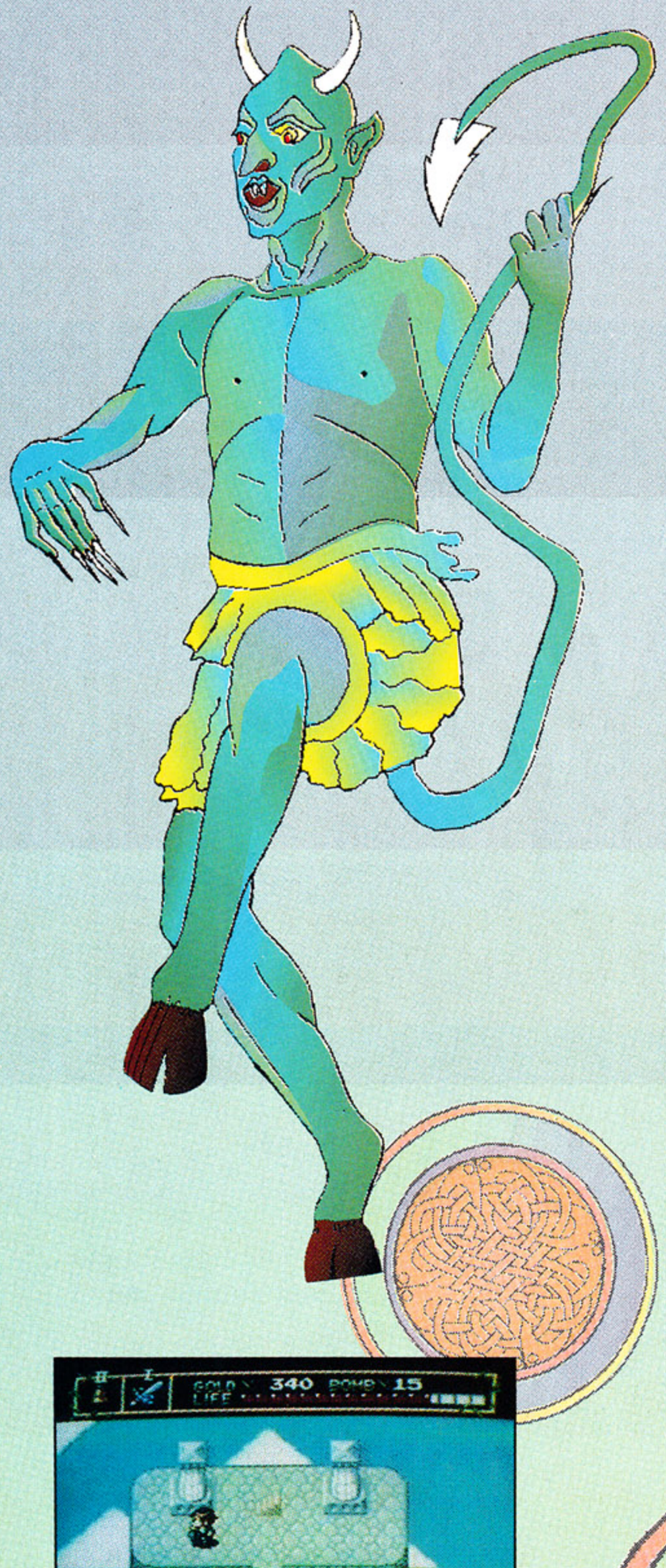
Here you are, ready to take on the last dungeon.



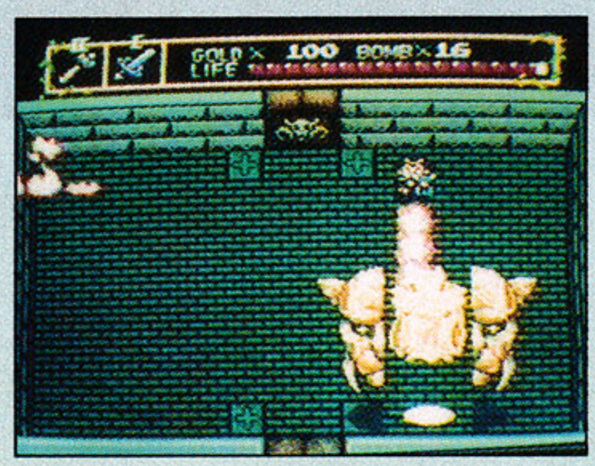
In the eighth labyrinth, booby-trapped rocks sometimes look like any other rock.



Find the Bell of the Sky in the eighth labyrinth.



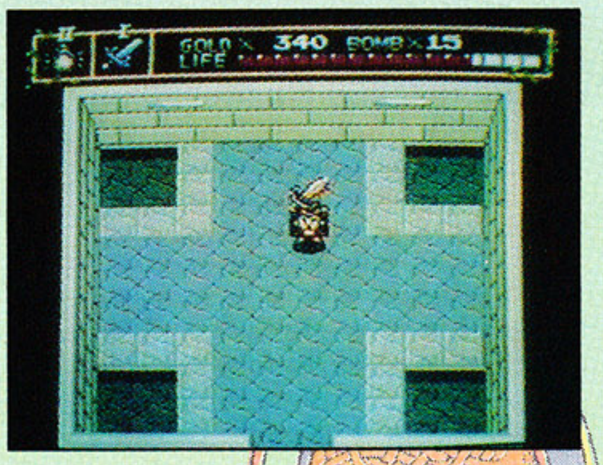
...he must open his mask shell. If you can...



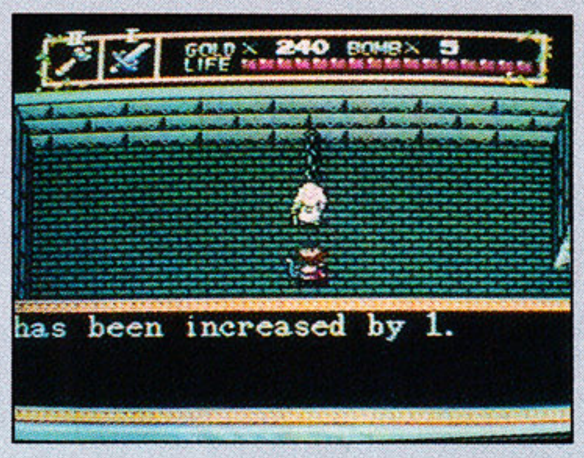
...get behind him when he opens and blast him with a stream of fire, you'll do a lot of damage. Keep shooting fire. He can't close his shell when he's being hit.

...a secret stairway will appear. The stairway will take you to...

...this shrine, within which you'll find...

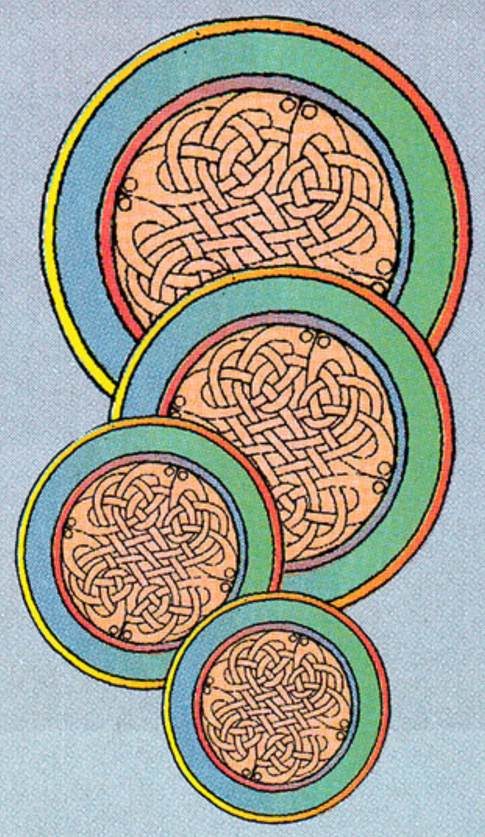


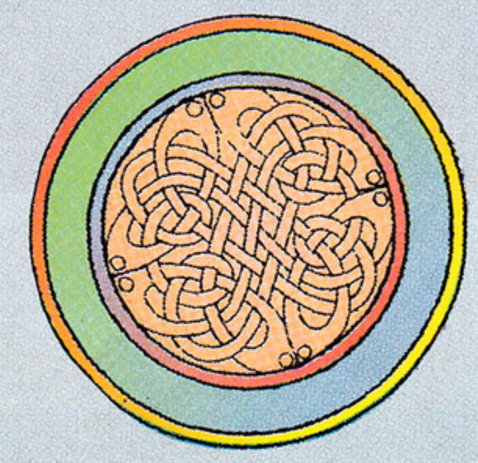
...the strongest sword, the only weapon that can hurt Dirth.



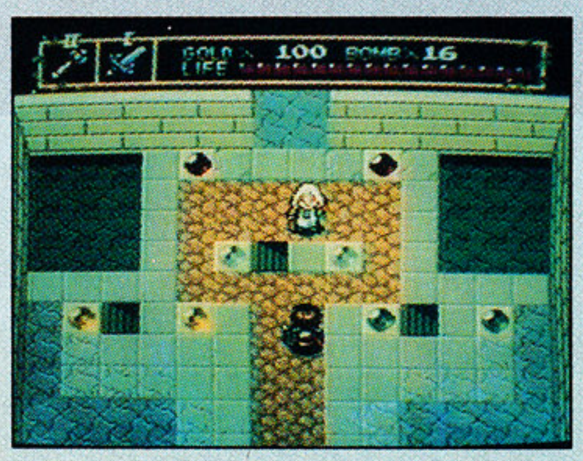
Also, find an old man who will increase the length of your lifeline.

The boss of the eighth labyrinth is a challenge to beat. Before you can hit him...

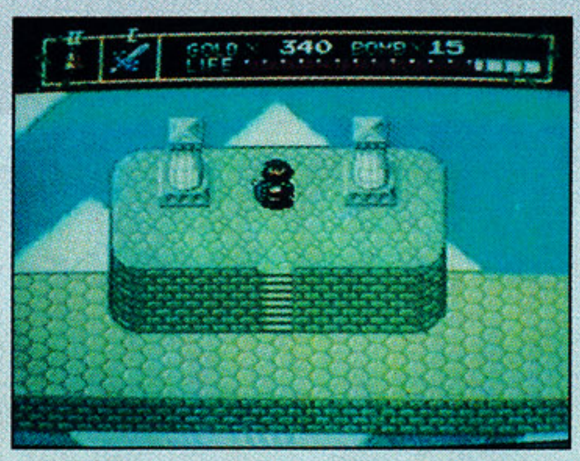




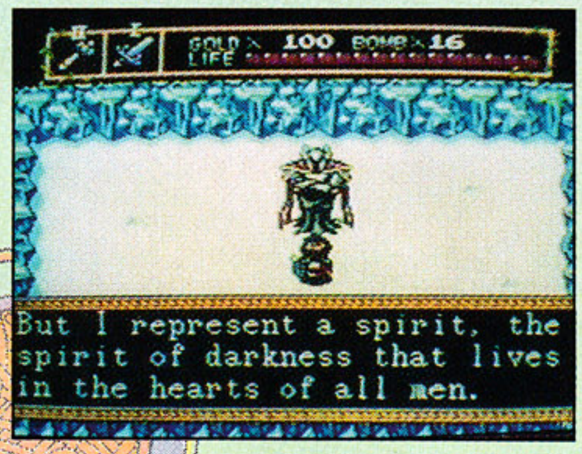
Fight hard and Dirth's mask shell will explode. Then he'll vanish.



Now that the eighth labyrinth has been conquered and the final medallion is in its place, the rear temple door will open. But...



...before entering the rear door, go back to the Castle in the Sky and find this altar. When you ring the Bell of the Sky...



Now go back to the rear temple door, where you'll face Dirth. Watch out! He's mad!

Dirth will appear as two beings; only one is real. If you have full life and two bottles of medicine, you should be able to defeat Dirth.

When Dirth is dead, all the people you met in your travels will come to the temple to thank you. You'll then get to see a long ending sequence that features scenes from the game along with the program's credits. Good job!

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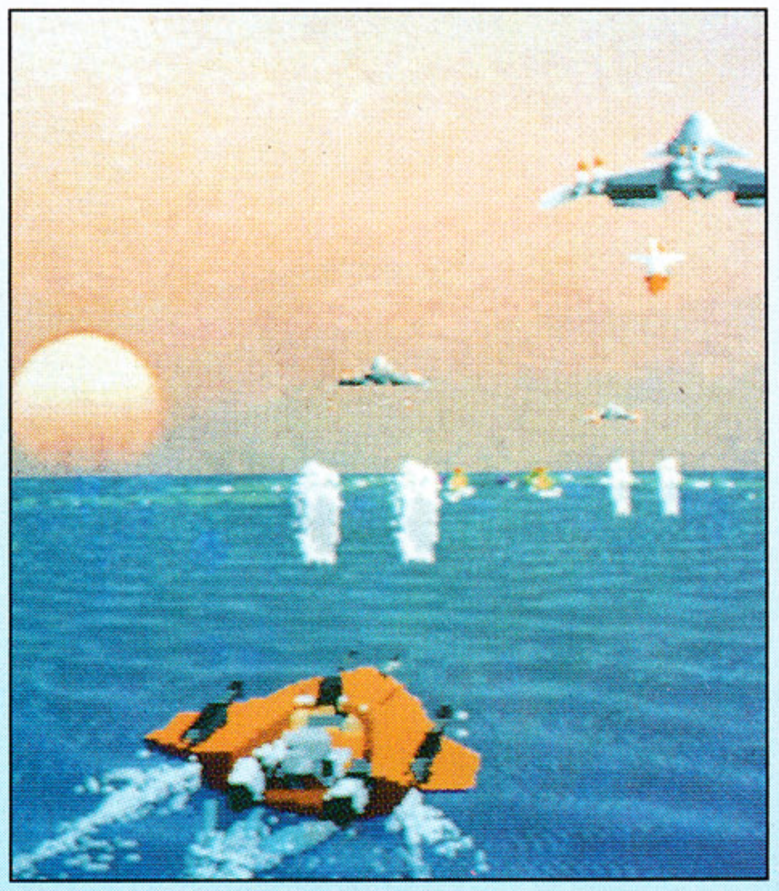
HYDRA

by Atari

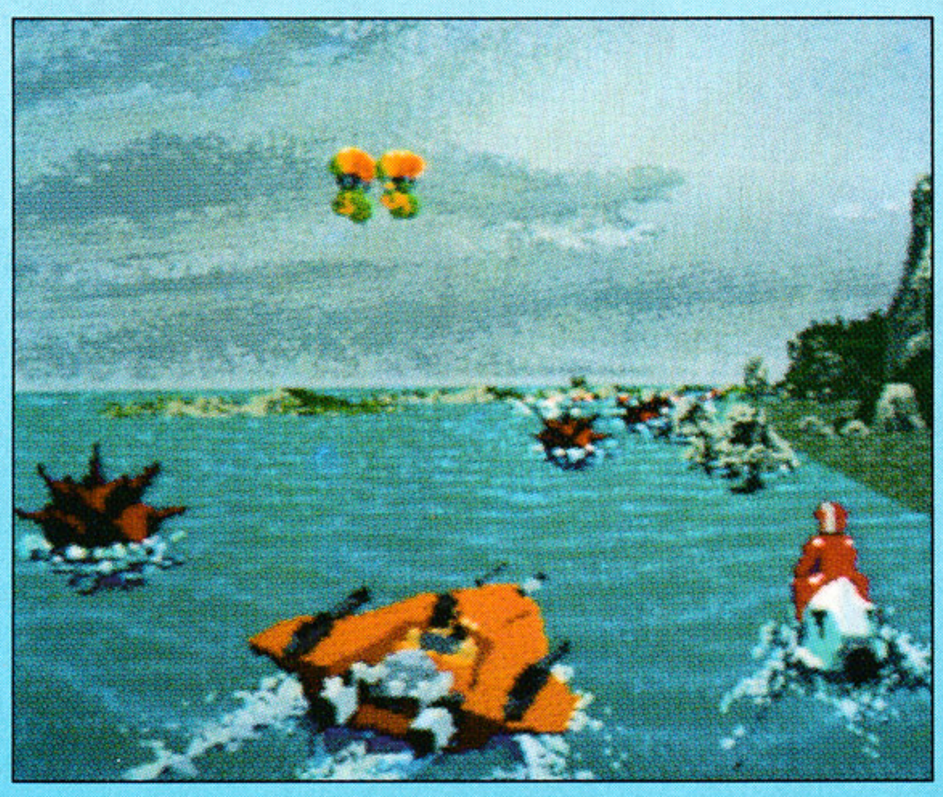
by
Donn Nauert and Andy Eddy

Are you tired of terrorists stealing your top-secret packages? Well, if you are, there's only one person to call: me. I'm code name Hydra. With my special Hydracraft I can outmaneuver, outshoot and outfly any boat, chopper or hovercraft those pesky ol' terrorists might have. And now I even provide worldwide service, so I can make those special deliveries from Colorado to Cuba, even Casablanca. For up-to-the-minute departure times, call 1-408-434-3700—and remember my motto: "Hydra is my name, and delivering contraband is my game."



Avoid the enemy shots and ride off safely into the sunset.

Atari's latest release, *Hydra*, features the same basic controls found on *Road-blasters*: a steering wheel (similar to *Star Wars*) that has buttons for laser cannons and special weapons. It also has a pedal to control your speed and a button called Booster, which, when pressed, will allow you to fly.



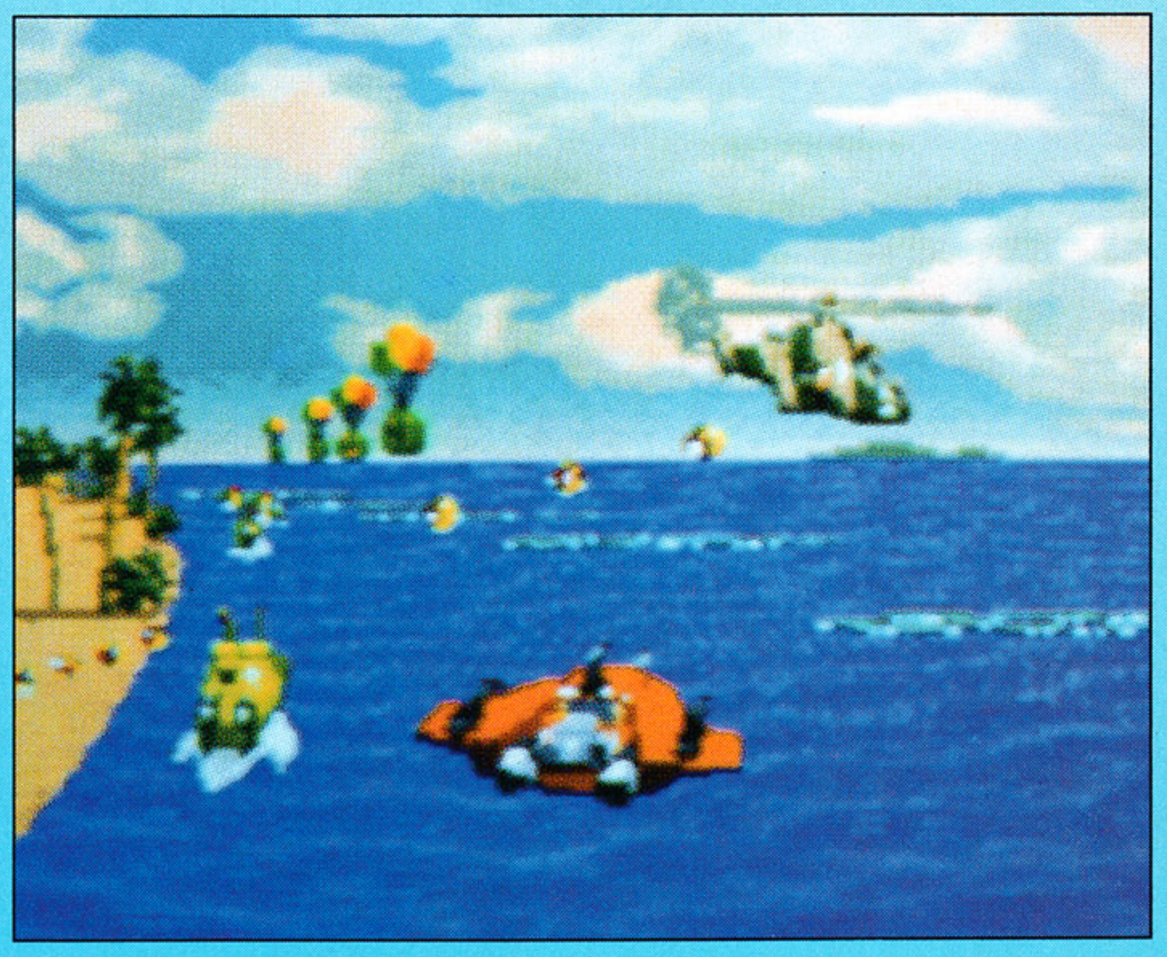
You have to maneuver your boat around a whole slew of hazards in Atari's *Hydra*.

In *Hydra* you must control your hydracraft through nine missions. Each mission requires you to avoid various obstacles, such as tree stumps and mines, in an effort to deliver prized top-secret government packages. Terrorist forces, using everything from jet skis to zeppelins to half-tracks, are out to get you. And to make matters worse, your main competitor, Shadow, is just waiting for you to fumble the ball so he can pick up the booty and receive the large delivery charges.

Don't despair, however, for you have some allies in this cruel, cruel world. At the beginning of each round, a cargo plane will fly by and drop off special weapons like an Uzi, homer (homing missiles) and flamer (flame thrower), which should help even the odds a little. You'll also come across jewels of three different colors: Blue and green jewels help replenish your fuel supply, while red jewels add one boost to your collection. Boosts give you the power to fly, allowing you to shoot down any air vehicles and to retrieve bonus items.

Not only can you get certain items from the cargo plane, but you can also buy them at Ziggy's weapon shop. Money to buy these weapons can be obtained by picking up money bags along the route, from the cash payments for deliveries or from bonus rounds. In the bonus rounds you can increase your cash flow by jumping from ramps and landing on different-colored targets, with the point values ranging from 1,000 to 20,000. There is no time limit in the bonus stage but there is a fuel limit. The more fuel you collect, the longer you'll stay in the bonus section; but once it's depleted, you'll see Ziggy offering you the latest weapons available.

Using digitized landscapes for the rivers, marshes and coastlines definitely



Here's a good place to use the booster, so you can get the cash hovering over the water.

Mean Streets

Mean Streets has set a new standard for interactive adventure games!
—R. A. Frisk
Sugarland, Texas

Beautiful! A new step ahead in computer entertainment.
—M. A. Platnick
Bluefield, WV

Mean Streets is a major technical breakthrough for the I.B.M.
—Electronic Gamer

Mean Streets is a dazzling product! A showpiece game for VGA machines.
—Video Games and Computer Entertainer

Mean Streets' Real Sound's quality of music, voice & special effects beats anything I've heard from my "Ad Lib"™...hands down!
—H. Nichols
CPAA

Animating digitized images and synchronizing them with great voice and sound simulation for IBM P.C. make Mean Streets more realistic than anything you may already have experienced. To call Mean Streets just another computer game is an understatement!
—Game Player's Strategy

Mean Streets is truly an advanced interactive adventure experience.

It's the year 2033. Your name is Tex Murphy, private investigator in San Francisco. You've been hired by the beautiful daughter of a university professor to uncover the facts about her father's death.

As you begin your investigation, you uncover the deaths of several prominent members of the scientific community. Are these deaths coincidental, or is something more sinister going on?

- You will interact with more than 27 characters which animate and respond to questions, bribes and threats.
- Some characters actually talk. This spectacular effect is achieved by synchronizing digitized animation with *Real Sound* ™.
- You'll crack high-tech security systems.
- You'll rummage through offices, warehouses, and factories as you search for vital clues.
- You'll risk your life in action-packed shootouts.

Mean Streets features *Real Sound* ™, our own proprietary technology that allows MS-DOS computers to play high quality digitized sound effects, music and speech WITHOUT HARDWARE.

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All the cash you acquire during your delivery runs in *Hydra* will come in handy at Ziggy's Weapon Shoppe, where you can build up your boat's strength.

helps the overall appeal of *Hydra* because, to be honest, I can't recall there being any noteworthy sound or music. The sound and music seem to have gotten lost between "Insert Coin" and "Game Over." The game play for this driving-flying-shooting game is above average, but not excellent. I found there were too many slow spots in the action to warrant a better critique. Basically, this is a water version of *Roadblasters*, so if you're a big fan of that game, you'll love *Hydra*.

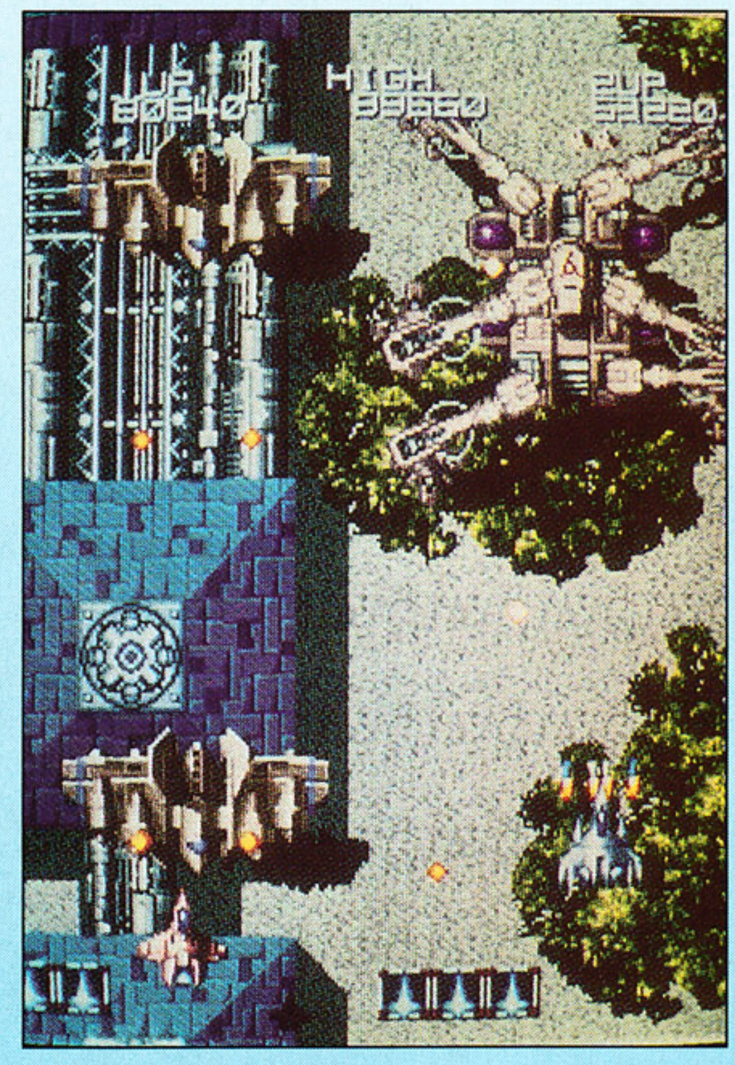
LIGHTNING FIGHTERS
by Konami

Okay, troops—listen up! There's an unknown force that's slowly taking over the world. It's up to the few remaining Lightning Fighters left in this room to conquer this unknown foe and return peace to the world. This mission has nine primary targets, and our intelligence sources indicate more enemy crafts are waiting to move in once these sectors have been eliminated.

Your fighters will be equipped with the standard eight-way joysticks with two buttons on either side: One lets you shoot, and the other cuts loose with any special weapons you've obtained. On this mission you'll be using vulcan bullets (which gives you auto-fire) and spread bullets (which provide you with a wider range of shot). The special weapons will consist of a "particle beam" and a "dragon laser," each of which will terminate every enemy on the screen. All bullets and special weapons can be found at predetermined locations throughout the various sectors, so you shouldn't have any trouble selecting between the different weapons.

Oh, yeah—before I forget. The eggheads at the Pentagon have come up with a new toy. They call it "Trigons." So if you go into some duel action, find one of these babies and link up with your partner. The "Trigons" will form a force field between the two fighters and destroy any enemy aircraft that get in your way. As usual, the more weapon items you recover, the more powerful your shots become, so try to collect as many as you can.

Your adventure is going to take you into some uncharted regions that include islands, snow-covered landscapes and deserts. Not only must you be ready for air-to-air combat, but you must be prepared for air-to-ground and air-to-sea combat as well. Our scouts report that you will be facing planes, tanks, various sensors and submarines, some of which have unknown fire power at this point. So you're going to have to listen for updates



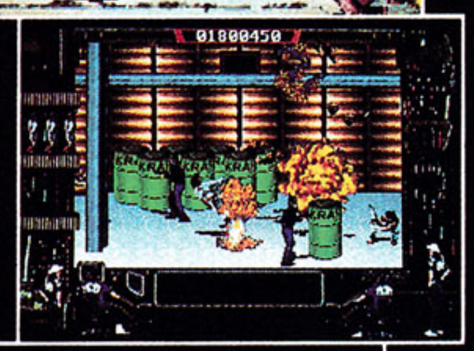
In *Lightning Fighters*, you'll go against some elaborate enemies.

as they come in. Gang, this is probably going to be the most intense battle the Lightning Fighters have seen in a long time...good luck!

Graphically, *Lightning Fighters*, by Konami, is outstanding. Virtually every aspect of the game from foreground to background—and everywhere in between—is highly detailed. I liked the detail of the small fighter planes and of the "dragon laser," especially when you fire the laser and the shot bounces around the screen.

Unfortunately, the sound and music are somewhat lacking. As far as this department goes, it seems to be the "same thing,

CRIME WAVE



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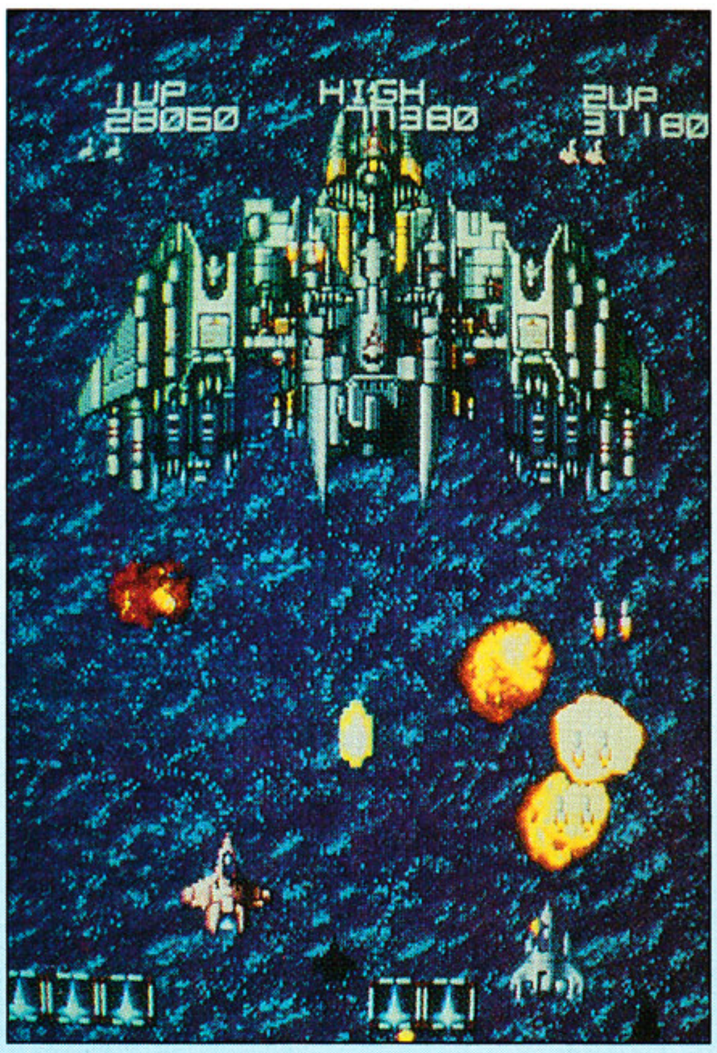
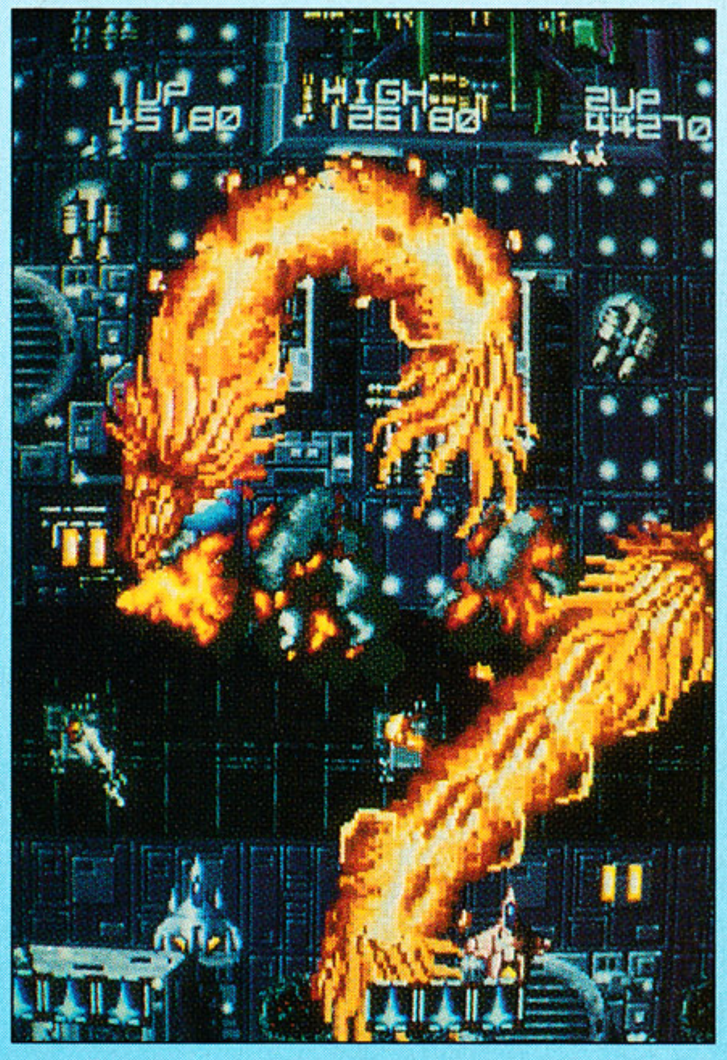




***LIghtning Fighters* features powerful end bosses (top), but offers strong weapons to help you out (bottom).**

different game." Which brings us to the game play, which is, in a word...average. For this long-time shooter specialist there just wasn't enough variety in the weapons to work with and the difficulty (regardless of the setting) was simply too easy.

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE

by MicroProse

When you hear the name MicroProse, it immediately conjures up images of elaborate simulators popping up on your computer screen. When "Wild" Bill Stealey decides to do something, he always does it to the max and with all the flair he can muster.

It's no surprise, then, that MicroProse's first venture into the coin-op world would be a no-holds-barred flight simulator that takes you to the limit of endurance. MicroProse didn't just design a "nice and simple" game, but built an entirely new coin-op machine from scratch to do exactly what it set out to do.

F-15 Strike Eagle, based on the computer game of the same name, will do what no other arcade machine has done. To create the smooth effect and animation required to get the experience right, *F-15* will generate up to 60,000 polygons per second—2,000 polygons per frame, 30 frames per second— which is approximately five times what the average coin-op game does. This will allow the game to smoothly animate the 3-D flight experience without reminding the "pilot" he's playing a game.

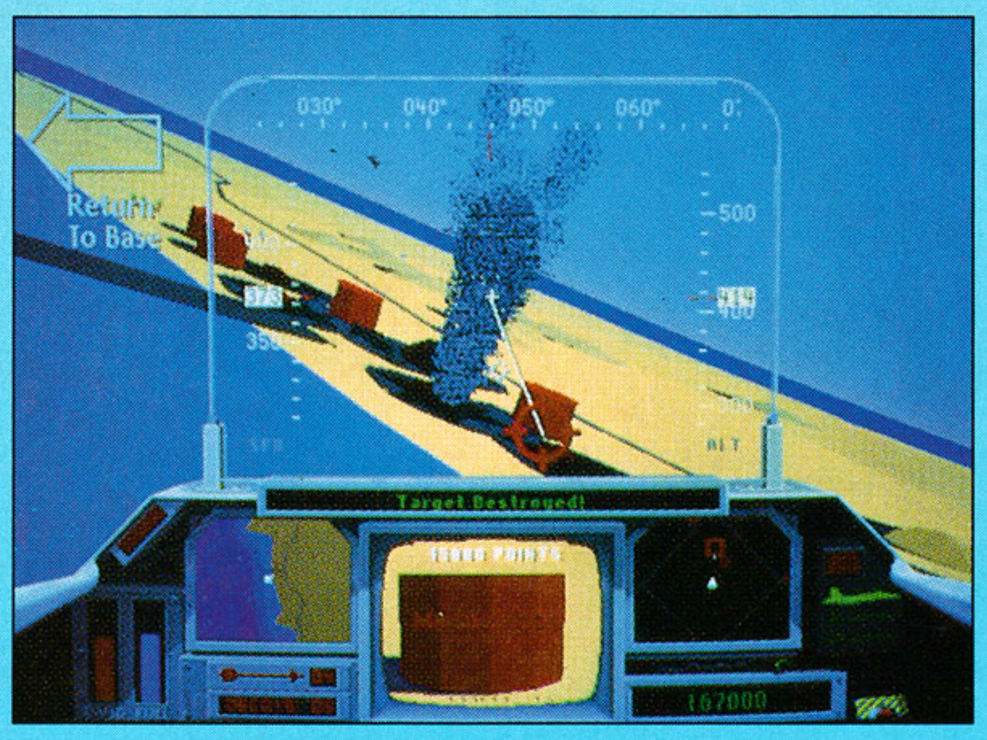
The important thing MicroProse needed to accomplish was to make a potentially difficult game easy enough for players to pick up without discouragement, but hard enough that it wouldn't allow the player to quickly master the game. In the nearly finished version we played, the game has an initially difficult aspect to understand, but a few quarters spent will give the player some time to acquire the needed skills.

For instance, a button on the front will launch a decoy, which draws enemy missiles away from your plane, but the uninitiated player wouldn't have much of a clue when to release one of these devices. Thankfully, games like this have demo modes that show how the game is played—and in *F-15*'s case, it requires reading.

Another positive point is the quantity of voice commands that are provided to help you understand your status. For example, if you are struck by an enemy missile, a voice will tell you when your damage is really bad. You can hop to a subscreen, from which you can refuel, fix damage and stock up on the supplies you need to complete your mission.

***F-15 Strike Eagle*'s smooth graphics make you feel like you're really in an aerial battle.**

The missions—*F-15* has six for you to try out—are spelled out for you at the beginning of the game, and they prompt you to fly through hostile situations, battling against air and ground assault. To put the mission in perspective, you have various indicators on a "head-up" display, which puts such vitals as the altimeter and the heading of your primary target on your windshield. On your "dash" are a throttle (complete with turbo booster); a multi-function joystick for controlling the plane, with buttons for firing your cannons, selecting targets and launching missiles; the previously mentioned decoy button; and a **START** button that serves to begin the game and bring you to the subscreen.

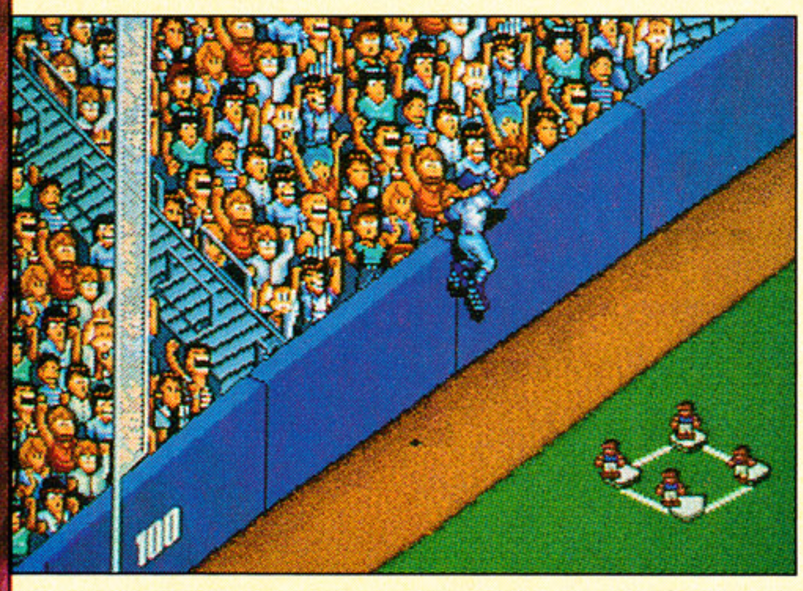


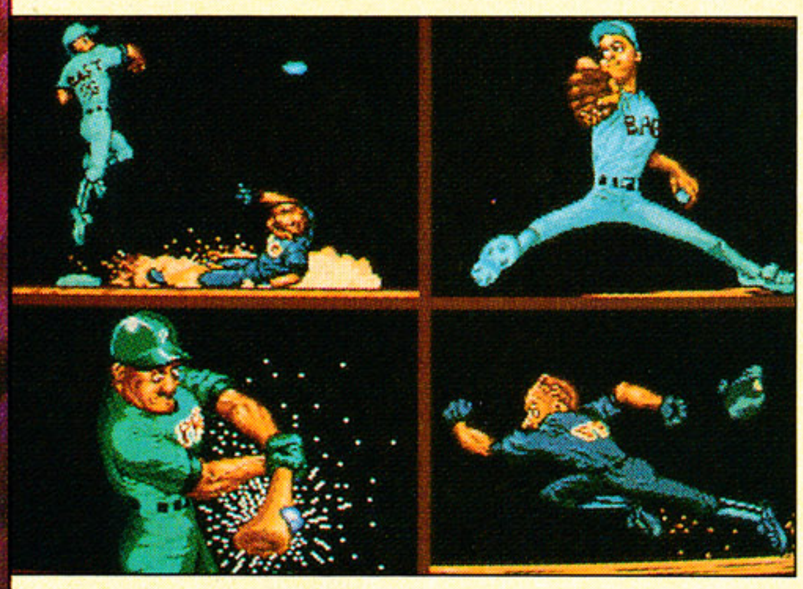
***F-15 Strike Eagle*'s designers have put all the info you need on your windshield and dashboard.**

We're excited by what *F-15 Strike Eagle* offers, though one of the concerns is how it will be priced. Early speculation was that, due to high development costs, it would be 75¢ or $1 per play, but the final cost will probably end up at 50¢. For a company to get into a new venture such as this is usually risky, but we expect that MicroProse will pull it off in typical Stealey fashion.

continued from page 44

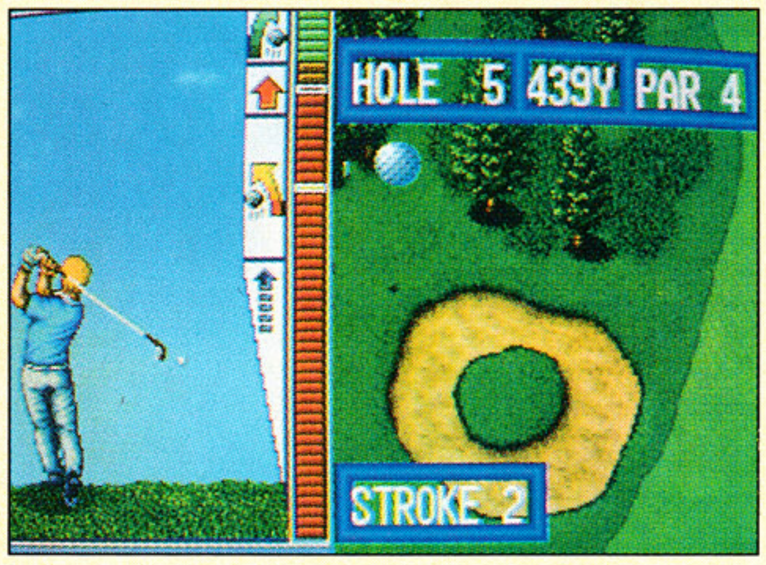
cle-racing game that offers three different modes: a role-playing game, World GP competition against the computer and head-to-head against another Neo•Geo owner. The latter allows the players to run a cable between the two cartridges and gives each player his own view of the race course.





Though similar in design to many video baseball games,* Baseball Stars Professional *goes a step beyond with detailed animations and rich images.

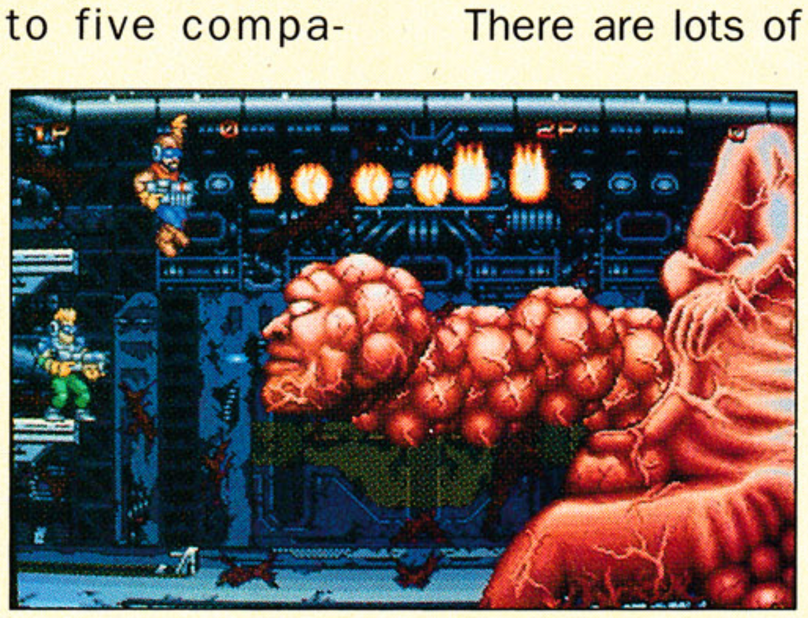
- *Baseball Stars Professional*—This sports cartridge is an enhanced version of SNK's *Baseball Stars* cartridge.
- *Nam 1975*—As the name implies, *Nam* is a war-combat game with lots of action.
- *Magician Lord*—This scrolling adventure shows the strength of the Neo•Geo, with lots of wild enemies and vicious battles.
- *Top Players Golf*—Another enhancement of a genre SNK has already tackled in *Fighting Golf*. Visually strong, the game lets you scroll around the hole from a bird's-eye view, then look from behind the player as he drives the ball to your specifications.
- *Cyber-Lip* (the name may change by the time it hits American shores)—This scrolling fantasy-combat game allows one or two players to battle (from one console) against myriad beasties and horrific evil creatures.
- *Ninja Combat*—Obviously, this is SNK's shot at a martial-arts battlefest. As you (and another player, if you choose) go through the game, you free various hostages, who may then be chosen as your fighter in following levels.



Top Players Golf *for the Neo•Geo lets you view your shots from a variety of perspectives.*

Aside from this lineup, SNK claims it will have five or six more games ready by the October AMOA coin-op show in New Orleans and 25 games available by April 1991. Also, the company is putting together a list of third-party developers, currently up to five companies, though others were being courted and signed to create software for the Neo•Geo. (The companies already signed were confidential at press time.)

SNK gives detail to all aspects of game design, from game play to subscreens (Nam 1975 shown).



***The Neo•Geo's size and number of sprites help to provide gigantic enemies, as seen in* Cyber-Lip.**

The scenery in Neo•Geo games, such as* Magician Lord, *are artistic masterpieces.

Pluses and Minuses

VG&CE was impressed overall with the arcade unit, the CES-based demonstration of the Neo•Geo and our subsequent tests with the console in our own labs. One of the most exciting aspects, from our viewpoint, is the use of a memory card instead of a password to save game position and status. This is not only easier, but it lets you save up to 17 game positions, which can be mixed between different carts.

On the negative side, the obvious question is whether a relatively unknown hardware producer can sell such expensive products to a reasonably young audience. Granted, the capabilities are a quantum leap above the TG-16 and the Genesis, but the same situation occurred with the Sega Master System—the SMS is more powerful technically, but has been drastically outsold by the NES.

There are lots of question marks hanging over the release of the Neo•Geo, and it will be only a matter of time before we have some answers. SNK is betting the farm that it has some of those answers right now.

THE 1990 GAMERS' POLL:

PART 1

What Video Gamers Like— and What They Play

by Arnie Katz and the VG&CE Editorial Staff

The total sales numbers aren't there yet, but the Sega Genesis and NEC TurboGrafx-16 are already solid hits with the readers of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT. Hundreds of gamers from coast to coast and around the world have voiced their choices on every topic from favorite game themes to how much time and money they spend on the hobby.

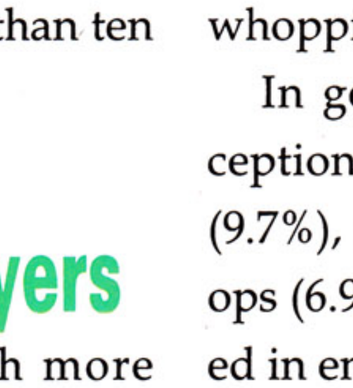
The overall results confirm what we already suspected: VG&CE readers know—and love—games. You are quick to try new products, and you're just as quick to move onto something else to get the play challenge you crave.

According to VG&CE's 1990 Survey of Electronic Gaming (VG&CE, April 1990), the typical gamer is most likely to be a male junior or senior high-school student. Electronic gaming isn't just for kids, though, because 30% of the players are over 26.

Spending is approximately $7 a week, though a sizable segment (38%) spend $10 or more weekly. Two-thirds play six or more hours a week, and three out of ten devote more than ten hours a week to the hobby.

Profiling the Players

To make the results both more meaningful and easier to understand, a pair of questions in the survey enabled us to separate the VG&CE audience into three distinct gamer subtypes. We also asked respondents to rate their interest in computer, video and coin-op games on a grading scale of 1 to 10.



The largest group of gamers, 51%, includes those who primarily like video games. Most video-game specialists, 52%, are in the 12-16 age category, and an additional 6% are even younger. Players tend to leave video games behind when they head to college, but it's only a separation, not a divorce. The survey shows that they start coming back to video games in droves as soon as they settle into their first homes. A whopping 25% are aged 26-40.

In general, these players are exceptionally interested in video carts (9.7%), moderately interested in coin-ops (6.9%) and only casually interested in entertainment software (5.5%).

The smaller classification is composed of those who consider themselves almost exclusively computer gamers. No segment has a higher percentage of women (13%) or "over 40s" (13%). A player in this category generally is over 26 years old and earns $20,000-$60,000 annually.

The typical computerist spends about a dollar a week less than other electronic gamers. Computer users stay in front of their machines about two hours longer a week than do video-game specialists,

Jump!

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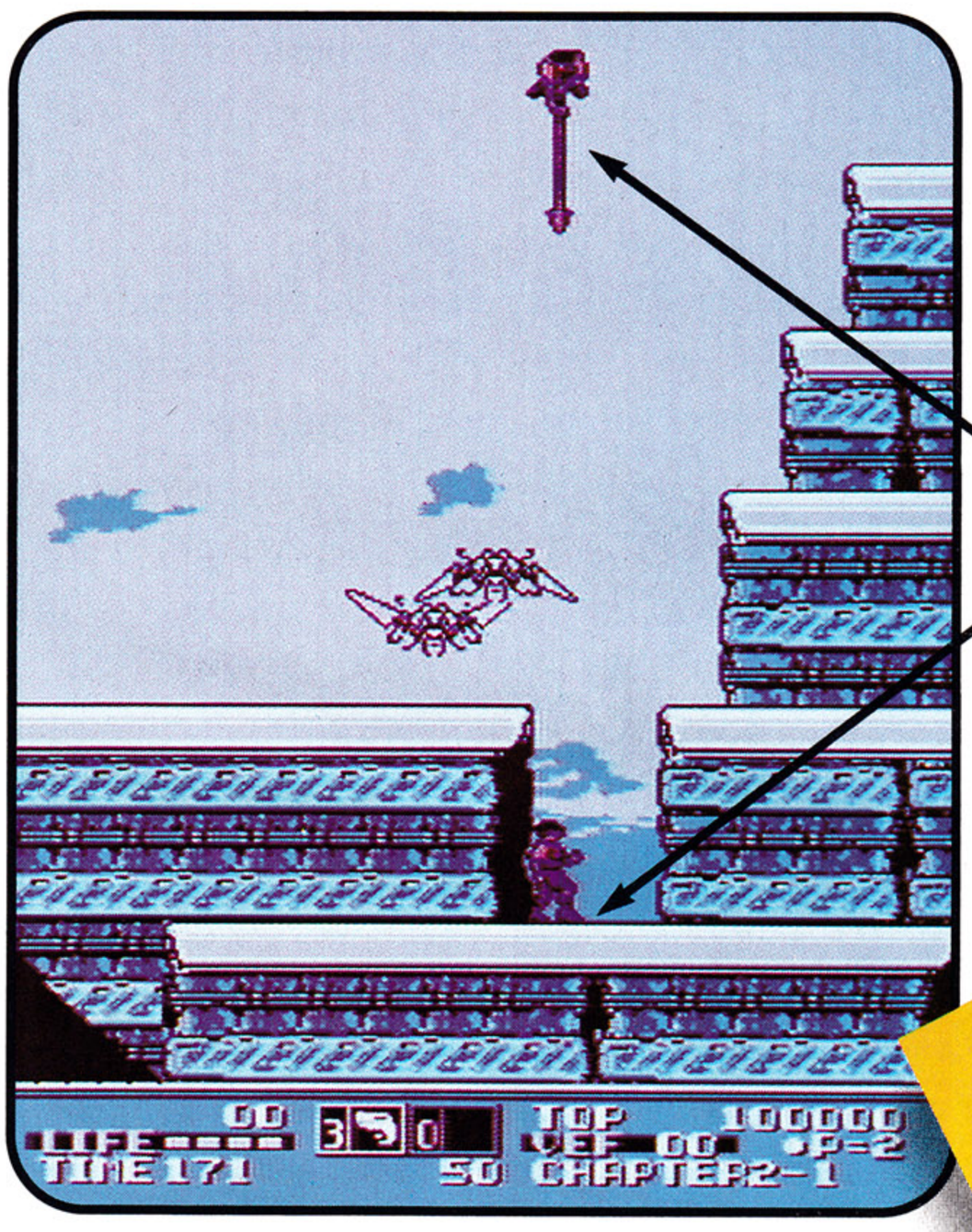


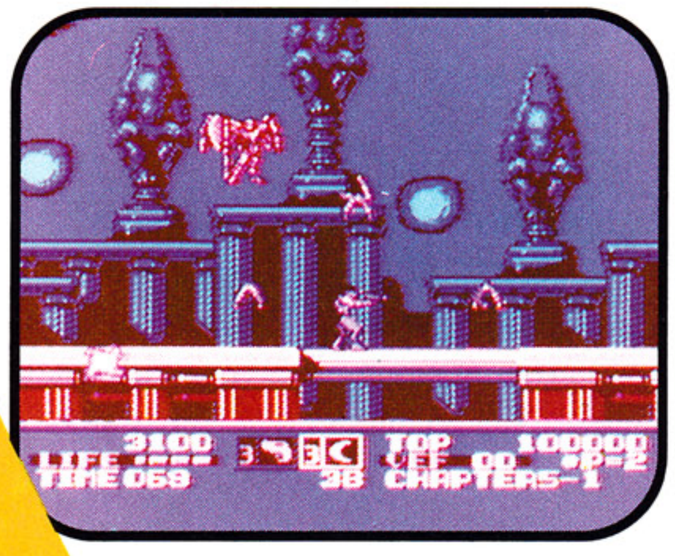
Power-up your anti-gravity belt, then jump almost 2 SCREENS HIGH!

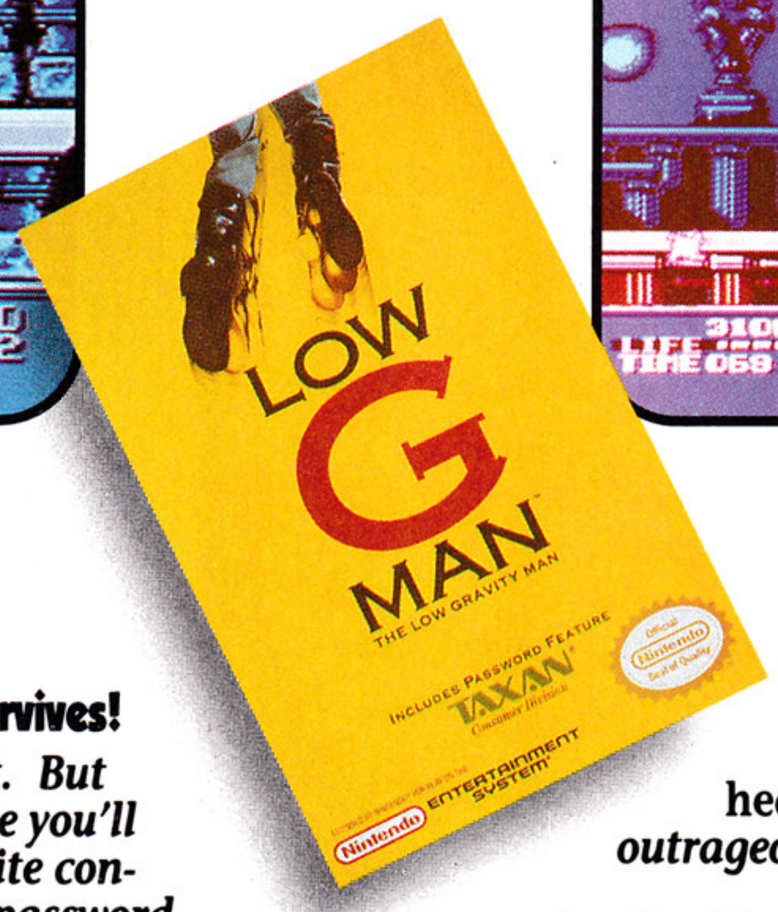
END JUMP HERE!

START JUMP HERE!

Use super-human jumping skills to climb giant cliffs & tall towers.

With Low G Man you can Run, Jump, Stab, Seize & more!





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So don't. But just in case you'll have infinite continue & a password. You'll get rapid action, detailed scrolling backgrounds, bundles of surprises, multiple levels, infectious music, heavy power-ups, and *outrageously massive Bosses.*

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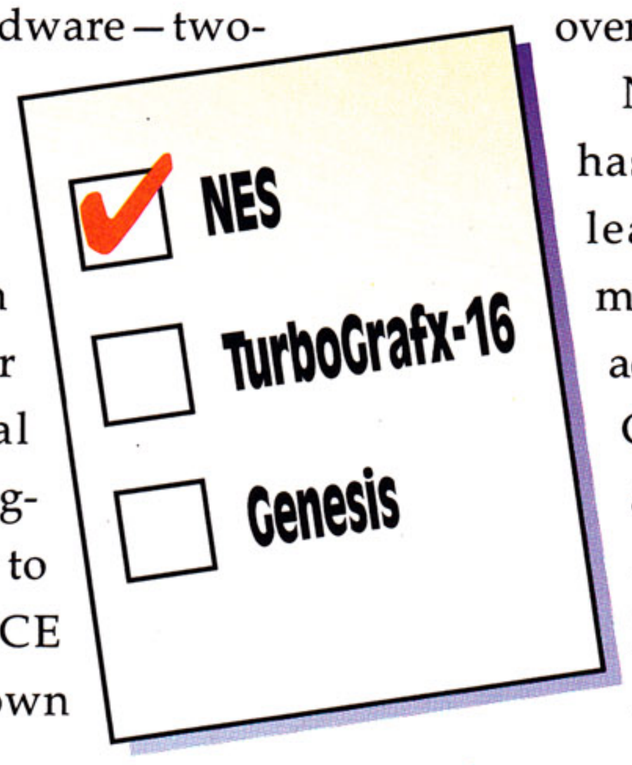
because computer adventures and strategy contests take longer to play. They love software (9.3%), but display little enthusiasm for video games (5.3%) or coin-ops (5.3%).

The remaining 43% of the survey sample represents the category we call *megagamers*—people who enjoy all forms of electronic gaming. They can be almost any age, though the group is slightly younger than the other classifications. A megagamer isn't as apt to be an arcade regular as a video-game specialist, but almost all of them occasionally visit coin-op land. They put about the same amount of time and money into the hobby as the average VG&CE reader.

The megagamers are less excited (9%) than average about video games, but show a more balanced interest in all facets of gaming than either of the other groups. They love coin-ops (7.6%) and are even more avid computer gamers (7.9%).

What the Players Play

It's no surprise that the Nintendo Entertainment System is the most popular piece of hardware—two-thirds of all electronic gamers own one. That's about twice as many as have its main rival, the Sega Master System. The actual sales gap is much larger, so it's reasonable to assume that VG&CE readers chart their own course through the hobby rather than blindly following the masses.



Nintendo's 8-bit unit is an even more overwhelming favorite among video-game specialists—more than three-fourths of this busy group own an NES.

The NES is so much a part of the entertainment scene that even 27% of computer gamers have one. That's nearly four times more than any other brand of video-game console.

Electronic gamers aren't short-sightedly sticking with the old reliable, however. Most want new challenges to conquer. It may shock some to learn that more of those polled already own a Sega Genesis (42%) than have a Sega Master System (33%)!

The megagamers love the Genesis even more than do video-game specialists or the VG&CE readership as a whole. Nearly half of this group already has a Genesis hooked to the family television set!

The TurboGrafx-16 can be found in 19% of VG&CE homes. About as many megagamers own a TurboGrafx-16, but it hasn't dented the computer-gaming segment. A rumored price rollback on the CD-drive accessory may radically change the TurboGrafx-16's ownership profile over the next year.

Nintendo's Game Boy has a better than 2-to-1 lead in the programmable-portable division, according to the survey. Game Boy especially attracts megagamers, and almost one in four has bought it. The premium-priced, full-color Lynx has done a little better with the computer owners than the Game Boy, but only one-fifth of the megagamers are Lynx owners.

What They'll Buy

Video gaming is turning into a 16-bit world right before our eyes. Only 9% intend to acquire an 8-bit video-game system in the next year, but 41% have a 16-bit console on their shopping lists. More readers plan to buy a Genesis than a TurboGrafx-16, but the lead is only by 21%. The quality of the two systems' software libraries could swing actual purchases in either's favor.

About 20% of today's video-game specialists are poised to become megagamers by purchasing a new computer in the next year. The IBM is the most popular choice, followed closely by the Amiga. Lack of color graphics on its entry-level machine limits planned purchases of the Macintosh.

The Final Reckoning

This installment concentrates on the video-game specialists. Part 2 of the results of the 1990 Survey of Electronic Gaming will appear in the next issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT. It will focus on the most popular themes for video and computer games as well as the attitudes, desires and preferences of home-computer gamers.

READERS PICK THEIR FAVORITE VIDEO GAMES

Other cartridges have higher sales totals, but none are dearer to the hearts of VG&CE readers than Sega's *Golden Axe*. Both the video-game specialists and megagamers who answered the annual poll rated it at the top of the popularity lists.

Here's the top 20 for both groups:

VG&CE READERS PICK THE VIDEO-GAME TOP TEN

(First-place votes in parentheses)

Golden Axe (22)
Phantasy Star II (18)
Phantasy Star (12)
Super Mario Bros. 3 (11)
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (11)
Ghouls 'n' Ghosts (1)
Altered Beast (4)
Legendary Axe (5)
MegaMan 2 (5)
Legend of Zelda (4)

VIDEO GAMERS RATE THE TOP VIDEO GAMES

(First-place votes in parentheses)

Golden Axe (10)
Phantasy Star II (9)
Phantasy Star (10)
Super Mario Bros. 3 (7)
Ghouls 'n' Ghosts (1)
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (4)
MegaMan (3)
Ultima (2)
Batman (2)
Shadowgate (1)
Legend of Zelda (3)
Altered Beast (2)
Willow (2)
Tetris (1)
Blazing Lazers (1)
Blaster Master (2)
Bad Dudes
Military Madness (2)
J.J. & Jeff (2)
Tommy Lasorda Baseball (1)

MEGAGAMERS RATE THE TOP VIDEO GAMES

(First-place votes in parentheses)

Golden Axe (9)
Super Marios Bros. 3 (4)
Legendary Axe (5)
MegaMan 2 (4)
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (4)
Phantasy Star (2)
Revenge of Shinobi (1)
Altered Beast (2)
Legend of Zelda (2)
Hard Drivin' (2)
Forgotten Worlds (1)
Bad Dudes (2)
Contra
Tetris (1)
Cyberball (2)
Tommy Lasorda Baseball (2)
Batman (1)
Double Dragon II (1)
Shinobi

If You've Got the Questions... We've Got the Answers!

by the Game Doctor

Yo, group, how's things? We're up to our tongue depressors in questions this month, so let's get right to it!

question

With this new CD-ROM technology, do you think makers of the TurboGrafx-16's CD drive or any computers will publish a cartoon version (like the arcade game) of *Dragon's Lair* or any of the other [laser disk coin-op games]? Also, at the beginning of a CD-ROM game, couldn't they have the author talk a little bit about the game and give some instructions? Is it possible? Do the laser disk players have the same concept [as] the CD-ROM players?

—Shane Price
Sandy, Utah

answer

Actually, Shane, a home-computer version of *Dragon's Lair* already exists, but I'm not sure it has actually been *published.* That is to say, the Doc has seen such a game running off a laser disk player and a computer (an Atari ST) at several trade shows, but I don't believe it has actually been commercially released. In any case, *Dragon's Lair* is probably the only laser disk-based game with enough public recognition to earn itself a place in today's electronic-entertainment environment. *Space Ace*, the follow-up coin-op produced by animator Don Bluth and Cinematronics, was neither a big success nor especially entertaining. Other laser disk-based coin-ops, like *Firefox* (Atari), flopped in the arcades for a variety of financial reasons and are barely remembered today.

Laser disk and CD-ROM systems are similar in that both are essentially data-storage devices capable of holding a vast amount of visual information. They also share similar drawbacks, the main one being that it takes time for the program to find a given piece of visual data. With laser disks, the laser must physically scan the disk until it finds what it needs; similarly, CD-ROM requires time to track the appropriate images, after which that data must be transferred to the computer for display.

CD experts tell me that photographic-quality resolution and motion picture- or videotape-quality visual displays are not attainable using current CD-ROM technology, so your idea regarding authors appearing to introduce their games may not be feasible as you described it. But, surely, some variation of this excellent idea would be workable, and the Doc would love to see it.

question

I own an Atari 7800 and am just slightly more than ticked off with Atari Corp. for its lack of support of its system. Toys 'R' Us and Kay-Bee have stopped carrying titles for the 7800 and replaced the Atari corners with handheld games and Nintendo shirts! Recently Atari released *Commando*, *Alien Brigade*, *Ninja Golf*, *Ikari Warriors* and *Super Mario Bros.* for the 7800. What's the point of releasing new titles if I can't buy them *anywhere*?

Has Atari given up on the 7800 and put all its efforts into the Lynx? (Around here the Lynx is the hottest thing since the 2600 was in its day.)

PS: Recently I went into a Kay-Bee Toy & Hobby and was shocked by what I saw: a number of NES titles under $25, including: *Golgo 13*, *Indiana Jones*, *Gauntlet*, *Friday the 13th*, *Contra* and a few others. I'm hoping this is the beginning of a trend in the pricing of older, quality NES carts.

—Dennis Chimelis Jr.
Bellport, New York

answer

I can understand your frustration, Dennis, but I feel it is misplaced. In the first place. If it were up to Atari, I guarantee that every store in your area would carry a full supply of 7800 products. The decision not to carry this software has been made by the retailers, not the manufacturer. In fact, your local store obviously believes it can make more money selling Nintendo merchandise and handhelds than it can with 7800 software, and sad to say, it is probably correct.

I'd recommend contacting Atari, however, since it may be willing to sell you the games directly. At worst, it can tell you which store(s) in your area carries Atari products.

question

I talked to a man here in Panama who ordered lots of Sega Genesis machines to sell them here, and I asked him why he didn't order any TurboGrafx-16s. He told me that the TurboGrafx sells so badly that NEC had to produce an 8-bit system called SuperGrafx and that it will sell most of their new titles in CD-ROM. I want to know if that's true and if not, I want to know the real truth. (Please excuse my English; I am only 15 years old. I'm just learning.)

—Ivan Quintero
Panama

answer

It certainly is true that the Genesis has, so far, outsold the TurboGrafx by a significant margin, but the part about an 8-bit system called SuperGrafx, in that context, is a new one to me. The SuperGrafx, which is only available at this time in Japan, is a souped-up PC Engine (the Japanese counterpart to our TG-16). There have been no announcements as to when this powerful system will be available in America, but it is "backwardly compatible," meaning it will be capable of playing PC Engine software.

As for NEC eventually going to an all-CD format, even if that is true (and I have no information that it is), we're talking several years down the road, at which point the price for the CD player will almost certainly be considerably less than the current $400 price tag. And your English is just fine, Ivan—it's always a kick to hear from gamers outside the U.S.A.!

question

Here's my question, Doc: Why is it that everybody out there is trying to kill each other to prove which system is better? Both the TurboGrafx-16 and the Genesis are great systems. I chose the TurboGrafx because it has a larger library of shoot-'em-up and adventure games. My gaming loyalty is to the TurboGrafx, but I'm sure not

going to say that the Genesis stinks. The Genesis is also an awesome machine with awesome games.

—Jason Duncan
Martinsville, Indiana

answer

There are some questions, Jason, that even the Game Doctor can't answer. The partisan attitudes exhibited by many gamers leave me baffled: Why is it that some of us can only enjoy our system if we believe that the alternatives—and the people who own them—are somehow inadequate? As electronic gamers, what we have in common with one another is much greater than any petty differences.

question

I have been a loyal Sega fan for some time now and am thinking about buying a Sega Genesis. My father told me to buy a Super Famicon because he thinks Sega is going to go out of business. What do you think?

—Matt Rice
St. Peters, Missouri

answer

I think there are two chances of Sega going out of business in the forseeable future: slim and none. And slim, as they say, just left town.

If fear of Sega going bust is your only reason for not buying a Genesis, I'd say stop worrying. As for the Super Famicon, Nintendo has still not even given a release date for that system in this country.

question

I have a question for you concerning items such as the TeleGenesis (a modem for the Sega Genesis), keyboard and disk drives for the Genesis. I've seen that in Japan, the TeleGenesis is already being used for Genesis users to call a modem network like CompuServe or Quantum and that they have games such as *Phantasy Star II* to play through it. How come it's taking so long for the modem to be released here?

—Alexis Morgenstern
Miami, Florida

answer

The TeleGenesis will reportedly be unveiled for the U.S. market at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, so you can look for extensive coverage of this new modem peripheral in an upcoming issue of VG&CE. As for the delay in getting it out, remember that releasing a modem for a video-game system involves more than simply getting the peripherals out onto store shelves. Software that utilizes the modem must be ready, something that has up until now been in development. Fear not, however, it's finally on the way!

question

After reading "News, Notes and Quickies" in the April VG&CE, I thought you might be interested in some other technical aspects of the Amiga. First, although the Amiga has eight sprites, they are rarely used. Instead, most game software on the Amiga employs the blitter chip to produce animated objects. Essentially, the blitter is a memory-move chip that is specifically designed with the ability to transfer 125K worth of screen data per second. The Amiga operating system provides software routines for controlling the blitter by providing the programmer with a full set of routines to produce and control "blitter objects" ("bobs").

Bobs are drawn directly onto the bitmap, unlike sprites, which appear above or behind the bitmap. Bobs are not limited in size (as long as you have the memory) and can have as many colors as the bitmap you are using (usually 16, 32 or 64 colors but ranging anywhere between 1 and 4,096 colors). When a bob is moved, the operating system will automatically restore the background. In addition, a technique known as "double-buffering" (or page-flipping, as it's called on other computer systems) is used to prevent the actual rendering of the bob from being seen. This is desirable with screens using many colors because some flicker may be noticeable with large or multicolored bobs. With double-buffering, which requires two bitmaps, no flicker is evident even with bobs as large as the screen, with 4,096 colors! Combine this with a four-voice, 8-bit digital sound chip and the ability to multitask and you have a game programmer's dream!

Now I'm not saying that the Amiga is easy; far from it. The Amiga 256K OS (operating system) is a monster to learn how to program on, especially if you are used to BASIC language as I was, but it is certainly powerful. (Omigosh, I heard version 1.4 of the OS will be 512K!)

A language named C, a derivative of an older mainframe language called BCPL, is a good choice for Amiga programmers because it offers near assembly-language speed while still offering if/else, do/while and programming constructs just like BASIC. In addition, C provides easy access to OS routines. By the way, it seems that the Amiga resolutions are due for an upgrade. A company called Black Belt Systems is due to release a unit that plugs into the RGB port on any Amiga and offers these new graphic modes: 256-color grayscale mode; 256-color mode with the ability to show 256 colors on-screen out of a total palette of 16 million colors; HAM-E mode with the ability to show 262,144 colors on-screen out of a total palette of 16 million colors.

Fundamentally, the box intercepts a 640x200 or 640x400 16-color screen and turns it into a 320x200 or 320x400 256-color screen (or a 262,144-color screen). Of course, you still have the option of not having the box intercept the signal. This type of graphics device sounds a lot like the GTIA upgrade that was once offered for the Atari 8-bit computers. Anyway, the cost of the box is expected to be in the $200-300 range. That's pretty reasonable for what the box can do.

Well, I hope I haven't bored you stiff but I just thought you might find it interesting.

—Terry Miller
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

answer

Bore me? Not on your life, Terry. Our readers are always asking questions about the capabilities of various video games and computers, so I'm always delighted to print letters like yours. In fact, you did such a good job I'm going to send you this issue's Game Packet for the best letter of the month! Enjoy.

That about wraps things up for this installment of *Game Doctor*. Remember to send your questions and comments to ***Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.**

Q & A QUICKIES

• Jon Glenn of Athens, Georgia, wanted the address of Interplay Productions: It's 1575 Corporate Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

• Vectrex fans will want to contact Al Backiel, 253 Rock Rd., Ridgewood, NJ 07450: He has several cartridges (including *Melody Master, 3-D Crazy Coaster, Berzerk* and *Animaction*) for sale at prices ranging from $15-20. Also for sale are some issues of electronic-gaming magazines.

• Douglas McGowan of Newton, Massachusetts, was recently reading *The Winners' Book of Video Games'* section on the original Bally coin-op *Space Invaders* and wondered if the author's theory of a mysterious "super trick" has ever been confirmed. "The author had a theory," writes Douglas, "that if you killed all of the aliens but those of the first two rows that the trick would show itself." Well, the Doc is long past the point where he could hope to accomplish this feat. Anyone out there know about this?

• Douglas also wonders where he might find back issues of the now-defunct *Electronic Games* magazine. I recommend contacting the publisher: Reese Communications, 460 W. 34th Street, New York, NY 10001.

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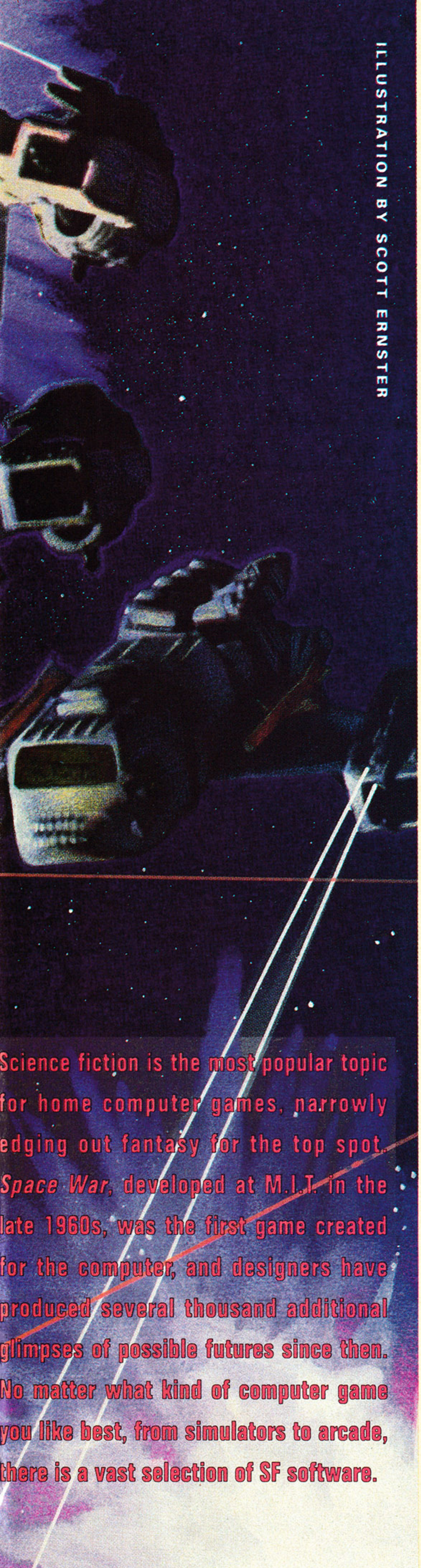


Aboard the Enterprise

The five officially licensed *Star Trek* games were not the first connection between the popular television and movie series and electronic gaming. Many designers made unofficial use of the *Trek* mythos.

During the 8-bit era, many action-strategy contests "borrowed" the idea of a single powerful starship fighting against a hostile universe. The connection to the Enterprise was so obvious that journalists dubbed the whole category "*Trek* games." It was sometimes hard to tell one such game apart from another.

The *Trek* games feature two levels of play, strategic and tactical, and the ship moves from sector to sector, guided by a galactic map that indicates alien activity. On reaching an enemy-held sector, the ship fights the aliens in a first-person perspective, real-time space battle.

The licensed *Star Trek* games relate much more closely to the TV show and feature the characters and equipment familiar to several generations of fans. Four different development teams are responsible for the five games in this group, so quality and approach vary a lot.

Star Trek: The Kobayashi Alternative (Simon & Schuster for IBM PC, Apple and Commodore 64) was the first. This text adventure's unusual interface allows the player to talk to other characters at some length, though the MicroMosaic format does little with object manipulation or direct action. The scenario is an extension of the "Kobayashi Moru" in which cadets wrestle with an unwinnable situation. The player is a future Starfleet officer who must assume the role of Captain Kirk in a test of resourcefulness and initiative.

The Promethean Prophecy (Simon & Schuster for IBM PC, Apple and Commodore 64) is something of a throwback to early Infocom games, although the parser does not seem as flexible or extensive as the one used for that line of text adventures. Kirk and crew beam down to a strange planet to look for needed supplies and must penetrate the riddle of the society to successfully complete their mission.

Star Trek: The Rebel Universe (Simon & Schuster for Atari ST) is more action-oriented than the earlier titles and features a point-and-click interface for calling up the various important crew members. A Starfleet rebellion has unaccountably broken out in a normally quiet sector of space, the *Enterprise* must enter the quarantined zone, visit many planets to collect information and reverse the process before the growing renegade space armada attacks.

Star Trek: First Contact (Simon & Schuster for IBM PC, Apple and Commodore 64) uses an upgraded version of the MicroMosaic interface to present story, characters and dialogue by Subway Software. Kirk and friends travel into Klingon territory to unravel the mystery of a space beacon that Starfleet believes is a calling card from a previously unknown intelligent race. Expanded options, better music and a set of fairly nice illustrations makes it a fuller play experience than *Kobayashi Alternative*.

Level Systems designed *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* (Mindscape for IBM PC and Amiga), and they've done a convincing job of translating the movie to the gaming screen. This intriguing adventure blends action sequences, strategy and a flight simulator to weave a yarn about a trip to the center of the galaxy.

The design team pulled out all the audiovisual stops, in what's surely the best-looking *Star Trek* title so far. It is greatly enhanced by digitized illustrations of the famous members of the *Enterprise* crew, such as Spock, Kirk and McCoy. There's nothing like seeing recognizable characters to ease the player into the game-world.

Adventures in the Far Future

Many game designers and developers continue to draw "unofficial" inspiration from *Star Trek*. This isn't too surprising since Gene Roddenberry's brainchild is the most enduringly popular mass-market science-fiction series in history. If the five adventures already mentioned don't fully satisfy the need to "go where no man has gone before," these two programs may fill the gap.

Universe III (Omnitrend for IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST) is the third installment of this ambitious science-fiction series. In this role-playing adventure, the player assumes the role of a starship captain in charge of a tricky diplomatic mission. Designers Tom Carbone and Bill Leslie tread little new territory, but *Universe III* is an above-average serio-comic story.

A menu-driven interface eliminates the need for a parser, though it doesn't permit much conversation between the hero and nonplayer characters. The overhead-perspective display window provides a good view of the area surrounding the protagonist, but the illustrations are not especially atmospheric.

There's a bit more contact between the player and other characters in *Starflight I* (Electronic Arts for IBM PC and Commodore 64). The player leads a mission to—where else?—the center of the galaxy, where the ship finds three planets. An attack by a hostile alien then sends the computerist on a journey that can include stops on well over 200 worlds to mine minerals, collect specimens and discover artifacts of ancient stellar civilizations.

Those who relish fantasy role-playing games like *Wizardry* and *Azure Bonds* will feel right at home with *Star Command* (Strategic Simulations, Inc., for IBM PC,

Amiga and Atari ST). A team of eight user-created characters undertakes a wide variety of missions such as rushing medicine to plague-stricken planets and chasing ravening space pirates.

Characters are divided into four classes: pilots, marines, soldiers and espers. Success generally depends on blending the various talents of each class into a "combined arms" force. The characters acquire greater powers and more advanced weapons through field experience. As the strength of the party grows, the scope of the missions also expands.

Decidedly different than the *Trek* school of science fiction is *Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* (Infocom for IBM PC, Amiga, Apple II, Atari ST and Commodore 64). This combat-oriented 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 already popular in toys, comic books, non-electronic games and television.

Scenes from Sierra On-Line's Space Quest III: Pirates of Pestulon.

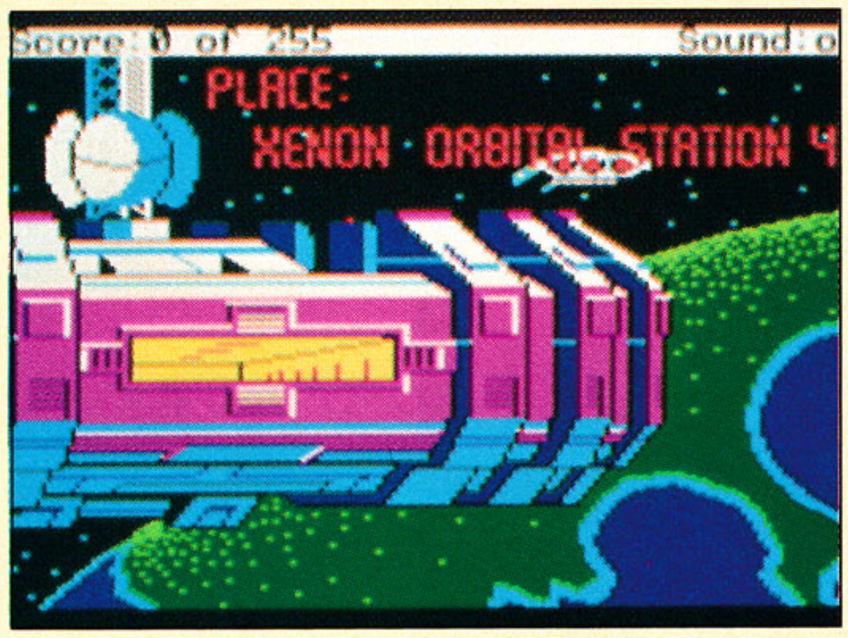
A menu-driven simulation of the life of a Mechwarrior cadet, it goes well beyond Infocom's previous all-text format. The modified overhead perspective graphics are attractive, if simple, and the automatic mapping feature eliminates the need for laborious doodling on graph paper.

Breach and *Breach 2* (Omnitrend for IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST) are role-playing SF games that utilize a play system experienced adventures will recognize from *Paladin* and *Universe III*. The icon-activated system allows the player to enjoy a single scenario, join short episodes together into a campaign or create wholly new missions for the Squad Leader and his troops.

The scenarios put the characters into many interesting situations. These range from maneuvers like garrison duty or a river crossing to an encounter with hostile aliens. Players who don't want to invent their own plots can buy disks with additional scenarios through Omnitrend.

The *Breach 2* graphics, created by VG&CE contributor Maurice Molyneaux, are the best so far for this publisher. The modified overhead perspective gives the illusion of 3-D, and bits of animation further enhance the visual appeal.

The most popular original science-fiction series is *Space Quest* (Sierra for IBM PC, Amiga, Apple IIGS and Atari ST), by the Two Guys From Andromeda design team. Roger Wilco, janitor and space hero, has now starred in three adventures presented in variations of Sierra's outstanding interactive graphics game system.



Software piracy is the theme of the newest of the titles, *Pirates of Pestulon.* These star-faring brigands have kidnapped the Two Guys, and it's up to Roger to get them back.

The components get better with each episode. *Pirates* boasts multiple viewing angles, noninteractive dramatic sequences and tension-filled cinematic tricks. Similarly sharp is the Two Guys' comedic touch, which remains broad and sophomoric.

The "cyberpunk" novel by William Gibson comes to computer disk in *Neuromancer* (Interplay for IBM PC, Apple and Commodore 64). The player becomes a cyberspace cowboy in Chiba City in 2058. In this SF detective story, the player searches for the other cowboys, who disappear one by one. Some of the action takes place in the "real" world, but most of the fun lies in using a cyberdeck to explore the computer-generated reality called cyberspace.

Circuit's Edge (Infocom for IBM PC and Amiga) 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 Bagdad.*

Michael Berlyn has enjoyed fair success as both a science-fiction writer and a designer of SF adventures. His latest is *Altered Destiny* (Accolade for IBM PC). This dimensional travel yarn concerns the efforts of the hero to find a jewel that has bewitched an entire universe and bring it back to our plane of existence. *Altered Destiny* will remind many of the cult favorite *Tass Times in Tone Town*, though the accent is on science fiction rather than outright fantasy.

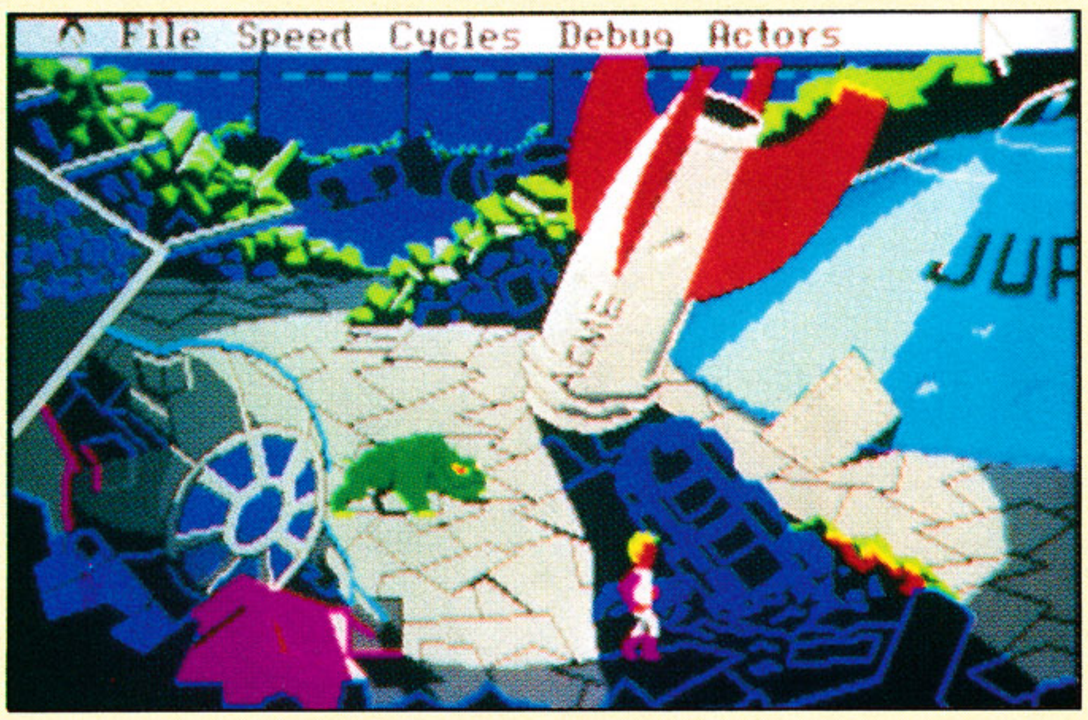
Wasteland (Electronic Arts for IBM PC, Apple II and Commodore 64) was selected as the best computer adventure of 1988. It stands up well beside the same design group's popular *Bard's Tale* fantasy RPG trilogy. The player controls a party of six characters, each with unique abilities, on deadly missions into the wilder areas of a post-nuclear war United States.

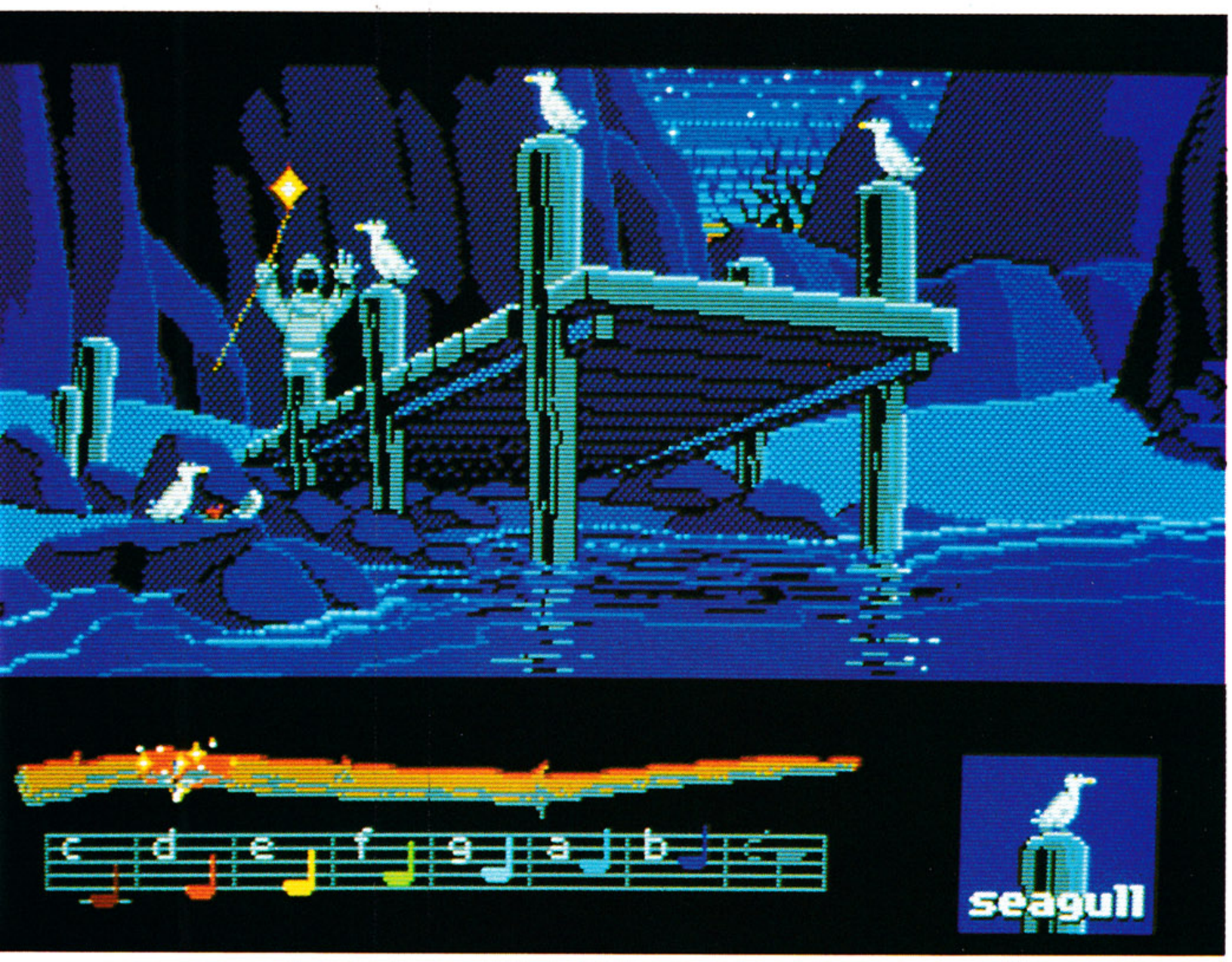
Despite spotty reviews, *The Colony* (Mindscape for Macintosh and Macintosh II) is worthy of any science fiction gamer's attention. Its unique first-person system makes movement around the spaceship and the planet outside much more realistic. The ability to pivot in place and see a complete 360° scene is unmatched.

Many have found *The Colony* a tough nut to crack. It's easy for a novice to get trapped on the ship, unable to do anything. A little study and experimentation, however, open up new areas that are considerably more entertaining than the starting position.

Tomorrow's Wars

Star Fleet I and Star Fleet II (Interstel for IBM PC and Amiga) portray interstellar warfare from both sides. The first game in the series challenges the armchair space admiral to thwart the aggression of the Krellan invaders, while the more recent title allows





The game is fantasy. The interface is magic.

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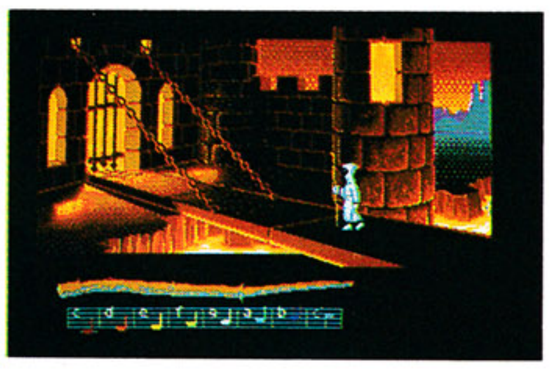

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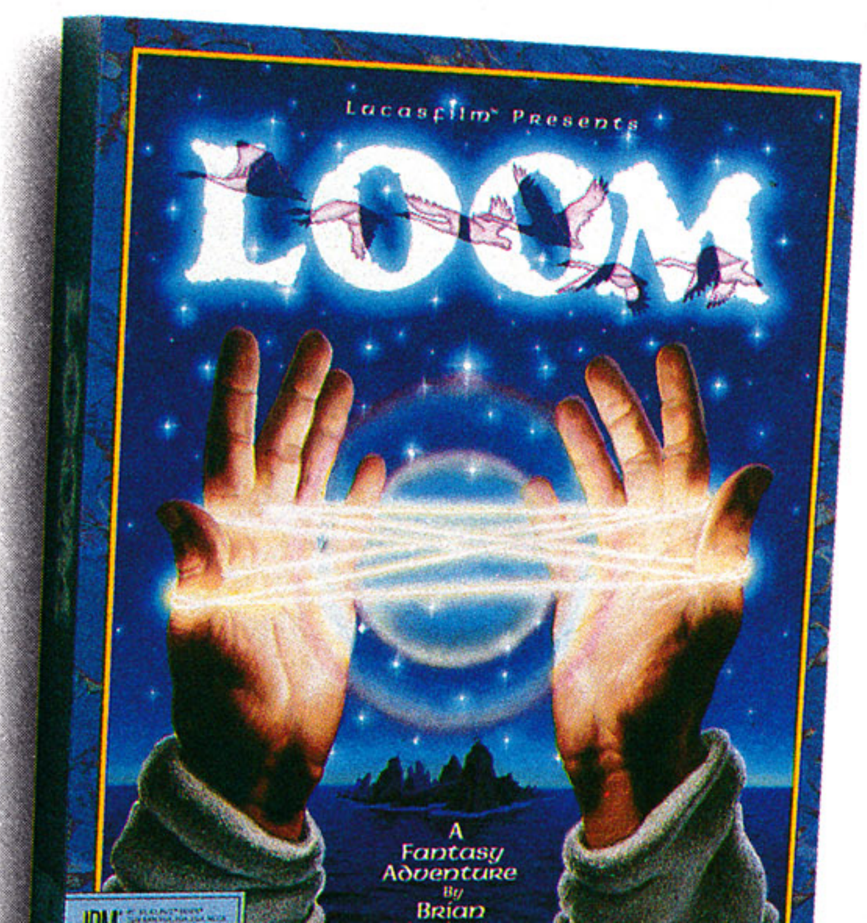

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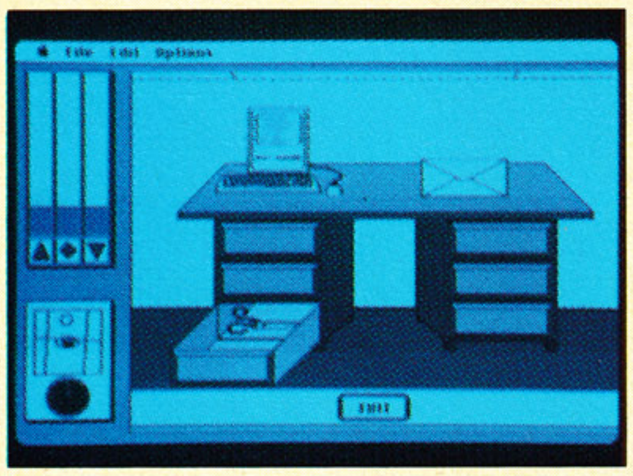
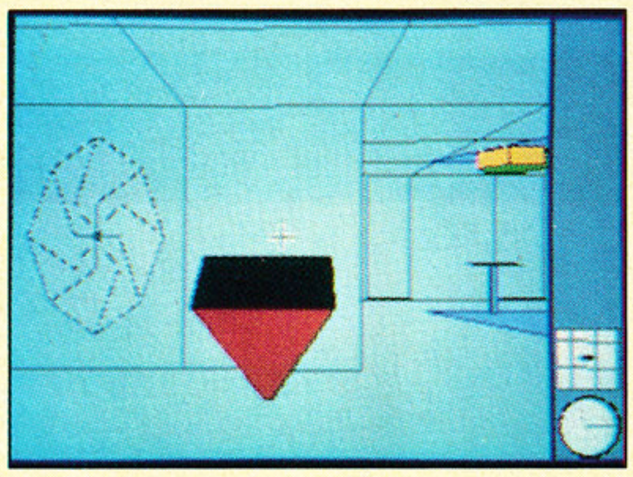
the user to become a Krellan commander and ravage 1,000 Alliance planets ripe for the plucking.

Some space-war games replace first-person involvement with a more encompassing view of the war. These strategic-level simulations feature far less action, but bring a sweep and power to futuristic computer warfare that is missing from games that turn the player into the captain of a single attack formation.





Mindscape's The Colony

A hypothetical tug-of-war between the Alliance of Free Stars and an alien civilization called the 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, has both strategy and arcade action. The player can concentrate on either phase—with the computer handling the other—or perform both types of activity.

Quasar (Virgin Mastertronics for IBM PC and Amiga) is one of the most attractive computer board games ever published. The static screen illustrations and playfields are absolutely beautiful. The various screens incorporate a lot of animation to keep the game visually interesting. The object of *Quasar* is to conquer a planet at the far end of the galaxy. This requires a tremendous build-up of resources, including terra-forming planets to increase the economic and military power of your force.

Reach for the Stars (Strategic Studies Group for IBM PC, Apple II, Apple IIGS, Commodore 64 and Macintosh) unleashes up to four players on an unsuspecting universe as the leaders of interstellar megapowers. The victor is the player who subjugates the biggest slice of territory.

Balanced economic expansion is just as vital as good generalship in this outstanding SF strategy game. It takes planning to set the stage for a brilliant military campaign that sweeps aside opposition.

Reach for the Stars is now in its third edition. The game has greatly benefited from repeated redesign and fine tuning, and it's now one of the best computer board games on the market.

Stellar Crusade (SSI for IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST) chronicles 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.

Each turn in this strategy contest represents three months of real time. Each six-phase turn starts with the "save game" opportunity and continues through the economic phases, the movement phases and finally the results portion of the turn.

A few titles cross the standard hex-grid war game with science fiction. These are probably of greatest interest to military simulationists, but science-fiction fans may find the subject matter more appealing than the Normandy Invasion or the Battle of Gettysburg.

Firezone (PSS for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64) is a lot closer to home. Four late 20th-century powers contest for supremacy using powerful vehicles armed with beam weapons. This hex grid-style war game is probably the best of PSS' three futuristic war games.

A scenario generator lets more advanced gamers alter terrain and forces to concoct new battles. This makes *Firezone* very flexible and promotes replayability because the user controls the size of the action.

Data East's RoboCop

Empire (Interstel for Atari ST and Amiga) lets the computerist command land, sea and air units against up to two rivals. The program can handle two completely independent opponents.

Empire is part of the "Star Fleet universe," though the weaponry is similar to World War II. The rule book outlines the Krellans' "Operation Big Brother" They support a local general who conquers the whole planet and runs it as their puppet. The Alliance response is counterinsurgency.

Players direct eight kinds of military forces: armies, fighter planes, troop transports, submarines, destroyers, cruisers, aircraft carriers and battleships. Special rules provide for naval bombardments, patrols, sentries, hidden movement and sea-based air power.

Empire is a long game. It takes 60 turns to crank out a battleship, so it's not for the casual gamer. Those who relish total immersion in a stimulating strategic environment will love it.

Omega (Origin Systems for IBM PC, Amiga, Apple II, Atari ST and Commodore 64), *Combots* (Avalon Hill for IBM PC) and *BattleDroids* (DataSoft for Commodore 64) all portray mechanized combat in the future, but the similarities pretty much stop there. *Omega* is a minutely detailed simulation of cybertank design and testing, while *BattleDroids* packs the thrills of an action-combat contest. *Combats* is similar to the

Scenes from Omnitrend's Breach 2

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Journey to the far future, to a time when Earth is uninhabitable, and you must find a new home for Mankind. The company that revolutionized combat flight simulation has taken another bold step with *Lightspeed*.

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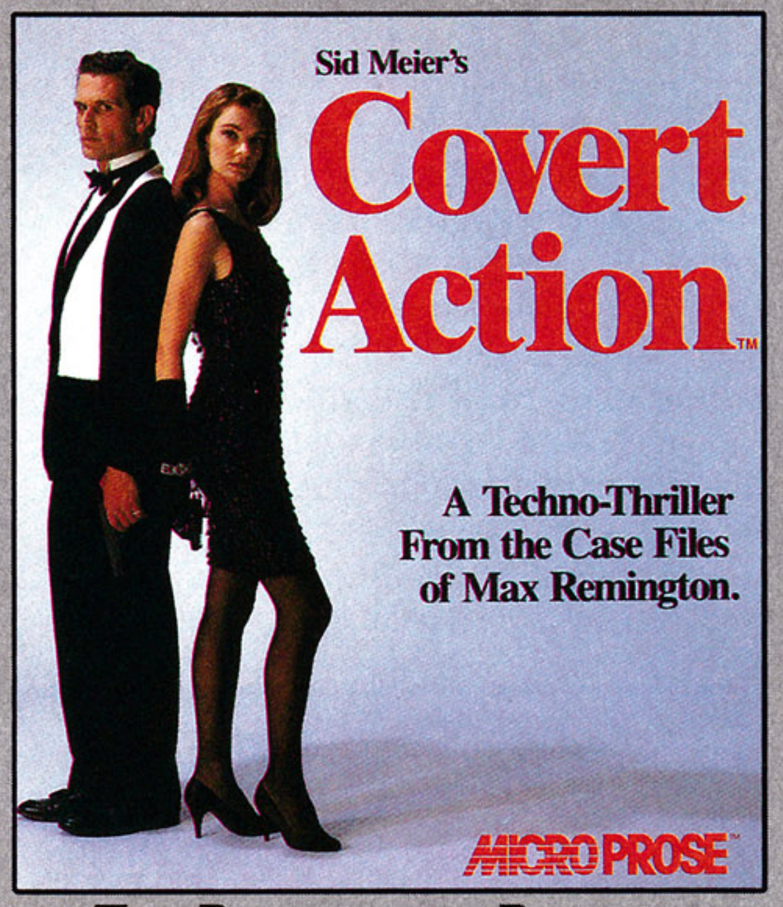

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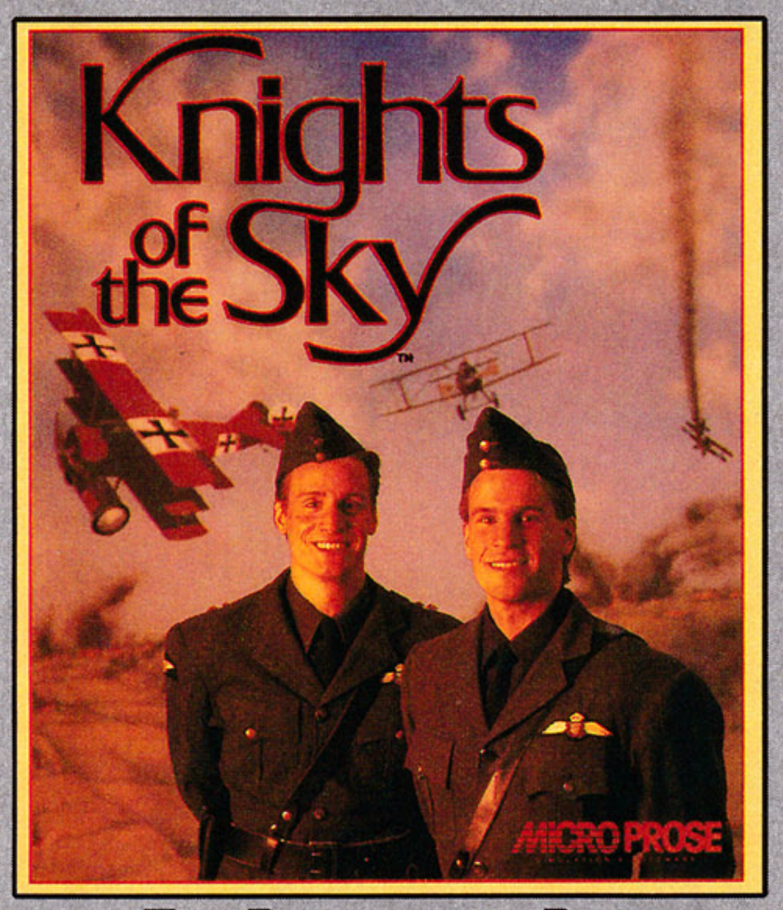

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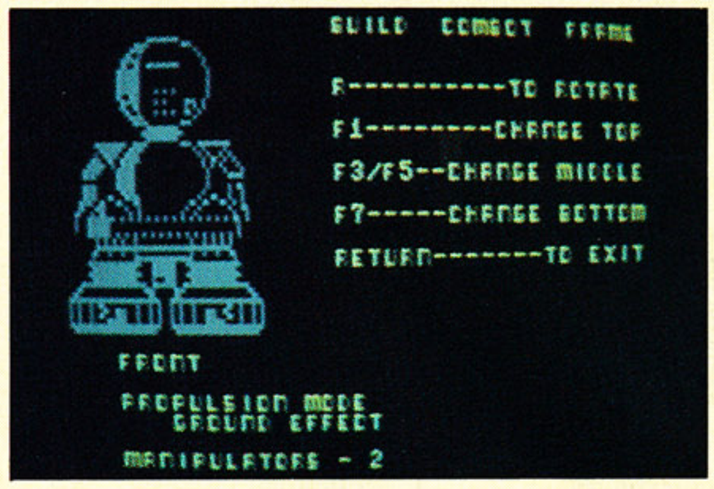
Origin entry in theme, but it not quite as complex and extensive in its simulation of robotank design and combat.

Mechwarrior (Activision for IBM PC) is part of the "BattleTech" universe. It differs from the role-playing 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.

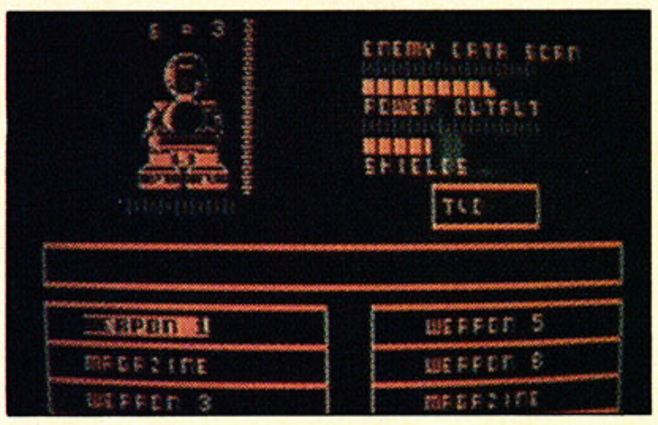
Simulators in Space

More than a decade ago, a first-person flying-and-shooting simulator called *Star Raiders* captured the hearts of electronic gamers. Its stranglehold on players helped make the Atari 800 a popular home computer. *Wingleader* (Origin Systems for IBM PC) could become the *Star Raiders* of the 1990s. Breathtaking graphics, a compelling musical score and hot play action made this the most acclaimed game shown at June's Consumer Electronics Show.

Paul Neurath's *Space Rogue* (Origin



Avalon Hill's Combots



Systems for IBM PC, Amiga, Apple, Atari ST and Macintosh) combines flight simulator and role-playing elements in a single product. The player, as pilot of a Sunracer scout craft, battles enemies in outer space in a 3-D environment and interacts with nonplayer characters on the ground.

UFO (subLogic for all systems) is the latest flight simulator from the publisher whose name is synonymous with this genre. This time around, the player can pierce the veil of mystery that surrounds unidentified flying objects and actually pilot a flying saucer. SubLogic takes the subject more seriously than some skeptics might wish, but taking command of a spaceship is quite a bracing change of pace from electronically flying a Piper Cub or jet fighter.

SF Action

Star Wars (Brøderbund 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 Deathstar.

Powerdrome (Electronic Arts for Amiga and Atari ST) and *Speedball* (Spotlight for IBM PC and Commodore 64) are both futuristic sports games. The former substitutes one-man flyers for motorcycles, while the latter is a team game enlivened by warp tubes, bounce domes and a heavy streak of violence. It's a science-fictional sport that plays like a fast-action arcade game, and is reminiscent of the movie *Rollerball*.

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 and blast everything in their path, to the accompaniment of a thunderous musi-

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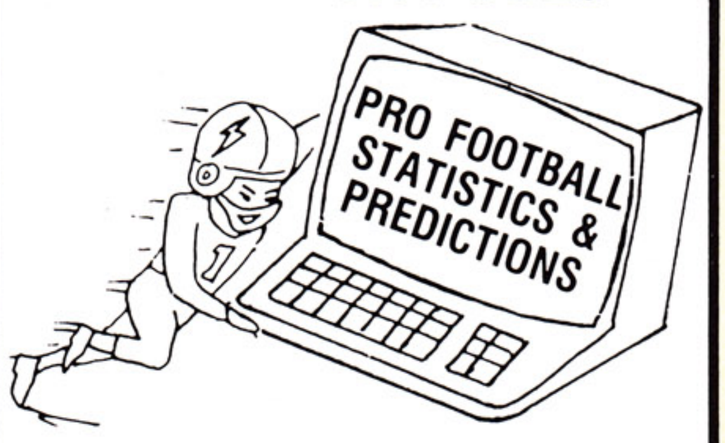

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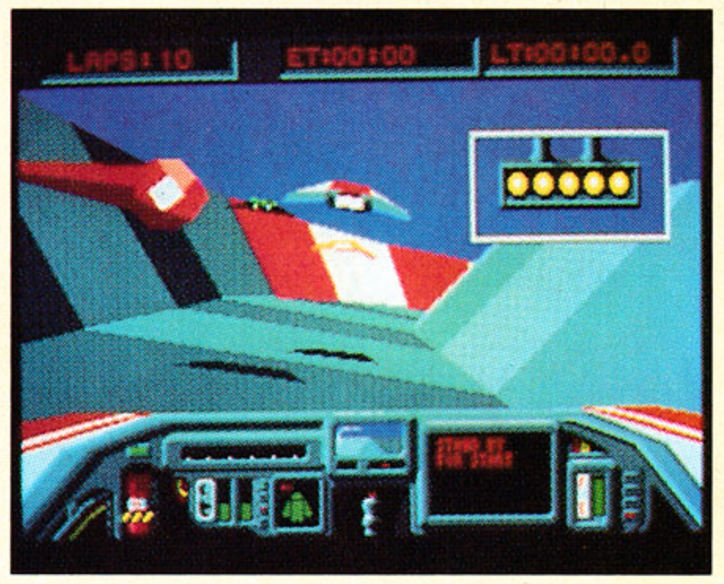
Origin Systems' Omega

cal score. Entrance spaces allow joystick jockeys to descend to subterranean levels of the planet Terrainia to battle even denser concentrations of Barrax Empire forces.

Only slightly more cerebral is *Silpheed* (Sierra for IBM PC). The Super Air Fighter SA-08 needs all the extra weapons the player can collect to defeat 15 types of alien craft in a 20-level marathon slugfest. Music by Bob Siebenberg (Supertramp) is, of course, lightyears ahead of the usual game



Electronic Arts' Powerdrome

sound and creates a distinctive ambience.

Science fiction is only a background theme for *Beyond the Black Hole* (Software Toolworks for IBM PC) and *Arkanoid* (Taito-Discovery for all computer systems). Both of these excellent abstract strategy games have futuristic themes, but they don't get in the way of the wall-bashing play-mechanic these programs employ.

Beyond the Black Hole boasts a satisfying pseudo-3-D effect, while *Arkanoid* enlarges the basic concept of whacking a wall with a ball à la *Breakout*. Both fail miserably as science fiction, but are total triumphs as games.

Captain's Log

Even an article of this length can only cover some of the high spots in computer science-fiction gaming. And a dozen new titles will come onto the market by the time this issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT reaches readers. Fortunately for science-fiction fans, it's a safe prediction that this is one game theme that will continue to be as plentiful as space rocks in the asteroid belt.

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CIRCLE #154 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

THE FUTURE OF CD GAMES

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. In this issue he continues the discussion on interactive compact discs and also discusses just what kind of games we'll be playing on this equipment.

Let's assume that skeptics of interactive CD (compact disc) systems are wrong, and the presidents of most of the leading software companies are right. By 1992 there will be several CD-ROM systems, including the IBM platforms, the Amiga and the TurboGrafx-16. In addition, Philips plans to have its interactive CD machine in the market by then. There could be some other systems, but these are all reasonably sure bets.

So far, there's been a lot of talk about the capabilities of the hardware and little information concerning the nature of the software. Publishers are staking big money on this bet, and none want to tip their plans to a competitor. As mentioned in last month's *Inside Gaming*, the development cycle for CD games is twice as long as for conventional computer- or video-game titles. No companies want to spend 18 months on a CD project that gets blindsided by imitators as soon as it hits the stores.

It's always interesting to hear about new, super-gaming gadgets, but in the long run, it's the software that matters. If that weren't true, technologically superior hardware would always crush the less-advanced system.

Yet time and again, high-quality software has triumphed over state-of-the-art hardware. The Odyssey^2 had a keyboard and twice the memory of the Atari 2600, which rode a gigantic cartridge library to video-game dominance. More recently, the Nintendo NES outsold the Sega Master System, despite the latter's better graphics, more than ten to one.

The Look of Tomorrow

The electronic-gaming industry's catchphrase is "live-action video." Talk to a product vice-president about the CD for more than ten minutes, and watch him or her slip into a reverie about the TV-quality images of the games the company plans to do "some day."

Several outfits now have small, but completely professional, movie studios where they can shoot footage for forthcoming games with live-action video graphics. Stars like Eddie Murphy and Jack Nicholson have received offers to "star" in CD games, and there'll be plenty of actors, both stars and bit players, who will record scenes for interactive-entertainment products. We've already had a foretaste of this technique in conventional computers: *Crime Wave* (Access) and *David Wolf: Secret Agent* (Dynamix) for example.

Live-action video, comparable in quality to a TV show, is what every company wants to do on CD, but the equipment that's likely to become available in the next year or so isn't equal to the task. The bandwidth of the image and the slow disk-access speed combine to limit CD-ROM's ability to show human figures in motion.

The technology easily accommodates animation of drawn images, however. So the first knock-your-socks-off game visuals will probably look more like a Saturday morning cartoon series than an episode of *Dallas* or *L.A. Law*.

Few CD game makers can resist the lure of real video images. Some publishers will hunt for ways around current limitations until the research scientists can bring forth a more powerful generation of machines.

That suggests two major roles for video graphics in 1990-1992 CD titles:

• Background Scenes

In driving games, the track, stands and roadside objects could be done with video, and the same technique could be used for flight simulators and sports contests. Careful arrangement of frames on the CD somewhat lessens the access time, which makes it possible to shift these backgrounds fast enough for use in an action game.

• Still Pictures

If the digitized video isn't animated, all of the CD's problems disappear completely. *MicroLeague WWF Wrestling* (MLSA) is a computer sports-strategy game that displays a sequence of still frames to illustrate the results of the two combatants' ring strategies.

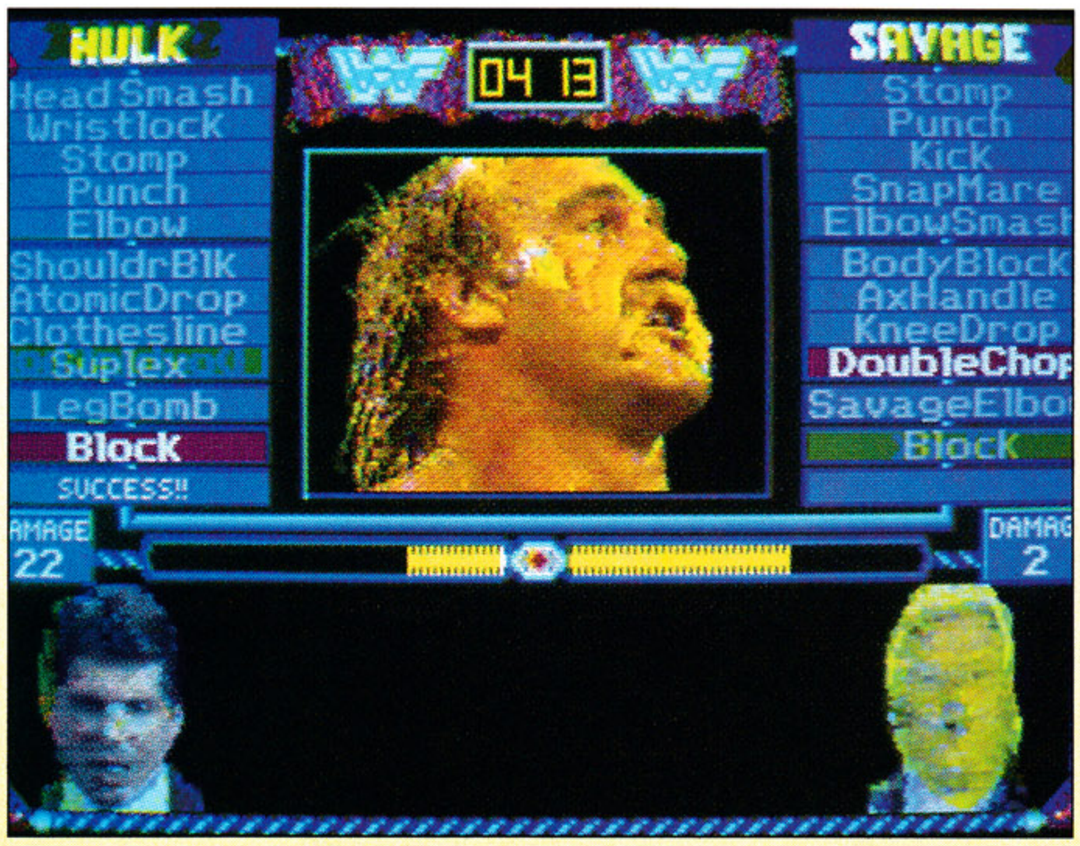
The wrestling game presents only three or four frames per move due to the memory cap. A CD pushes the limit through the roof. A similar game for the CD medium could easily quadruple the number of frames per hold. That would produce a more coherent, more closely connected sequence than is possible on a home computer with a standard magnetic disk drive.

The Sound of CD Gaming

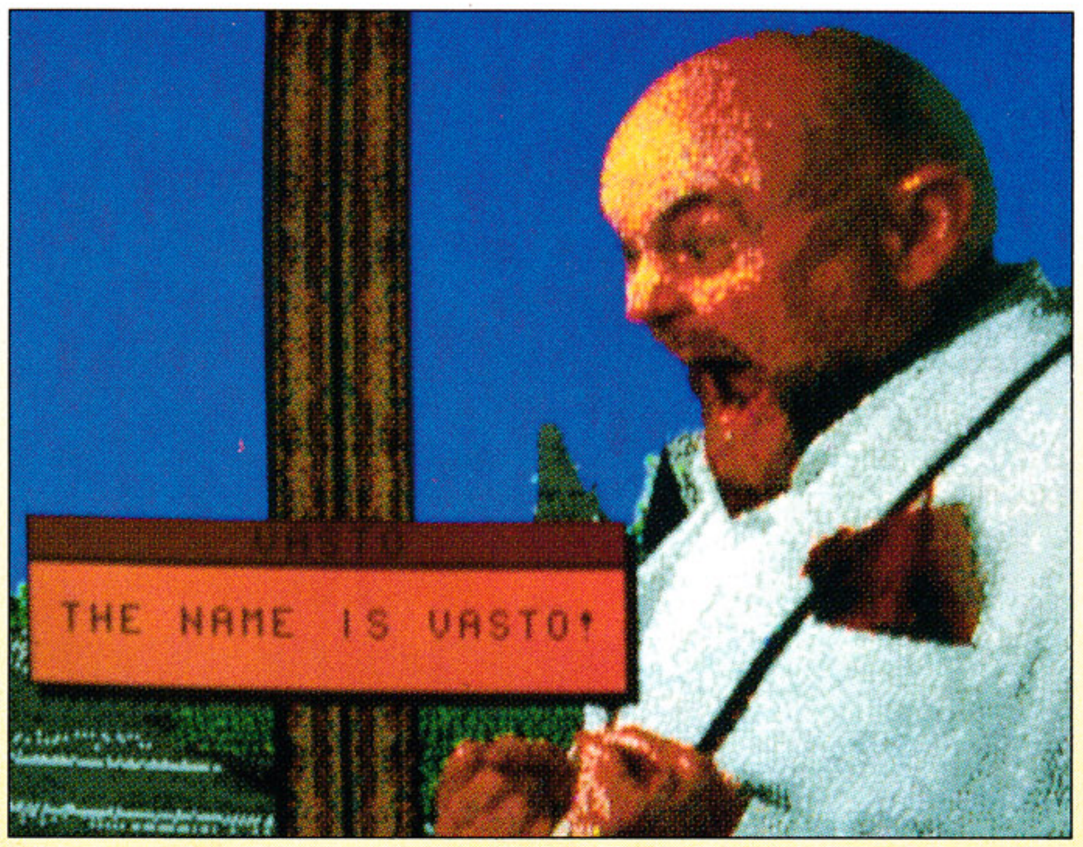
Graphics may fall short of some initial expectations, but I don't expect anyone to be disappointed about the audio. After all, CD's first use was as a replacement for phonograph records and recorded tapes. Stereo CD music, sound effects and even speech set a new standard for electronic gaming.

The best thing about CD audio is that it doesn't use nearly as much memory as the equivalent amount of graphics. You could create adventure games, for instance, in which the characters actually converse with each other instead of communicating with word balloons.

The mid-1990s could be the golden age of game sound. Audio is the easiest aspect of a CD game design to implement, so publishers who want to differentiate CD from computer and video games in the minds of consumers will naturally exploit sound to the fullest possible extent. "You



MicroLeague's* WWF Wrestling *was one of the first to use digitized images to make a game appear more realistic than traditional computer graphics.



The ground-breaking* David Wolf: Secret Agent, *by Dynamix, was described in the March 1990* VG&CE *as "absolute state of the art in computer entertainment."

can't do *that* with a video game!" will be an often heard sales claim by 1992.

Few designers have utilized sound as a play element in computer and video games. That means the field is wide open for CD products. Role-playing games and adventures can make excellent use of audio to provide clues that are more subtle than putting an object on a table or in a treasure chest.

Access'* Crime Wave *offers the best VGA animations to date, which were accomplished by digitizing the moves of actual actors and actresses rather than "creating" the graphics.

Popular Genres

Adventures will be the most important category of CD games, at least for the next couple of years. The action-adventure format, widely used in both video and computer gaming today, will lose some of its popularity to a mutation of the format Sierra On-Line pioneered with *The Wizard and the Princess*. Yes, the illustrated adventure will stage a comeback, but it won't be a rerun of the original concept.

This time, illustrated adventures will have full speech, video-quality pictures and an icon-driven interface. Illustrated adventures lost out last time because of the player's inability to interact directly with the graphics. This limitation also exists in CD-based illustrated adventures, but there's so much else happening that publishers hope gamers won't find the barrier between themselves and the visuals as annoying.

Another reason adventures will be popular is that they are easy and cheap to develop. A tree-branching plot is the kind of thing the current CD equipment handles best. The arcade classic *Dragon's Lair* may also be the shape of things to come for home CD-gaming.

Data storage is another thing CD systems handle exceptionally well, so expect strategy games that capitalize on this strength. That means lots of detailed economic simulations, statistics-based sports and military titles.

Complexity won't be a problem from the gamers' point of view. The industry perceives CD as the basis for a mass market that is larger than video and computer-gaming combined. That makes ease of play a major priority.

Cinemaware, known for the intuitive feel of its games, is working on at least seven CD projects, and that's a strong indication of the type of game experts believe will succeed in the new medium.

CDs won't instantly revolutionize action games. Blast brigaders will be in their glory when the next wave of hardware rolls in at mid-decade, but until then, CD action won't be that much hotter than today's computer and video games. The sound will be better, and many will offer more levels and other enhancements, but the initial CD-based action games will use the CD disk as the storage medium for a conventional program, rather than milk the potential of the CD itself for better action contests.

Besides souped-up versions of popular coin-op, video and computer action hits, I anticipate quite a few game anthologies. Bundling a dozen or so existing games won't cost the publisher much, and it will help build CD software libraries. CD software isn't cheap, and most publishers like the idea of having at least a few value-oriented items in the line.

My belief, as a designer and as a game player, is that the CD is destined to reshape the entire field of interactive electronic entertainment. This medium offers more of what most gamers want in a simple-to-use format.

Here's a prediction that is even more certain: When CD games are a reality, not just an exciting promise, VG&CE will be there to separate the good titles from the turkeys.

And me? I'll be here next month with my behind-the-scenes report direct from the Consumer Electronics Show.

Clue

VIRGIN LEISURE GAMES
Version: 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

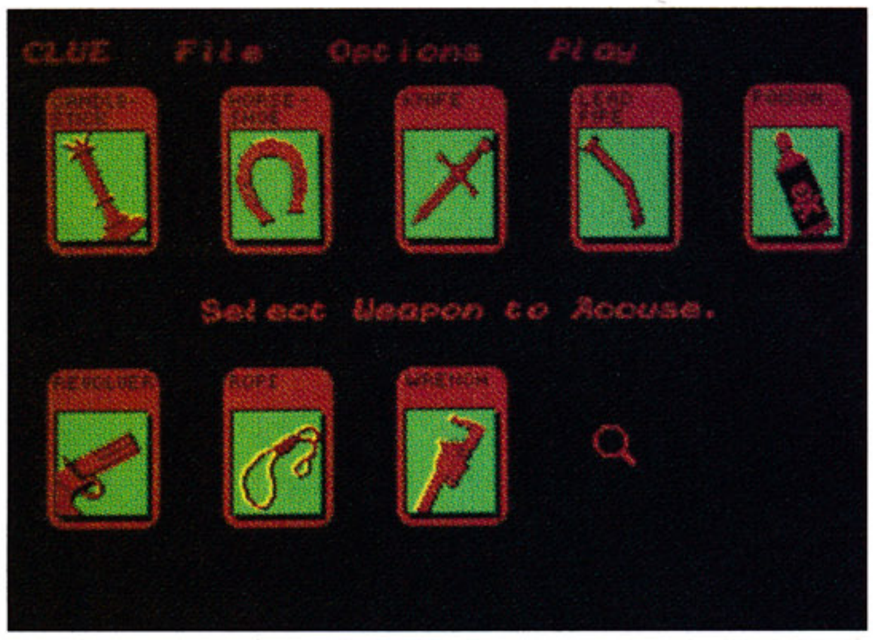
Clue has been a well-loved family game for millions of Americans for many years. Parker Brothers even released a new edition recently, with more areas and possibilities for would-be sleuths everywhere to explore. Considering its level of popularity, it's not surprising that a computer-game company finally converted this classic to the home screen.

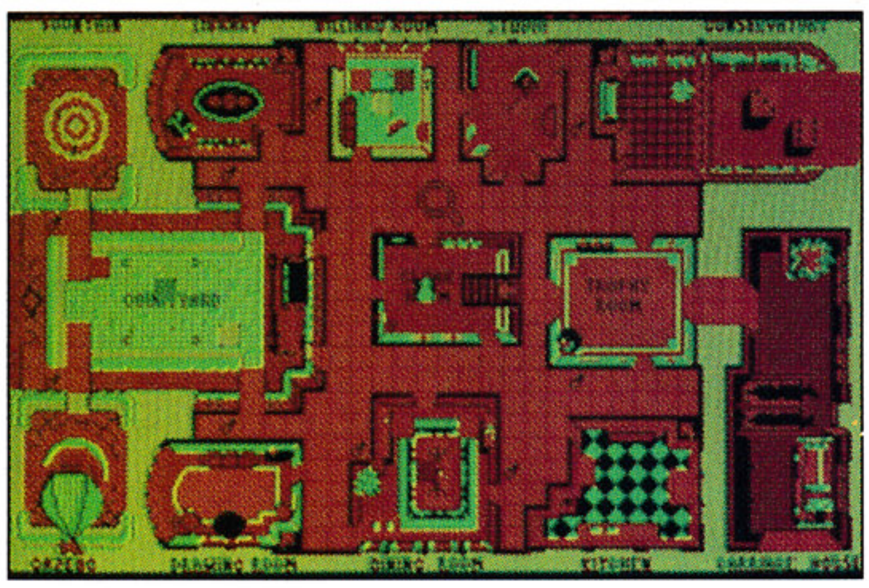
Clue begins just after a dastardly murder in a large estate house. Each player dons a Sherlock Holmes hat and attempts to be the first to discover the murderer, the weapon and the location of the murder. Was it Colonel Mustard in the courtyard with the rope? Or was it Mrs. White in the kitchen with the revolver? Only time will tell.

The game uses a deck of special cards to determine the specifics of each murder. A weapon card, a suspect card and a location card are all selected at the start of the game and set aside. The remaining cards are shuffled and passed out to the active players.

The game unfolds over a series of turns, wherein each player moves in sequence. The gamer moves his on-screen icon the number of spaces indicated by a die total. The main goal of movement is to get into a room, but sometimes a player's turn takes him to a snoop space. These spots allow a player to spy on a random card in the hand of a selected opponent.

When a player gets in a room, he can make a suggestion. Suggestions are the main method of revealing clues. The player proposes a possible combination of weapon and suspect, combined with the current room. If any other players have any matching cards in their hand, they must pass at least one card to the player, who will then note the information and return the cards. Play continues until one person gains enough information to make a correct accusation, naming the weapon, suspect and location of the murder. If a player makes a false accusation, he is taken out of the game and must wait for someone else to solve the mystery.





***Clue*, by Virgin Leisure Games, matches the popular board game in nearly every aspect of play.**

There aren't many sounds in *Clue*, though that is not surprising given the subject of the game. As far as control, either the mouse or the keyboard can be used; each works fairly well.

Unfortunately, the graphics are really not that good. The overall board view is acceptable, but the closeups when a player enters a room are very blocky and lack significant detail. The cards themselves are nicely drawn, but their display screens, as well as the other informative displays, lack the visual pizzazz that most users expect from computer games.

Several play assists are also missing. While a player can print out a sort of crib sheet, nothing comparable is available on-screen for those without a printer. The one available screen does show all the possibilities, checking off those the player has seen. But information inferred from other player's suggestions is not marked. Also, it would have been much better if this list could show who has the card, not just the fact that it is in play.

The computer version falls far short

of the possibilities for this classic game. If you really want to play *Clue*, break out the board version.

—R. Bradley Andrews

Virgin Mastertronic Inc.
18001 Cowan, Suites A & B
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 833-8717

Breach 2

OMNITREND

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($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

Two years ago, Omnitrend introduced *Breach*, a science-fiction squad-level tactical simulation. Although not a new idea to veterans of role-playing games, the program initiated a slew of action/strategy hybrids that sought to attain *Breach*'s level of success. This success came despite a clunky interface that detracted from game play. Unlike film sequels, which rarely attain the reputation of the original release, *Breach 2* is a significant improvement on the original and should receive a warm reception.

The essence of the game is the completion of assigned missions to advance the squad leader's abilities and achieve promotions. All squad leaders begin with low ability ratings. Each is rated for shooting accuracy, cracking ability (skill at obtaining information from enemy computers) and detecting ability (percentage chance that one will detect enemies, mines, etc., at a distance). These skills are necessary in combat and are advanced when the mission objectives are completed.

The computer keeps track of total time of combat, number of marines lost and enemies killed for each squad leader. The figures accumulate for unsuccessful missions as well, unless the squad leader character dies in combat.

Ten scenarios come with the game, and they may be played in any order without limitation on duplication during a squad leader's career. Each scenario possesses a difficulty rating; it is best to stick to easy- or medium-level scenarios until advancement to at least the rank of Lieutenant Commander, then tackle the more challenging scenarios. The easiest method of improving the squad leader's shooting accuracy is to have other squad members soften up the enemy before letting the player-character make some kills of his own.

For additional challenge, a user-friendly builder generates new scenarios that can be saved to disk. Players can create situations for one another, thereby maintaining the "fog of war" and greatly enhancing the product's endurance.

Furthermore, scenarios can be chained together to form campaigns, in which squad leaders may receive field promotions but nothing becomes permanent until the entire series of missions ends. The scenario builder allows a player to attach text to objects and to modify the characteristics of opponents from the preset default values for each of the ten types.

Play takes place from one screen. Three quarters of the display is an overhead view of a 9 x 9 grid around the current marine (a level is a 50 x 50 grid, and scenarios may have up to five levels). Part of the display may be blanked if you're playing on an experience level where line of sight restrictions apply.

The new features of Omnitrend's *Breach 2* make a sizable improvement to the science-fiction, role-playing sequel.

Although it is not exactly spectacular, the graphic display is more than adequate for the task at hand. Thirty-five distinct terrain types are depicted, each of which exacts different movement-point costs. Both the interior furniture and accoutrements, exterior vegetation and rivers and slopes are clearly discernable and provide a believable environment for game play. The remainder of the screen includes a statistic box and several buttons that manipulate various functions (i.e., take, drop, arm, use, etc.). These buttons correspond to keystrokes but may be accessed directly by use of the mouse.

The addition of mouse support, sound-board support and the scenario builder make *Breach 2* a winner for all action/strategy players.

—Ed Dille

Omnitrend
P. O. Box 3
West Simsbury, CT 06092
(203) 658-6917

Ultima VI: The False Prophet

ORIGIN

Versions: Amiga ($69.95), Commodore 64 ($69.95), IBM PC ($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

Origin's *Ultima VI* is so complete that it's hard to figure where the developers will go with the next installment, but you can be sure that its audience will be back for more.

Followers of the *Ultima* series know that each release has been significantly better than the last, but few could have predicted the quantum leap evident in *Ultima VI*, the culmination of the second trilogy. The designers made full use of the 256-color VGA/MCGA palette in the creation of a gaming environment more richly detailed than ever.

Players have virtually limitless freedom to move, examine and otherwise interact with all of the inanimate objects portrayed. Each item has realistic size, weight and even strength attributes (allowing one to hack open that pesky lock, etc.). Objects also possess relationships to one another, making it possible to take wool, spin it into thread and use that to make clothing, for example.

Traditional traveling companions now have well-developed personalities. Dupre swaggers into combat without concern for his safety; Shamino is more cautious, hanging back and harassing his foes with arrows; and Lolo exudes undying loyalty to the Avatar in his every action. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the companions is not only vital to the quest but one of the most enjoyable aspects of the game.

The *Ultima* series explores subtle aspects of the struggle between good and evil. The second trilogy, in particular, has posed serious questions about the misuse of might in the name of holiness. The boundary between good and evil is increasingly drawn in less cohesive shades of gray. Discerning players will draw parallels with the real world. In this manner, the game elevates one's perception almost imperceptibly, without the moralizing postures adopted in some other mediums.

The prologue, a sweeping sequence in VGA, immediately draws players into the game. The soundtrack is sufficiently ominous to allude to the difficulties ahead and supports Ad Lib, Roland, Covox and Innovation Game Blaster sound boards.

Once through the portal to the land of Lord British, the action is displayed from a three-quarters top-down perspective, like a cross between *Prophecy* and *Gauntlet.* A combination of mouse control and pull-down menus provides a smoother interface than ever before. The expanded parser permits more interactive conversations during encounters.

Ultima VI's fiction is so comprehensive, its plot so thought provoking and its mechanics so technically advanced that one wonders where Origin could possibly go from here? Apparently, some of Origin's cards remain unplayed as *Ultima VII* is already in the works. And it's no wonder: Everyone who completes *Ultima VI* will surely come back for more of the same.

—E. D.

Origin Systems
110 Wild Basin Road #330
Austin, TX 78746
(512) 328-0282

Low Blow

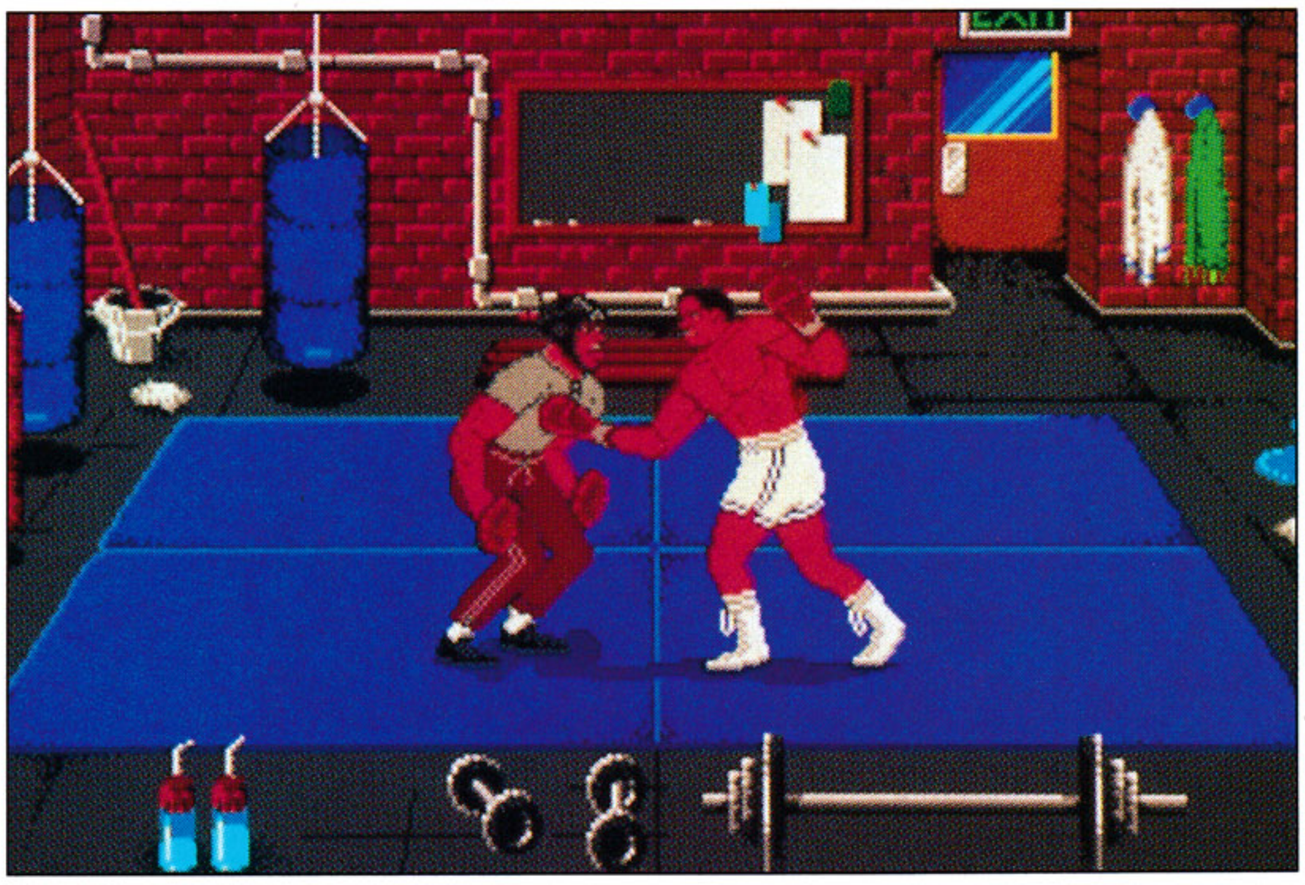
ELECTRONIC ARTS

Version: 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

As the name implies, EA's *Low Blow* stands apart from previous boxing games because of its lax enforcement of the ring rules.

Pugilistic contests abound in gaming, and for the most part, the electronic



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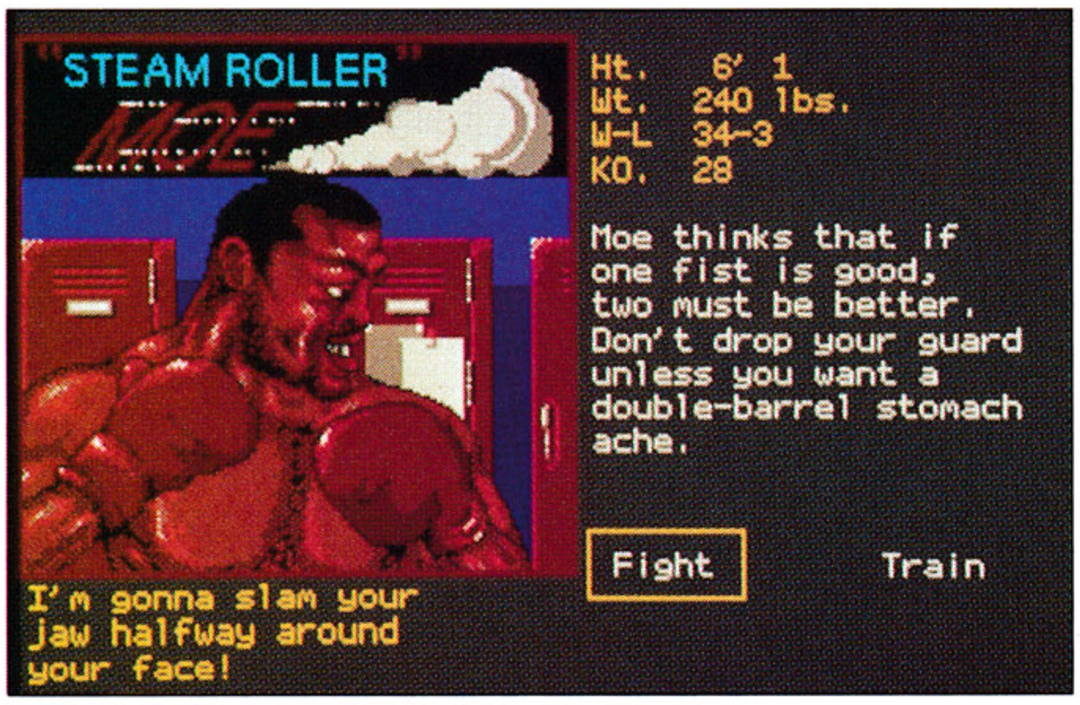


combatants are a gentlemanly lot. The latest boxing game from Electronic Arts puts a twist on the Queensbury Rules: The ability to low-blow an opponent separates *Low Blow* from all the rest. Players box against some pretty dirty fighters, and when the referee's back is turned, get a chance to respond in kind, with kicks, head butts and groin shots.

Players start by selecting a one- or two-player game or a training option in which the player is taught a sequence of moves guaranteed to deck the opponent. Once training is over, the real action begins. At the start of the first round, the computer opponent shows his knockout move. This is the windup to be wary of. If he should connect, it could be big trouble.

Players have four basic moves: the jab, the cross, the uppercut and of course, the low blow. Gamers must execute these moves in varying sequences to find the one that is most effective against the current opponent. Should the player emerge victorious, he or she is pitted against a faster enemy with fewer weaknesses.

The graphics in *Low Blow* are very effective and oftentimes humorous. The various windup routines and facial expressions add much to the playability. However, the main item that separates this game from other boxing games is obviously the ability to kick an opponent where it counts. Players can do this twice and are usually disqualified on the third attempt.

Learning the different techniques is challenging if players avoid the training option. This training takes something away from the strategy of the game since it tells exactly what to do to knock down the player. This shortcut might be desirable in latter bouts, however, as repeatedly pressing the jab and cross buttons becomes tough on the fingers.

Although the music is one-dimensional and the other sound effects fairly straightforward, players shouldn't mind much since there's no real need for these elements in a boxing match. Besides, the fast action and entertaining graphics make up for it. If sporting games are your thing and you've always wanted to play dirty, then *Low Blow* is a must for your collection.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

The opponents you face in *Low Blow* are humorous, but will still give you a tough match.

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

Circuit's Edge

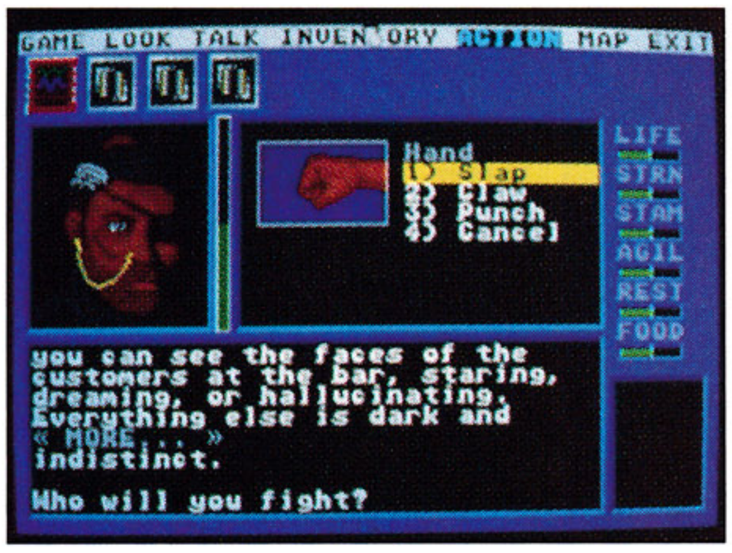
INFOCOM

Version: IBM PC ($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

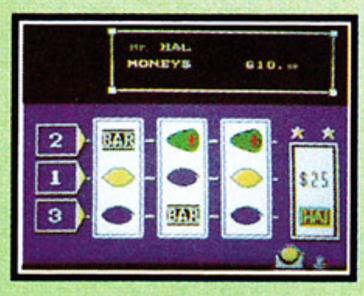
Tired of adventuring through the same old RPG tourist traps? Had it with jaunts through off-the-shelf dungeons full of cardboard characters and generic prizes? Then let me recommend a trip to the Budayeen, a walled, futuristic ghetto redolent with vice, fascinating (if unsavory) residents and a sinister, Casbah-like ambiance.

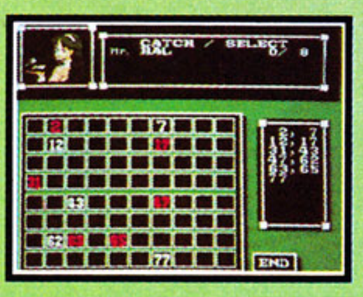
The science-fiction theme in Infocom's *Circuit's Edge* is much different from most other available graphic adventures .



The Budayeen, which exists in an unnamed Islamic metropolis in the 23rd century, is the fictional creation of science-fiction author George Alec Effinger. The protagonist Marid Audran, a ne'er-do-well private investigator with a weakness for drugs and friends in all the wrong places, makes a refreshing

VEGAS DREAM IS HERE!





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Available April, 1990.

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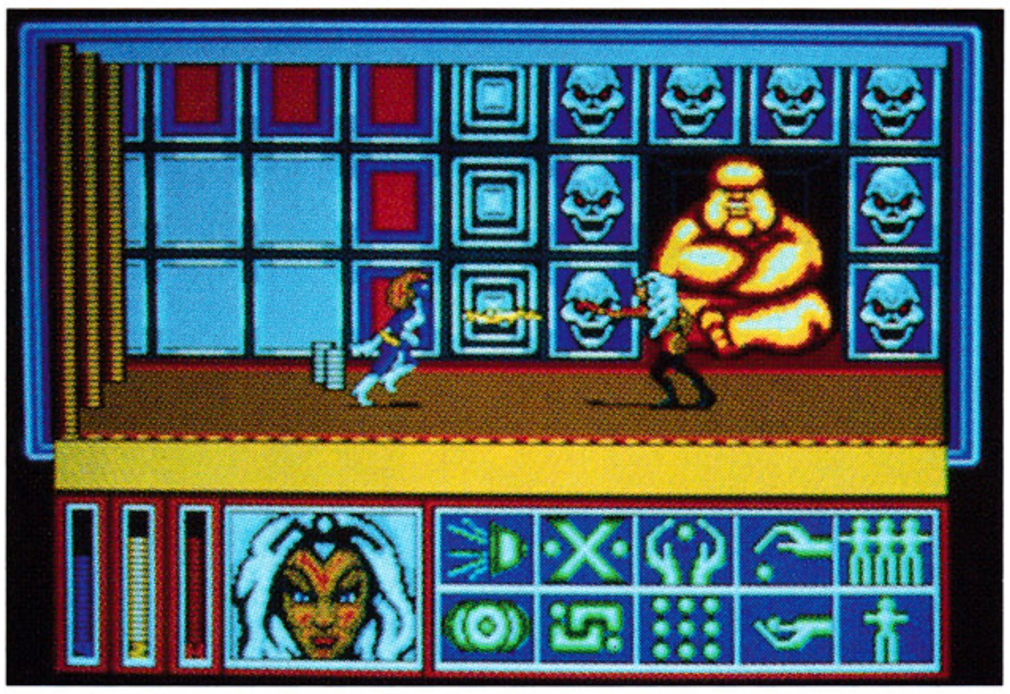
change of pace as a player-surrogate, and Effinger's Budayeen is a marvelously atmospheric hellhole.

Circuit's Edge also explores new ground as the first adventure set in an Islamic environment. We don't just get the trappings, either. The characters, their lifestyles and their behavior are all steeped in the traditions of Islam, though Marid, an Algerian refugee, actually has both a Western appearance and philosophy. The cafes, gambling dens and hotels that fill the landscape all bear a distinctly Arabian cast.

Circuit's Edge, by Effinger and Westwood Associates, is no sterile adventure. Although it's been somewhat toned down compared to the original stories—especially in regard to Marid's fondness for narcotics—this is a courageous and innovative attempt to bring a new level of gritty realism to computer adventuring.

The game interface is a marvel of simplicity. After a few minutes of experimentation, the user grooves through the Budayeen like a native. On-screen you will find a character window containing Marid's face, unless he is interacting with another character, in which case that face appears; a location window, offering a first-person view of exterior and interior locales; a text window; menus; a map window; bio-scanner monitors, which detail Marid's physical status; and chip sockets. Chips, selected from the chip-rack menu, provide personality-altering effects and temporary knowledge. Marid has custom chips that control hypothalamic functions, allowing him to tune out hunger, fear, thirst and pain.

The characters Marid encounters are a delightful and varied crew. Bill the taxi driver is a drugged-out hack. Fuad is a scrawny, luckless flunky, an all-purpose gofer for the denizens of the ghetto. Blanca is a sexchange who dances on the club circuit. Fatima and Nassir own the Red Light Lounge, a trouble spot notorious even in the Budayeen. Friedlander Bey, a/k/a "Papa," the secret master of the district, is the main conduit for vice and corruption in an area renowned for those commodities. These are just a few of the characters Marid must deal with in order to stay alive in the Budayeen.



***Circuit's Edge* is perhaps the most playable computer adventure that has come out during 1990.**

Circuit's Edge is perhaps the most playable new adventure of the year; a journey to a strange and dangerous place full of dark alleys, madmen and all-purpose depravity. It also marks the most successful collaboration ever between an established writer and a computer-development group. At the very least, *Circuit's Edge* is a delightful change of pace from puzzle dungeons, dragons, wizards and warriors. Check it out. Who knows, the Budayeen might turn out to be your kind of place!

—Bill Kunkel

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

After Burner

MINDSCAPE

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95), Commodore 64 ($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 After Burner* has been familiar to video gamers for a few years, but now computerists can partake in the high-flying excitement as well.**

After Burner quickly shot to the top of the list of quarter-eaters when Sega released the original arcade version. Strong graphics, good game play and a control yoke that shook violently when the plane was hit combined for a great gaming experience. Many a player spent hours in the local arcade trying to master this beast and become the top jet-jockey in the neighborhood. Now, through a license agreement with Sega, Mindscape has brought *After Burner* to home computers.

Unlike most computer-flight simulators, which simulate every last detail of the jet-flying experience, *After Burner* concentrates mainly

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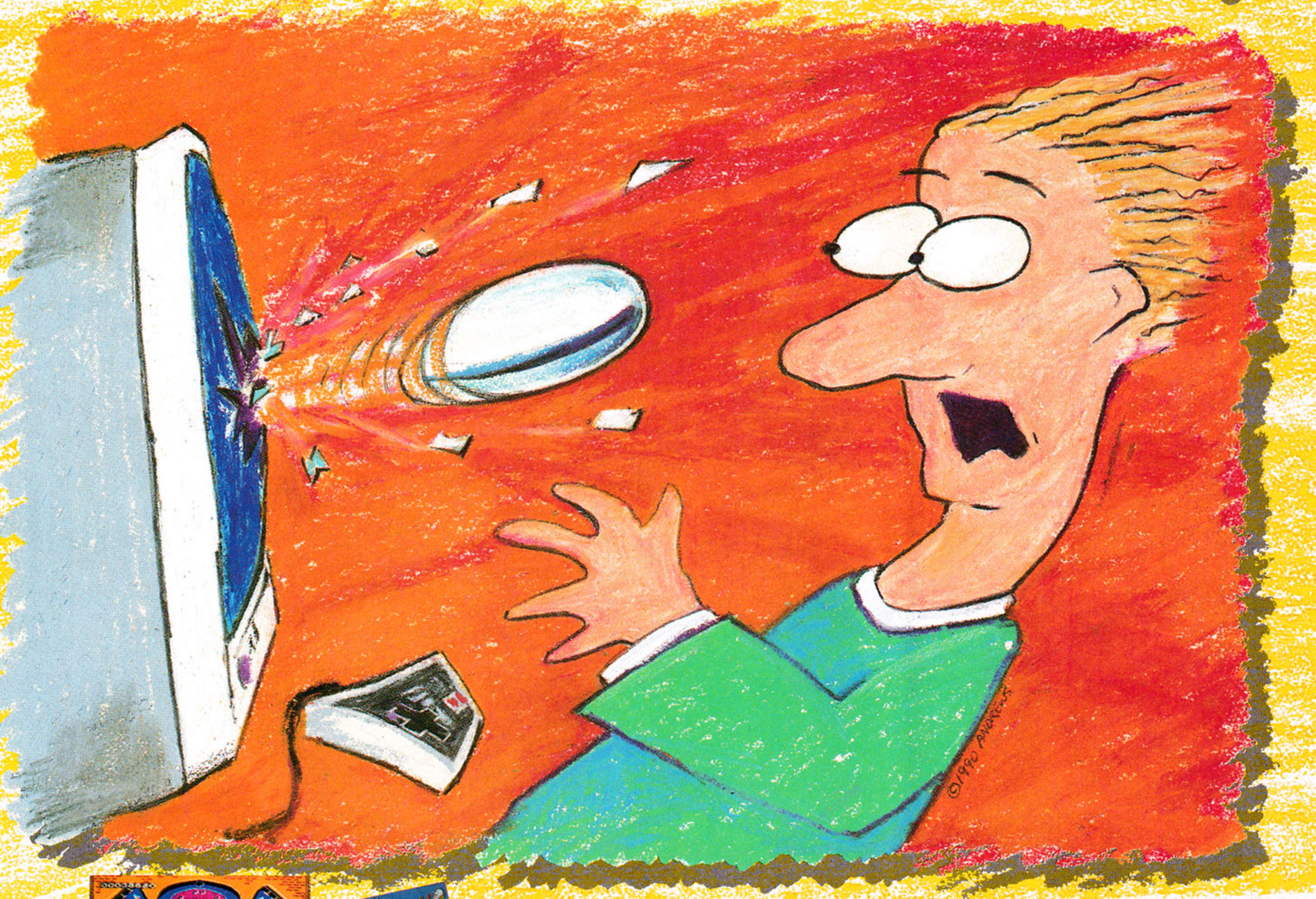
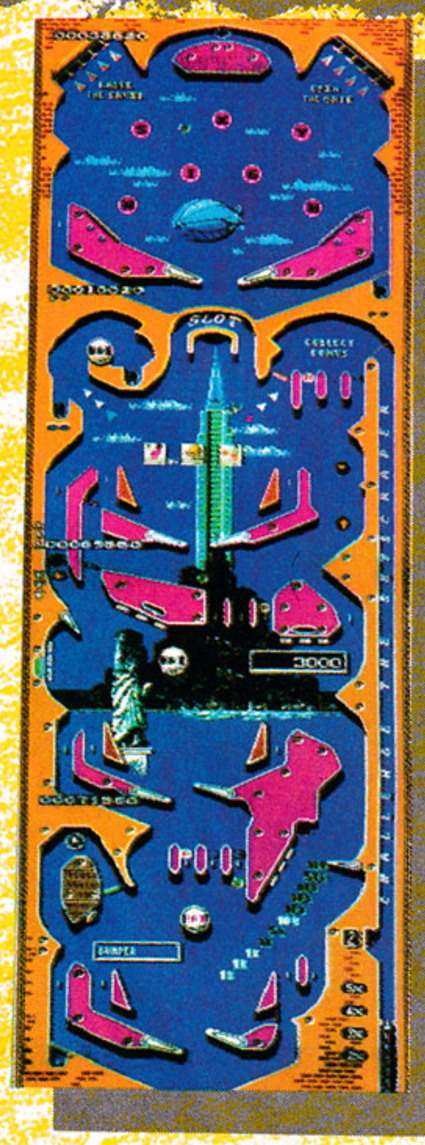
COMIN' AT YA!





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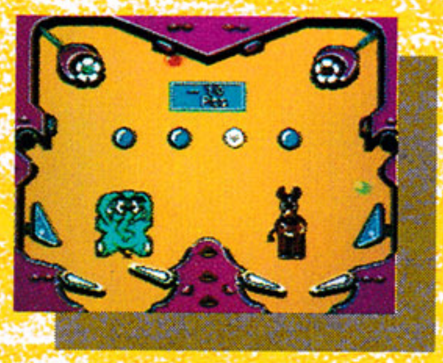

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CKVAA

continued from page 150

on shooting down bogeys. The actual mechanics of flight take a back seat to the thrills of combat. Though the plane may bank to the left or right, it still flies in a fairly straight line. In fact, with the exception of the IBM PC version, the computer even takes care of controlling the jet's speed.

In *After Burner*, the player assumes the role of pilot in an F-14 ThunderCat jet. From the moment of launch from the deck of an aircraft carrier, the unnamed enemy (presumably Soviet MiGs) prey upon the gamer. The player must dive, climb and roll to dodge the enemy fire, firing back whenever the enemy jets get in the F-14's gunsights.

To combat the enemy, the F-14 ThunderCat is equipped with 20-mm rapid-fire Vulcan machine guns and air-to-air homing missiles. These missiles must be locked onto a target before they are fired, or else they streak uselessly off into the sunset. Once all the jets in a round are cleared, bonus points are awarded for each one shot down. Then it's off to the next round, stopping occasionally to refuel and restock the weapon supply.

The graphics in *After Burner* are first-rate, worthy of the arcade original. The jets are drawn realistically, and in the heat of battle the missiles almost seem to be heading out of the screen. The top of the field displays the current score, along with the number of jets shot down. The bottom shows the number of jets left, along with how much ammunition remains. An airspeed indicator is also provided, though it's pretty useless considering that the computer controls speed in most versions. The scenery on the ground scrolls by fast, but what can be seen of it looks good.

After Burner's musical score is excellent, particularly on the Amiga, which takes full advantage of the stereo sound. The music succeeds at drawing the experience. Realistic sound effects accompany the exploding enemy jets as they streak toward a fiery grave.

Compared to the wide range of options in flight simulators such as Spectrum Holobyte's excellent Falcon, *After Burner*'s rudimentary control system may seem too primitive and restrictive. However, for gamers who find more realistic programs daunting in their complexity, this may be just right.

—Michael Holda

Mindscape
19808 Nordhoff Place
Chatsworth, CA 91311
(818) 885-9000

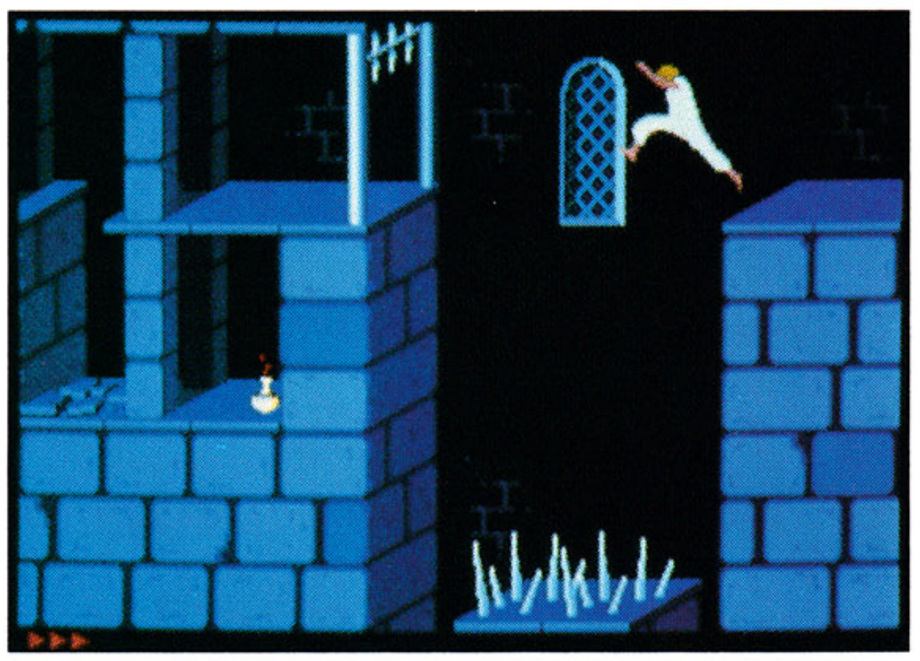
Prince of Persia

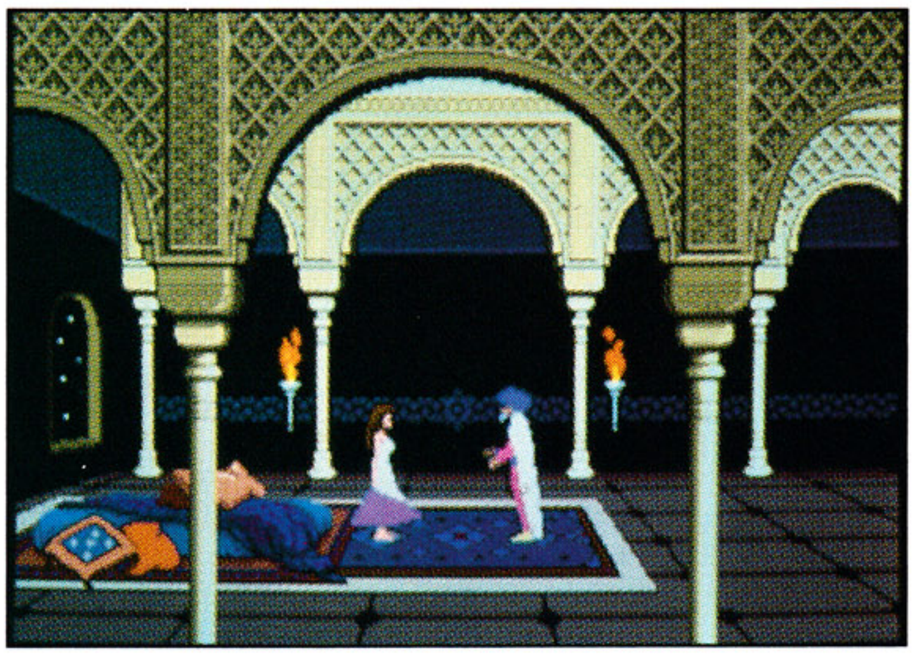
BRØDERBUND

Version: 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

The creator of Brøderbund's early hit *Karateka* has struck again with *Prince of Persia*, an arcade-adventure masterpiece.





Jordan Mechner has been widely regarded as the uncrowned king of computer-character animation since the publication half a decade ago of *Karateka*, his classic martial-arts action-adventure. And now, with the arrival of his latest masterwork, *Prince of Persia*, the issue has been pretty much decided.

The movement of characters within this duo-directional scrolling action-adventure redefines state of the art. You've never seen such realism in a computer or video game. Characters run, jump, hoist themselves up or down levels, dangle from overhangs, tiptoe and duel with a fluid, human grace that will have users rubbing their eyes in disbelief.

Mechner apparently made extensive photographic studies of human movement, in the same vein as many film animators who use a technique called rotoscoping to achieve realistic movement in cartoons. Rotoscoping, originally developed by Walt Disney Studios, was most recently employed by Ralph Bakshi for his movie version of *Lord of the Rings*. Human actors are filmed, then animators trace over them, taking special care to duplicate the breakdown of each human movement. Whatever the means used, the results in this game are downright phenomenal.

Prince of Persia revolves around a simple plot somewhat reminiscent of *Karateka*. The player, cast as a foreign adventurer, is tossed weaponless into the dungeon of the wicked Grand Vizier Jaffar, who will marry the beautiful Princess in one hour if our hero doesn't stop him. The hour ticks off in real time,

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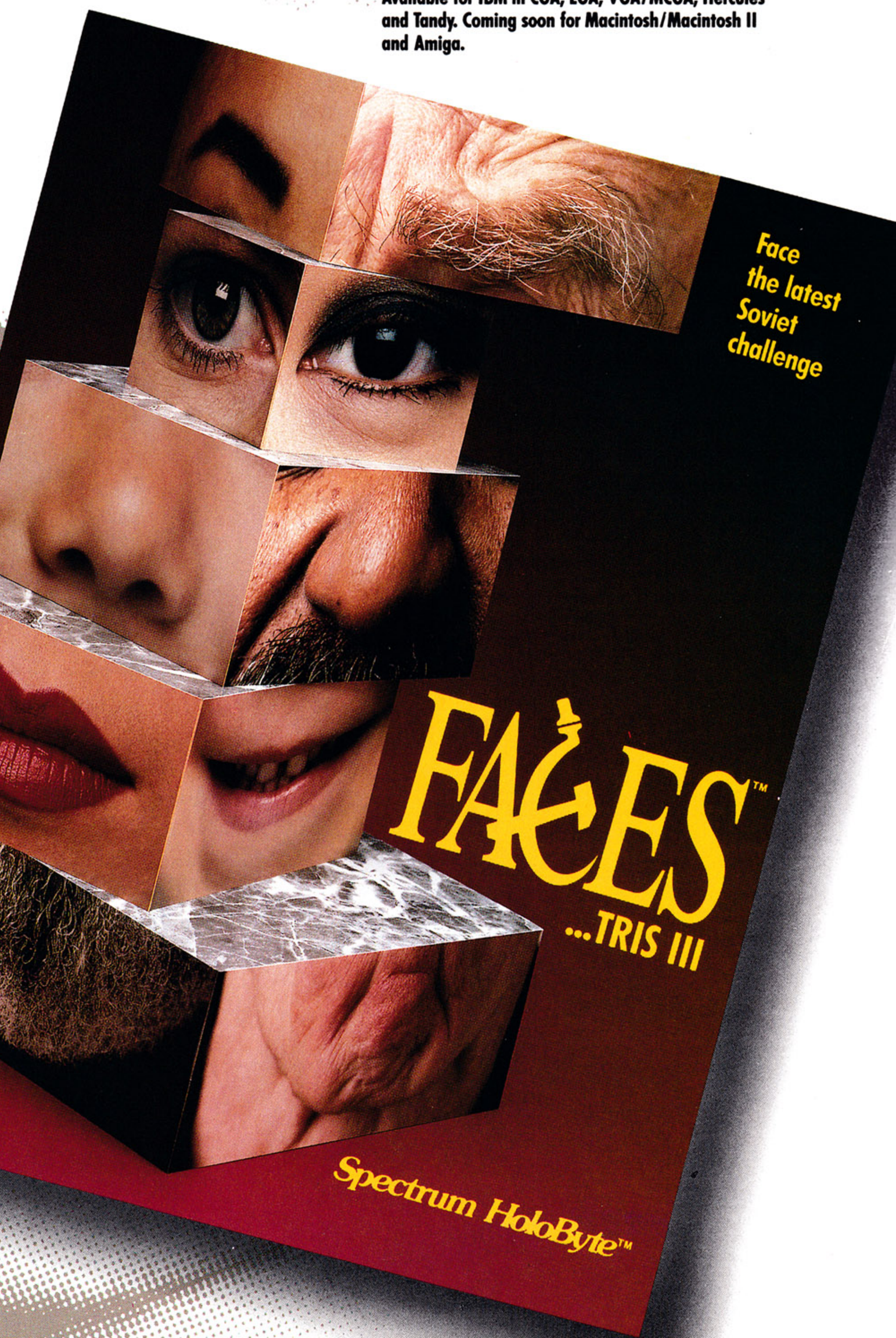
Rack up the score by making perfect or mixed faces, but remember there are no points for "double chins" in this game! For an unparalleled, fun time, play FACES in the head-to-head mode. When you create a perfect face, your opponent gets a stack of face pieces dumped onto his screen. It's funny, it's obsessive, and you'll keep coming back for more of this soon-to-be-unforgettable FACES from the Soviet Union!

Available for IBM in CGA, EGA, VGA/MCGA, Hercules and Tandy. Coming soon for Macintosh/Macintosh II and Amiga.



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and the player-character must escape the dungeons, advance through the main palace and reach the Princess' tower prison before it elapses.

The game's first level comprises the player-character's effort to move through the labyrinthian dungeons, obtain a sword, then return and fight the armed guard who blocks passage to the palace. In an intriguing anti-piracy effort, no copy protection is invoked until after the player completes the first level, at which time a keyword system is used (unfortunately, the keyword system was slightly flawed in the first batch of copies but has been subsequently corrected). It's tough to imagine anyone playing through the first level of this game and then not buying it just to see what happens next.

The graphics depict three horizontal corridor levels on each screen, presented in slightly angled side perspective, with some scenery continuing above and/or below the on-screen area, made visible by vertical scrolling. Access to various areas within each scenario is sometimes blocked by an iron gate that can be opened and closed by stepping on the appropriate triggering device (such as loose floorboards).

The game's only real drawback is that it cannot be saved until the player reaches the third level. However, the player-character can be indefinitely reincarnated (until the hour has expired) at the beginning of each level on which he died.

Prince of Persia plays in any IBM or Tandy graphics mode and supports the various sound boards, including the Ad Lib. Before the end of the year, it should also be programmed for Apple and Amiga computers. It's a technological triumph and tremendous fun to play.

—B. K.

Brøderbund
17 Paul Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 492-3200

Blasteroids

TENGEN

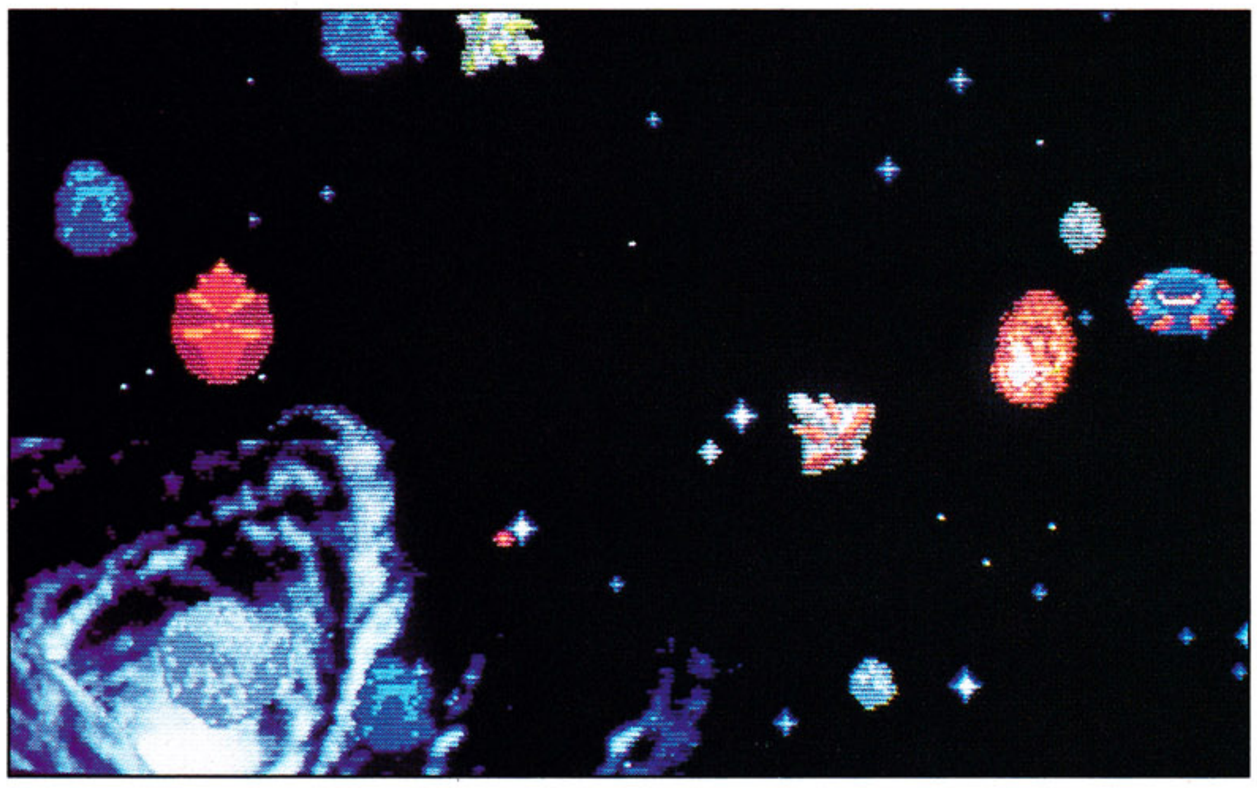
Versions: Amiga ($34.95), Atari ST ($34.95), IBM PC ($34.95), Commodore 64 ($27.95)

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

With all the games available for the Atari ST and Amiga, you'd think that everything had been done. Surprisingly, one entire class of games was virtually left out of the flood of entertainment software for these two superior machines—asteroid-smashing. However, with the introduction of *Blasteroids*, Tengen has effectively filled this void with a fast-action, colorfully animated offering.

The player selects between levels of difficulty, called warps, in the first screen. Even medium warp is plenty hard, and there are two tougher levels beyond it. Once a warp is selected, the gamer picks which of the ten zones to clear first. Strategy goes into this decision: If zones are completed in the wrong order, precious fuel is wasted traveling through empty ones. However, some sections contain special bonuses that can make all the difference in winning the game.

The ship is controlled by joystick, pressing the stick left and right to rotate or forward to engage the thrusters. As in the original *Asteroids*, there are no brakes on this ship—reverse direction and fire the thrusters to slow down.



Just as it did for the video-game world, Tengen is now bringing Atari's classic arcade games, such as *Blasteroids*, to the computer realm.

There are three kinds of craft: The fighter is a good all-around craft with moderate armor and excellent firepower; the speeder is the fastest, but only lightly armored; and the warrior is heavily armored, but with little firepower. The degree of armor protection impacts how much energy is lost when the ship collides with an object. Each collision costs energy, and when all the energy is gone, the ship is then lost.

Pressing the fire button shoots in the direction the ship is pointing, and there is plenty to aim at! Besides the standard asteroids that burst into smaller parts when hit, there are enemy ships, popcorn asteroids (get bigger each hit until they freeze in place to become formidable obstacles) and some nasty surprises like eggs that release a stream

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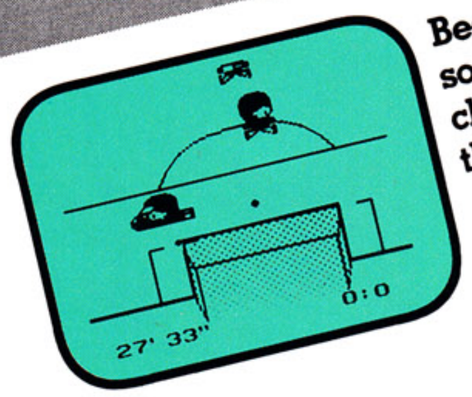

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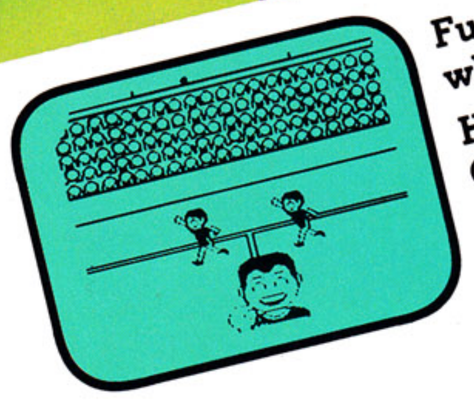

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of leeches when they explode. Clearing a screen brings up a portal that allows the player to choose the next zone to be cleared.

There are bonus objects galore on the screen: energy pellets that come out when red asteroids are destroyed, double firepower, shields, extra fuel and special weapons. Some of these objects are used immediately (like the shields), while some should be saved for an opportune moment.

Once the player manages to clear all the zones, it's time to go one-on-one with a really mean opponent. Mukor is an ugly, giant head with tubes sticking out. These tubes must be shot off before he is vulnerable—not an easy trick. He tries to ram the ship, costing lots of energy, and he also sends out little leeches to absorb fire and collide with the player's vehicle. Once the gamer blasts all the tubes off Mukor, he is vulnerable. A few well-placed shots finish him off and let you go up against the next wave.

Two players can play simultaneously either with separate ships or—by docking a speeder and warrior—one awesome ship. *Blasteroids* is fun, though tough to control. It's colorful and simply animated with satisfying explosions. Fans of the arcade version will find little lacking here.

—Dave Plotkin

Tengen
1623 Buckeye Drive
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 435-2650

X-Men

MICROPROSE

Versions: Commodore 64 ($34.95), 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

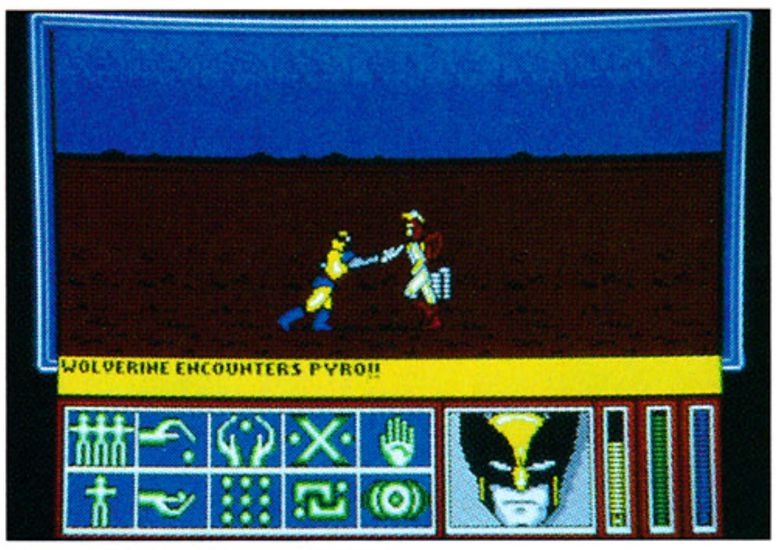
The evil Magneto, head of the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, has kidnapped Professor X as the first step in another plan to rule the world. Magneto took him and the mutant-locating computer, Cerebro, to a secret hideaway in deadly Murderworld. Here, with the help of Murderworld's creator, Arcade, and the other evil mutants, he plans to once and for all eliminate the X-Men and remove the last hindrance to his nefarious plans.

X-Men is the second Paragon-developed computer adaptation of popular Marvel Comics' characters. Unlike its predecessor, *Dr. Doom's Revenge*, where the player controlled only two characters (one at a time), this game lets the player choose from any of the six X-Men, matching each to their best situation.

The action begins outside Arcade's facility. After a brief telepathic message from Professor X, our heroes must fight their way in. While the initial robots are fairly easy to defeat, they do give a taste of what's to come. Once inside, the player must find his way through the various halls and rooms of the notorious Murderworld.

Scattered throughout the facility are the many keys, keycards, passcodes and other objects needed to find where the professor is hidden. The X-Men also find various clues on what to do once they reach the professor. Most of the rooms that contain a needed item are guarded either by Arcade's deadly robots or by Magneto's mutant lackeys. From the simple rats and snakes to the more potent Sentinel robots, the X-Men have their hands full. While it's better to simply run from trouble, matching the proper X-Man power to the bad guy at hand usually does the trick.

Paragon has again successfully brought comic book characters to the computer screen with its *X-Men* game.



The game combines elements of arcade action with more traditional role-playing thought. All combat is carried out in real-time action, and an X-Man must either defeat or run away from each enemy. The top half of the screen shows the current room and any characters in it, and the bottom half has a list of additional actions available during play. These range from the usual "pick up, drop or use an item" choices to a command to use the current mutant's special power. This menu is also used to switch the current character at any time, provided that the target character has not died.

For EGA, the graphics look very sharp. Each room shows a realistic side view, and characters are smoothly animated. Instead of scrolling from room to room, each chamber remains static,

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and only the characters move. When a new room is entered, the game pauses until the new room is brought onto the screen. The sound is also well done and includes coverage for the Ad Lib sound board. Either the keyboard or a joystick can be used for control during play, and the players move smoothly in response to either device.

Paragon seems to have learned a lot since their original superhero title. *X-Men* is a sharp-looking package that is enjoyable to play. The only shortfall is the periodic aimlessness of it all, but those with patience and endurance are in for a real treat.

— R. B. A.

MicroProse Software
180 Lake Front Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(301) 771-1151

Crime Wave

ACCESS

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

Access' *Crime Wave* is an arcadelike sequel to its big brother *Mean Streets* and utilizes many of the same effects, such as digitized actors in animated sequences.

Access' last effort, *Mean Streets*, was an interactive detective movie/adventure game that contained a few arcade sequences interspersed throughout the plot. *Crime Wave* was announced as a sequel, so many players expected a similar format. They were wrong, but they won't be disappointed. *Crime Wave* is an arcade game par excellence; don't miss it. Access is striving to remain in the forefront of the IBM PC format, and this effort is their best yet.

Sometime in the future, a major crime syndicate is scheming to take control of New York City and provide free drugs to everyone. They are lead by a mysterious figure known as the Kingpin who, as part of his master plan, has kidnapped the President's daughter (a winsome young lass if ever there was one). Players assume the role of Lucas McCabe, super crimefighter and all-around tough guy. Lucas must fight past hordes of gunmen, thugs, ninjas, psychos and various man-made killing devices before even coming close to rescuing the girl.

The prologue is comprised of a series of encapsulated video-display windows. Players witness the actual kidnapping of the President's daughter and her subsequent removal to an unknown location via helicopter.

The display windows, in VGA format, are incredible. Actual digitized footage of actors and actresses replays at realistic speed and image quality. Except for a slight distortion on the edges of some animations, these sequences are the best VGA animated routines to date. These interludes occur between each level of arcade play and serve the dual purpose of advancing the plot and giving the player a break from the action. Once they've been viewed, it's possible to toggle the animations off and proceed from one arcade screen to the next.

Access included difficulty settings for the arcade sequences, and this makes it possible for novices to complete the entire game while retaining sweaty-palmed intensity for true arcade masochists.

The screens scroll from right to left, and it's not possible to backtrack past the left edge, so pick up items as you go. Each level has only one exit, but there are several bonus rooms along the way to build the score.

Players begin with a machine gun and a few rockets. Weapon management is crucial, particularly at the higher difficulty settings. Besides blasting assailants, it's important to destroy objects, since one finds extra lives and ammunition in this manner.

For instance, look closely in the subway for the light switches. Shooting these drops 20 rockets at a time. Also, when approaching the Kingpin's mansion, destroying the bushes around the doors yields extra lives. Inside the mansion, don't overlook the lamps and furniture. This is the last opportunity to beef up before facing the evil Kingpin himself.

Finally, when dealing with the mechanical arachnid, remember the walker at the end of the counterfeit operation. Jump up and aim for the eye, it appears as a black hole.

To paraphrase a well-known saying, "Catch the wave"—you'll be glad that you did!

—E. D.

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COMPUTER STRATEGIES

Flying on the Wings of Fury

BRØDERBUND
Versions: Amiga, IBM PC, Apple, Commodore 64

The time is 1944, and the world is at war. The U.S. Navy is proving to be more than a match for its opponents due to the incredible success of the new F6F Hellcat. Your mission: Fly one of these babies right through enemy lines and return unscathed.

The most important thing to learn in *Wings of Fury* is how to navigate the aircraft. Once the plane appears on the carrier deck, press and hold the stick to the left until the craft is about to fall off the edge. At this point, press the stick to the upper left so the plane climbs while continuing to accelerate. Once the craft is at a safe cruising height, the player may release; however, if any turns or stall moves are made during flight, you must press the stick to the left to accelerate to safe cruising speed once again.

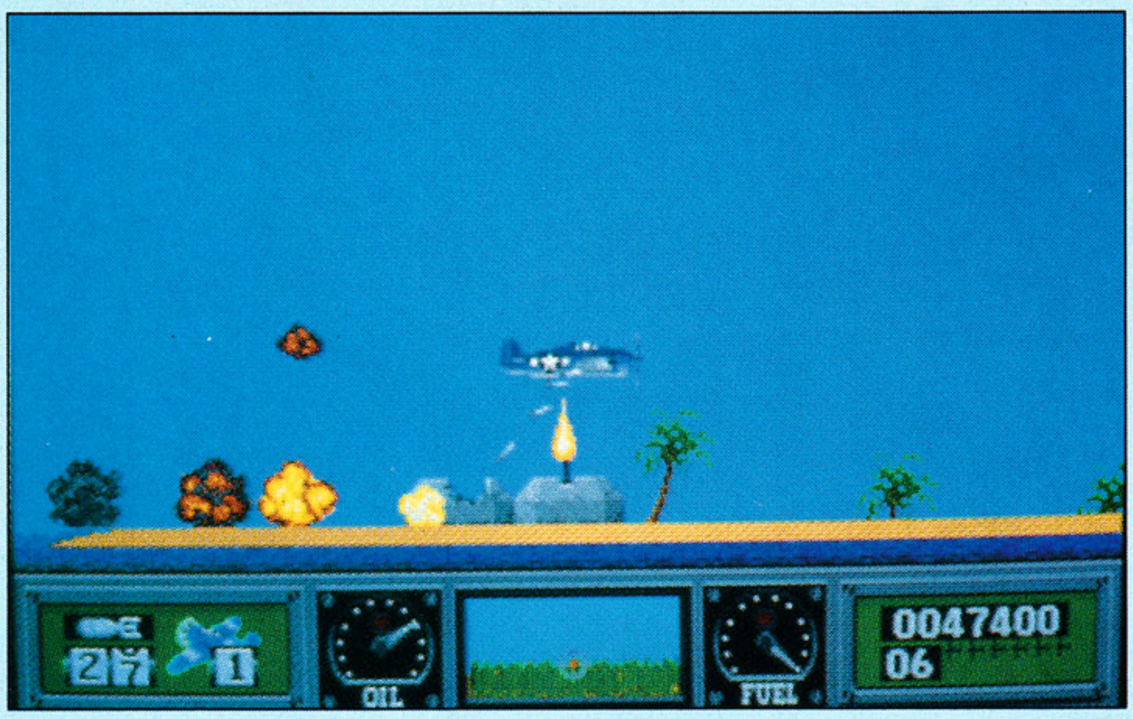
Once up-and-down flight is mastered, practice turning and stalling. The plane loses altitude as it turns, so make sure the aircraft is at a good height before then executing a turn. Stalling is relatively simple. Start by cruising at a height just above the enemy or targeted runway. Once the plane is level, press down on the stick to stall to a lower altitude. Once a new height is reached, push the stick toward full throttle to maintain or press upward to pull up and out of danger.

The final trick to flying is landing. This looks difficult at first but after a few times, becomes quite routine. On the approach, always come at the carrier from the *right*. Keep an eye on the middle section, and line up the flashing crosshair with the deck of the carrier. In other words, place the horizontal bar of the crosshair right where the deck touches the horizon. Once done, fly a fraction of an inch over the deck and stall the plane downward to land safely.

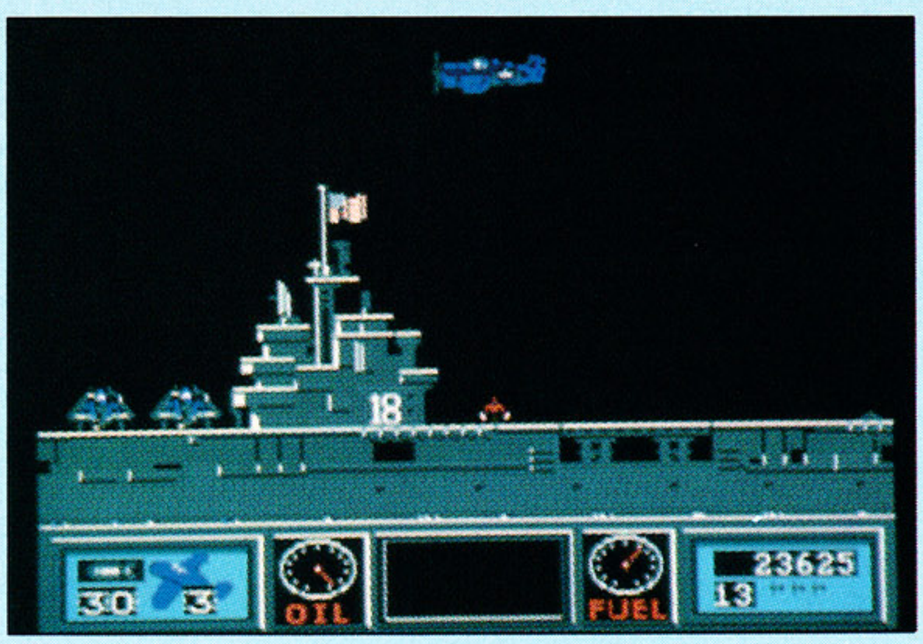
To fry the enemy, start each mission by watching the briefing to note whether it consists of air or sea targets. This determines what type of weapons to carry aboard. The basic strategy on weapon selection is simple. Start with bombs over land and rockets for sea targets. Knock out all the anti-aircraft guns as quickly as possible. When fighting over land, take out the buildings with bombs, then concentrate on the troops.

When battling at sea, you must destroy all the carrier's guns before going in for the kill. To sink the ship, return to base and switch to torpedoes. Fly at the ship and release the torpedo about 2 inches in front of it. Now watch the fireworks.

The final offensive tactic is



The first task you want to master in Brøderbund's *Wings of Fury* is navigating the aircraft satisfactorily. Only then should you try to take on the enemy and complete the mission you've been given.



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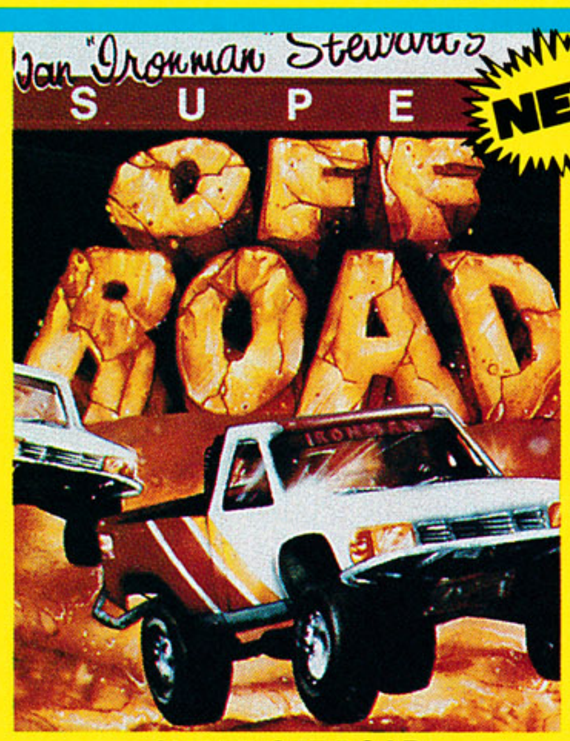

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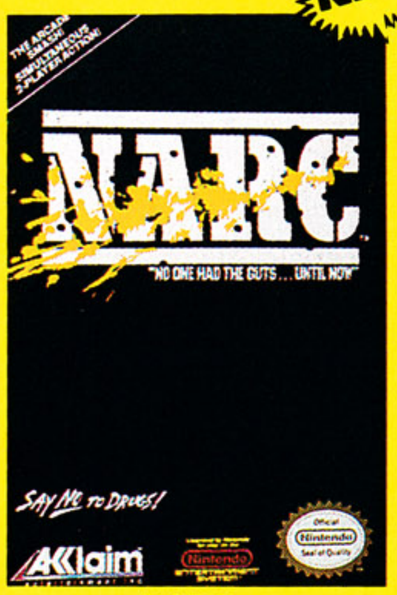

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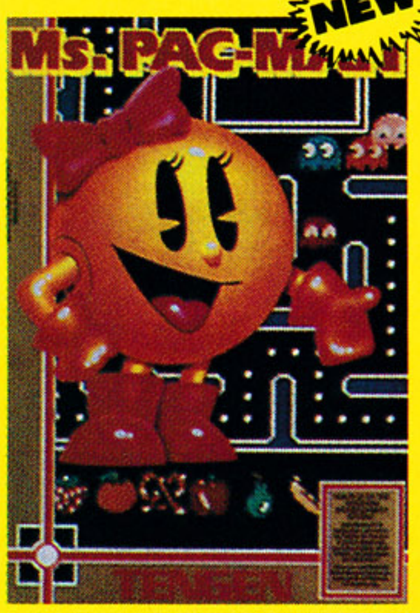

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strafing, a technique of flying dangerously close to the ground and using machine guns to wipe out targets. This is highly effective but can prove fatal if a tall palm tree should pop up at an inopportune moment. To avoid this, start each mission with a flyby over the entire enemy zone to see where the straightaways are located—the best places to strafe. Enter them by flying just above the trees until the area is in view. Then stall to just above the ground, hit the stick toward full throttle and let 'em have it!

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

Winning the Day in Day of the Viper

ACCOLADE
Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC

Accolade's *Day of the Viper*, their latest action/adventure, lets players assume command of the Viper-5 attack robot. The mission: Explore the five building-defense installations, locate 25 data disks needed, wipe out the evil Gar and restore peace to the galaxy. It's a big job, but somebody's got to do it.

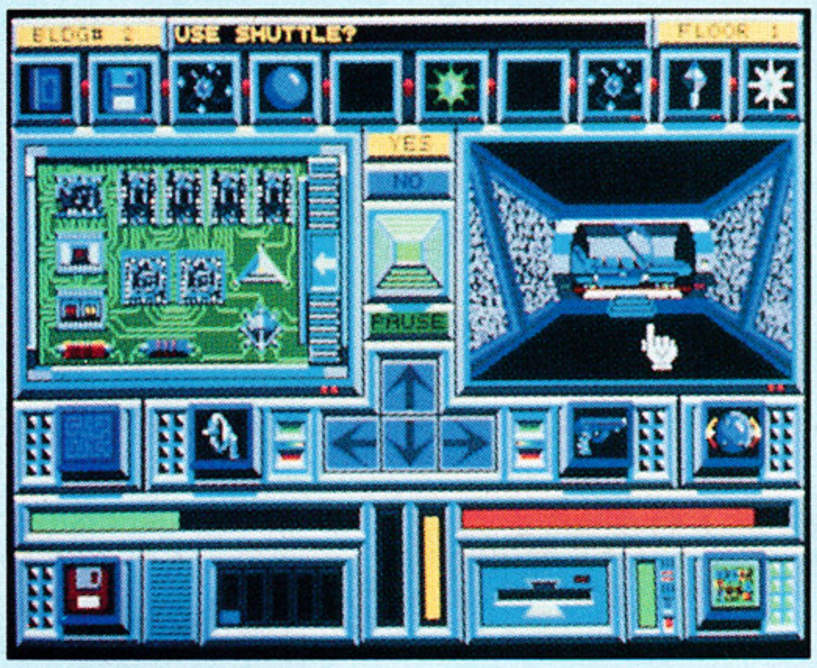
Viper-5 is equipped with lasers and shields, which are used to destroy the enemy robots that protect the complex. Unfortunately, the Viper was damaged in transport, so it's also necessary to locate control chips to repair the console circuits.

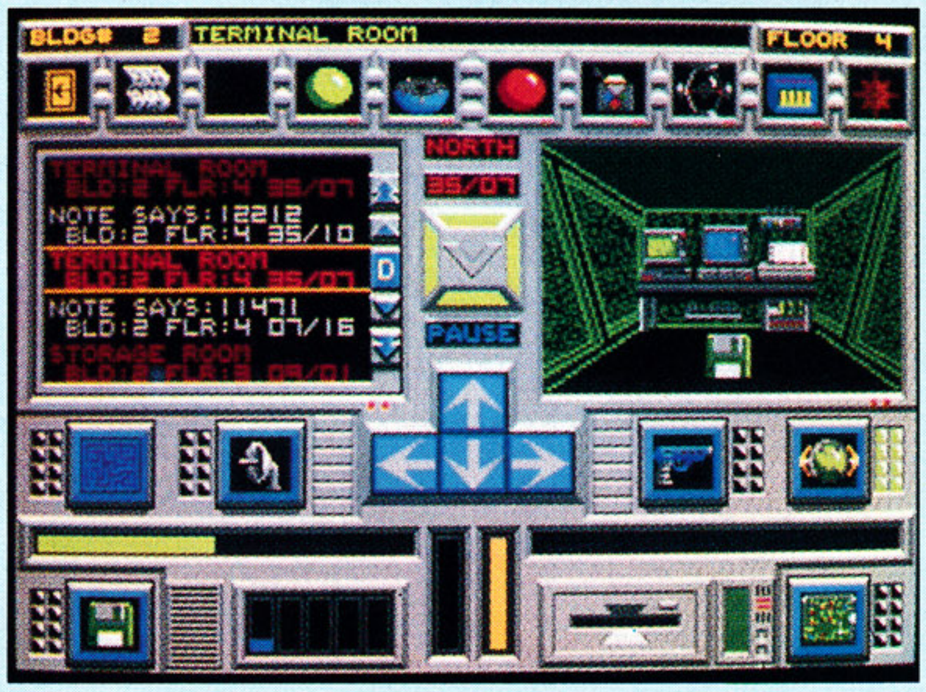
The trick to this game is a keen eye and good mapping strategy. Pick up anything that Viper encounters; if the object is unfamiliar, press the right mouse button for a description. Try to save the energy pods until the Viper is less than half full, as using them too early results in wasted energy. The same holds true for damaged repair pods.

Correct use of the plotter and scanner options can be crucial. Although the instructions say to use the scanner with caution (it consumes energy), I recommend players *do* use this option often, for two reasons. First, the energy used is minimal, and there are plenty of energy pods around to compensate for it. Second, the scanner shows the area around the Viper in great detail, including all traps, doorways and even whether a room contains an object. This crucial detail reduces the time spent wandering into empty rooms or dead-end corridors.

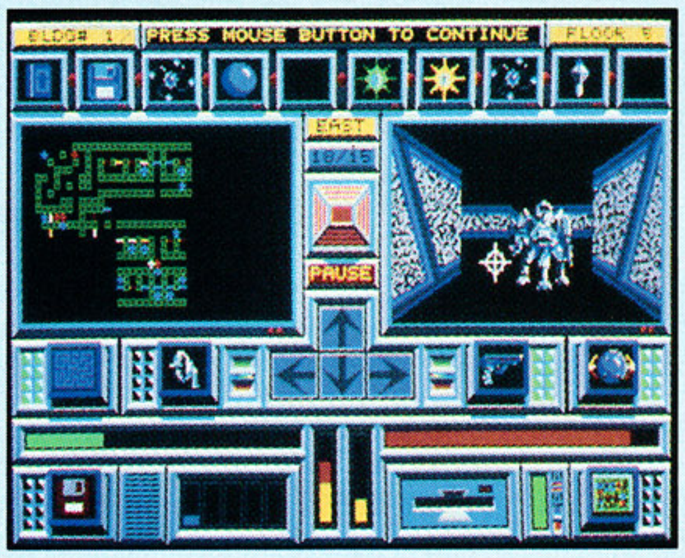
Learn to use the recorder whenever an important room is discovered (such as a turbolift room or a store room). Failure to record these locations causes players to waste too much time searching for them later on when they're really needed.

The only thing that's really *needed* on each level is the disk. There are many times when players are forced to depart a level that still has many doors locked. However, once the disk is in hand, players can search the next level for a higher access card and then use the turbolift to return to the incomplete sections.





***Day of the Viper*, by Accolade, requires you to master the Viper-5 robot and its various tools, such as lasers, shields and the scanner, all of which help you find the parts you need to repair your craft.**



Finally, there's the enemy. Always keep one eye on the short-range scanner in the middle of the screen. If it turns yellow, there's usually something dangerous up ahead. If this happens when Viper is standing still, the enemy could be approaching from any direction. When yellow alert appears, activate the gun and (if energy allows) the shield. The shield uses a sizable amount of energy, so turn it off after every battle. If you don't, Viper's energy will quickly drain down to zero.

Each enemy has a weak spot, found only through trial and error. Watch the robot closely as Viper fires. If a small explosion appears, Viper's shot was close to the mark. If the explosion is big, aim for that spot. Memorize this point so that next time you'll destroy the robot quickly, eliminating the need to use the shield when he appears.

—F. T., Jr.

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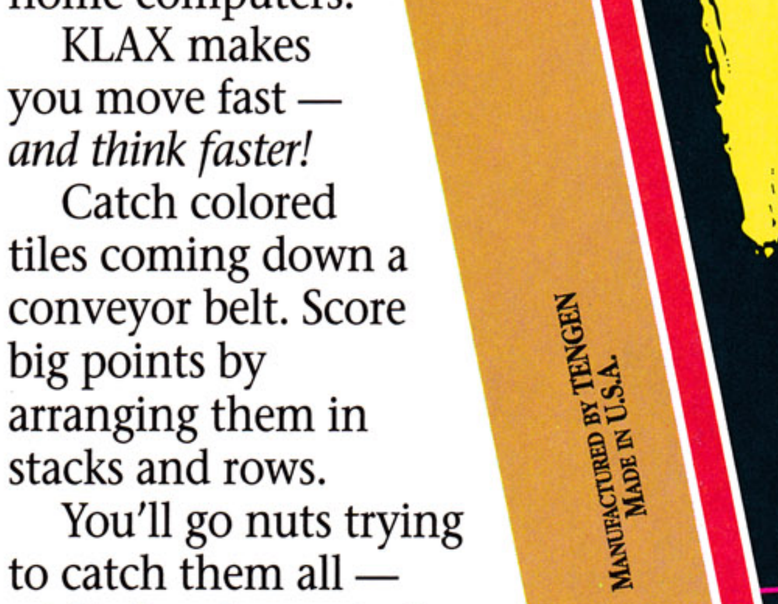

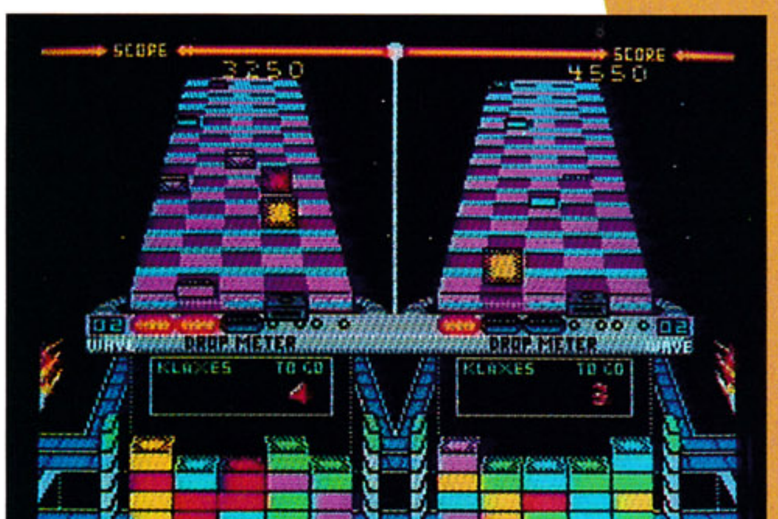

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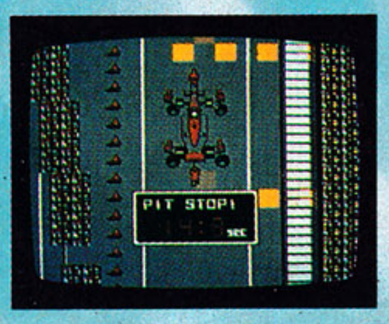

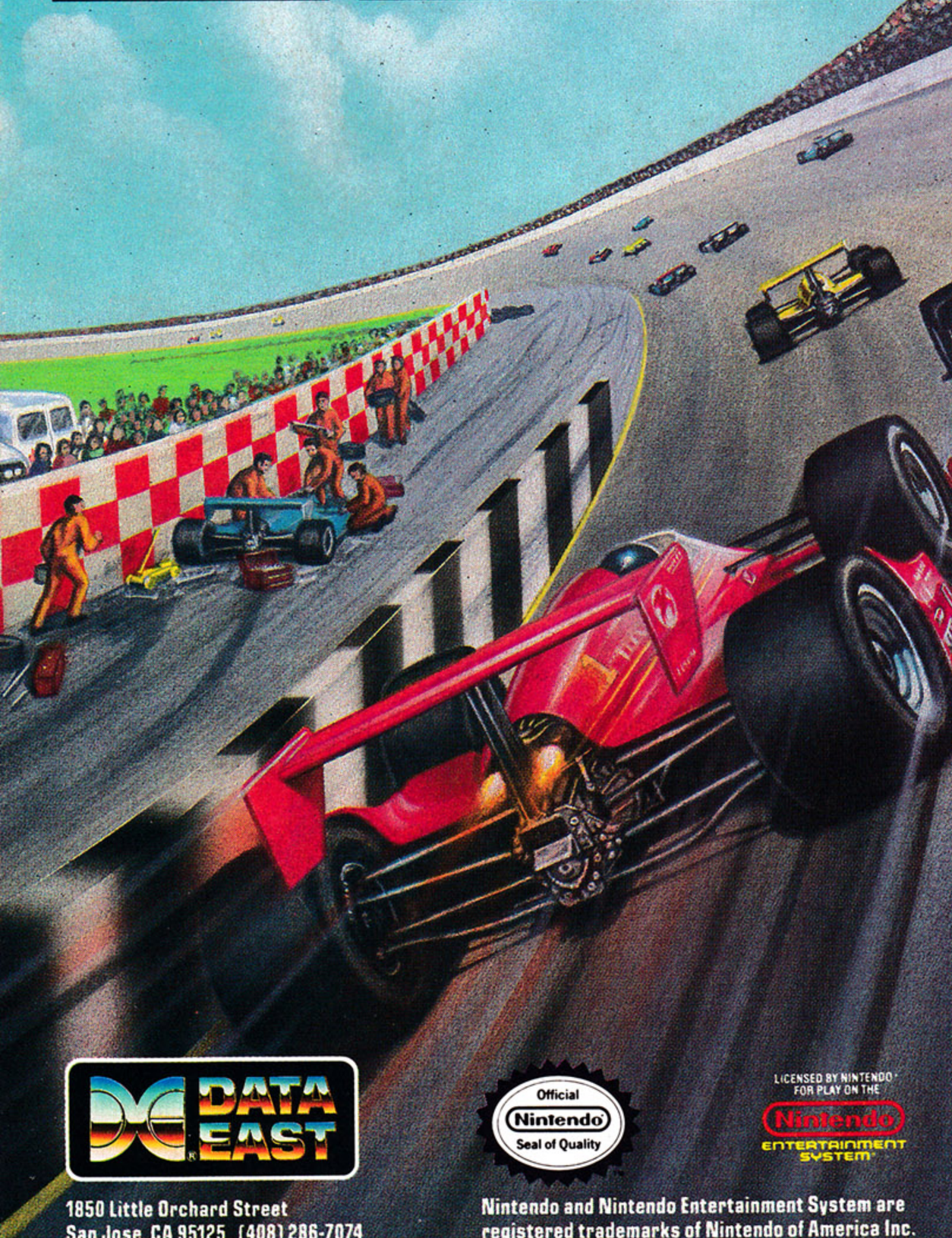

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