

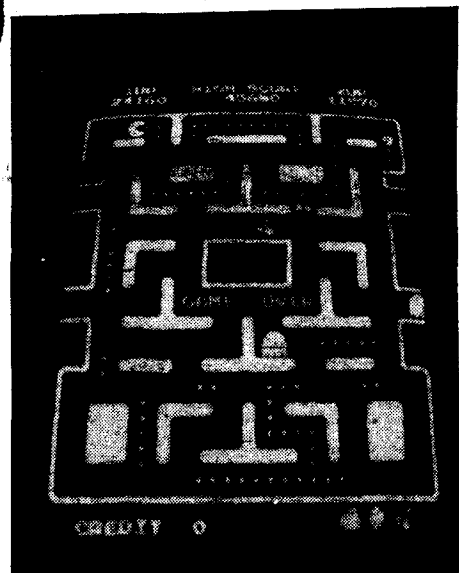
# Video games a part of campus life

By Judi Faruquee

When you walk into the game room at Capitol Campus, the rich blue-green table stands as forlorn as the one in VanGogh's Night Cafe. Van Gogh 'wanted to paint a place where one could go mad, commit a crime or ruin one's self.' Some opponents of arcade games would believe that entering this room could be responsible for all those dire possibilities.

Whether viewed as friends or foes, they stand lined up on the perimeter of one end of the game room and for the present are the five best reasons for the quarter's existence.

Ms. Pac-Man and her friends play host to a steady stream of company every day. The crowd increases during lunch time and in between classes. One student said "Ms. Pac-Man is the most exciting woman I ever met."



For those who may have been away from planet Earth, Ms. Pac-Man is the friendly yellow charmer with a sassy bow on her head who ducks in and out of mazes to keep out of the clutches of the gobblers -- when they turn blue watch out--here she comes..she's a man-eater. She also eats strawberries, oranges, apples, and pretzels.

Debbie Langdon, Behavior Science major, assessed her latest score and remarked, "I like to play Ms. Pac-man for a lot of reasons, but mainly because it relieves tension. But when my last Pac-Man was gobbled up before I could make it to the third board, that was upsetting."

Another high popular game is Donkey Kong which Steve Sauerteig admits to spending a dollar to \$1.50 a day playing. D.K. is the old King Kong updated. You jump over barrels and avoid fireballs and climb endless ladders to save the lady in distress.

Sauerteig, who is majoring in elementary education observed,

"It mostly seems like guys play video games. Girls come in only on occasion. But, it's not that way with the younger kids in elementary grades. There, girls are more enthusiastic."

In a recent Psychology Today, report psychology professors said: "Boys are taking over video arcades and that may mean girls will be less likely to grow up to be computer scientists. Prof. Lee Sproull, co-author, said, "That doesn't imply that video arcade players will have the ability to use computers later, but that it's the first familiarity that leads people to develop self-confidence and competence."

"I've observed women and men play Ms. Pac-Man and saw that the reflexes of the men are quicker," says Denise Wells, business administration major. Wells plays for the enjoyment of the game, but would just as well enjoy an ice cream cone.

At two diverse places such as C.C. arcade and Time Tunnel, Walnut St., Harrisburg, the ratio of male and female is about 14-1.

Eric Powers, business administration major, noticed that it's the guys that come to play during the busy times and the girls come to experiment at the less popular times such as early evening and between periods 4 and 5. "Maybe that's because they see others getting high scores and don't want to embarrass themselves." Eric said, adding:

"The better you get at a game the less money you have to spend on it. Just one quarter can keep you here for 15 or 20 minutes. By any standard that's not bad at all."

Much controversy surrounds the phenomenal growth of the Video Arcades. Experts are divided on the consequences of playing video games. Dr. H. James Holroyd a University of Southern California Professor of pediatrics claims "that children and teenagers are liable to get



hooked on technology abuse -- a term for misusing video games, cars, personal stereos and television." He says the full effect of video games has not been determined, but early research indicated they could become a health hazard if misused.

On the other hand, Syracuse University communications expert Professor George Comstock says, "There's more to be concerned about violence on T.V.

and in films than there is about video games. In video games you're dealing with socially accepted conflict and rules, learning how to play games better, which is not such a bad thing." Comstock believes video games are helpful in teaching children about strategy and use of computers and develop keener hand and eye coordination.

Joe Nypaver, urban regional planning major, supports the theory that being familiar with a computer via arcade games may stimulate a lot of thinking towards the hi-tech revolution. Nypaver, a Ms. Pac. Man fan who averages 54,000 a game feels, "The possible reason for Ms. Pac-Man's popularity is the great variety in the game." The boards change after they have been cleared and the game speeds up becoming more of a challenge. In Donkey Kong an added inducement is being able to add your initials as one of the five highest scoring players.

No matter what the psychological impact, the machines do bring a flash and excitement in the midst of a room filled with the discordant sounds of the little melodies of all the games mixed together a form of music to an arcade player's ear.



Photos by Mike Markie