

Pac-Man gobbles student pocketbooks

By George P. Yanoshik, Jr.

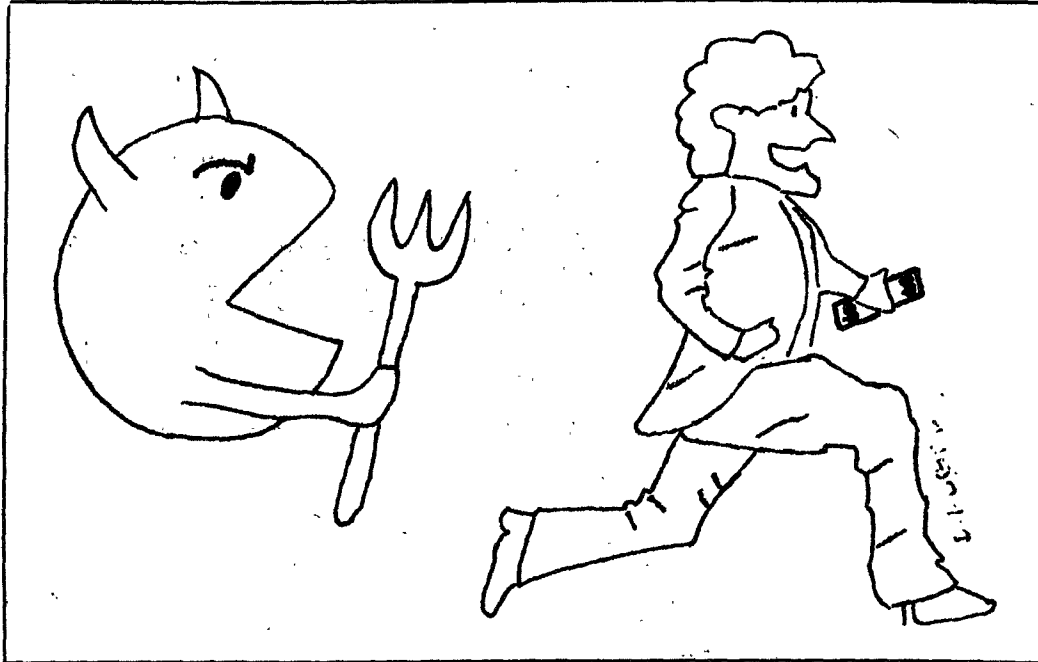
"Pac-Man," "Asteroids," "Space Invaders," — sounds like we are being taken over by creatures from outer space. Actually, though, these are a few of the common names of the new computerized video games found in arcades, supermarkets, convenience stores, lobbies of movie theatres, etc. everywhere.

Pac-Man fever, a national craze, has reached epidemic proportions here at Highacres, too. Everyday a crowd gathers around the Pac-Man machine in the Commons Building as players with "the fever" anxiously await their turn. According to a recently published report, about \$5 billion was dropped into game-machine slots nationally last year. There are currently over 100,000 of these machines gobbling up quarters nationwide.

With the video invasion — here with the first wave of the computer age — doubts about the practicality or purpose of the games arise.

For students there are fears that the games are addictive and distracting from homework and other activities. Also, arcades and video centers may be the site of fights, drug exchanges, etc. The list of fears against video games goes on and on.

To be totally objective, though, we must also take a look at the positive side of these games. It is not easy to beat them because they are contests demanding much skill. Human reflexes and a person's reaction time are locked in a head-to-head battle with a well-programmed computer. If you play long



enough you are bound to keep improving and accumulating higher and higher scores. For some reason, we all love the challenge of self-improvement, and, video games give us a feeling of accomplishment — sometimes after frequent failure, though. Pac-Man requires about 90 percent skill and only 10 percent hand-and-eye coordination while other attack games range from 90 percent hand-and-eye coordination to 50-50 percent.

A tremendous, sometimes mind-boggling challenge is faced each time a player drops his quarter into the machine. It is a challenge that appeals to youngsters and teenagers of both sexes, and adults, too. Occasionally, a faculty member or two can be seen battling with the games here at the Hazleton Campus. It goes to show that students haven't cornered the video-game market alone!

As popular as it is, Pac-Man's success is now being threatened on two fronts. First, Atari recently unveiled a "Ms. Pac-Man" game — based on her male counterpart's wide intrigue. Another is that a Pac-Man home video game is on the verge of being marketed.

Atari officials believe that the Pac-Man home video game will be extremely successful on the American market. They have gone so far as to predict that, in time, it will be found in one of every ten homes in the United States. Things are really looking bright for Pac-Man fans. The home game may

alleviate the long lines in front of video games throughout arcades nationwide, and players will eventually be able to relieve their frustrations and anxieties in the comfort of their own homes!

Until then, Pac-Man players, save your quarters, buy a video game code book, and try to outsmart the computer. You may get several hours of playing time on just one quarter if you memorize the manual.

When in the Commons during this Spring Term, keep your eye on the Pac-Man machine. It should be interesting trying to pick out the people who have chosen to memorize the Pac-Man code book instead of studying their math or science!

Taking a look at the Springtime activities here on campus, it is safe to say that the Hazleton Campus will have a fairly active Spring.

It is certainly a welcome calendar following a long, gloomy winter, and now it will be interesting to see how well the campus events go over. Just in the way of outlining some of the upcoming events, Drama Club is currently working on its own production. Congratulations to that club's president, Bob Tier, for taking the initiative to undertake such a project. HCAC is also working on a tremendous project, the annual March of Dimes Walk-A-Thon. That group is also looking into the Big Brother/Big Sister program.

The SGA is planning the Awards Banquet to be held on April 30 at Gus Genetti's Best Western Motor Lodge. Alumni Club is bringing the Penn State Symphonic Blue Band to Hazleton on April 4. The Chorus is producing "HMS Pinnafore," as its annual project. Outings Club is setting up a raft race. Vets Club is working on a Ping Pong Tournament. HCV has at least three new programs in its Spring lineup, in addition to its present production schedule.

There are more things going on on campus, and to the many clubs and organizations planning them, thanks for helping to make the Hazleton Campus a more livable environment.

The Executive Editors

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Letters

Learning to make decisions can be a difficult process for young people to learn but it is important that each person learn to make decisions for himself. Parents seem to exert the strongest influence or decisions that their children make if they do not make the decisions themselves.

Three years of service to the Army does not make me all-knowledgeable on the benefits and disadvantages of the Armed Services. But since coming to Highacres and talking with many students who came into college a few months after graduating from high school, I've learned that many of them have no interest in learning. For young people not wanting to attend

college, I think they should seriously consider and inquire into a term with the armed service. Many of them may say that the service is not for them, but if college is not for them either, they could be saving thousands of dollars. The idea of enlisting in an armed service may sound outlandish, but if they want to mature and learn how to make decisions for themselves, the service is a good start and offers two to four years to learn. The armed services provide the environment for challenge. If you are not sure about your future and your college education, the armed services can be a wise and profitable experience in maturing a young person.