

September 2002

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## HELLO INTELLIFANS!

In this issue of our newsletter: *Astrosmash* appears on the Sunset Strip, Intellivision titles are selected to run on super gaming machines, Blue Sky Ranger memories about parking, readers ask the programmers about *Happy Trails* and *Pitfall!*, and our monthly trivia contest!

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## INTELLIVISION ON THE SUNSET STRIP!



Across **Sunset Boulevard** from the trendy Los Angeles hangouts **House of Blues** and the **Mondrian Hotel** (home of the celebrity-packed **Skybar**) stands a billboard showing off the **newest** trend - color video games on your cell phone. Featured on the billboard: the **Intellivision** classic **Astrosmash**!

The **Boost Mobile** billboard is just one of many now appearing in major metropolitan areas. Boost Mobile offers many games to their customers, including several from **THQ Wireless**, exclusive publisher of **Intellivision** games for cell phones. **Astrosmash** is available in color to Boost Mobile subscribers with a Motorola i95 phone.

More and more wireless providers are offering **Intellivision** games. Check to see if yours does. If not, ask for them! Or check out what **Boost Mobile** is offering right now.

[More info about Boost Mobile >](#)

Spot a **Boost Mobile/Astrosmash** billboard in **your** neighborhood? E-mail us a photo of you with the billboard in the background! If we add it to our **Post My**

Mug page, we'll send you a **Running Man** button!

[Post My Mug >](#)

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## THE BEST OF 1982 MEETS THE BEST OF 2002



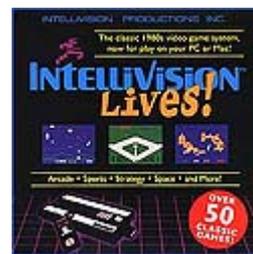
Since 1996, **Alienware Corporation** has been manufacturing PCs optimized for uncompromising gamers. Everyone from **Tech TV** to **Rolling Stone**, **PC Gamer** to **Playboy** has raved about Alienware's screaming-fast, fully tricked-out desktop and laptop computers.

Their motto: "Build it as if it were your own."

And once they've built it, they load on **Intellivision Lives!** It's now standard on all **Alienware** game machines.

Why would **Alienware** make standard a collection of games with primitive sounds and graphics on machines with the latest sound and graphics capabilities?

Maybe it's because uncompromising gamers know that when you get down to it, it's the **gameplay** that counts. And as exciting as many of today's cutting-edge titles are, especially when played on a top system from **Alienware**, sometimes it's fun to go back to the basics.



[Check out the cool desktops and laptops from Alienware >](#)

Of course, you don't **have** to have a state-of-the-art PC to play our **Intellivision Lives!** and **Intellivision Rocks** collections. They'll probably run just fine on the PC you have right now. You can get them from our **Retrotopia** online store.

[Get Intellivision Lives! and Intellivision Rocks >](#)

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## INTELLIVISION LORE FROM THE FILES OF THE BLUE SKY RANGERS:



### NO PARKING

(Note: the key player in this story has asked that we not tell it. Well, we think it's too good to keep under wraps. So instead, we've changed the guilty party's name to **Mike McGuffin**. All other names are real.)

In 1982, **Mattel Electronics** moved into a converted warehouse one block south of Mattel headquarters in Hawthorne, California. Hiring was going on at a furious pace; soon, the building's parking lot was overflowing. People got creative about jamming cars into unmarked spaces along fences and walls, but before long the city's Fire Marshall put an end to that. Mattel announced that parking would be

strictly monitored and enforced.

All of the spaces were usually gone by eight in the morning. Many of the Intellivision programmers, who were pretty much allowed to set their own hours, didn't arrive until nine or ten.

They were forced to park in an auxiliary

lot down the street. Of course, there was an "Executives Row," a dozen or so reserved parking spaces right next to the Mattel Electronics building stenciled with the names of the vice presidents and senior vice presidents.



One afternoon, **Manager Mark Urbaniec** was arriving at work after a dental appointment. He knew the parking lot would most likely be full, but decided to take a spin through just in case a space was free. He spotted an opening down toward the end of Executives Row. He hoped it was an unreserved space, but when he got there, he saw the stenciled name "McGuffin." Mark moved on, finally parking in the lot down the street.

On the walk over to the office, Mark thought about the name "McGuffin." He didn't know any executives named "McGuffin." The only "McGuffin" he knew was **Mike McGuffin**, one of the programmers.

In his cubicle, he went through the company phonebook. Mike was the only McGuffin listed. Mark checked Mike's cubicle - Mike wasn't in that day.

Mark went to **Director Don Daglow's** office. He passed on his suspicion that **Mike McGuffin** had snuck into the parking lot at night and painted his name on one of the spaces.

Don shook his head. It made sense; Mike never arrived at work before eleven. And reserving himself a place to park sounded like something Mike would do. Don said he'd take care of it.

The next day, Don called Mike into his office. Don said he'd heard a rumor that someone had created a parking space for himself. He really hoped that rumor wasn't true, Don went on, because then he'd have to do something to the perpetrator. Something bad. If this really **had** been done, it had better be **undone**. Fast.

Mike nodded and left Don's office.

The next day, Mark Urbaniec checked the parking space. Mysteriously, a coat of white paint had removed all traces of the name "McGuffin."

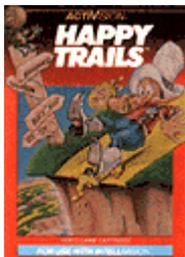
**The Blue Sky Rangers' moral of the story:** When stenciling a name on a parking space in the middle of the night, **don't use your own name, Einstein**. A made up name will work just as well at keeping other people out of the space, and it lets you deny all responsibility, even if your car is parked there.

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## ASK THE BLUE SKY RANGERS!

**Paul R. Meyer** of Peoria, Illinois writes:

I am a huge intellivision fan, always have been and always will be. When I was growing up, nothing made me happier then receiving a new game from my parents for whatever reason. I can still feel the excitement as I used to look at the game box and imagine the hours of adventure, excitement, and frustration I would feel after I began to play this game!



My question refers to **Happy Trails**. I was wondering if there was an end to this game? I haven't played it aggressively for probably ten years, but at that time my roommate and I could get quite a way into it. I remember the game board grows after completion of each level and then it goes back to the two-by-two maze. I think we managed to go through three of these cycles before not being able to go any longer.

I have a question about **Pitfall!** as well. Is there a flow chart anywhere that one could see where in the grand scheme of things you are? When you run through the underground tunnels and resurface, are you resurfacing somewhere on the same level or are you in a completely different place? For example if I climb down a ladder, run through the tunnel and then climb up another ladder, am I fourteen screens down (for example) from where I started or am I in a whole new level that no matter which way I ran I could never get back to where I started?



Thanks!

**Carol Shaw**, designer of **Happy Trails**, replies:



*If I recall correctly, **Happy Trails** does not end. It continues to cycle through the different board sizes, as the question mentions, with different mazes. Theoretically, the mazes would eventually repeat when the pseudo-random number generator repeated, but this would take a long time.*

**Carol Shaw** Hope this answers your question.

**David Crane**, designer of **Pitfall!**, writes:



*I designed **Pitfall!** as a linear path that loops back upon itself. So, if you had enough time you could remain on the surface and eventually return to your starting point. (This would happen whether you chose to run right or left.) But the game was tweaked so that you didn't have enough time to go that far.*

**David Crane** The underground chamber can shortcut through the upper path, shortening the total route to allow the game to be completed. You are expected to map out the underground and how it relates to the surface world, and after a bit of mapping most people notice that for each screen you traverse underground you travel past three screens of the surface world.

*Armed with that information you can map out all the treasures. You have to be careful not to skip over treasures while travelling underground. You have to decide if it is best to come to the surface before or just after a treasure - in the second case backtracking for the pick-up. If you don't use the underground you cannot*

complete the game. And even if you do, most players tried to complete the game with the most time remaining (showing that they found a more efficient path to all the treasures).

So, the simple answer to your question is that by going underground you skip three surface screens for every one traversed below, and that each time you surface it is on the same path you left, just further along.

Good luck!

[Get Happy Trails and Pitfall! on Intellivision Rocks >](#)

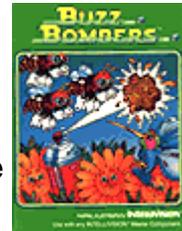
[Got a question for the Blue Sky Rangers? Write us here >](#)

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## THE INTELLIVISION TRIVIA CONTEST!

Ninety-one of you entered last month's trivia contest. The question:

The 1900 opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* introduced what musical theme later heard in an Intellivision game?



Seventy-five of you had the correct answer: "**Flight of the Bumblebee**," heard in *Buzz Bombers*. As many of you realized, the question is actually the answer to a problem talked about in last month's **Intellivision Lore**: when *Buzz Bombers* was released in 1983, no one at Mattel could find when "Flight of the Bumblebee" was written. (There was no World Wide Web back then.)

From the 75 correct answers, the random number generator at <http://www.random.org/> selected **Matt Hiner** of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, as the winner of an **Intellivision coffee mug**.

Congratulations, Matt! And thanks to all of you for playing!

Now try **this** question:



**The former parking lot of Mattel Electronics is now home to a Toys 'R' Us. In 1984, the standard version of the "I Want to be a Toys 'R' Us Kid" jingle was changed. Why?**

[Submit your answer >](#)

(If you have trouble following the above link, or if submitting your answer fails, type the URL <http://www.intellivisionlives.com/contest.shtml> into your browser and try again.)

We'll pick a random winner from all complete, correct entries received before NOON PDT, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6. The winner will receive an official **Intellivision Coffee Mug** - just like we use here in the office for serving up steamin' hot java!

**GOOD LUCK!**

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**THE BLUE SKY RANGERS**  
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