

Book it

Can you study your way to entertainment?

By Colette Hutchings
Battalion Staff

It's inevitable. With every new puzzle or invention, you can bet there will be at least five books which will tell you how to solve it.

It takes all the fun out of playing.

Such is the case with the famed Rubik's Cube.

Just how desperate are people in wanting the solutions to the famed cube? Well, "The Simple Solution to the Rubik's Cube," by James G. Nourse, published by Bantam Books, is now on the best-seller list. It sells for \$1.95.

Another Rubik solution book, "Conquer the Cube in 45 Seconds," by Jeffrey Varasano and Bell Publishing, sells for \$2.90.

"Cube Games: 99 Puzzles and Solutions," by Don Taylor and Leanne Rylands, sells for \$3.95. It's published by Holt Rinehart and Winston.

Pete Nelson, manager of Hastings Records and Books, said sales of the puzzle books have been good.

With the invention of the Magic Snake and The Pyramid, two puzzle games similar to the Rubik's Cube, other how-to puzzle books are available.

Lynn Riley, a salesperson at Waldenbooks in Manor East Mall, said she usually receives at least one new book a week on puzzle-solving. "People just come up with new titles for the same thing," she said.

Charles Bredwell, manager of Bookland in Post Oak Mall summed up the cube and book craze by saying: "As long as the fad lasts, the books will sell."

If you've yet to master the Pac-Man or any of the other video games so rampant these days, maybe you should invest in one of the new how-to-win-

at-video-game books.

It takes a certain amount of coordination to flick the right button and gobble monsters to win points. It also takes money.

With the influx of the books, maybe video games will no longer be the challenge they are now. Since the books are so new, it's too early to tell how many will make best-seller lists.

Nelson said: "I don't expect there will be a dramatic effect on the book industry. I think they can learn faster by having someone who shows and tells them how to do it."

Rita Davis, assistant manager at Games Galore in Culpepper Plaza, said she has heard of the books but has never read one herself.

"I heard some people saying they saw a television program telling how to win at Defenders," she said.

Davis said for most games you can only beat the machine so far, then it beats you.

She added that unless someone is quick enough to handle the machine, the books probably won't do any good.

"A lot of people have an instinct," she said. "You have to have skill and of course, practice helps."

Mark Watts, an attendant at The Games People Play in Bryan, said he has seen one book, but that it "didn't really tell me anything."

He said he thought it would help to know what will happen next in the game, but you must be quick enough to react.

Fun-Way Freeway manager Bruce Hall said he has never read one of the books. He said he imagines they could be helpful to some people but probably won't make a big impact on the video-game world.

"How to Beat the Video

AHA, I CAN DO IT, I CAN WIN AT PAC-MAN. THIS BOOK GIVES ME THE POWER! AHA-HA HA HA HA HA...

I THINK I'LL WAIT FOR THE MOVIE...



Games," by Michael Blanchet and published by Simon and Schuster, sells for \$3.95. It gives

a general overview of how to win 'em all, but so far the number of Pac-Man books seems to outnumber the other computer game books.

Either Pac-Man is easier to figure out or the game is tough to beat. Whatever the reason, they're here.

"Scoring Big at Pac-Man: How to Munch the Monsters," by Craig Kubey is published by Warner Books. It sells for \$1.25. "How to Win at Pac-Man," by

the Editors of Consumer Guide, is published by Pocket Books and sells for \$2.25.

Another video manual, "How to Master the Video Games," by Tom Hirschfeld is published by Bantam Books and sells for \$2.95.

Pac-Man fever more than a song

Many players may never make it to the final screens of Pac-Man.

Who but the most devoted Pac-er has seen keys, at 5,000 points apiece, on the screen? Most can't even get that many points from several laundry loads worth of quarters.

But now, thanks to a slew of handy-dandy, pocket-sized books, you too can become an expert at Pac-Man. A noble intention, that of beating a mere machine, although the machine ends up with the quarter.

Pac-Man is two years old now, and has multiplied to the tune of 250,000 machines in arcades and lobbies around the world, 95,000 in the United States alone.

If you're a dedicated over-the-

shoulder spectator, one sure sign of an expert is a row of keys along the bottom of the screen.

Under no circumstances should you let this person challenge you to a round.

Beginners should stick to challenging the computer. If you've never really played Pac-Man, the books won't help; get a little practice first, then head for the bookstore.

Your mission, should you decide to accept, is to eat a meal beginning with an appetizer of dots, followed by a main course of energizers and monsters, ending with a dessert of fruit. The true Pac-Man gourmet may also enjoy thunderbirds, bells and keys.

Instead of adding calories, the meal adds points to your score.

Your menu includes several monsters.

The book says get to know your monsters. Not exactly the type of heavy relationships one might hope to find in college, but some people have a hard time making friends. These critters ask for nothing more than coordination and a steady supply of silver.

The red monster is Shadow, nicknamed "Blinky." He's sly, so watch your tailfeathers.

Speedy, the pink monster, is called "Pinky." Got that? He's fast, so keep it in high gear when he's around.

Bashful is the light blue monster. "Inky" is shy, and will sometimes run away from you.

Pokey is the last of the four-some. Nicknamed "Clyde," he

is always ready to attack, but is a bit on the slow side.

Many people may not be aware that Pac-Man comes in different flavors. When Midway Manufacturing Co. realized that the game had attracted a dedicated following, they introduced a new and improved version.

The new model looks like the old, yet has devious little tricks built in. Pros were at first confused but soon learned that the same old patterns were there, just in different order.

Now there's a new member in the family—Ms. Pac-Man, truly one of a kind. Ms. Pac-Man is speedier than her mate and features great-looking lips and a beauty mark. If the sex appeal doesn't get the monsters, her

fast pace will.

Housewives and businessmen have joined their children in invading video-game houses until their quarters are gone.

Columbia Records has released an album, "Pac-Man Fever," for Pac-Man junkies. The album, by Buckner and Garcia, is now on the top 100 billboard charts.

Maybe someday, they'll come up with a Pac-Man Anonymous club to help cure the addicted, so they can save their quarters for necessities, like junk food and laundry.

But until that day, the books will help the junkies get the most for their money.

Think of them as a sort of consumer guide for the Pac-Man customer.