

Computer Entertainer

INCLUDES

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THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

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A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman

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...for TI 99/4A
Spare Change
Football
...for Atari computers
Beamrider
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Microsurgeon
...for PCjr
...and lots more

COMING NEXT MONTH

REVIEWS, REVIEWS, REVIEWS!

including
Zaxxon for C64
Slamball for C64
Beat the Beatles for Atari
Atarisoft for...
Commodore 64
Apple
TI99-4/A
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...and our normal surprises!

Questionnaires Revealing!

We've had tremendous response to the questionnaire which was included in last month's issue (if you have responded yet, please do so—we want to know what you're thinking!) and, as we suspected, you have quite a bit to say. When we did a questionnaire a year ago, the percentage of you who indicated you owned a home computer was relatively small. This year you've definitely expanded your horizons as many of you have added a home computer. Once we get all the questionnaires back, we will compile them and print results for you; however, there are many Adams, Atari's, C64's, and Apples out there with just a smattering of PCjr's (a signification number of VIC-20 owners have, so far, relegated their computer to the closet). Meanwhile, your gameplaying units are still going strong with ColecoVisions and Atari 2600's leading the way. Most importantly, you are taking an active role with your game units, purchasing, on average, two games per month.

We want to address a couple of your most specific concerns immediately. No, we are definitely NOT abandoning games—in fact, we continue to review EACH and EVERY game which comes through our testing facility, whether it's sent by the manufacturer or we go out and purchase it! If, in a given month, we don't review anything for your game system, it's only because nothing new has come in. In the computer area, due to the fact that there are so many companies out there, we follow-up on tips from readers, word-of-mouth, and any other way we can find out about companies and their software.

We totally agree with you regarding the publishing of game screens. We beg for them whenever we talk with manufacturers and, if there's a screen on the back of the packaging, we even attempt to have our printer work from that (which is one of the reasons that our pictures are sometimes very muddy—you've told us before that you'd rather have that than nothing). Unfortunately, many manufacturers do not have screens available until some point after the release of their new game. We very often beat the company's art department with our reviews! But...never fear, we keep trying!

Some of our former Logical Gamer subscribers have indicated they miss the Reader's Letters section with our newsletter. While we do not have that feature, we encourage (and often use—see various articles in this issue) our readers to write to us with tips, problems, solutions, etc. If we feel the topic one that affects our readers, we will reprint all or portions of your comments.

Not Popular With Everyone

Overall, we appreciate your continued support regarding our honesty and continued quest for the truth, in spite of the fact that it can make us very unpopular with certain manufacturers and even readers! We believe, as many of you have pointed out, that our record speaks for itself. If you spend some time going back through our past issues, our rate of accuracy in predicting problems, unveiling exciting new top-secret product, and "getting the goods," is unparalleled. We will NEVER simply quote a press release because we know you want to know more!

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR READERS

Due to a very exciting announcement, about which we have been sworn to secrecy, we will be holding our MAY issue for a few extra days based on a commitment we have made to the manufacturer. We will be the FIRST to tell you all the details on this development from a Major Manufacturer. Believe us, it'll be worth the wait!!

TOP 10 SELLERS

Game Systems

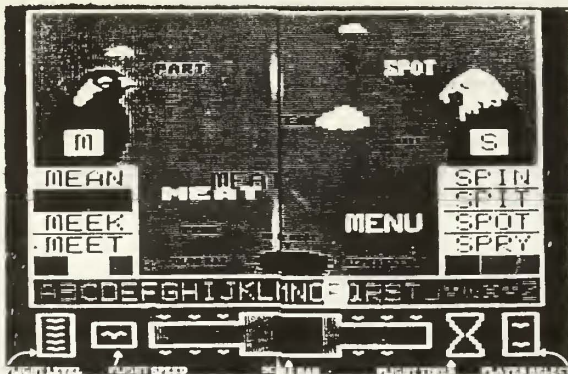
1. Pitfall II (ACTV/2600)
2. Pengo (AT/5200)
3. Space Shuttle (ACTV/2600)
4. River Raid (ACTV/COL)
5. Joust (AT/2600)
6. Q*Bert (PB/COL)
7. Frenzy (COL/COL)
8. Jumpman Jr. (EPYX/COL)
9. Tutankham (PB/COL)
10. Quest/Quintana Roo (SUN/COL)

TOP 10 SELLERS

Computer Entertainment

1. Flight Simulator II (SubLogic/AP)
2. Dimension X (Synapse/AT)
3. Julius Erving One on One (ElecArts/AP)
4. Blue Max (Synapse/AT)
5. Zork III (INF/AT)
6. Millionaire (Bluechip/AP)
7. Ultima III (Origin/AP)
8. Murder by the Dozen (CBS/AP)
9. Pooyan (DS/AT)
10. Zork II (INF/C64)

(Top 10's are compiled from a panel of retail outlets, chain stores and distributors)



WORD FLYER is an education game which teaches vocabulary by word matching. Each side of the screen shows a Watch Bird perched on a Word Tower, which has four slots holding letters or words. With your joystick, move up and down and select a slot (your "Flyer"). You move your Flyer out to the playing field and



watch for matching Zooming Words. You begin with one letter at a time and then move up through two, three, and four letters. The lower levels teach the alphabet, while upper levels teach more complex patterns, word recognition, spelling, and pre-reading skills. As you manage to match up with the Zooming Words, a score bar begins to fill up at the bottom. Every time you fill up the score bar, you move up to more letters, to a maximum of four. The game begins to speed up, with more and more Zooming Words flying at you, with many "trick" letter combinations. You must watch carefully to make sure you match. Every time you do make a match, your bird chirps. Make a mistake and you hear a "boink". You have control over which letter of the alphabet you wish your words to start with, so drills can be selected for a child in areas he/she may be weak in. The vocabulary of the program is well over 2000. There is a special surprise if the player manages to get through the fifth level; however, we do feel this intermission is set too high as it could provide a very frustrating experience for a child to try and reach so far into the program. Overall, however, it is a good vocabulary game for children.

AQUATRON (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ 1/2) is yet another shooting game in the *Defender* mold. This time the player controls the Aquatron fighter which can demolish enemies in the air

or the ocean. Watching a scanner at the bottom of the screen, the player must seek out and destroy various types of enemy ships and mines in the air. There are some items, such as Sub Chutes, which can be shot but are worth more points if captured by touching them. (A Sub Chute turns into a Submarine upon contact with the water.) When the subs materialize underwater, the Aquatron fighter can plunge beneath the waves to fire at them. Aquatron's energy and missile supplies must be replenished periodically by intercepting the rescue chute dropped by the base ship.

Too Similar to Dozens of Other Games

We couldn't get excited about Aquatron because it's just too similar to dozens of other games on the market. While the graphics are colorful, there is nothing really special about them. Unquestionably, the game is very fast, but it's not particularly challenging unless you're a real beginner at video games. (We made it to the fifth level the first time we played the game.) There is no real satisfaction in amassing huge point scores without having to sweat your way through a few practice sessions first. The game might have been improved by decreasing the level of shield power, making the enemy craft more deadly, or both. (Solo Play; Pause; 32K Disk)

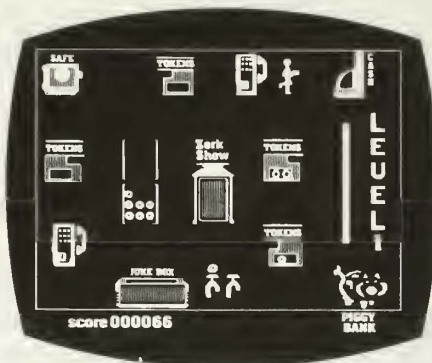
Not recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

...Just Wondering

With the incredible popularity of trivia board games such as the runaway hit, "Trivial Pursuit," can trivia for games and computers be far behind??? There's no doubt in our mind that they would adapt superbly to computers and ColecoVision.

SPARE CHANGE (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★) is an absolutely silly game

Brøderbund Software



which is somewhat very addictive! you against two fi loving Zerks w have escaped fr their coin-op ga and are trying to se up enough tokens retire. Your job is fill up the token b before the Zerks c collect 5 tokens their piggy bar You race arou pulling tokens fr the token machir and depositing the in the bin. All t

while, the Zerks are also taking tokens from the machines, a stealing them from the bin after you drop them in. They toss the to one another, while you chase them down—steal the token ba and put it in the bin. If you want to distract the Zerks briefly, j drop a token in the jukebox—they can't resist dancing until t music stops. On higher levels, you can use your tokens to r pay phones and start up a popcorn machine. When the tok machines run out, run to the cash drawer and get additior money. If the drawer runs out of money, you can go to the sa for a money bag. Every once in awhile, you'll get lucky and fi money in the coin return of the phone. Complete a level and you entertained with a slapstick cartoon in the ZERK SHOW boot The booth also serves as refuge as the booth door opens after yd deposit 10 tokens—dash in and get credit for your collected token

Just One More Play

We began this one with some skepticism, but soon found ourselv completely in the swing of the action. The game seems simpl but it's no easy task to reach the first cartoon as the Zerks a relentless in their robbery of your tokens. The animation of th Zerks is delightful as they scamper around the playfield, bouncir back and forth with the stolen token (you'll love the occasio "drop kick" they make into their piggybank). This is a game whic the entire family could gather around and just have a roaring goo time! (solo play; pause; keyboard or joystick) Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

JUPITER MISSION 1999 (?/?) is the game we had intend



to review in this very spot. Unfortunately, a gremi must have gotten into our Atari BASIC cartridge without which we couldn't boot the disks on our At 800. (Anyone with an XL computer wouldn't have t problem, because BASIC is built in.) According to th instruction booklet, this game offers a combination of role-playir and arcade-style action in a simulation of a voyage to the Jupit system in search for the source of intelligent radio transmission With four disks and four envelopes stamped "Top Secret" in brig red (to be opened only in case of emergency), the game loo intriguing. By next issue, we will have replaced our BASIC ca tridge and explored this game for you. Stay tuned!

Apple "ELF" to Debut

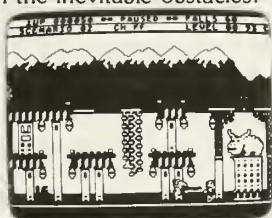
As we reported back in December, Apple is hard at work c the Ilc (code-named "Elf") which appears to be headed for an Ap 24, 1984 unveiling. The Ilc is reported to be an 8-pound versio of the Ilc, but less expensive and with easy-to-use features simil to the much publicized Macintosh. It will display 80 columns of te and have a broad range of colors. Included will be a built-in dis drive, 128K RAM, built-in parallel and serial interfaces (expansio slots will not exist in the Ilc), and a mouse. Later introduction c an inexpensive flat-panel display is also rumored. Although ther has been much speculation regarding the price, it now appea that this new computer will be in the range of \$1000-\$1300.

Meanwhile, it appears that yet another Apple is in secr development—the "LOLLY"—which could be Apple's direct cor petition for the Coleco ADAM.

BRUCE LEE (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) adds martial arts movements to a searching and climbing game, resulting in a contest that is unique. The game involves two tasks: fighting opponents with martial arts techniques and exploring the fortress of the wizard to claim great wealth and the secret of immortality. The cast of characters includes Bruce Lee, famous master of the martial arts, the beefy Green Yamo, who appears to be a Sumo wrestler, and a ninja warrior clad in black and brandishing his katana, (a special ninja sword developed for fighting against the samurai's sharp, double-edged sword, the katana.) The solo player takes the role of Bruce Lee. When two play, they may alternate as Bruce Lee, or they may play simultaneously, with one player as Bruce Lee while the other plays the Green Yamo. The game begins in the courtyard of a wizard's fortress, where Bruce must jump up to take the hanging lanterns before he can move to the next set. In the meantime, both the Green Yamo and the ninja do their best to thwart Bruce's every move. The Green Yamo attacks with his karate kicks, while the ninja strikes out with his sword. Bruce's opponents with kicks and chops of his own, or he can be leapt out of the way. (Three hits will disable the Green Yamo temporarily, while two hits will take care of the ninja for short moments.) Bruce also climbs vines and ladders and can leap over ledges of the building. With Green Yamo and the ninja in pursuit, he makes his way through the various chambers of the wizard's fortress. At each level, he must find and grab the lanterns to open the gate to the next level. The closer Bruce gets to the wizard, the more hazardous the going, with such obstacles as exploding bushes and electrical charges passing through between ledges. The wizard himself is a scary sight: fireballs stream from his eyes.

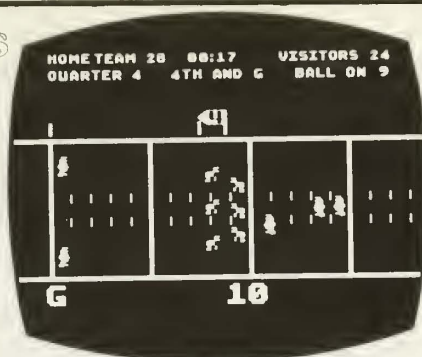
Graceful Movements

BRUCE LEE is basically a climbing and searching game—make your way through the fortress and find the wizard to claim his treasure. What makes the game different from others of the type is the use of martial arts in dealing with the inevitable obstacles. More typical methods of dealing with enemies or obstacles is shooting at or jumping over them, but the martial arts elements make this game seem so much more elegant. The moves of all three characters—Bruce Lee, the Green Yamo and the ninja—are extremely graceful and evocative of true martial arts movements. (We had to be sure, so we checked with an associate, a former instructor of Tae Kwon Do. He agreed that the movements represent true forms of martial arts.) The designers obviously worked at creating the effects—the graceful leaps, the flying kicks, Bruce Lee's wing-style chops, the ninja's artfully raised sword. As nice as it looks, it's even more fun to play, even if you're not a martial arts master yourself. The game moves quickly, and split-second timing is often required. This is a delightfully different game, one that is a tribute to the memory of Bruce Lee. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; 2-Player Simultaneous; Pause; Joystick; 32K/64K/Cassette packaged together) Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)



Computers Won't Byte

Linda Coccione and Gayle Winter have just released a new book titled "Computers Won't Byte," which offers an entertaining and easy-to-read introduction to what a computer can do, detailing a variety of real-life home and business examples and listing many resources for educational, recreational, and personal purposes. Typical items are hardware and accessories are described, and the book shows how software provides the instructions needed to make a computer do what the user wants it to do. It also explains system features and functions necessary for particular applications, and provides charts for readers to use in selecting their software and hardware. The book also includes advice on where to learn more about computers, examines service bureaus and timesharing as alternatives to buying and explores word processing and data base management. (MSR \$4.95)



REALSPORTS FOOTBALL (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★) is a two-player game which allows a one-player practice game against the computer. You control all aspects of play—selection of formations and plays as well as player movement (running, passing, kicking, etc) with your joystick and fire button. There is a very detailed chart included which gives you 15 offensive plays and 5 defensive plays. When playing the one-player practice game, Atari recommended that you don't try to outscore the computer. Rather, you play offense for both teams in alternation—switching from one joystick to the other (you need two joysticks even in the one-player mode), while also calling the defensive plays for the computer. The point here is to learn the formations and plays so you are ready when a friend comes over. All the offensive plays are executed from one of three formations available (you can check your playchart for exact player positioning). You can run or pass on all but two play selections—field goal or punt (although you can fake the punt and try to run for the first down).

No Kickoffs

Unlike the real thing, there are no kickoffs—the home team begins with the ball on its own 20-yard line at the beginning of the game. The ball has the same placement after a field goal or touchdown. After a safety, the scoring team takes possession on the 50-yard line. There are no penalties and each team has six players. You control one player on your team with your joystick (the odd-colored player—generally the quarterback on offense and the middle linebacker on defense) but, in certain situations, you can transfer your control from one player to another. Knowing when to do this can become critical in winning the game. A scoreboard at the top of the screen will give you information such as yards needed, time left, and instructions for playing the game. Although the scoreboard clock runs twice as fast as normal, it will stop after an incomplete pass, interception, score, etc.

Learn Your Players

Just like the real thing, certain players in this game are faster than others and knowing which player is fastest in a particular situation can be critical to the outcome. It will, undoubtedly take you some time to master the players, the patterns, and other nuances of the game. We liked the fact that there are several play combinations which are totally controlled by the player, therefore making the game more exciting. The one-player version does give you an opportunity to plan plays for both you and the computer, although it is still tough to win. The one-player game in this game really is a practice session and will be a disappointment to anyone who wants a challenging "full-blown" game against the computer. All in all, it's a good version of football in gameplay; although the graphics are not overly exciting. However, our vote for the best football game available for Atari still has to go to Gamestar's STAR BOWL FOOTBALL. (solo; two-player simultaneous; pause; joystick; cartridge) (MSR \$44.95)

EXPLANATION OF RATING SYSTEM:

- ★★★★ — EXCELLENT
- ★★★ — GOOD First set of stars — Quality of Graphics
- ★★ — FAIR Second set of stars — Quality of Play Action
- ★ — POOR
- N/A — Not Applicable (i.e. Adventure games are not rated for graphics)

Any game for a given system is compared only to other games for the same system. In other words, all Atari 2600-compatibles are judged separately from ColecoVision-compatibles, etc. The same system is used for computer software, except where noted (i.e. many Atari and C64 software is virtually identical)

ULTIMA II (★★★★ / ★★★★★) is a graphic adventure designed by Lord British. The player's quest through time and space is an effort to stop the evil reign of Minax, the Enchantress, who is the protege of Mondain from *Ultima I*. A colorful cloth



map is included to help the player find his/her way around the continents of the present day and use the time doors that lead to past and future times. Unlike some adventures in which the player is a set character in the drama of the game, *ULTIMA II* allows the player to create the character he or she wishes to be. In creating a character, the player chooses the amount of strength, agility, stamina, charisma, wisdom and intelligence for the character. Then the player selects the character's race (human, dwarven, elven or hobbit), profession (fighter, wizard, cleric or thief), sex and name. Each of the choices affects the character's abilities to deal with certain situations in the game. For example, a male character has added strength, useful in fights with foes, while a female character has added charisma which can help in bargaining successfully with merchants. The first order of business for any character is the purchase of weapons and armor, so the first move for the beginning player is into the nearest town. (Wizards and clerics will also want to purchase magical spells.) In the town (and nearly everywhere the character goes) it's very important to talk with the people. Some won't speak to your character, some will have nothing important to say, but a few offer crucial information that the player must have to win the game eventually. Some are there only for the player's amusement, such as Ronall McDonall at a local eatery who suggests, "Try our new ride-thru." Fighters as a group aren't very talkative. Most have nothing to say but "Ugh me tough." Guards are forever asking your character to pay taxes. We ran into a Barkeep who exclaimed, "Isn't this a great game!" and then told us that guards carry keys. The information on the box indicates that the player can meet prominent people within the computer industry, among other things. We found a couple: one who said, "What? No Software?" and another who sang the game designer's anthem, "Copy protect! Copy protect!" But pay close attention to anything said by an oracle or sage; their information is usually valuable.

Fighting Evil Creatures

As the game progresses, the player's character gains experience points and gold, while losing food and hit points. Food can be replenished at any food stand, and hit points can be added by going to the right place and offering the right thing. (We don't want to give too much away—you'll find out for yourself.) Everywhere the character moves, there are creatures that attack and must be fought, including fighters, wizards, devils, balrons, sea monsters and others. Defeating a creature adds experience and gold, but hit points are inevitably lost. In fact, there's one particular spot in the game that is so over-run with nasty creatures that the player must be sure to have many extra hit points just to survive. Getting into the structure in that spot is quite an experience! In addition to towns and villages, the player's character explores dungeons and towers full of treasure and vicious monsters. (Be sure to take a torch; these places are very dark.) Though we haven't been there yet, it's possible to take a rocket into space in this game, exploring the *Ultima II* galaxy.

Very Well Designed

ULTIMA II is quite an experience. While the graphics are quite good, especially for an adventure game, the real joy (and occasional frustration) lies in discovering the secrets hidden by the designer. And there are so many of them! Along with the secrets, travels and perils, several bits of comic relief are provided, and they're very welcome. The designers have even given the player a way to let off steam in moments of extreme frustration. Along with the usual keyboard commands such as A)ttack and U)nluck, Y)ell allows the player to type any spleen-venting comment desired before proceeding with the game. Also, pressing J)ump at moments of triumph yields the computer comment "Whee!" *ULTIMA II* is a very well designed adventure game. Its characters are many and varied, its lands richly laden with things to discover, and the player can have a wonderful time creating the adventurer of his or her dreams to carry out the quest. (Solo Play; Pause; Keyboard; Three Disks) (Versions of this game are also available for Apple and Atari computers, IBM PC and PCjr.) Recommended. (MSR \$59.95)

FLIP AND FLOP (★★★½ / ★★★★★) is a most unusual twist—literally—on the quite popular hopping games in which the player attempts to change the colors of squares. On the first and all odd-numbered screens, Flip the Kangaroo hops around a three-dimensional arrangement of squares connected by ladders. (The setting of platforms represents a Zoo of the Future.)



On the second and all even-numbered screens, the setting twists in perspective so that Mitch the Monkey hangs from the underside of the squares, swinging from one to the next. Once the first two screens are cleared within the time limit, Flip is chased by the Zookeeper and Mitch is pursued by the Zookeeper's Flying Net. Sticky squares that flash on some of the platforms can be used strategically: lure the Zookeeper or his Flying Net to land on one, and the pursuer will be caught for a few moments. After each five levels, there is an intermission in which Flip or Mitch descends a magic rope to rejoin their circus friends under the big top. There are 36 levels, and the player can choose to start on anything up to the thirteenth level—you have to *earn* the fourteenth level and beyond!



Innovative Game

Ever since the charming *Q*bert* hopped into the arcades, games of jumping and changing color blocks have become very popular. Far from being a thinly-disguised copy of *Q*bert*, though, *FLIP AND FLOP* is an innovative game that uses perspective as an integral part of game play. The three-dimensional appearance of the Zoo platforms is convincingly done, and the characters are cute and colorful. What drives you nuts is making the transition from Flip to Mitch, from the normal perspective of jumping around on top of a maze of squares to that of hanging from underneath the maze. It's easy enough to get Flip moving quickly around the maze, but most players will lose many a Mitch before getting the "hang" of moving from beneath the maze. Worse yet, it's very easy to jump right off the edge of the maze! This game is very challenging, too, because the configuration of the mazes changes from level to level. By the time you make it past the first few levels, the mazes occupy more than your TV screen can show at one time, so there's the added problem of not always knowing where the Zookeeper or his Flying Net may be. Also, it's easy to become trapped on a platform when you cannot see the entire maze. Graphics are very good, the circus music is delightful, and game play is sometimes exasperating, but always engrossing. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause; Disk or Cassette) (Also available Atari computers; coming soon for Atari 5200) Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

Talkies from Tymac

Tymac Software promises "revolutionary" speech without a synthesizer software for C64, Atari, and VIC-20 within the next two months. Tymac Talkies will include *GANDALF* in which you fire power bolts at attackers; *PEGASUS AND THE TRAILS OF PERSEUS* in which you fight strange creatures while searching for treasures of the ancient gods; *SAMURAI*, in which you defend family honor; *BIO DEFENSE*, in which you battle deadly bacteria in your body; and *FIRST STRIKE*, in which you try and survive nuclear destruction.

Nine titles are planned, including a typing tutor and utility graphics program. Planned retail will be in the \$30-\$40 range. Watch for our reviews shortly.

Super Bowl Football from NEXA

We've had a number of readers asking about the availability of *SUPER BOWL FOOTBALL* for the Atari computers from NEXA Software. We spoke with the company and have learned they are in the final stages of programming the game and should have it available around the end of April or beginning of May. We have been assured that we will have a copy for review the minute it's available, so watch our pages for a review.

DRAGONHAWK (★★★★/★★) was licensed from United Creative Software. It's the first disk-based entertainment title from Creative Software. In a game that's somewhat reminiscent

of *Joust*, the player's task is to eliminate successive waves of strange creatures in order to meet the final challenge, the dragon. The player controls the Dragonhawk, a small gray bird that is made to fly by pressing the joystick button to keep its wings flapping. The first creatures to be defeated are the Buzzards, and they're pretty easy to knock off. The player's Dragonhawk must kill each creature by hitting it from above. A successful kill results in a white feather that floats toward the ground. If the Dragonhawk nabs it in flight, the player can earn a few extra points. Successive waves of creatures become more aggressive and numerous. They include Iguanas (gee, we never hear of a flying iguana, did you?), Phoenixes, Dragon Puppies, Vampire Bats, Giant Mosquitos, and, finally, the Dragon itself. If the Dragonhawk takes too much time to kill all the creatures on a level, bolts of lightning will shoot down from the top of the screen.

Great Graphics, Repetitious Game

Graphics are quite spectacular, with beautifully detailed fantasy creatures and pretty scenery that scrolls slightly to the left and right. However, good graphics alone don't necessarily make a good game. Although the play mechanic of flapping a bird's wings and descending to kill another creature is very much the way *Joust* plays, Dragonhawk falls considerably short of the elegance and originality of both the arcade and home versions of *Joust*. Frankly, we got a little bored with the repetitious waves of different fantasy creatures. There isn't as much variety as we'd like to see from wave to wave. The game becomes very challenging, but that alone isn't enough. You may enjoy this one for a while, but we doubt it's a game you'll want to play again and again. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick) (Disk) Not recommended. MSR \$29.95

MICROSOFT MULTIPLAN is a very powerful financial planning tool that's not for everyone, but it's a real time and energy saver for those who can use its many functions. The purpose of programs such as Multiplan, which are often referred to as electronic spreadsheets, is to set up a worksheet which is typically composed of interrelated financial data. Once a worksheet is set up, changes occurring in many values can be observed by changing key values in the worksheet. An example would be assessing the effect of a 5% increase in paper costs coupled with a 7% wage increase on the ultimate profitability of a monthly magazine. Should the subscription or advertising rates be increased, and what effects would these actions have on the profit structure? Another use of Multiplan could be to set up a comprehensive household budget with the ability to see the effects of rising utility costs, changes in auto insurance rates, etc. While any of these functions could be handled with paper, pencil and calculator, they're done much more quickly and easily with an electronic spreadsheet, once the user understands the program completely and sets up the basic data.

Learning to Use Multiplan

The worksheets in Microsoft Multiplan can be quite large—up to 255 rows by 63 columns, for a total of more than 16,000 "cells." At any one time, a window showing 19 rows and 4 columns is visible on the TV screen. (It is also possible to split the windows to view as many as eight smaller windows at once.) The 422-page manual offers a tutorial section, using the summary operating budget of a fictional company to teach the user the basics of setting up a worksheet, naming the cells, setting up formulas and entering data. The manual proceeds in an orderly fashion, teaching things logically and introducing necessary commands along the way. However, anyone considering the purchase of such a program should be aware that using the program to its fullest requires many hours of study and experimentation. Although this type of program makes a great deal of sense for the business-oriented computer owner, especially one with an interest in accounting, it is overly powerful for setting up a simple household budget. If your Commodore 64 computer is a working partner in your business, this is a program you'll want to consider. However, if you just want a little help figuring out where the money in your house goes every month, this program is probably more complex than you need. (Disk) (MSR \$99.95)

OMNIWRITER & OMNISPELL 64 is a fairly typical word processing program that allows the user to create and edit various kinds of documents more easily than with a typewriter. Word processing is one of the most useful functions of any personal computer, particularly for anyone who writes letters, term papers, speeches, etc. Text is entered from the keyboard and appears on the screen, where it may be changed and rearranged endlessly before saving it to disk or cassette or printing it.

Many Useful Functions

OmniWriter comes with a comprehensive instruction manual (75 pages), a quick reference card for formatting and editing, and an overlay card that fits around the four function keys. The program allows for the usual abilities to delete or insert text, copy blocks of text, print all or part of a document, create centered lines, and many other useful functions. Some functions not typically found in a word processing program in this price range are available with OmniWriter, including the ability to perform a "mail merge." This is the operation that allows you to personalize a form letter by printing a new name and address at the top of each successive copy of the letter. Other useful functions include the ability to do "search and replace" operations, in which the user directs the computer to find every instance of a specified word or phrase and replace it with another word or phrase. Another nice feature is the ability to create justified type. (When you use a typewriter, the left margin is "justified" because all letters are lined up vertically. The right margin is "ragged" because the letters are not lined up. This review is an example of justified type because both left and right margins are perfectly aligned vertically.) OmniWriter supports a wide variety of printers, even allowing the user to take advantage of some printer features such as the ability to print in italics, use underlining or extra-bold print, or print subscripts and superscripts.

OmniSpell

Of all the features provided in this program, the addition of OmniSpell really makes this package a terrific bargain. It's not unusual to find a spelling checking program associated with a word processing program, but it is rare to find that program included in the purchase price of the word processor and on the same disk. Over 30,000 English words are in OmniSpell, and you can update the dictionary to include any special words you use often. Not only can you check the spelling in your finished document, but you can also benefit from OmniSpell's statistical breakdown of your document. This little gem can help you clean up your writing by pointing out tendencies to overuse certain words. (This could help you break a few bad habits—a real boon to the high school or college student preparing a term paper.) If your needs for word processing are casual and occasional, this may be more program than you need. However, it's very easy to use, and it's a program that you can grow into as you do more writing. An excellent value. (Disk) (MSR \$69.95)

DIAGNOSE YOUR 64

Micro Software Intl has just shipped 64 DOCTOR (disk) which consists of short diagnostic tests to determine which piece of hardware in your C64 system may be working incorrectly. Included are tests for keyboard, disk drive, joysticks, printer and more. Suggested retail is \$29.95 with a cassette version planned shortly. MSI has also shipped PRACTIFILE, a database program which handles 3800 records per file, sorts and restructures files, rearranges data to print as mailing labels and allows selective printing (MSR \$49.95). PRACTICALC, another new program, is a complete spreadsheet program which accepts both alpha and numeric data. It has over 20 mathematical functions and is also equipped to operate in the graphics mode to give bar graph representations of numeric data.

Atari Program Exchange Closes

In what is seen as another cost-cutting measure, Atari has quietly shut down their Atari Program Exchange (APX) which allowed people to submit their computer programs and have the opportunity to have them published. We're sorry to see the division close as it has produced some first-rate software—software which, undoubtedly, would not be released under the Atari banner.

FATHOM (★★★ 1/2 / ★★★ 1/2) first appeared in a version for the Atari 2600. The game offers a combination of strategy and action, as the player becomes the mortal who must free Neptina, daughter of Neptune, from the chains that bind her to the bow of a sunken ship. This particular mortal has the ability to become a seagull or dolphin to search sky and sea for the three pieces of Neptune's magical trident. These must be found within a limited period of time (measured as waning energy points) before Neptina can be rescued. The process of finding a trident piece involves touching all the clouds on the correct sky screen (or all the seahorses in the right undersea screen) to reveal a star. When the seagull or dolphin touches the star, a piece of the trident is captured at the bottom of the screen. While underwater, the dolphin must avoid contact with jellyfish and kelp to avoid losing energy points. The seagull flies when the player pushes the joystick button to make the bird's wings flap, and it must avoid contacting flying ravens and lava spewing from the volcanic atolls. Once the trident has been recovered, the mortal must become a dolphin, make his way through a maze of seaweed, and descend to the shipwreck on the ocean floor. The dolphin's final task is to get past the giant octopus that guards the ship, finally releasing Neptina from her bondage. There are nine levels of play, each requiring the player to explore more screens to find the pieces of the trident.

Speech Synthesis Makes It More Fun

This is a difficult and unusual game that offers the bonus of speech for those who have the T.I. Speech Synthesizer. Though not necessary to play the game, the voice of Neptina makes it all the more fun as she exhorts, "Free me, mortal" or gives helpful hints. The graphics in FATHOM are lovely, especially the detailed rendering of the shipwreck on the ocean floor. The sound effects (aside from the synthesized voice of Neptina) are very good. Playing the game is difficult at first, at least until you get the feeling of controlling the dolphin and the seagull in their respective environments. In the underwater screens, there is a buoyancy to the movements of the dolphin, and it's easily knocked out of position if it collides with a jellyfish. The seagull has the same problem with the ravens, and you must be careful not to let the bird get bounced off the screen entirely. It can be very frustrating when you've just found the star, only to be bumped off the screen and have to touch the clouds to reveal the star all over again. All of this smooths out with practice, of course, but it remains a challenging game even after you've mastered the controls. FATHOM is an original, quite unlike any other game in your T.I. 99/4A collection, and it will keep you interested for a long time. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick or Keyboard; Cartridge) (Other versions of this game are available for Atari 2600 and ColecoVision.) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

Design Cards and Letters

Broderbund will release a very interesting program next month for the Apple computer entitled THE PRINT SHOP. It promises to allow you to write, design, and print your own greeting cards, stationery, letterhead, signs and banners! It is menu-driven: you can choose and arrange the various elements of your message using keyboard or joystick and produce a finished piece. Your message can be written in one of eight different typestyles available in two sizes and in solid, outline and three-dimensional formats. There are nine border designs, ten abstract patterns, and dozens of pictures and symbols with which to create personalized printed matter. With the built-in graphics editor, you can create your own original pictures and symbols or modify those provided. You can also print illustrations generated with other graphics programs or freeze and print intricate designs from 12 kaleidoscopic animations provided. Text-editing features such as automatic centering and left and right justification are included, as well as proportional spacing.

Create Customized Letterhead

This program promises the ability to produce custom letterhead, complete with a personalized logo. Full-page signs can be created, or by printing out your text and graphics horizontally, banners of unlimited length, with extra-large letter and graphics, can be produced. The program comes with a colorful assortment of pin-feed paper and matching envelopes and will support many popular printers including the Epson, Apple Dot Matrix, and Imagewriter. The program will retail for \$49.95 with paper refills available for \$14.95.

PROTECTOR II (★★★ / ★★★ 1/2) was licensed by Synapse to Atari for this T.I. 99/4A version. (Synapse designed the original for Atari computers.) It's a horizontally scrolling game of the *Defender* type in which the player shoots at alien craft and tries to save people. The player controls a slick-looking Omicron Needlefighter which must fire lasers in self-defense at airborne enemies and vulnerable ground installations. The most important task, however, is saving eighteen people from a fiery death at the hands of the Fraxullans. (The Fraxullan mother ship kidnaps people and drops them into Dragonmaw, a heat-belching volcano.) They must be picked up, one by one, and flown past Dragonmaw to the City of New Hope. After the volcano erupts, the City of New Hope is destroyed, and each survivor must be dropped into an escape chute into the Verdann Fortress in order to be saved.



Emphasis on Saving, Not Killing

PROTECTOR II is a challenging game that will appeal to those who like *Defender* and other horizontally scrolling shoot-outs of this type. Graphics are colorful, but not highly detailed. The emphasis in this contest is on game play, and the multitude of tasks keeps the game player thoroughly occupied. There is a variety of enemy spacecraft that attack the Needlefighter above the ground, and the ground installations tend to fire at the most inconvenient moments. Picking up the people from the various buildings is a fairly delicate operation, and it's very easy to crash the Needlefighter against a building or the ground. In addition, the player has to keep an eye on the Needlefighter's fuel gauge. Refueling also requires a deft touch with the joystick. Altogether, this is a very enjoyable game with an emphasis on saving, rather than killing. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick; Cartridge) (Other versions of this game are available for Atari and Commodore 64 computers from Synapse Software.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

PICNIC PARANOIA (★★ 1/2 / ★★) puts the player in the middle of bug-infested picnic with little defense against the pests but a fly swatter. As the game begins, four tablecloths are covered with a variety of typical picnic goodies. George, the player's on-screen alter ego, must move between the cloths and around the perimeter of the area, swatting madly to keep the ants from turning the picnic into a moveable

feast. (A large enough army of ants can carry the food right off the screen, but it's possible for George to retrieve it if he's quick enough.) The more George swats, the more ants appear. Other pests include the jumping spiders weaving their sticky webs and the nasty, stinging wasp. The other pests can be swatted, too, but they bite or sting if George touches them. If there is any food left after each 90-second round, the game resumes with the next round. Every 5000 points earns George a can of bug spray. One quick "sssst" of the spray will kill every pest on the screen.

For Youngsters Only

This game may seem very funny when you read the description, but it's unlikely to hold the attention of anyone over the age of six for more than ten minutes. Graphics are blocky, and game play is repetitive. We tired rapidly of moving George around, swatting at everything that moved. You might consider this one for the little ones in the family, but take a good look before you decide to purchase it—even youngsters may find this one too corny. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick; Cartridge) (Also available for Atari computers from Synapse Software.)

Not recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

PCjr Commitment Made by Sierra On-Line

Sierra One-Line has made plans to bring several of their most popular titles to the IBM PCjr. As you read this, you should start seeing several titles in your local stores, including MR. COOL, OIL'S WELL, DRAGONS KEEP, TROLL'S TALE, JAWBREAKER, WIZARD AND THE PRINCESS, and CROSSFIRE. Planned for release shortly are FROGGER and BOXING.

IMAGIC **DEMON ATTACK** (★★★★/★★★★) is a great version of the classic invasion game, **DEMON ATTACK**, and it's a tough one to beat! The battle is fought in two stages: from the surface of the Moon and then deep in space Pandemonium, the Demon Base. At the Lunar Base, the player controls a horizontally mobile laser cannon, shooting at six successive waves of ten demons each. All sixty demons must be destroyed before the player's ship takes off into space to face the demon leader. At the Demon Base, Suicide Patrollers dive toward the player's laser cannon, a Roving Eye shields the demon leader and tracks the laser cannon, and the demon leader itself fires on the player's ship. The object is to eliminate the demon leader so that the ship can return to the lunar surface for a more intense battle with the next waves of demons.

One of the Best Invasion Games

DEMON ATTACK in its many adaptations is still one of the best invasion games available, and now owners of the T.I. 99/4A can play their own version. Graphics are excellent—colorful, detailed and full of variety. The scene on the surface of the moon is beautiful, with the planet Earth at the right edge of the screen. Each wave of demons looks different from the last, and some of them are really fantastic. (We liked the ones that look like green jellyfish.) Game play is challenging from the start, requiring lots of quick moves to stay out of the demons' line of fire both on the lunar surface and at the demon base in space. The demons move quickly and unpredictably, and their firing patterns change from straight angled as the difficulty level increases. Most players will have to practice quite a while on the demons before they'll even have a chance to see the Demon Base, much less destroy the demon leader. If you like invasion games, this is one of the best. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick or Keyboard; Cartridge) (Other versions of this game are available for Atari 2600, Intellivision, Atari computers, Commodore VIC-20 and IBM PCjr) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

MOONSWEeper (★★★★/★★★★) is a multi-screen space game by Imagic in which the player flies the USS Moonsweeper on a mission to rescue miners stranded on the moons of Jupiter. In the first screen, the player's ship appears near the bottom. Various objects hurtle through space, orbiting Jupiter on the right edge of the screen. Satellites and Photon Torches can be blasted or avoided, but the Jovian moons must be touched in order to enter their gravitational field. (The moons are of four different colors indicating their relative difficulty.) Once Moonsweeper is cruising above the lunar surface, the position of the stranded miners can be seen on the control panel's radar screen. Six miners must be rescued before Moonsweeper can travel through the accelerator rings to escape lunar gravity and return to space. However, there are enemies lurking about, and they have other ideas. Their towers on the surface should be destroyed, and the player must watch out for the Surface Destroyers released by the Orbital Launchers that hover near the horizon. The Destroyers move randomly and shoot at Moonsweeper, and it can be especially difficult to avoid them when they gang up on Moonsweeper in twos and threes. Fortunately, the player's ship is equipped with special long-range missiles that can be fired at the Orbital Launchers, preferably before they release the Surface Destroyers.

Arcade-Quality Space Game

MOONSWEeper is an arcade-quality space game with truly spectacular graphics. In space, the black background emphasizes the brilliance of the brightly-colored planet and orbiting objects. Flying above the lunar surfaces is a first-person trip through an apparently three-dimensional world in which the attack of the enemy Destroyers is relentless. Although the Moonsweeper never actually flies forward, the impression of forward movement is quite real because of the rapid changes on the lunar surface—a clever optical illusion. The USS Moonsweeper is very easy to control, and it shoots missile-shaped projectiles instead of mere streaks of light. The missiles even curve in flight when shot at an angle, a realistic touch. This is an exciting space game that will appeal to those who love to blast aliens. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick or Keyboard; Cartridge) (Other versions of this game are available for Atari 2600 and ColecoVision.) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

MICROSURGEON (★★★★/★★★★) is an adaptation of the game originally designed for the Intellivision system; several improvements have been made in this newer version, including voice synthesis if you have the T.I. Speech Synthesizer. The object of the game is to save one of several hospital patients using the techniques of microsurgery. Skill levels from "student" to "intern" to "surgeon" are available to the player. The player's surgical tool is the tiny Robot Probe, a vessel that can be used to direct ultrasonic rays, antibiotics or aspirin directly at various trouble spots in the patient's body. (Each medication only works on specific conditions, such as cholesterol buildup, tapeworms, bacterial infection, tumors, gallstones, etc.) Roaming white blood cells tend to attack the Probe when it strays outside the arteries, veins or lymphatic system, so the the Probe's routes must be chosen carefully. Time is important, too, because different areas of the body can become critical very quickly.

Successful Surgery Leads to Research Dollars

Unlike the original Intellivision version, in which the player had to switch back and forth constantly between surgery and status screens, this version provides all necessary information at once on the screen. There are four small "windows" on the screen. One scrolls to show the portion of the body in which the Robot Probe is located, another shows a magnified view of the immediate environs of the Probe, a third shows a patient in a hospital room (not part of game play), and the status screen lists each organ and its condition on a scale of "good" to "terminal." While keeping an eye on the status screen, the surgeon player must work as quickly as possible to eradicate disease in the most critical areas first, always watching the Probe's energy level. Rather than points, this game awards or takes away research dollars. Dollars are earned for saving organs, improving the patient's condition over his/her initial status and destroying individual viruses or other conditions. Dollars are lost over time, when dispensing medication, or when the Probe is touched by a virus or phagocyte (white blood cell). Dollars are also gained or lost when the Probe exits the body properly (through ear, eye, nose or mouth) or improperly (anywhere else).

Endlessly Fascinating to Play

In **MICROSURGEON**, the interior of the human body is shown in brilliant color and detail that may be a little too much for those who faint at the sight of blood, but most players will find it a fascinating study of anatomy. Speech synthesis adds realism to the game, but it plays equally well without it. (The voice adds the sounds of doctors being paged and brief comments on the progress of the microsurgery.) The game is endlessly fascinating to play because there are so many different patients from which to choose. It's the kind of game that keeps you very busy, constantly making decisions about where to move the Probe and what medications to dispense. In fact, the game is a little easier when two people play cooperatively, because one moves the Robot Probe while the other chooses and gives out the medicine. **MICROSURGEON** is an educational game that's good for hours of fun. (Solo Play; 2-Player Cooperative; Pause; Joystick and/or Keyboard; Cartridge) (Other versions of this game are available for Intellivision and IBM PCjr.) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

Beat The Beatles Trivia

Beatle-maniacs rejoice! Interactive Software has a Beatles trivia game available for Atari computers which grew out of a User's Group originally and, due to its success, they are now working on a translation for Apple and IBM PC, and possibly the Macintosh and TI99-4A. We were very interested to learn that anyone who purchases the program (retail \$24.95) is entitled to lifetime updates and, in fact, the trivia quiz has already been updated five times! They are now working on Beat The Beatles II for Atari for release within about 60 days. We will be reviewing Beat the Beatles I in our next issue.

First Star Goes to the Arcades

Reversing the normal trend of hit arcade games licensed to the home, First Star has just announced an agreement with Exidy Inc. whereby **BOULDER DASH**, **FLIP & FLOP**, **ASTRO CHASE**, and **BRISTLES** will be translated into arcade versions. All four games have been highly successful on the home front in various formats.

ADAM Software Update

It's becoming more and more obvious that there is a large contingent of ADAM owners among our readers. We know you're all looking for software, so we've been on the phones with all the various third party software companies who had announced previous intentions to produce for the ADAM digital data pack.

Datamost

MR. ROBOT AND THE ROBOT FACTORY is "in the works" right now and the company plans to show a finished version at the Summer C.E.S. in Chicago in June. A representative indicated the game should be ready for shipment to retailers at that time; however, no other software is "seriously being contemplated" until the success of MR. ROBOT is measured.

Broderbund

LODE RUNNER had been reported as a conversion to digital data pack; however, Broderbund has licensed the title to Coleco. (They did the same thing when they licensed CHOPLIFTER to Atari.) Therefore, when the title is released later this year, it will be under the Coleco name.

Tronix

Although JUICE has been reported as an upcoming data pack title elsewhere, a Tronix representative has told us that, due to a change of marketing strategy to home management and education, they will not be producing any titles for ADAM.

Infocom

Plans are in the works for data pack versions of some of Infocom's most popular titles, including the ZORK Trilogy, DEADLINE, WITNESS, PLANETFALL, INFIDEL, STARCROSS, SUSPENDED, and ENCHANTER. The exact number of titles to be produced is not fully clear at this point; however, our understanding is that at least one or two are targeted for a Summer release as the first.

Spinnaker

We were surprised to learn that, in spite of the newly released children's learning titles for ColecoVision where there are references to upcoming releases for the Data Pack, Spinnaker will have NO titles in Adam production until the end of the year, at the earliest! Based on that information, we would predict there will be nothing on your dealer's shelves until sometime during the first quarter of '85. By the way, there are no specific titles at this time.

Epyx

Although Epyx plans to continue releasing ColecoVision cartridges which are, of course, playable on ADAM, they have no plans at this time to produce for the data pack.

Sierra On-Line

Five titles are planned, probably for a June or July release. The titles which will be available for the datapak are FROGGER, DRAGONS KEEP, PRISONER, TROLL'S TALE, and BOXING. At this time, they do not have plans to release B.C.'S QUEST FOR TIRES or APPLE CIDER SPIDER. (B.C. is, of course, already available as a ColecoVision cartridge).

And so, you have it. We, of course, continue to ask EVERY software manufacturer about their plans for Adam, PCjr, and ALL the systems whenever we speak with them. We will continue to update you as soon as we learn any more.

BOOK REVIEW

BASIC COMMODORE 64 BASIC by James S. Coan, is a guide to the operation and BASIC programming for the C64, either for the home or classroom. It is written in such a way to make it relatively easy to work your way into more and more difficult tasks by beginning with short computer programs that are easy to learn. A new command is then added to the short programs and soon the desired effect on the program is created and illustrated. It gets into programming sound and music, working with the sprites, writing a program Menu, and much more. Clearly and concisely written, this is a good guide to anyone who wants to be stepped through the various aspects of programming for the C64. (MSR \$14.95)

CLARIFICATION

We had a few readers who questioned our apparent comparison of Coleco's Adam computer to Apple's Macintosh in the March issue. Unfortunately, part of the "Hardware Overview" article had to be cut at the last moment, due to space limitations, and the absence of a few lines made it appear that we were comparing the performance and marketing of a \$700 computer (Adam) to that of a nearly \$3000 one (Macintosh). Understandably, this raised the hackles of a few Adam owners. The comparison intended was between the two companies, Coleco and Apple, and their attitude toward consumers in general and toward purchasers of their products in particular. In our experience, and judging from the comments of many of our readers, Apple has shown itself to be more responsive to consumers and more willing to admit and correct its mistakes than Coleco. An example is the disk drive upgrade which has been made available to all owners of the original Lisa computer at no charge. An upgrade (R59 to R80 version of the word processor) is available to owners of the earlier Adams, too, but this is not made known to the Adam owner until he or she has a problem with the unit. (We are not comparing the Adam computer to the Lisa computer. We are pointing out the difference between offering an upgrade to all owners of a unit, rather than just to the ones who have a problem with it.)

When we remarked that it's difficult to find a store that will allow the consumer "hands on" experience with an Adam prior to purchase, we based that statement on reports from both retailers and consumers. As an example, one retailer, who asked that we not use his name, reported "we had an Adam set up for demos at first, but it was embarrassing when the thing would do something weird in front of customers. After a couple of weeks, we would only sell them in the box." The high defective rate of the early Adams is something that Coleco still doesn't recognize, but it was a very real problem that we have heard about from a number of our readers who sell and/or own Adams. It appears that these problems may now be under control—we certainly hope so.

Another portion of the article that was cut referred to the fact that it is relatively easy to get a demonstration of an Atari or Commodore computer, both of which are in the same general price range as Adam when a comparable "system" is assembled. We have since had reports from a few of our readers that such demonstrations of Adam are available in at least a few stores, so check around in your area. A computer is much too important a purchase to be made on the basis of TV and magazine ads alone—you must try it for yourself.

ADAM Word Processing Tip

Reader Wayne Motel of Dyer, Indiana owns an ADAM Module and has passed along a valuable tip regarding the built-in word processing which we felt our Adam owners would benefit from.

One of the problems with earlier Adams was the word processor (e.g. word wrap worked except when period was last character entered, therefore the word wouldn't jump to the next line. Instead, you would lose data on the screen and get garbage when you printed.) The problems with the word processor have been solved with the newer version Adam (version R80). How do you know which version you have (the old one is R59)? With your Adam turned on, get it in the "electronic typewriter" mode. The bottom of the screen shows the smart key settings 5 and 6 only. If you simultaneously press "Control and R" on the keyboard, digits will light up at the bottom of the screen where the smart key setting 4 would be. At that point, it should display R59 or R80, and you'll know which version you've got. If you're having problems, the R59 version can be exchanged at the Honeywell Service Center for the R80 and you'll also get the new and better manual plus new Smartwriter reference cards and another small manual with operating tips and problem-solving tips.

Note: Adam is in the electronic typewriter mode as soon as your power is on, provided there's nothing in the data pack drive.

Outside Help for Digital Data Pack

We have learned that the engineers from a major blank disk and tape company were recently called in to help solve the initial problems with the Adam Data Pack and we have been assured that the help given has "made the difference" with the Data Packs now coming off the production line seemingly trouble-free.

Readers Speak Out

Dear Editor:

I really must point out what I (and others) feel is unfair subjective and biased reporting in the March 1984 issue:

Page 177 (cover): "Had ADAM been a big success story, it would have been as a computer AND a separate video game system." What? Are you writing off the Adam computer? Isn't it a good success? My Adam is a great success around my house. (I only had to replace the word processing program, which had some bugs.)

Page 184: "Massive lay-offs at Coleco headquarters and our inside reports of internal panic because the Data Pak (among other technical problems) are causing Coleco extreme headaches...the most circulated rumor this month has Coleco quietly discontinuing the Adam in favor of a new computer altogether." Where did you dig out that "most circulated rumor"? Must have been down in a basement—back in a dark corner, eh? Electronic Games Hotline reports on March 11 that the Adam is very much alive and well, and has several articles about various companies announcing software on digital data pack and/or disk for the Adam. Also CompuServe is starting service via modem for the Adam. (Ed. Note: See Adam Software Update article elsewhere in this issue.)

...What's wrong with real impartial objectivity? Looks to me like you and your staff could use some practice in that...

G.K., Lakewood, Colorado

Dear Editor:

...Although Coleco deserves some bad raps, ADAM is not that bad for the money. The current revision 80 upgrade word processing works fine. I am a programmer and work on a mainframe IBM system using word processing. The Adam is not that bad, nor is the printer considering the overall cost. The new BASIC manual is excellent as is the word processing reference chart and operating tips manual. Although the digital data drive received raps initially, much of this was due to lack of information on leaving tapes in when power on/off. I have not had any problems in four months.

W.M., Dyer, Indiana

Dear Editor:

I'm impressed by your cynicism (equal to mine) regarding the "reliability" of projected availability of both hardware and software by most manufacturers. I rarely believe anything stated by Coleco. S.F., Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Dear Editor:

Less than 24 hours after getting my Adam, it went blank and made a loud AHHHH humming noise. I mailed it in to the main Honeywell Repair Depot and got it back 2 weeks later working, but as I used it, I noticed irritating little problems. The computer would "freeze up" on me (more than once), losing pages of word processing, because I had to hit the main reset button before it would work. The tape drive ate my basic tape and I had to open the cassette to fix it. I did manage to fix it long enough to transfer programs stored on it to a blank tape. The Super game occasionally went into a garbage mode, where weird shapes take the place of the normal graphics, (part of the screen blacks out, etc.) Then the computer tries to reset it, or the game just freezes. I get weird error messages when I try to store about an eight-page single-spaced letter, such as "cannot read this file," "cannot write to file," etc. And it would only bring back the first page or two while the reset was gone forever. The printer type was uneven though not bad.

After a week or two of putting up with this, I called Coleco and returned the unit to Honeywell. They replaced the printer and memory console. Two days after getting it back again, the printer started acting crazy, would make a loud humming noise, and then stopped. I took it in and they replaced the printer again which had a different defect—the margins went nuts. My Adam is now in for the fourth time.

A Disenchanted Adam Owner (name withheld by request)

AT YOUR SERVICE

If you want more information about anything we talk about in an issue, or can't find a program or company, just send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope and we will send you the information you request. Just one more way we are at your service! A complete listing of all computer software can be obtained from Video Take-Out. Ask for the Computer Software Menu.

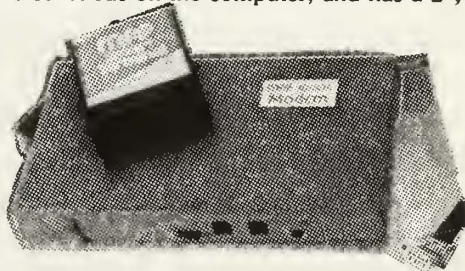


64K Memory Board for 600XL

Microbits Peripheral Products will be introducing a 64K Memory Board for the Atari 600XL later this month (retail \$149.95) which will easily plug directly into your expansion bus.

Modem & Printer Interface too

Another unusual and potentially exciting item is their Atari Auto Answer/Auto Dial Direct Connect Modem (retail \$149.95) which plugs into the joystick port and works on ALL Atari computers! Features include a Smart Terminal Cartridge with upload/download of text; 100% machine language; multiple buffers; off-line editing; Parity Options; full/half duplex; ASCII/ATASCII translation; and ability to transfer files larger than memory. The modem comes with a 1-hour subscription to THE SOURCE and a CompuServe DemoPak and has a 1-year warranty. The MPP-1150 Printer Interface replaces the Atari 850 Interface Module and is compatible with all software. It also works on all Atari computers and comes with a 3-foot cable with Centronics plug (compatible with Epson, NEC, Prowriter, etc); connects to serial bus on the computer; and has a 2 year warranty.



Books On ADAM

Our thanks to reader Mike Price of Columbia, Missouri for this comprehensive list of Adam books that are either available or coming soon. Mike works in the University of Missouri bookstore.

USING AND PROGRAMMING THE ADAM INCLUDING READY TO RUN PROGRAMS by Timothy Orr Knight (128pp) \$7.25 paperback—TAB Books (May, 1984)

BASIC BASIC PROGRAMS FOR THE ADAM by Timothy Orr Knight (144pp) \$8.25 paperback—TAB Books (May, 1984)

THE FIRST BOOK OF ADAM THE COMPUTER by Arthur Dent (208pp) \$9.25 paperback—TAB Books

THE BASIC ADAM by Gary Corwell & Wm Abikoff \$12.95—J Wiley & Sons

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR COLECO ADAM by Stan Miastrowski (256pp) \$12.95—Osborne/McGraw Hill (June, 1984)

THE COLECO ADAM ENTERTAINER by Brian Sawyer (150pp) \$12.95—Osborne/McGraw Hill (June, 1984)

ADAM USER'S GUIDE by Deborah Miller & Deborah Voosen \$10.95 paperback—Prentice-Hall

THE SIMON & SCHUSTER GUIDE TO THE COLECO ADAM by Danny Goodman \$6.95 paperback—Simon & Schuster (June)

HOW TO USE COLECO ADAM by Jerry Willis (100pp) \$5.95 paperback—Dilithium Press

32 BASIC PROGRAMS FOR THE COLECO ADAM by Tom Rugg and Phil Feldman (288pp) \$19.95 paperback (June); data pack book/software \$39.95 (June)

THE COLECO ADAM USER'S GUIDE by Roger Sharpe & Mark Andrews (128pp) \$5.95—Macmillan

MASTERING THE COLECO ADAM by Kent Porter \$8.95—New American Library (April)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..APPLE-COMPATIBLE

B.C.'S QUEST FOR TIRES (★★★/★★) is an adaptation



Sierra
ON-LINE INC

of the game that first appeared in versions for the Atari computers and ColecoVision. Starring Thor, the loveable caveman, the game brings the B.C. comic strip to life in a horizontally

scrolling quest to rescue Cute Chick from the dinosaur. Thor rides along on his stone tire, hopping over rocks and holes. When he collides with an obstacle, he falls over, his tire rolls away, and he cries "Zot!" When he reaches the river, he must attempt to cross by jumping on the backs of a string of turtles that are constantly submerging and resurfacing. After the river, there are more rocks and holes as Thor climbs the side of a volcano. At the top, he must jump so that the Dooky Bird will carry him across the lava pit. Then Thor must ride and jump his way through a shower of volcanic rocks, across another turtle bridge, and then duck under the Fat Broad's upraised club to enter the dinosaur's cavern. Here Thor must jump and duck to avoid stalagmites and stalactites, until he finally reaches Cute Chick on the other side of the cave. (Apparently the dinosaur is out for the afternoon.) Eleven high scores are retained on the disk.

Not As Good As the Original

We rated the earlier versions of this game (for Atari computers and ColecoVision) highly, but we were not as happy with this adaptation for Apple. The characters are well animated, but the scenic backgrounds are a little sparse. Thor's hair blows in the breeze, and he wears the same silly grin that he does in the earlier versions, but the amusing moments when he turns his head toward the player are missing. We also missed the presence of Fat Broad on the far side of the river, taunting Thor with "Jump, Sucker!" as he tries to cross on the backs of the turtles. In this version, Thor doesn't travel through the Petrified Forest, nor does he encounter the dinosaur at the mouth of the cave. Lest we sound too negative in talking only about what this version *doesn't* have, the Apple adaptation does have a whimsical charm of its own. The graphics are colorful, and we especially liked the little white clouds floating across the sky. However, we found the play action of this game considerably slower than the earlier versions. Even when we sped Thor up to maximum, it seemed that he was creeping along, perhaps because of the lack of background objects as a point of reference. We've spent a lot of time with the earlier versions, and so we may be prejudiced in their favor, but the Apple version doesn't seem as lively and interesting. It's not really a bad game, but it just doesn't measure up to the original. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick; 48K Disk) (Other versions of this game are available for Atari computers, Commodore 64 and ColecoVision.) Not recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

OIL'S WELL (★★★/★★★) is reviewed under ColecoVision. Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..IBM PCjr-COMPATIBLE

MICROSURGEON (★★★★/★★★★) is essentially the same game as the version for the T.I. 99/4A computer, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. One major difference—the status screen is a separate one, accessible during game play



by pressing both joystick buttons simultaneously or hitting the "enter" key. Also, there is no voice synthesis in this version. Due to the greater graphic capabilities of the PCjr, the pictorial aspect of the game is the most spectacular of any of the three versions of MICROSURGEON. Colors are beautiful and details exquisite. This game will provide many hours of enjoyable play and learning. (Solo Play; 2-Player Cooperative; Pause; Joystick or Keyboard; Cartridge) (Other versions of this game are available for ColecoVision and T.I. 99/4A.) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

ADAM Users Group Formed

If you're an ADAM owner in search of a User's Group, the first one we are aware of has just begun the release of a bi-monthly newsletter entitled *Expandable Computer News* (\$12.00 for six issues). For more information, write to Sage Enterprises, Rte 2, Box 24, Scrivener Road, Russellville, MO 65074; phone number 314-782-3448.

PCjr Acceptance Still Dismal

Reports of the PCjr sitting on dealer's shelves gathering dust have several third party software companies just a bit concerned as man had immediately announced plans to support the system, based on IBM's success and penetration in the market. Several companies have told us within the last week or two, off the record, that they are taking a "hard look" at continuing releases for the system until they see signs of a stronger installed base. Although everyone generally seems to feel that because it is IBM—and, therefore, eventual success (with some adjustments such as a new keyboard??) is probable—immediate heavy involvement and the costs inherent in that involvement have definitely slowed down third party releases. As we predicted months ago, there is a great deal of concern over cost vs. value since a completely outfitted PCjr will run you around \$1300-\$1400 and will not run over 40% of IBM PC software. At least in the short run, it appears that the disappointment over the value of PCjr is actually creating sales for the Apple //e system (computer, disk drive, and monitor will run you \$1100 - \$1300)

Third Party Problem in Adam Expansion Module?

After receiving a phone call from an anxious reader, we've been back and forth on the phone with Coleco, Parker Bros., and MicroFun regarding a potential problem involving some third party software and compatibility with the Adam Module. Our reader purchased both Super Cobra (Parker Bros.) and Heist (MicroFun) and took them home to play on his Adam module. Neither game worked so he went back to the store only to find they were not defective. He exchanged them, took the new ones home, only to be confronted with the same problem. He then tried them in a friend's "stand-alone" Adam and found there was no problem and, when he removed his ColecoVision from the Adam, the games worked in the ColecoVision. Since his call to us, we have received a few more, reporting the identical problem. Our reader phoned the Coleco 800 phone number where they said they had just received a memo outlining that there might be a problem with certain third party software.

Software Companies Baffled

We've spent a great deal of time on the phone with Parker Bros. and MicroFun. Both companies were amazed at the problem but promised to speak with their technical staff immediately. As we go to press, we are still working on getting to the bottom of the problem and will print anything we learn next month.

Fascinating New Game from Datamost

We checked in with Datamost to see what they're up to and they've got one planned for the end of May which has got our curiosity piqued! Entitled ANKH 64 ROOMS—AN ADVENTURE IN THE METAREAL WORLD (phew!), it's the first arcade abstract computer puzzle. As the "Surrogate Other," you must make your way through 64 rooms, solving puzzles (some musical), moving things from room to room (and back to rooms you've already been to), etc. It's planned for the Atari, C64, and Apple computers and Datamost promises many, many hours of puzzle solving!

Other Sneak Previews

Planned for late Spring, early Summer release are MYCHESS II, a two or three-dimensional championship chess game where you can rotate the board, save your game to disk, etc. POLAR PIERRE will be a one or two-player (simultaneous) game where you work against the clock and guide Pierre and Jacques through an obstacle course. Fancy graphics and music are promised. And, their first text adventure, EARTHLY DELIGHTS is being planned for Apple, IBM PC and PCjr. It's billed as a modern detective story where you must get back a stolen painting. The majority of the setting is planned as Paris.

Software Directions '84, Part II

Entertainment Software

If, as John Victor of PDI and others feel, the shakeout is imminent in educational software, few would disagree that the shakeout in entertainment software has already occurred. Many companies that exhibited at past Consumer Electronics Shows were nowhere to be seen in January. One of the survivors is Parker Brothers, even though they've had their share of less-than-successful games. Philip Orbanes, Vice President of Research and Development, echoed a sentiment we heard from many other producers of games. He said that Parker Brothers has an "understanding that it's quality, and it's setting trends for the quality of video game software where we will make our mark... The philosophy of the company today is quite a bit different than it was back in the summer of '82 or even the fall of '82 when it was 'let's get as much as we can on the market because the market wants products' to one where we are extremely selective and have put together... policies to make sure that we don't put out mediocre product. In fact, a lot of product that we had announced or had actually almost finished programming, we chose not to manufacture and introduce because we didn't think it would be distinctive enough to warrant either good praise or good response from the consumers." Parker Brothers is one of several companies that are acting on the same general philosophy. The emphasis in entertainment software for 1984 is quality.

Are Video Games Dead?

When asked for his reaction to the often heard comment that the video game business is dead, Orbanes offered an interesting view that places video games within the overall perspective of the history of games in general. He said, "I think that video games as a fast-rising medium that has the world totally enthralled—or at least this country enthralled—certainly that's over. And it will probably not be recaptured again in the so-called video game machine category. But games per se have become an ever-increasingly important part of entertainment for this country, and have been since World War II. We can trace back to significant, jolting revolutions in the game industry, from the time when games were merely religious in their themes and moral-building in their design, to a point where suddenly the founder of Parker Brothers, in particular, was one of those people who realized that people wanted to have more out of game-playing than just learning about goodness and right and wrong, and he introduced a lot of business games, or business-oriented money games. That was a revolution in its day, and it was one that was looked at with little regard at first, and then suddenly became the only way that games were to be selected—based upon merit."

"That evolved, of course, through Monopoly's era in the 30's, and finally by the 1950's and into the early 60's, another revolution occurred, and games suddenly incorporated plastic and dimension and real-time action. No longer was it simply a board where you moved a token and dice. That revolution in the early 1960's was perhaps as significant to the game industry then as was the video game revolution of several years ago. Parker Brothers and Milton Bradley were about the only major game companies in the early 1960's that survived and accomplished and incorporated and built upon the advent of plastic. We sometimes lose the importance that type of event had in the game market. Board games didn't go away because of that. They went through a lull, but they came back because better ways were found by which people could use the board type of apparatus. Witness the advent of Dungeons and Dragons a few years back, and just how big that is today.

"Now to jump for a moment to the present: we've gone through the hand-held electronic revolution, which was superseded by the video games, and now many people feel that home computers are the next medium. But I feel that what will happen is that the excitement and the love that the press, in particular, has for a category, which wanes once the category becomes stable or dips a little bit, will find a rebirth of sorts as time goes on, when better ways are identified, or better means are available to portray games on the television screen. We may be in a bit of a lull right now, compared to being in period when there's a lot of product on the market that really shouldn't be there, from the consumer's point of view. Once that passes, I think there'll be a few innovations that will rekindle the growth. Now the growth may be on machines other than what we know today as the most popular machines, but you can't escape the fact that tomorrow there will be more computers in the world than there are today. That fact alone is going to have amazing repercussions on this business. I think over the long term, they'll be very

beneficial ones. So I think what's happened is that games have proved themselves to be very valuable in the last 70 or 80 years, and they find the right way to reach the consumer. It's our job to always be there. And if, in fact, the Atari 2600 and 5200, Intellivision and ColecoVision are not the way the consumer wants his games delivered in 1985 or '86, then we will not be among those companies that will die because we've pinned our success on those machines. As good businessmen, we will move to where the consumer wants the product delivered from."

Laser Disc Games in the Home

In discussing the possible future directions of home video games, we asked Mr. Orbanes if he felt the laser disc games now available in the arcades would have a significant impact on the home market. He replied, "like any new and up-and-coming technology, we have been excited, concerned, and hopeful for it from the beginning. We are very serious about a meaningful introduction in the laser disc category at the right time—if not this year, then very soon thereafter. The answer to the question, what impact will laser discs have—and they will, in fact, have an impact—is really dependent upon the features that the hardware offers the consumer to enable him to play games. Right now the hardware is very awkward. It's interactive, but it's very laborious to make it interactive for the consumer. It's our feeling what if hardware manufacturers make it easier and more user-friendly for games to be played, that video discs will happen much faster—in fact, it's my prediction that the hardware sales of video disc units are going to be many times what the manufacturers now expect because of the fact that games will drive that product, if the hardware can be exploited by games. I think that in itself—if that happens, and I really believe it will—is an indication of just how important games are to the American consumer, because it's the most important form of interactive entertainment."

Arcade Game Translations

One final area of entertainment software that we talked about was the arcade-to-home game conversion, an area where Parker Brothers has met both success and failure. Mr. Orbanes wanted to make it quite clear that Parker Brothers always works with its programmers to get the maximum out of each system's potential. He added, "many times it's very difficult to take an arcade game and to faithfully reproduce it, given the limitations of the cartridge home systems." While we understand that there are problems to be overcome in translating arcade games for home systems, especially for those with limited capabilities, we made the point that the consumer doesn't necessarily understand or even care about the insurmountable obstacles that the designer faces. What the consumer cares about is the end result: does the translation look and play enough like the original to deserve the same name as the coin-op? If it is not possible to make the adaptation quite similar to the original in looks and play action, then perhaps it shouldn't have been done in the first place. Orbanes agreed, saying, "I can think of several examples, some of which we were responsible for in our earlier days." This comment from Orbanes is typical of the more honest and realistic attitude we found among most software producers we spoke with at CES and since. These companies have all been through trial by fire, and those that are still in business are approaching 1984 with more humility, less bombastic over-sell, and a better understanding of what the software consumer demands from the product he or she will purchase.

"Computer Games" Magazine Recommended!

Naturally, we watch all the game and computer magazines every month to see what everyone is doing. Most are "fun," but are obviously swayed by the advertising they receive and tend to be almost cartoonish in their presentation. However, there is one "slick" which, month after month, prints good, solid reviews; thought-provoking articles; and well-written articles geared toward the serious gamesman—and they haven't abandoned the dedicated game systems. There is a good mix of systems covered and the information is remarkably "on time" in light of the lead time the four-color magazines are faced with. For those of you looking for a good source of information in addition to us, take a look at COMPUTER GAMES (888 Seventh Avenue, New York 10106). By the way, the current issue on your newstand (June, 1984) has an absolutely hilarious center fold satirical look at Coleco's "Cabbage Patch Computer". The June issue also features several games for PCjr, conversion games, a guide to computer camps, and more.

THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

CRITICALLY SPEAKING...ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE

ACTIVISION **BEAMRIDER** (★★★/★★★½) is an adaptation of a game originally designed for Intellivision and later done for ColecoVision. In its third incarnation, BEAMRIDER retains a look of vector graphics that are only slightly less dazzling in this version. It's a futuristic shooting game with a grid of light beams that fade into the distance, giving the appearance of three-dimensional space. The player's ship moves horizontally along the bottom of the screen, while the enemy ships emerge as blips of light in the distance, quickly attacking by riding down the beams toward the player's ship. The player's ship fires "laser lariats" at the onrushing enemies and must avoid their red laser bolts. This is not one of those games in which the player can shoot at everything, though. Occasionally, a yellow energy form will ride down a beam; contact with it results in an extra ship, while shooting it turns it red and deadly. At higher levels, the enemy ships take on different forms and wild attack patterns, becoming very difficult to shoot or avoid. After each wave of fifteen enemies is dispatched, the Enemy Command Craft moves across the screen. It's guarded by fast-moving yellow saucers, and the player gets only three chances to hit it. Then it's on to the next sector.

The Feel of a Classic

This is the third time in a row that we've liked this game. This version for Atari 2600 is every bit as addictive as the earlier games for Intellivision and ColecoVision. The graphics have a clean look, and the designer has done a great job of simulating three-dimensional space with the use of perspective. BEAMRIDER is very easy to learn—typical of many Activision games—but it gets the player hooked in the early stages of play. The player has the ability to start at the first or the eighth screen, thus accommodating both beginning and advanced gamers. No matter where the player starts, though, the difficulty escalates fairly quickly, with the addition of new enemies and more frantic attack patterns. The design of the game penalizes the mindless technique of simply shooting at everything in sight, which we think makes for a better game. It's obvious that BEAMRIDER was inspired by the basic invasion games, but the combination of clean graphics and unpredictable enemy movements takes it a step beyond the typical game of the type. This one has the feel of a classic. (Solo Play)
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

5200 Software Drought

We've had many readers complaining about the lack of reviews for their Atari 5200. Unfortunately, it is not a situation where we are holding back reviews, but a temporary (we hope) lack of software releases which has caused the lack of coverage for the system. Unlike ColecoVision which is enjoying tremendous third party support currently, in spite of a very light release schedule from Coleco itself, the 5200 has not benefited from the same situation. Atari, in cutting back their releases substantially, has only released PENGU and ROBOTRON within the past couple of months, with very few other companies converting any of their hits for the 5200. Frankly, based on planned releases from the various software manufacturers, this lack of support does not appear to be something which will clear up in the near future. Companies like Imagic, Sunrise, Epyx, and others, have released and are continuing releases of ColecoVision product, with no plans for 5200 conversion. With all the recent releases, ColecoVision has begun to take a definite lead in the amount of software available for it.

New Coleco Titles In

As we were walking out the door to the printer, three (!!) brand new ColecoVision games showed up at our doorstep for review. In order to give the reviews the time they deserve, watch next month's issue for DESTRUCTOR, WAR GAMES, and BURGERTIME!

FRONT LINE (★½/★½) is based on the Taito arcade game in which the player takes the role of a soldier on a mission to invade enemy territory and wipe out the enemy's fort. The game begins with a military drum roll and then scrolls vertically as the player's character travels up the screen, first on a road and then through the brush. The foot soldier is armed with a pistol and anti-tank missiles, and the early stages of combat are strictly man-to-man with the patrolling enemy foot soldiers. It's a matter of kill or be killed, only becoming less personal when the player's soldier finds an abandoned tank to jump into. Both heavy and light enemy tanks attack as the player's tank makes its way through the desert across a bridge over a river, finally reaching the barriers near the enemy fortress. If the player's tank is destroyed by the enemy, the lonely foot soldier must make his way alone through the enemy's tank forces—there are no more abandoned tanks to be found. Once the soldier reaches the fortress, he must jump out of his tank (if he still has one) and fire an anti-tank missile to destroy the fort. The game then resumes on the road at the next skill level.

Personal Violence in a Dull Game

We disliked this game on two levels. First of all, it takes violence which is mostly vague and impersonal in many video games, to a point where it is undeniably a case of one human being killing another human being. Coleco didn't set the game up this way. Taito did so in designing the original arcade game. We doubt that many parents would knowingly expose their kids to this type of overt violence. Regardless of how you may feel about the issue of violence in video games, though, this version of FRONT LINE is not a good game. The graphics are blocky, primitive and unsophisticated. We all know that the Atari 2600 system and its equivalents are capable of far better than the square shapes and unimaginative perspectives of this game. Game play is equally dull: move up the screen, aim and shoot, move up some more, and nauseam. If you like the arcade game, you won't like this adaptation, and if you're not a fan of the coin-op, you'll like this game even less. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating)
Not recommended.

Reader Tip

Dear Sir:

I've found a new way to use the ColecoVision Expansion Module #2. The accelerator pedal of this controller can be used in conjunction with an Atari-type joystick to relieve the continual pressing of the "gas" button. The driving controllers will work too, but not the paddle controllers. Plug the Atari converter (Expansion Module 1) into your ColecoVision or Adam, get a "two-joysticks-into-one" adaptor cord (Y-Adaptor) and plug this into the first jack on the Atari converter. Then plug the cord from the ColecoVision Expansion Module 2 into one socket, and a joystick or driving controller into the other socket. Use the joystick or knob on the driving controller to steer, and the accelerator pedal instead of the "gas" button.

Arnold Lee Susat
Buffalo, New York

Vectrex Problem?

We've had a reader contact us regarding a problem he has encountered with the built-in game, Mine Storm. As Vectrex is no longer in existence (and we haven't gotten to screen 13 ourselves!), we pose this question to our Vectrex acers out there. Our reader finds that nine times out of ten, the game resets itself after passing Mine Field 13. If it doesn't reset after #13, it does so sooner or later. Our reader wants to know if he has a defective unit, or if this is a flaw in the program. So, Vectrex owners—if you have the answer, please drop us a line so we can get to the bottom of the resetting Field 13!

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

BUCK ROGERS PLANET OF ZOOM (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ 1/2) is based on the Sega arcade game that Sega itself adapted for other game and computer systems. This version by Coleco has all screens of the coin-op original, something that Sega didn't do

with their adaptations. First the player pilots Buck Rogers' spaceship through a narrow trench (pictured), firing away at alien saucers and avoiding explosive rockets. The bottom and sides of the trench whiz by, giving an effective illusion that the spaceship is moving forward through the trench. (Actual movement is limited to horizontal and some vertical maneuvering; the player has no control over the speed of the spaceship's apparent forward movement.) If all saucers are eliminated or time runs out, Buck's ship moves to the second screen in space. The enemies are the same—saucers and rockets—but the motion through dark, starry space is simulated by moving orange bars. (In space, Buck's ship has mobility over the entire screen.)



On the Planet of Zoom

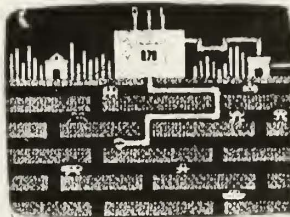
The third scene is the surface of the planet, Zoom, where saucers and rockets are joined by enemy planes. (There are no towers or space hoppers on the surface of Zoom, as in the coin-op game.) The fourth screen is the same trench as the first, except for energy barriers to be avoided and nothing but enemy planes to shoot at. The fifth screen is an encore of the second—outer space with the addition of blue asteroids to be avoided or shot. The Command Ship must be eliminated on the sixth screen by knocking out all four of its engines and the reactor gates before all the "invisible saucers" escape. (A UFO counter at the top of the screen counts down as time elapses, keeping track of the number of saucers still inside the Command Ship; if the counter reaches zero before the Command Ship is destroyed, then the player's ship has had it.) Enemy planes make the task more difficult.

Excellent 3-D Simulation

Coleco's designers have done a terrific job of simulating the three-dimensional effects of the original coin-op version of this game. The flying saucers, in particular, seem to have depth and rounded form as they fly toward the player's ship from in front or from behind. Our only complaint about the graphics: there is a slight, but noticeable, amount of blinking in moving objects at times, along with a tendency for some objects to seem transparent when they overlap. However, none of this is serious enough to detract from the game. (We were surprised to note that there is no "pause" feature in this game.) Play action is very straightforward: fly and shoot. Because no enemies fire on the player's ship, it's quite possible to play a purely avoidance game. In fact, we accidentally discovered a technique that allowed us to play through all six screens quite easily, although we didn't earn a lot of points doing so. Rather than chasing enemies aggressively all over the screen, we kept our ship as near to the bottom of the screen as possible, simply sweeping back and forth and keeping the firing button depressed. We avoided contact with any enemy craft and shot only those that were foolish enough to stray within our range. The first time we tried this technique, we made it all ?way to the Command Ship with all of our extra ships intact. (It is definitely not possible to play the arcade game this way. If nothing else, the towers on the Planet of Zoom would get in the way, and there would be some spectacular collisions!) Even playing the game in a more normal fashion is not especially exciting, though. While graphics are very good, game play doesn't offer enough variations from screen to screen to keep the player really interested in playing again and again. It's fun to play for a few rounds, but we don't feel it's likely to become a favorite game that gets repeated use. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating) (Other versions of this game are available from Sega for Atari 2600 and 5200, Atari computers, Commodore 64 and VIC-20.)

OIL'S WELL (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★) has just released for ColecoVision owners. The object of the game is to snake your drilling

SIERRAVISION



bit down through the underground oil fields picking up oil pellets and goblets of super-rich deposits. Throughout your drilling, your drill bit must avoid the land mines which will pass harmlessly through the pipe you've already laid, and the Oozies, who will destroy your pipe but you can devour them with your drill bit. The Oozies continuously pass through the field which makes it imperative for you to continuously pull your drill bit back up above them so they can't pass through your pipe and destroy it. In the deepest caverns below, you will find an occasional deposit of petromin which, while flowing up through your pipe, slows the Oozies, giving you a chance to mine some of the deeply buried oil pellets. You must totally clear the field of all pellets before being allowed to mine the next field.

Addictive

You'll need a lot of hand and eye coordination for this one as you must watch all the levels for Oozies coming from both sides of the screen. Hold the joystick button down and you can retract your pipe to whatever point is necessary to devour them. As you move deeper into the caverns, the pellets become harder to get to as you'll find them in little nooks and crannies with only one way in and out. This is one of those games that you find yourself saying "just one more round." The graphics are simple, but effective; however, the play is the key to this game. Oil's Well is just good fun! (solo; pause) (also available for Atari & Apple computers) Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

SAMMY LIGHTFOOT (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ 1/2) has been translated from its original Apple version; however, this one is just not quite as satisfying as the original. Sammy is, once again, the star of the circus as he leaps circus balls, dodges plungers, crosses chasms and jumps from level to level on his trampoline and swinging ropes. In his performance, he flies through the air over scorching flames, challenge the man-eating pumpkin, and soar on a flying carpet to the next screen. Throughout all scenes, you start with a high score which counts down throughout your navigation. The faster you make the correct moves, the higher your score will be. Timing is everything as you jump, duck, and run through your paces.

Another Version of a Climbing Game

This is another approach to the old favorite climbing game. The action is pretty good, from the spring of the trampoline to the swing of the ropes across chasms. You are also entertained by the mad spin of Sammy's thick thatch of red hair when he gets bonked by a circus ball. While it's certainly unfair to compare this version to the earlier Apple version, we did feel the graphics not very dazzling and crisp. The gameplay was a bit sluggish in our opinion; however, if you truly love climbing games, this is one you may want to check out (before purchase, if possible) (solo; pause) (still planned for Atari and C64 conversions) (MSR \$39.95)

Parker Bros. Signed for Mr. Do's Castle!

Universal U.S.A. Inc., manufacturers of arcade video games, has just announced that their popular coin-op game, MR. DO'S CASTLE, has been licensed to Parker Bros. for conversion into home formats.

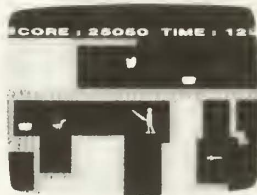
Parker Bros. plans to release versions of MR DO'S CASTLE for the Atari 2600, 5200, ColecoVision, Atari computers, and Commodore 64. These home versions are scheduled to be available during the second half of 1984. Parker Bros. was chosen because Universal felt Parker Bros. achieved excellence in their previous arcade-to-home conversions for multiple systems, including Q*BERT, POPEYE, FROGGER, and TUTANKHAM.

As a footnote for our arcade buffs, Universal is releasing the latest Mr. Do adventure, MR DO'S WILD RIDE, in the arcades.

GATEWAY TO APSHAI (★★★½/★★★★) is a strategy and action game in which the player takes the role of heir to Apschai's greatest warrior. The quest—find and reclaim a safe passageway through an underground labyrinth to the fabled, lost Temple of Apschai. And what a labyrinth to explore! There are eight levels, each level containing ninety-nine dungeons of approximately sixty rooms each. The booklet promises that each of the 792 dungeons has a different floor plan, which we cannot dispute. It would take weeks of exploring and mapping to cover that much territory! Starting the game on level one, the player is given the choice of any of the ninety-nine dungeons to explore. Initially, only the entrance room of the chosen dungeon is visible. All other chambers are masked until entered. (If you can find a map, the rooms will be uncovered without having to explore them.) The object is to collect as many treasures as possible within the time limit of approximately six and a half minutes. The player must also avoid perils, such as traps, and fight all kinds of nasty creatures. (At the end of the time limit, the player is automatically transported to the next, deeper level.) The player starts the game equipped with keys, a "search spell," a "locate trap spell," a short sword and leather armor. The key is used to open closed, visible doors in the dungeon walls, and to open secret doors that are revealed by using the search spell. The locate trap spell reveals invisible traps that can detract from the player's "health" score if the player runs into the trap. (Health points are also deducted for wounds inflicted by creatures in the dungeons. When the player's health score falls to zero, a life is lost. Healing salves and potions will restore health when points are low. (Keys, spells, potions, weapons and other possessions are put to use by pressing appropriate numbers on the controller keypad.)

Wealth of Discovery

Just as there are many chambers to explore in this game, there are numerous things to discover within the labyrinth: treasures, all kinds of creepy creatures, magic spells and potions, secret doors, traps, and various weapons. Creatures can be avoided, or they can be fought with long or short swords, bow and arrows, or other weapons, and they run the gamut from bats, vampires and spiders to snakes, ghouls and wizards. The more precious the treasure the creatures are guarding, the more challenging they are as opponents to the player's on-screen character. There is a wealth of discovery in this game, and it's a stimulating combination of strategic thinking and exciting action. Graphics are quite good, too, especially for a game in which so much memory is obviously devoted to depth of play. **GATEWAY TO APSHAI** is a must for those who love adventure gaming, and it has enough action to keep arcade game fans happy, as well. (Solo Play; Cartridge) (Versions of this game are also available on cartridge for Atari computers and Commodore 64.) Recommended. (MSR approx. \$40.00)



JUMPMAN JUNIOR (★★★½/★★★★) is a twelve-screen climbing game for one to four players, a sequel to *Jumpman*, the computer game on diskette (Atari and Commodore 64). On each of the screens, the object is to defuse bombs left by the enemy Alienators at the Jupiter Command Substation. Only when all the bombs have been defused can *Jumpman Junior* move on to the next screen. Choosing from eight speeds, the player coaxes Junior to run, jump, ride and climb beams, ladders, ropes, moving platforms and other devices. The Alienators have planted different obstacles on every screen, calling on a multitude of skills from the player. Each screen



is named, starting with "Nothing to It" and ending with "Hurricane," the twelfth screen. Some of our favorites are "Sreddal" ("Ladders" spelled backwards, featuring a set of moving ladders), "Figurits Revenge" in which parts of the structure disappear at the most inconvenient times, and "Blackout," in which the entire structure must be uncovered very carefully. On the "Spellbound" screen, it's possible to spell "Epyx Jumpman" down the center of the screen if you do everything in the correct order—we never did get it quite

right! Fortunately, correct spelling isn't required to move on to the next (ninth) screen. On many screens, Junior is chased by the Alienator's bullets, probably the strangest bullets ever seen. The don't follow any known laws of physics—where else but in a video game can bullets change direction and speed in mid-flight?

Full of Variety and Challenges

JUMPMAN JUNIOR ranks right alongside *Miner 2049er* as superb example of the best in climbing games. Graphics are simple, but well drawn. *Jumpman Junior* himself is little more than a white stick-figure, but he's so well-animated that you don't mind his lack of features. (His falls are wonderfully comical.) As in *Miner 2049er*, more memory is lavished on play action than on fancy graphics. As a result, **JUMPMAN JUNIOR** is full of variety and challenges that make the player want to play the game over and over again. We found it nearly impossible to put the game away returning to it over a period of several days until we could play well enough to see "just the next screen." Each time we made to a new screen for the first time, though, that simply whetted our appetite for the next screen, and so on. We liked the ability to choose any of eight different playing speeds, especially because each player can choose his or her own favorite speed when two or more play the game. Take this one home—we bet it will soon be one of your favorites. (Solo Play; 2 to 4-Player Alternating Pause) (Versions are available on cartridge for Atari computers and Commodore 64.) Recommended. (MSR approx. \$40.00)

Coleco Gets Burgertime License

As was indicated in last month's issue, Intellivision's new owners told us they would not be releasing **BURGERTIME** for ColecoVision, but that it would be sub-licensed to someone else. We have learned that the "someone else" is Coleco and, shipping to dealer's has just begun! In addition to **BURGERTIME**, Coleco has picked up the license for **BUMP 'N' JUMP** which should be available during the second quarter.

Cartridge Update

Meanwhile, we wanted to check on other ColecoVision titles for our readers since it has been about three months since the last release. Planned for release "any minute" is **CABBAGE PATCH ADVENTURE IN THE PARK**. **TARZAN** is planned as a second quarter release. Several other titles have been given to us as second quarter releases (listed under Coleco and ADAM in our Availability Update). In our discussion with a Coleco spokesperson, we were told that these second quarter dates will *definitely* hold. **ROC 'N ROPE** is *only* planned for the 2600 VCS (**TARZAN** is also scheduled for the 2600 during the second quarter)

Nothing Definite on Peripherals

Meanwhile, there are no definite dates regarding the release of peripherals, including the disk drive and the modem which would be necessary for the CompuServe service for Adam owners. The spokesperson told us that it takes the F.C.C. anywhere from 4-12 weeks to approve the peripherals (we do not know if any peripherals have reached a stage to be delivered to the F.C.C. for approval).

Donkey Kong Jr Ships for Adam

DONKEY KONG JR. has just begun to ship as a data pack with the promise of five more software titles before C.E.S. As has been the case with many other companies, Coleco has abandoned plan to release any more titles for Intellivision—it's going to be totally up to Terry Valeski and his Intellivision, Inc. to "save" Intellivision

ColecoVision Experience Cancelled

We have learned from several sources that Coleco has quietly cancelled their "ColecoVision Experience" magazine with the promise of a new magazine being introduced within the next few months centered on the ADAM. If, in fact, they are planning a magazine which is strictly geared towards Adam, it would underline our previous concern of Coleco's own potential abandonment of the ColecoVision system to put all energies into Adam.

SQUISH'EM Featuring **SAM** (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is a combination of *Squish'Em*, a Sirius Software game which was licensed to Interphase Technologies, with the character of Sam, who first appeared in the Interphase game for Intellivision, *Sewer Sam* (reviewed in our October, 1983 issue and soon to be available in an adaptation for ColecoVision). Sam, who was a sanitation worker for the city of New York in the earlier game, has now taken up climbing skyscrapers to collect suitcases full of money at the top of the buildings. New Yorkers may not like the implications, but the buildings that Sam climbs are infested with all kinds of creepy-crawly creatures. As he climbs the vertical and horizontal beams, mere contact with one of them will knock him off the building. Surprise! He exclaims, "Whoops" when this happens. The talkies have come to ColecoVision, and Sam's voice is an integral part of the cartridge—no voice synthesis unit is required. Sam can jump over the creatures or jump on them, resulting in a very satisfying, crunching sound, accompanied by Sam's comment, "Squish'em." Strange falling objects try to knock him off the building, too, from bricks and hammers to tires and televisions—even the kitchen sink! When one of these items bonks poor Sam, he cries "Ouch" and falls. Some objects on the buildings can be touched for an extra life. When Sam finds one of these, he says "Wow," and he exclaims "Money, Money, Money" when he reaches the money bags at the top. The game resumes at the next level after Sam floats to the bottom of the screen with his parachute. (The player has a choice of starting the game at any of the first seven levels.)

Marvelously Silly Game

Squish'Em by Sirius is one of those marvelously silly games that are so much fun to play, but the designers at Interphase have made the game irresistible with the addition of Sam and his comments. Graphics are crisp and colorful, though not as spectacular as those of some other games for the system. The best part of this one is the game itself, which is something of a vertical maze. The game speeds up gradually, offering a little greater challenge as the player's skill increases. The early levels are suitable for beginners and young children, while the upper levels are fast enough to keep advanced players busy. This would be an ideal game for the entire family because it's comical and the voice is something genuinely new for the system. Between the crunching of creatures and the cries of "Squish'em," this game will keep everyone entertained for hours. (Solo Play; Pause)
Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

GALAXIAN (★ ★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is an adaptation of the Bally-Midway coin-op along with *Space Invaders*, this is one of the all-time classic invasion games. The invading Galaxians, which are small, winged creatures, attack in formation as the player moves a laser cannon along the bottom of the screen. Unlike the closed phalanxes in *Space Invaders*, however, the Galaxians peel off in ones, twos and threes to dive at the laser cannon, madly firing away as they swoop. They're regular kamikaze pilots that will ram your cannon if given the chance. Shooting a member of the Galaxian fleet in flight is worth more points than getting one in formation, and the Flagships and Escorts in flight are worth maximum points. Players may start at the first, fifth or ninth level (one to nine flags in the lower right corner of the screen).

Very True to the Original

Atari's designers have really done justice to the original arcade game in this adaptation. The colors are beautiful, and each little Galaxian is very detailed, down to its bee-like wings. The background of black space and multi-colored, twinkling stars adds to the visual effectiveness. Sound effects are good, too, with the Galaxians whistling like buzz bombers as they descend. They even let out a little scream when the player shoots one! Although this game has been around for quite a while, it's still a lot of fun to play. Among the invasion games, GALAXIAN has always been one of the more challenging contests, and this version is very true to the original. Especially if you like the arcade game, this is a great classic to add to your ColecoVision library. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause) (Other versions available for Atari 2600 and 5200.)
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

THE HEIST (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★ 1/2), from *MicroFun* has just been converted for ColecoVision and it's a good one! In this version, your hero, Graham Crackers must search through 90 rooms collecting art. He must search for the micro dot attached to one of the pieces of art which contains top secret information and the mission is complete after he collects the last piece of it. Jump over robots and narrow openings in the floor, ride the elevator and escalators and collect keys to open doors. Once you collect all the art on the three floors, you are lifted to the next level.

Fine Adaptation

Designer Mike Livesay has done an admirable job translating this from the Apple version. The colors are vivid, animation lively, cute music (which can be turned off), and will keep you busy for hours hunting through the various rooms hunting for the micro dot. There is one drawback which may or may not be bothersome to you—as Graham Crackers moves from room to room, the screen goes dark and the music stops for a few seconds as the game locks in on the next room. All in all, it will provide hours of entertainment. (Solo Play; Pause)
Recommended (MSR approx. \$45.00)

BOOK REVIEW

THE UNOFFICIAL I HATE COMPUTERS book by Rich Tennant and John Barry is the perfect, tongue-in-cheek guide many of our readers will get a kick out of! It's 76 anti-computer cartoons that offer a look at the every day evils of home, personal and big computers. There are several cartoons worth noting—from the discus thrower using a computer as his discus, to the "Dunk the Main Frame" carnival booth where you can hit the target to send the computer into the tub of water. And, if you think you have the perfect cartoon for their second book, there's a spot in the back to draw it out and send it in.
Hayden Book Company (MSR \$4.95)

Exciting Enhancements Due at Atari

Some exciting things are brewing at Atari for some of their computer software. Although we are not at liberty to talk about all details, look for a delay in the release of both MARIO BROS. and XEVIOUS, as they will be the first games to benefit from these enhancements. We will pass along details just as soon as we are able to.

General Software Update

Meanwhile, we can bring you up-to-date regarding software planned for the various Atari systems. CHOPLIFTER for the 2600 VCS has "gone back to the drawing board" for programming improvements and will not ship until August as a result. Games which have been CANCELLED for the 5200 include BATTLEZONE, SPORT GOOFY, and ROAD RUNNER. LEGACY has been renamed FINAL LEGACY with a shipping date "to be announced."

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ATARI 2600

MARCH

Beamrider (ACTV)
x-Crystal Castles (AT)
H.E.R.O. (ACTV)
x-Millipede (AT)
x-Oscar's Trash Race (AT)
Out of Control (AH)
x-Pitfall II (ACTV)
x-Private Eye (ACTV)
x-Shuttle Orbiter (AH)
x-Taz (AT)

JUNE

Stargate (AT)
SECOND QUARTER
x-Frontline (COL)
River Patrol (TGV)
Rock N Rope (COL)
Scraper Caper (TGV)
Star Wars (PB)
Super Crush (TGV)
Tarzan (COL)

SUMMER

Choplifter (AT)

COLECOVISION

MARCH

Beamrider (ACTV)
x-Gateway to Apsah (EPYX)
x-Heist (MF)
x-Jumpman Jr (EPYX)
x-Moonsweeper (IMGC)
Mountain King (SUNR)
x-Oil's Well (SOL)
x-Sammy Lightfoot (SOL)
x-Sewer Sam (INT)
x-Squish 'Em Featuring Sam (INT)
x-Super Cobra (PB)
x-Wing War (IMGC)

APRIL

Aquattack (INT)
Blockade Runner (INT)
x-Burgertime (COL)
Cabbage Patch Advs in the Park (COL)
Galaxian (AT)
Jungle Hunt (AT)

SECOND QUARTER

Antarctic Adventure (COL)
x-Buck Rogers (COL)
Bump 'N Jump (COL) ★★ ★★
x-Destructor (COL) ★★ ★★
Dino Eggs (MF)
Dragonfire (IMGC)
Dukes of Hazard (COL) ★★ ★★
Fathom (IMGC)
Fortune Builders (COL)

JUNE

Joust (AT)
Jungle Hunt (AT)
Keystone Kapers (ACTV)
Lunar Leeper (SOL)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Pole Position (AT)
Smurf Paint & Play (COL)
Star Wars (PB)
Super Action Football (COL) ★★
Tarzan (COL)
Threshold (SOL)
x-Wargames (COL)

★ ★ for use with Super

Action Controllers

★ ★ ★ for use with

Roller Controller

★ ★ ★ ★ for use with

Expansion Module 2

ATARI 5200

MARCH

Flip and Flop (FS)
Jawbreaker (SOL)
x-Robotron (AT)
Super Cobra (PB)

SECOND QUARTER

Choplifter (AT)
Dreadnaught Factor (ACTV)
Final Legacy (AT)
Keystone Kapers (ACTV)
Millipede (AT)
Scraper Caper (BIG5)
Star Wars (PB)
Tutankham (PB)
Warp Wars (ACTV)

AUGUST

Tempest

ATARI COMPUTERS

MARCH

Campaign 84 (SUN)
x-Dimension X (DM)
x-Dankey Kong Jr (AT)
x-Football (AT)
Gust Buster (SUN)
x-Jupiter Mission 1999 (AH)
x-Martial Arts Master (DS)
Moon Patrol (AT)
x-Pengo (AT)
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)
Scraper Caper (BIG5)
Snokle (SOL)
Tutankham (PB)
x-Pitfall (ACTV)
Sorcerer (INF)
Spare Change (BRO)
APRIL
Dreadnaught Factor (ACTV)
Flight Simulator II (SUB)
Puzzlemania (EPYX)
Zenji (ACTV)

JUNE

First Strike (TYM)
Gandalf (TYM)
Millipede (AT)
SECOND QUARTER
Beat the Beatles II (INAC)
Big Bird Special Delivery (CBS)
Coco Notes (CBS)
Computer Title Bout (AH)
Ducks Ahoy (CBS)
Ernie's Magic Shapes (CBS)
Free Trader (AH)
Gulf Strike (AH)
Half-time Battling Bands (CBS)
Keystone Kapers (ACTV)
Movie Musical Madness (CBS)
Peanut Butter Panic (CBS)
Sea Horse Hide N Seek (CBS)
Space Cowboy (AH)
Star Wars (PB)
Timebound (CBS)
Warp Wars (ACTV)
Webster: the Word Game (CBS)

VIC-20

FIRST QUARTER

x-Battlezone
x-Dig Dug (AT)
x-Donkey Kong (AT)
x-Moon Patrol (AT)
x-Ms Pac-Man (AT)
x-Pole Position (AT)

APRIL

Galaxian

Jungle Hunt

MAY

First Strike (TYM)

Gandalf (TYM)

COMMODORE 64

MARCH

Boulder Dash (FS)
x-Centipede (AT)
Dallas Quest (DS)
Death in Caribbean (MIF)
x-Donkey Kong (AT)
x-Dragon Hawk (CS)
Drelbs (SYN)
Flight Simulator II (SUB)
Floyd of the Jungle (MICP)
Gust Buster (SUN)
Juno First (DS)
Liberator (THORN)
Lost Tomb (DS)
Lunar Outpost (EPYX)
Minnesota Fats Pool (HES)
Monster Smash (DM)
Nightraiders (DM)
Oil Barons (EPYX)
PacMan (AT)
Painbrush (HES)
Popeye (PB)
x-Robotron (AT)
Rolloverture (SUN)
Roundabout (DM)
Scraper Caper (MF)
x-Sentinel (SYN)
x-Slamball (SYN)
Sorcerer (INF)
Stargate (AT)
Submarine Commander (THORN)

x-Ultima II (SOL)
World's Greatest Baseball Game (EPYX)
x-Zaxxon (SYN)
Zeppelin (SYN)

APRIL

Battlezone (AT)
Beamrider (ACTV)
Blockade Runner (INT)
Galaxian (AT)
Jungle Hunt (AT)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Pole Position (AT)
Pitfall (ACTV)
Viking Raider (INT)
SECOND QUARTER
Argos Expedition (CBS)
Balloony Bin (ACTV)
Big Bird Special Delivery (CBS)
Coast-to-Coast America (CBS)
Coco Notes (CBS)
Dinosaur Dig (CBS)
First Strike (TYM)
Gandalf (TYM)
Half-time Battling Bands (CBS)
Joust (AT)
Light Waves (CBS)
London Blitz (AH)
Mission Impossible (EPYX)
Movie Musical Madness (CBS)
Star Wars (PB)
Summer Games (EPYX)
Weather Tamers (CBS)

TI 99/4A

FIRST QUARTER

x-Fathom (IMGC)
x-Microsurgeon (IMGC)
x-Moonsweeper (IMGC)
x-Super Demon Attack (IMGC)
Wing War (IMGC)

APRIL

x-Jungle Hunt (AT)
x-Moon Patrol (AT)
x-Ms Pac Man (AT)
Pole Position (AT)

APPLE II / IIE

SECOND QUARTER

Dreadnoughts (AH)
Drelbs (SYN)
Free Trader (AH)
Genesis (DS)
Joust (AT)
Liberator (THORN)
Nibbler (DS)
Pooyan (DS)
Scraper Caper (MF)
Space Ark (DM)
Submarine Commander (THORN)
Under Southern Skies (AH)

MARCH

x-Aquatron (SOL)
Coast-to-Coast America (CBS)
Dinosaur Dig (CBS)
x-Oil's Well (SOL)
People Development (CBS)
Personal Development (CBS)
x-Quest for Tires (SOL)
Sorcerer (INF)
APRIL
x-Battlezone (AT)
Galaxian (AT)
x-Jungle Hunt (AT)
Moon Patrol (AT)
x-Ms. PacMan (AT)
Pole Position (AT)
Webster: the Word Game (CBS)

IBM PCjr

FIRST QUARTER

Baseball (IMGC)
x-Crossfire (SOL)
Football (IMGC)
Microsurgeon (IMGC)
x-Ultima II (SOL)
x-Wizard and the Princess (SOL)
SECOND QUARTER
Big Bird Special Delivery (CBS)
Coast-to-Coast America (CBS)
Dinosaur Dig (CBS)
Ernie's Magic Shapes (CBS)
In The Chips (CS)
Match Wits (CBS)
Murder by the Dozen (CBS)
Pipes (CS)
Timebound (CBS)

ADAM

APRIL

x-Donkey Kong Jr (COL)
SECOND QUARTER
Donkey Kong (COL)
Electronic Flashcard Maker (COL)
Flash Facts-Amer History (COL)
Flash Facts-Math & Science (COL)
Flash Facts-Vocabulary (COL)
Recipe Filer (COL)
Smart Filer I (COL)
Smart Letters/Forms (COL)
Smart Logo (COL)
Sub Roc (COL)
Type Right (COL)
Zaxxon (COL)

COMPANY NAME CODES:

ACTV - Activision
AH - Avalon Hill
AM - Amiga
ART - Artwork
AT - Atari/Atarisoft
BRO - Broderbund
CBS - CBS Software
COL - Coleco
COMM - Commodore
CS - Creative Software
DM - DataMost
DS - DataSoft
EA - Electronic Arts
EPYX - Epyx
FIR - First Star
FUN - Funware
IMGC - Imagic
INF - Infocom
INT - Interplay
MIC - Microfun
MMG - MMG Micro Software
PB - Parker Bros.
PDI - Program Design Inc
ROK - Roklan
SIR - Sirius
SOL - Sierra On-Line
SPN - Spinnaker
STRSIM - Strategic Simulation
SUB - SubLogic
SUN - Sunrise
SYN - Synapse
TGV - Tigrivision
TRO - Tronix
XON - Xonox

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(Editor's Note: We feel,
some cases, dates given
by the manufacturers are
simply not realistic. Ho
ever, we feel it is our resp
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