

THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

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A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman

VOL I, #11

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Two Dollars

EDITOR'S NOTE

The field of games has mushroomed even faster than any expert could have predicted and, with that, in addition to more choices than ever, there are more copycat and poor quality games coming on the market than ever before. On the other side of the coin, some companies are introducing truly outstanding games, controllers, and the like. It is quite obvious to us that while several companies will continue to flourish due to excellence of their product, a number of companies will inevitably disappear. This is an expensive business in research, marketing and promotion. We have suspicions about several companies and their ability to continue to "cut the mustard", based on sub-par games we saw. We also know from you, our readers, that the Gamesman is a very sophisticated consumer who will not be swayed by fancy titles, be they movie or arcade licensed. This appears to be the year of underwater games, adventure and strategy games, arcade translations (be they good or bad), and a glut of new hardware and peripherals. Our advice to you is to buy more carefully than ever. Do research and don't let a slick salesman talk you into something you will regret in 6 months. Remember, if a company goes out of business, your warranty isn't worth the paper it's written on. With the number of modules coming into the market, you can virtually have any piece of hardware you want and play your favorite games.

So, keep reading The VIDEO GAME UPDATE and doing research! Games and home computers are here to stay. We want you to enjoy the system(s) you decide to have in your home. HAPPY GAMING!!



ACTIVISION. Activision is coming with several new games, with the thrust being Atari 2600-compatible cartridges. OINK is a video version of The Three Little Pigs as the wolf huffs and puffs at the wall, disintegrating it on contact, while the pig takes building material from the roof and drops them into the empty spaces. The pace gets faster and faster as the wolf and pig work frantically against each other. In the 2-player version, one player plays the pig and the other plays the wolf. DOLPHIN is another in the underwater genre, but with a twist. The player must use his ears as well as his eyes to master play. You outrun the squid by guiding the dolphin through small gaps in the vertical walls of sea horses; however, the gaps appear far too late to react visually. Instead, the player must listen for the dolphins variably-pitched sonar echo, which warns him of the location of the approaching gaps. The higher the pitch, the higher the gap, etc. Periodically, a seagull flies overhead which is foreshadowed by a special sound. When the player hears that, he must make the dolphin leap into the air and touch the gull. Then, he has a few seconds to catch the squid, who is not an easy catch. During the chase, the dolphin tries to catch waves which, depending on their direction, can boost or hinder the dolphin's speed. When the dolphin and squid are in full run, it becomes a cacophony filled with the porpoise's echo, the "pluck" of the waves, the shrill "wah" of the gull, and the "sizzle" of the catch. The designer has added a surprise for the player with enough ears, concentration, and reflexes to conquer it. He's not telling how many points you need, and he's not telling what it is! KEYSTONE KAPERS is a madcap one-player chase between an Irish cop and roguish robber through a 1920's department store. Keystone Kelly must pursue Harry Holligan through 3 floors of a merchandise-filled store filled with obstacles such as shopping carts, balls, toy airplanes, oldtime cathedral radios, etc. The player uses the long-range scanner to spot the locations of Kelly, the thief, and the nearest elevator and escalator between floors. We were totally charmed by what we saw of this game.

Coming later this spring are PLAQUE ATTACK where you must protect your teeth from decay playing the role of a toothpaste tube. A game with a valuable lesson, it teaches you that "junk food" such as candy, fries, ice cream, etc. will rot away your teeth if you don't protect them. ENDURO is Activision's "Grand Prix"-type game. It looks as though they've packed a great deal of exciting graphics into this racing game. Also planned is ROBOTANK and, for Intellivision, HAPPY TRAILS.



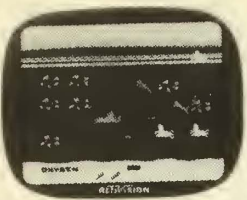
COMPUTER GAME UPDATE

See

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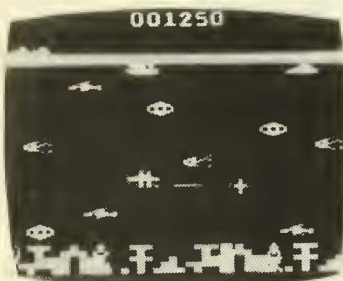
SEAQUEST (★★★½/★★★½) is another undersea game for one

ACTIVISION™



or two players in which you control a submarine, but your mission is to rescue your team of scuba divers laden with treasure. The divers are chased by schools of man-eating sharks and packs of pirate subs, and you can shoot torpedoes to eliminate the predators. With each dive, you have a limited supply of oxygen, and you must attempt to rescue six divers before surfacing with them. (You can surface with fewer, but you'll be penalized one diver if you do.) Even the surface isn't always safe - there's an enemy trawler that patrols occasionally. The game seems fairly easy at first, but as your score increases, the screen becomes congested with sharks and enemy subs, and it becomes extremely difficult to rescue the divers. The designer has managed to impart a genuine sense of being underwater in this game: there's a buoyant feeling to the way your sub handles, air bubbles move upward from the divers as they kick their flippered feet, and the sound effects have just the right muffled quality. Seaquest is a truly enjoyable game. Recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

BERMUDA TRIANGLE (★★½/★★) is an underwater, horizontally



scrolling game for one or two players in which you control a mini-sub patrolling the waters of this mysterious part of the Atlantic Ocean. Artifacts of a deserted city at the bottom of the sea are to be collected and delivered to a rescue ship at the surface while you avoid contact with giant squid, man-eating sharks, aquatic drones, explosive mines, and Bermuda bombs underwater plus an enemy ship on the surface.

Most obstacles can be shot for points, but bumping into them will cause you to lose any cargo you may be carrying (and points, as well). Once you reach 10,000 points in two game variations (or from the beginning in the other two), this supposedly unoccupied city will turn on its laser defense system. Unfortunately, there is no defense against the vertical laser beams, which will fry your mini-sub if you happen to be in the wrong place when they strike. Graphics, except for the detailed rendering of the mini-sub, are only average. Game play is too similar to other horizontally scrolling shoot-outs to be of lasting interest. Not recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

PARKER BROTHERS

REACTOR (★★½/★★★) is based on the Gottlieb coin-op, and it's an unusual game involving the prevention of meltdown in a nuclear reactor. All action takes place within a chamber which houses the reactor core. Your task is to use your tiny ship to batter sub-atomic particles (positrons, neutrinos and photons) into the outer "Kill Wall" of the reactor - while they're trying to do the same to you! As your ship and the particles are playing ping pong with each other, the reactor's central core grows larger and larger, giving you less room to maneuver. (If you can bounce enough particles into the control rods on either side of the chamber, the core will shrink and meltdown will be averted temporarily.) The reactor also contains two bonus chambers - particles lured into these rooms will bounce themselves silly against the walls, earning you bonus points. An interesting feature is the availability of "decoys," which can be deployed to lure enemy particles away from your ship. This game offers many variations and a total of four levels with eight successive rounds per level - more than enough challenge for most video game players. Graphics are adequate, though not particularly exciting; the game plays better than it looks. Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

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EXPLANATION OF RATING SYSTEM: ★★★★★=EXCELLENT
 First set of stars--quality of graphics ★★★★★=GOOD
 Second set of stars--quality of play action ★★★★★=FAIR
 ★★★★★=POOR

Any game for a given system is compared only to other games for that system. In other words, all Atari & Atari-compatible games are judged separately from Intellivision & Intellivision-compatible games, etc.

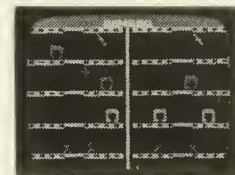
Telesys

STARGUNNER (★★★½/★★★) pits your lone spaceship against the deadly Sphzygi forces that are attacking the planet of Yarthae. Each level consists of three waves: first there is one Saucer, then two Space Buzzies, and finally three Squeezers. The action takes place above the scrolling surface of Yarthae, and the Sphzygian attackers move randomly across the screen (only to the right in two variations, both left and right in other two). To make your task more difficult, the Sphzygian's symbio-droid, Bobo, scoots back and forth across the top of the screen dropping bombs, which you must avoid. The most unusual feature of this game is what happens when one of your lasers hits an enemy creature - it flies apart into four pieces and then reassembles into a new creature in a new location on your screen. This creates the distinct possibility of your ship being blasted out of the sky because a creature formed inside it! The slower game variations are relatively easy, but the faster ones are guaranteed to challenge the most expert video space pilots. Graphics are fairly simple but clean and quite effective. Recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

RAM IT (★★★/★★½) is a timed contest for one or two players in which your object is to ram 32 color bars (16 per side) off the screen before they block you from moving, or before the 5000-count timer runs out. You control a claustrophobic Ramroid with only vertical mobility in the exact center of the screen, and you simply shoot the randomly-growing bars as quickly as possible. Occasionally a flashing bar will appear, and it can be knocked out with a single shot for bonus points. Each color bar will emit a different electronic note when hit, so you make your own music in this game. Graphics are clean and colorful, but game play can get tedious very quickly. There just isn't any substance to the game, and we seriously doubt that even small children would play repeatedly without becoming bored. Not recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

NETWORK

ADVENTURES OF TRON (★★★½/★★★) is a climbing game



for one player which stars a cast of characters from the movie, TRON: Bits, Recognizers, Solar Sailors, Grid Bugs, and of course, Tron himself. The playing field is a grid with four floors and a vertical dividing line in the center, the I/O (Input/Output) Beam. There are two sets of elevators, one on each side of the I/O Beam, and Tron can only use an elevator to climb one floor at a time after he crosses the I/O Beam. His task is to jump up and catch the Floating Bits on each level while avoiding the roving trios of Recognizers and Grid Bugs bent on destroying him. Tron has three possible avenues of escape: riding elevators up one floor, sliding down the I/O Beam to the bottom, or jumping down one or more floors. (In the heat of the game it's important to remember that Tron doesn't have to travel continuously upward - sometimes the only safe direction is down.) Once you've managed to clear two screens, it suddenly becomes much trickier to keep Tron alive because Cannon-Firing Tanks join the other attackers, and Tron still has no defense except avoidance. This is a good climbing game, though relatively easy in the early stages, and all the characters are graphically well represented.

AIR RAIDERS (★★★½/★★★)

is an excellent flying and fighting game for a solo pilot.



The game takes you from runway take-off to airborne dogfights and back to landing and refueling - if you don't crash in the meantime! The bottom of your screen keeps you informed of your status at all times: altitude (in thousands of feet), number of hits you've taken, amount of ammunition left, fuel remaining, and your plane's position relative to the heavy flak (ground fire) zone. You even have an artificial horizon that tilts when you bank your plane. Taking off is a simple matter of gaining enough ground speed and pulling toward you on the joystick - just like a real plane. Once airborne, your object is to line up enemy aircraft in your gun-sight and fire away. You must watch your instruments, though. If you fly too low or run out of fuel before landing, you'll crash. You must also shoot down at least ten planes before you can land, refuel and take off after more enemy planes. (The first few times you play, you'll probably have more trouble landing than taking off - just be sure to allow enough fuel for the landing sequence.) Most of the fun is in the aerial dogfights, especially when you spot a group of planes and go after them. AIR RAIDERS is fairly simple but full of high adventure! Recommended.

PICNIC (★★★/★★★★½) is a one or two-player game in which you attempt to commit mayhem on a swarm of hungry insects. You've just set out a picnic lunch on a red-and-white checkered tablecloth when the horde attacks your cheeseburgers. You defend the food with your trusty swatter (positioned with a paddle controller), and try to knock the pesky bugs into your bug-zapping trap, one at a time. Each swatted bug caroms wildly, bouncing off the sides and top of the TV screen - if the bug doesn't land in your trap, he'll be back for another bite of your lunch. At the end of each wave, a Super Bug appears, and it's worth lots of points. As you might expect, the bugs get faster and tougher with each new wave. Although you have to use your imagination to recognize the cheeseburgers, the insects are very well represented visually and by their constant buzzing sounds. With three different skill levels available, this is a very enjoyable game for all ages. Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

SQUEEZE BOX (★★★½/★★★★½) is a single-player game in which you control a grizzled Jailbird in red-and-white striped prison garb as he attempts to shoot his way out through the walls before they close in on him. This is another amusing game with very good use of music. In one version of the game, there are brightly colored, horizontal "squeeze bars" growing randomly from both sides of the room at once; you must shoot them back to move to the next room. In another variation, squeeze bars grow in from one wall only, while the other remains stationary. In a third variation, squeeze bars grow randomly from one side while the entire opposite wall moves in; bonus points can be earned by shooting flashing bars. (Shooting at colored bars may sound reminiscent of games like Breakout, but there is NO similarity in game play.) Just to add a few more variables, color bars may be wide or narrow, and your Jailbird's gun can be set for manual or automatic fire. Aiming the gun is accomplished by pressing the fire button while holding the joystick either up or down until the desired angle is reached; the angle stays set until moved to another position. This is a fast-paced game with a great ending: when the Jailbird escapes his three "lives," he goes to meet a malevolent, dancing red devil! Squeezebox is a very appealing game for the whole family. Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

GOPHER (★★★½/★★★★) is a family-oriented game of genuine charm, and it is so humorous that it's likely to earn a chuckle from even the most confirmed hater of video games. One or two players can participate in this zaniness, controlling a farmer whose carrot patch is about to be demolished by gophers. The game opens musically with "Turkey in the Straw" to set the mood, and the gophers start tunneling below the carrots immediately. As soon as one breaks through the surface of the garden, your farmer must rush over and fill the hole with his shovel. If you can get the farmer to bonk the gopher on the head, it is worth even more points than just filling holes! Inevitably, you will lose a carrot or two to the hungry critters, but with good timing you may be able to catch and plant a seed dropped by a crazy duck that occasionally flies by. The longer you can stay ahead of the gophers, the more frenetic the pace. Graphics are very colorful and crisp, and game play should appeal to kids of all ages (even the "grown-up" ones)! Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

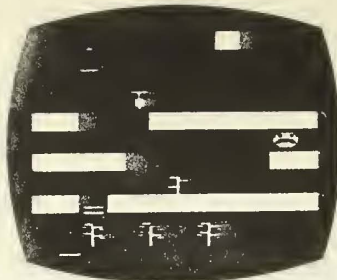
"NAME THAT GAME" (★★★/★★★★) is the subject of a contest to name it (worth \$10,000 to the winner), thus the absence of a title. This game is yet another underwater epic, and your role is that of a diver attempting to protect a hoard of treasure recovered from the deep. With only a limited supply of air in your tanks, you must fend off attacking sharks and avoid angering a giant octopus. Periodically, your buddy on the surface will extend an airline in your direction, but you have to be in the right spot to refill your tanks. The sharks attack one at a time, moving across the screen and gradually lower toward your position at the bottom. If a shark reaches your level before you shoot him, he'll next be seen swimming across the screen with nothing but the kicking legs of your diver protruding from his jaws. Lose a diver and you'll also lose part of your treasure. As if the sharks weren't enough, the octopus keeps extending his tentacles. If you don't shoot at them occasionally, they'll eventually reach the diver and the screen will fill with inky black fluid. There are some good graphic touches, such as the diver's friend on the surface whose hair blows in the breeze as he speeds back and forth, and the game plays well. Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

EGGOMANIA (★★★★/★★★★½) is a wacky game for one to four players using paddle controllers in which your blue bear must attempt to catch eggs in his hat, which may be large or small depending on the setting of the difficulty switches. The eggs are dropped in varying patterns by a truly silly-looking bird that scoots back and forth across the top of the screen. Up to this point, game play is reminiscent of Activision's KABOOM!, but there's a new wrinkle in this one: if the blue bear catches all the eggs in a wave, he can *fire them back at the bird!!* The bird is no sitting duck, though, because he dances crazily to the "EGGOMANIA Waltz" (an electronic version of Strauss' "Blue Danube") as blue bear takes his pot-shots. A direct hit results in a wolf-whistle as the bird's feathers are blown off, revealing *red and white polka dotted undies!* However, if bluebear lets one of the eggs get past his hat in the first stage, there's no waltzing - only a layer of egg yolk across the bottom of the screen. EGGOMANIA is a totally enchanting game with wildly colorful graphics. Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

M.A.D. (MISSILE ATTACK & DEFENSE) (★★★/★★★★½) is the single shoot-em-up in the current group of U.S. Games, and it's just not as appealing as their family fun games. This is a fairly predictable "save civilization from enemy attack" game in which you use a ground-based photon cannon in the center of the screen to shoot down enemy missiles before they knock out your six energy stations. The cannon is aimed to one of seven positions with the joystick, and the idea is to knock off the most dangerous missile first - it will turn white just before falling toward your city in the first three attack waves. From the fourth wave on, all missiles are white, and your best bet is to go after the lowest missiles first. This could prove to be a good game for combative siblings, because the two-player version allows one player to handle the defensive task of firing the photon cannon, while the other player has control of the missiles. The offensive player determines which missile will be dropped and may aim it by deciding when to play "bombs away!" We were not impressed by the single-player game, but the competitive two-player battle is an interesting addition to current surge of bang-bang-bang cartridges now on the market (MSR \$29.95)



As is the case with many of the hardware manufacturers, Odyssey is lowering the price of the ODYSSEY II so it will retail below \$100. The COMMAND CENTER, their 3rd generation system, will retail for around \$150 when it ships in the third quarter. Although all of your current Odyssey cartridges will work in the new system, new versions of your old games will have to be purchased to enjoy the "enhanced graphics" (mostly just backdrops from what we saw). Only 2 new games are being introduced for the Odyssey system, TURTLES, in which you help turtles find their babies and carry them home, and KILLER BEES.



REVENGE OF THE BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES (★★½/★★★)

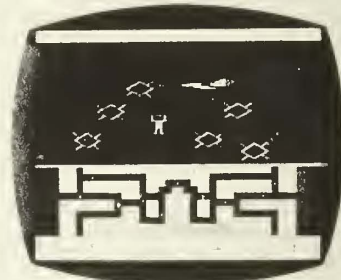
is a challenging game for one player with a rather far-fetched premise: build walls above tomato plants that shoot at you while avoiding or shooting at Roving Beefsteak Tomatoes and Killer Cherry Tomatoes. You are equipped with an all-purpose Tomato Sprayer which can be used to shoot at tomatoes or capture and place roving bricks in one of three walls. A group of three tomato plants travels back and forth across the bottom of the screen, shooting randomly toward your position near the top. You cannot destroy them, so you have to avoid their fire and attempt to block it eventually by completing your first horizontal wall. The color-coded blocks you need for the walls move across the top of the screen; shoot a brick once and move it into position. In some game variations, you can lose blocks you've placed when Brick-Eaters, a strange variety of tomato plant, grow on your wall (they can be shot with your sprayer). Between dodging tomato fire, grabbing bricks, and avoiding beefsteak and Cherry Tomatoes, this is one tough game. Graphics are OK, but not spectacular, with the single exception of the great effect when a Beefsteak Tomato is squashed. (MSR \$24.95)

CRYPTS OF CHAOS (★★/★★) is a fantasy/adventure game in which your quest is to find the gold hidden among the eight levels of the Crypts. Rather than being represented by an on-screen character or cursor, you actually move through the passageways of the Crypts, making this a sort of first-person maze game. Unfortunately, the attempted 3-dimensional effect is rather abstract and crude. As you travel through the Crypts, you'll encounter many adversaries, such as Blobs, Dragons, Trolls, Wizards, and the like. If you let them get too close, you'll be robbed of precious strength, even to the point of ending the game. You start every game with a small arsenal of weapons, such as a magic wand, sword, and magic ring, and you must learn which items work best against which enemies. Some items are more powerful than others, and some can be exhausted by using them too much. You'll probably find yourself spending more time warding off attackers than hunting for gold. Although the game's basic concept is a good one, we found it frustrating to play at first. Eventually it became just plain boring because it doesn't have as much to offer as other games of this type. Not recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

BOOK REVIEW

INVASION OF THE SPACE INVADERS by the popular British author, Martin Amis, has recently invaded the U.S. after great success in Europe. This is a large-format (approximately 8 x 11 inches) soft-cover book covering the history of video games, details and strategies for many of the most popular arcade games, plus brief treatments of hand-held games, home game systems and personal computers. The introduction by Steven Spielberg will capture the browser's attention, but the most striking thing about the book is its extravagant use of extraordinarily high-quality color photographs and illustrations on luxurious, heavy paper. This is the coffee table book for the video generation - you don't necessarily have to read it to enjoy it! However, it would be a shame not to read the thoughts of this self-confessed vidkid. The ambiguity of his love/hate relationship with video games is a theme that recurs throughout, as he explores the game phenomenon with irresistible wit and style. To his credit, he never becomes mired in lengthy "formulas" for successfully beating this or that game, as so many other authors have done. The book is highly readable and a must for video game addicts. Recommended. MSR \$9.95

FLASH GORDON (★★★½/★★½) allows you to play the role of one of the original space explorers as you attempt to rescue surviving Spacemen from an earlier expedition to Spider City and knock out the enemy forces in this city of tunnels. The screen display comprises two views: the upper portion shows your ship and its immediate surroundings, while the lower section is a map of the entire city indicating the positions of your ship, the Disruptors (a kind of debris storm), and the Hatching Pods containing Spider Warriors. You must rescue as many floating Spacemen as possible, and they can only be seen on the upper portion of the screen. (Shooting Spacemen is a *no-no*! Each one shot costs you 1000 points.) Your other task is to rid Spider City of all Hatching Pods while avoiding the Disruptors as much as possible. Find a group of Pods on the map and touch one to make them hatch. If you can shoot five Warriors from any hatching, you'll gain a temporary shield which will make your ship impervious to danger. The debris from Disruptors is nearly impossible to survive, and the Disruptors have a nasty habit of following you around the city. If you find yourself in a debris storm, either try to get away from it or attempt to shoot the Disruptor Generator to stop the storm in its tracks. If you clear the city of Spider Warriors, it's on to the next city and faster action. While the graphics in this game are quite good (we really like the spaceship with its shields on), there isn't enough variety in game situations to hold interest over repeated plays. We were especially disappointed to learn that the Disruptors and Hatching Pods occupy the same position on the map every time you start the game. We recommend that you try this one before you consider buying it. (MSR \$29.95)



WORTH NOTING...

Coleco has raised its prices on all software, including the Expansion Modules 1 & 2. Expect to see immediate increases on games coming into your retailer's shelves of at least \$4 to \$5 per cartridge!

Atari has restructured its pricing on its 2600 line of cartridges. Some games will remain the same; however, look for several cartridges to come *DOWN* in price categories (mostly older 4K games such as Chess, Dodge 'Em, etc. Several older games have been dropped out of the catalog. Among those are GOLF, HANGMAN, BASIC PROGRAMMING, HOME RUN, OTHELLO, OUTLAW, HUMAN CANNONBALL, and others.

We reported in the January issue that anyone with the STAR PATH SUPERCHARGER would not be able to use it in the Coleco Expansion Module 1. In speaking with Starpath, they tell us they are aware of the problem and are producing a small adaptor which will allow you to use your Starpath in the Coleco module. Expect availability of this item sometime in the first half of '83.

VECTREX announces a new lower retail for its VECTREX ARCADE SYSTEM. Formerly retailing at \$199.95, the new suggested price is \$169.95. Some cartridges, most notably new ones scheduled for this spring, and SCRAMBLE (now available) have had their suggested retail price raised by about \$5.00 per game.

First, Starpath plans on an adaptor which will allow its Supercharger unit to work in the Coleco Expansion Module Number One. They hope to have the extension piece available in late spring. They have also announced a new, lower suggested list price for the Supercharger unit of \$49.95 (from 69.95). One new cartridge was introduced for spring release, KILLER SATELLITES. In this game the player must defend his planet against renegade invaders on a mission to destroy the planet.

CBS GAMES Two new games, in addition to the games we talked about last month, have been introduced for spring shipping. With a great deal of publicity, CBS is touting internal triple-capacity cartridges (called the RAMPLUS chip) which are promised to increase the complexity and graphic detail of the games. WINGS is a flight simulation game which puts the player in the cockpit of a jet fighter. In addition to a front view through the windshield, the player must control three different types of armaments, read instruments, and use radar to detect enemy missiles. TUNNEL RUNNER is a 3-dimensional perspective maze game that tests the players ability to think logically while avoiding obvious (and not so obvious) hazards and monsters. The player must negotiate five maze levels of increasing difficulty.



Several new M NETWORK titles are planned for the Atari 2600. Among them are ADVENTURES OF TRON and AIR RAIDERS (see reviews), STAR STRIKE (around \$24*) based on the Intellivision game, BURGERTIME (\$29*), LOCOMOTION (\$29*), ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (\$29*); also IN SEARCH OF THE GOLDEN SKULL (\$29*), an expedition through steamy swamps and a pyramid maze, and COMPUTER REVENGE (\$24*), a unique 3-dimensional race against hostile computers. The latter will be renamed shortly as a major licensing agreement is in the final stages of negotiation. (*-Suggested retail price set at press time).

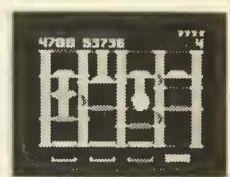
Also coming for the 2600 is a new line of games designed for children ages 4-9. Initially, SCOOBY DOO, MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE, ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE, and KOOL-AID will be introduced.



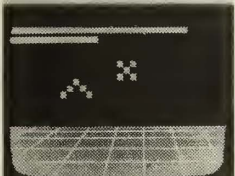
Star Strike™



In Search of the Golden Skull



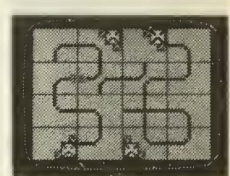
BurgerTime™ +



Computer Revenge°



ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™



Loco-Motion™ + +



Rocky and Bullwinkle™



Kool Aid™ ° °



Masters of the Universe™ †



Scooby Doo's™ Maze Chase



With great fanfare, Fox is introducing M*A*S*H, to be made available initially for the Atari 2600, Atari 400/800 and VIC-20, followed by versions for the TI 99/4A, Intellivision, and ColecoVision. As in the TV show, you pick up wounded, rush them back to the 4077th and operate to save them. We were not excited by the graphics we saw, but, with an April release, there may be additional programming to be added. Fox's thrust is, without a doubt, the movie and TV titles they own. Other games planned for the first half include "THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING", "FALL GUY", "9 TO 5", and "SPACEMASTER X-7". We will get into more detail on gameplay closer to the actual release dates.

US GAMES

In addition to the new titles outlined in last month's newsletter, we have just seen a prototype of a new cartridge planned for the spring. THE PINK PANTHER will utilize a new 8K expanded memory and, although the game is far from finished, we loved the graphics of both The Panther and Inspector Clouseau. The Pink Panther music was also very much in evidence and we eagerly look forward to a more finished product to get a look at gameplay.

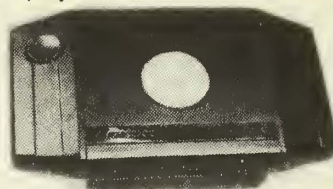


Ambitious plans are afoot at Atari, and we were impressed by what we saw!! They are definitely putting more time and care into programming games for their 2600.

First, as mentioned last month, they introduced The Children's Computer Workshop cartridges for their 2600 system. They are fun, graphically well done, and something any parent will like. These are truly educational games that will hold the attention of the young ones (they won't even notice that they're learning)! **COOKIE MONSTER MUNCH** is a maze game which not only teaches children directions (up/down/right/left), but also how to count. We loved the rendition of The Cookie Monster. In **OSCAR'S TRASH RACE**, your child picks up number recognition skills as he counts the number of trash items left by a passing garbage truck. He must then select from three numbered trash cans, picking the one corresponding to the amount of trash left behind. The reward for winning: a huge Oscar face emerges from the can smiling. **GROVER'S MUSIC MAKER** is definitely worth putting in the library as it encourages children to develop creative skills in music. There are 20 well-known tunes stored in the cartridge which your child can play back, one note at a time, or record and play back his or her own creations.

Later in the year, look for **ALPHA BEAM**, designed to help your child recognize letters; **BIG BIRD'S EGG CATCH**, designed to help timing and direction; the first games designed around the Peanuts characters; and the games coming from the Disney agreement. Available for both the 2600 and 5200, these games will feature Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Snow White.

Accessory-wise, Atari plans a "PROLINE JOYSTICK" for the 2600 in June, a streamlined metal unit, reminiscent of the shape of the 5200 joystick. Also planned for June is a **TRAK-BALL!!** We had a chance to play it with **CENTIPEDE** and found the response on this unit very, very nice. It will be a great addition to your 2600 library!



Several new cartridges are coming for your 2600. Among them are many arcade favorites like **MS. PACMAN** (they've come a long way from the **PACMAN** of last year); **CENTIPEDE** (another one we enjoyed and found had more features of the arcade game than we expected), **DIG DUG**, **KANGAROO**, **JUNGLE HUNT**, **GALAXIAN** and **GRAVITAR** as well as two more **REALSPORTS** games. **TENNIS** looked very good as did **SOCCER**.

The Atari 5200 system promises several new cartridges also including **DIG DUG**, **KANGAROO**, **QIX**, **JUNGLE HUNT**, **VANGUARD**, as well as **TENNIS**, **BASKETBALL**, and **BASEBALL**. Also coming are **POLE POSITION**, an exciting grand prix competition; **SPACE DUNGEON**, the 5200's first adventure game; and **COUNTERMEASURE**.

In speaking with our friends at Atari, they tell us that the supply problem of both the 5200 master unit and cartridges will ease up a great deal as we move into the first half of the year. You should start seeing the units in your favorite game store soon.



Three 2600-compatible games, in addition to **BERMUDA TRIANGLE** (reviewed elsewhere) have been announced for spring shipping. In **FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER**, you gather stones from the dungeons of Dr. Frankenstein's castle and carry them to the tower where the monster is being created. You must construct a barrier around the monster before he is completed. There will be ghoulish creatures to impede your progress. **MR. BILL'S NEIGHBORHOOD** features Mr. Bill from "Saturday Night Live" fame. You must help Mr. Bill lead his family away from the neighborhood before he's caught by Sluggo. As he picks up his family, the escape becomes harder and harder. Later in the year, **SMOKEY THE BEAR** will be released. This is an educational game designed to teach children the hazards of fire.



We still don't really have a handle on the Apollo situation since they filed Chapter XI. They were at the show, in abbreviated fashion, and introduced **SPACE CAVERN** for the Atari 400/800 AND **GUARDIAN** for the Atari 2600. They also plan a game for the VIC-20 entitled **CUPID**. Still on the boards for later release are **POMPEII**, **KYPHUS**, and **SQUOOSH**, all for the 2600.



We covered the majority of the 1983 Parker Bros. news last month; however, we have news on two more planned cartridges. The first, Nintendo's **POPEYE** (Atari 2600-compatible) is scheduled for July and will have the popular character racing up steps, across beams and back down ladders as he attempts to "catch" the hearts. As with the arcade adaptation, musical melodies are sent to him by his sweetheart, Olive Oyl. Popeye needs his spinach to fuel his efforts as he evades Brutus. In an adaptation from the Williams coin-op, **Q*BERT** will come to your Atari 2600 and Intellivision screens in July and Atari 5200 in September. Players must help Q*bert hop across a pyramid of cubes, which change color with each successful landing. Chasing Q*bert are colored balls which fall down from the top of the pyramid and the meddlesome characters **UGH** and **WRONG WAY**, who "fall" up and across the cubes. And for those of you who have been wondering what happened to **TUTANKHAM**, the game has "gone back to the drawing board", being redesigned as an 8K game (it was a 4K game). Because of the upgrade taking place, the game will not ship until later in the year.



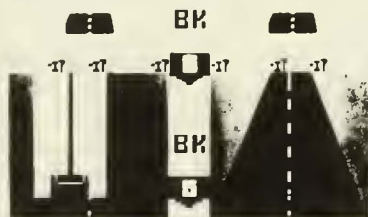
ZIMAG We told you about this new entry into the games arena in December. They are a division of Magnetic Tape Intl. and will be introducing several games for the Atari 2600 during the first half of the year. You are under attack by a force of mysterious phantom tanks that disappear and reappear at will in **TANKS BUT NO TANKS**. You must defend the outpost and destroy the enemy as they advance relentlessly through your defense mazes (MSR \$19.95). You're suspended in time - caught in hostile space between the edges of the galaxy in **COSMIC CORRIDOR**. You are under constant attack from all sorts of space vermin, from alien monsters to rogue fighters (\$19.95). Ever want to juggle plates at the top of a pole?? You now have your chance with **DISHASTER** (\$19.95). I WANT MY MOMMY has Teddy having a bad dream and wanting his mommy. Guide him up the stardust ladders and avoid nasty dream demons who try and block his path. Hell get a big bear hug if he reaches the top. This appears to be a "Donkey Kong" type of game (\$19.95). You've got to put the pizza orders together in **PIZZA CHEF**. The pace gets faster and faster as you add tomato, cheese, onion, mushroomioncheesehamolive... how are you going to keep the orders from getting mixed up? (\$29.95)



First, **DEMON ATTACK** is set for release for the Odyssey system, along with the Atari 400/800 computers and VIC-20. Later in the year, Imagic promises cartridges for the ColecoVision and TI-99/4A. Leaning heavily toward Intellivision-compatible games for the first half, we'll run down the titles and brief descriptions for you. In **ICE TREK** the Nordic hero Thor must cross miles of frozen tundra with a thundering herd of caribou thundering by. He must dodge them and ski around them. They can gouge him with their antlers, but he must avoid killing them at all costs as the unforgiving Goddess of the Wilderness rises to avenge the loss. His trials continue as he must bridge a frigid lake and link frozen chunks of ice. Icebergs crash into his makeshift footbridge if he doesn't destroy them first. When he finally reaches the Frost Giants fortress (beautiful graphics), he assaults that castle with enchanted fireballs! **NOVA BLAST** will be coming soon. This is a fast-paced (one of the fastest Intellivision games yet) space-type "shoot-em-up" games, whereby you defend four cities from alien assault. You will engage the enemy in galactic dogfights and locate anti-aircraft guns and destroy them. **TRUCKIN'** might be referred to as the "thinking man's Turbo" as you take your rig all over the U.S.A. delivering goods on a tight schedule. Pick your route, make strategic decisions about your cargo, and radio ahead to find out what loads you need and where they're needed. In **SAFECRAKER** you're the best bank robber around. Cruise down city streets in your black limosine and watch out for cops. This is set in the '30's as you try to crack safes, avoid the cops, or use your tommy gun. Although the graphics look nice, we will hold judgement on the moralistic (or lack thereof) value of this game until we can spend some time with it. In **TROPICAL PARADISE** you've been shipwrecked on an island and the big beast has stolen your lady! You must cross dangerous territory to rescue her, avoiding boulders, man-eating clams, vicious ferns, and bubbling lava. **WHITE WATER** has you navigating a raft down a river filled with rapids. You pilot the raft avoiding whirlpools, plants, etc. to stop at a stretch of beach. Go into the jungle and try and collect treasures as the natives try and stop you. Race back to your raft and continue down the river to more beaches and more treasure. **DRACULA** is set at night as you rise from the graveyard to bite people and return to the graveyard before sunrise. Avoid constables and race against the clock as you look for your victims. **SHOOTIN' GALLERY** is the "old-time" midway game as you take aim at monkeys, rabbits, seals, and a toy train for a special challenge.



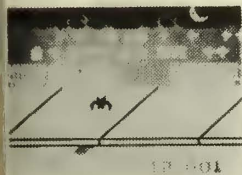
TROPICAL PARADISE



TRUCKIN'



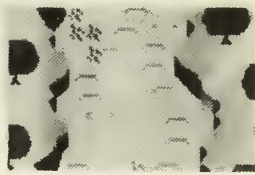
SAFECRAKER



DRACULA



SHOOTIN' GALLERY



WHITE WATER



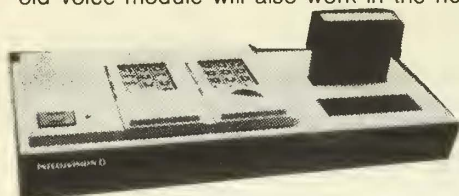
ESCAPE FROM ARGOS

For the Atari 2600, Imagic is releasing three new titles, the first being **SHOOTIN' GALLERY** (see above information). Also in the works are such projects as **ESCAPE FROM ARGOS**, where Jason, hero of ancient Greece, battles fierce Furies who are tormenting him. As a direct shot makes the Furies multiply, Jason must bank on his shots off temple walls. As he makes it through each assault, the winged Pegasus carries him away to a new challenge. In **AERIAL ACE** (formerly **SKY PATROL**) you are put behind enemy lines on a hot air balloon during World War I. Enemy anti-aircraft guns stalk you from the ground and your foes' fighter planes and balloons try to intercept and destroy you. Your mission is to bomb strategic outposts and pick up downed pilots. Although not totally finished, we enjoyed the "floating feel" you have with this game. You cannot simply direct your balloon with the joystick. You must use wind currents, air blasts to rise, etc.

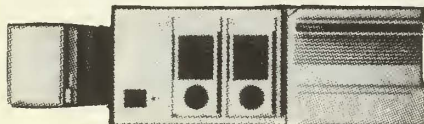


Although nothing was in finished form, and no release dates are available, SEGA, the company that brought you **ZAXXON**, **TURBO**, **FROGGER**, **CARNIVAL**, and others, are entering the 2600-compatible arena with several game titles. Titles that are promised (they are affiliated with Paramount Pictures), include **48 HOURS** (a current box office smash hit) **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE**, **AIRPLANE**, **MARATHON MAN**, **WAR OF THE WORLDS**, **FRIDAY THE 13TH**, **BUCK ROGERS** (a series of cartridges), **SUBTERFUGE**, **MUFFETT**, **STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN**, and **STAR TREK II: IN SEARCH OF SPOCK**.

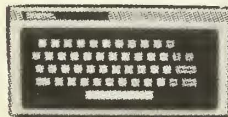
Intellivision Intellivision has gone to a "whole new look" and you're going to need a scorebook to figure out WHAT they are introducing for WHICH portion of their system!! We will start with INTELLIVISION II which is the new Mattel master component. The game unit that Intellivision has had on the market has been discontinued and will slowly disappear off retailers shelves. This new unit, with the new voice module, will retail between \$150 and \$199 (special promotional introductory price). The old voice module will also work in the new system, as will all the old cartridges.



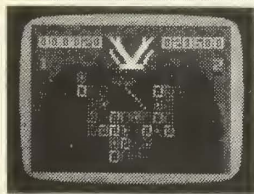
Why this new unit, you ask? Mattel says that they want to be more competitive in price. Touting a "high-tech look", we find this unit almost "toy-like" in appearance: all white plastic and very small. We would be remiss, however, if we did not point out that the controllers on this new unit have longer cords and ARE DETACHABLE (finally)! In the spring, Mattel will introduce a joystick controller (around \$20) which will have a top mounted fire button as well as four side action buttons on its base. Of course, with the controllers being detachable, it will open the doors for 3rd party joystick controllers. You cannot disassemble the controllers on this unit, so forget about using your "Injoy -A-Stick" or similar item. We are not wild about the looks of this new unit. They are also "restyling" the Voice Module to match. Your old Voice Module will fit the new system, along with all future hardware and software. Also planned for the first half of the year is EXPANSION SYSTEM A which will allow you to play your Atari 2600-compatible cartridges on an Intellivision, packaged with an M NETWORK cartridge. Coming this spring is the ENTERTAINMENT COMPUTER SYSTEM which you've been hearing about via those TV commercials with the realistic baseball game. This is the long-awaited Intellivision Keyboard.



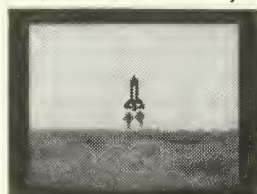
It will be sold with a computer adaptor (a 16-bit microprocessor which features BASIC program language built-in and 2K RAM. The Entertainment Computer System (referred to as the ECS) will sell for between \$125 and \$150, and should be available by late spring. Mattel plans around 12 cartridges specifically for the ECS, including BASEBALL (around \$35), SCOOBY DOO MAZE CHASE, and MIND STRIKE, a 3-dimensional space version of a chess board game. Several educational cartridges are planned which we will detail as release dates come closer. A Program Expander (8K/ROM, 16K/RAM) will also be released at around \$80. The next item for the ECS is the MUSIC SYNTHESIZER with 49 keys, and it should sell in the \$80 range also. Initially, three programs are being developed for use with the Synthesizer: ASTROMUSIC (a musical version of ASTROSMASH), MELODY MAKER (where you can compose melodies and record them on cassette) and MUSIC CONDUCTOR which provides for practice drills, interval recognition and fingering exercises.



We won't even get into an explanation of the new AQUARIUS HOME COMPUTER SYSTEM here (see computer section), but we will let you in on a secret. Remember how the Intellivision TV ads are telling us that "while everyone else is telling you to buy a new system to get state-of-the-art games, you don't have to do it with Mattel?" Well, remember that ad when fall rolls around and they introduce the INTELLIVISION III, a new unit which features built-in voice synthesis, high resolution graphics with intricate detail. (We will say from what we saw, WOW!). The unit also features nearly infinitely programmable colors and the ability to move objects on the game screen twice as fast as current systems. Also featured are six full channels of sound effects and music which can be enjoyed through a stereo system. Other features include remote battery-operated hand controllers, large keys as well as full-size joystick. With two extra ports, up to 4 players can participate in a game at once. The good news is that your current Intellivision-compatible cartridges can be played in this unit, as well as the ECS. Obviously, to use the systems sophisticated abilities, new cartridges will be forthcoming which will not be compatible with other Intellivision systems. Now that we've lost you on the hardware, lets bring you up-to-date on the software coming for your Intellivision. First, in addition to TRON SOLAR SAILER for the Voice Module, we were very disappointed to learn that only one new Voice cartridge is planned for the first half, and not until the summer at that. In SPACE SHUTTLE, you are a member of the crew and must successfully launch and orbit the craft as well as perform work such as retrieving/deploying satellites. The voices of ground control, a fellow astronaut and an on-board computer offer guidance. Seven different screens are featured. BUZZ BOMBERS (around \$30) is an action arcade game. When you hit the honey bees, they become pieces of honeycomb. As the honeycomb grows, so does the hive and you score more points! Graphically, this one looked very nice and appeared to be fun to play. Your MISSION X (around \$30) is to fly bombers on a scrolling screen with several targets. In LOCOMOTION (around \$30) you're moving on a scrambled railroad track. Your objective is to avoid collisions, pick-up passengers and stay on schedule. A game which requires strategy, this is one of the faster Intellivision games we've seen. BURGERTIME (around \$35), based on the Data East arcade game, has you scampering over the ingredients - buns, hamburger patties, tomato slices, lettuce - and dropping them onto the plates below. Watch out for the nasties! Mr. Hotdog, Mr. Egg, Mr. Pickle are out to catch you! Toss pepper in their faces or trick them into becoming part of your burger. VECTRON (around \$30) is an arcade action game with very colorful graphics. MYSTIC CASTLE (around \$30) is a medieval fantasy in which you are the knight in shining armor. Patrol the forests, castles and dungeons in this graphically stunning game. ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS TREASURE OF TARMIN (around \$35) was formerly known as MINOTAUR and it's another medieval fantasy game. In ARCTIC SQUARES (around \$24), you're a penguin trying to escape from rival penguins, a hungry seal and ferocious polar bear. Its up to you to skate around each of the enemy penguins to make the ice give way and send them into the freezing water. This one looks very cute. By the way, PINBALL and LAND BATTLE, announced last year, have been postponed "indefinitely".



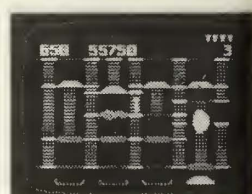
Vectron™



Intellivision Cartridge™



Mystic Castle™



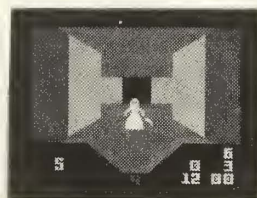
BurgerTime™ +



Arctic Squares™



Mission X™ +



ADVANCED
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™**
TREASURE OF TARMIN™** Cartridge



Loco-Motion™ +



Buzz Bombers™

INTELLIVISION

SHARK! SHARK! (★★★½/★★★★) offers a view of life in a fish-eat-fish world, as you eat smaller fish in an attempt to become a bigger fish. Of course, there are lots of bigger fish trying to eat your fish, plus such other oceanic nasties as seahorses, crabs, lobsters, jellyfish and the bad, black shark. The shark cannot be eaten. You must either avoid him totally or learn the tricky technique of taking brief nibbles at his tail to stun him temporarily. If you can take enough nips from the same shark, he will eventually die and earn you a bonus fish. In the two-player version, you and a friend can each control a fish at the same time. You'll compete for the same prey and find that your fish can end up as your opponent's lunch if you're not careful! There are four game speeds, making this contest suitable for all age and skill levels. Action is quite realistic as the variously-colored fish move through their undersea environment - even to the ability to make your fish move suddenly and quickly by pressing the "Dart" button on the keypad. The graphics offer a very pretty submarine view, complete with waving sea-plants growing from a coral reef at the bottom of your screen. Mattel has even added a musical interlude at the end. This game should be especially appealing to children, but adults will also enjoy the challenges. Recommended.

SHARP SHOT (★★★½/★★★★) is a four-part exercise in basic video game skills specially designed for children over four. Game 1, Touchdown Passing, requires the child to complete as many passes in 60 seconds as possible. The quarterback drops back in a predetermined, variable pattern while two receivers and two pass defenders move up and down the screen. Two may play by taking turns. Game 2, Space Gun-

ner, presents the player with a starry, black sky on which two stationary gunsights are superimposed. One or two children can fire away at spaceship targets as they move through the sights during the timed practice sessions. Game 3 is Submarine, and the object is to fire torpedoes from your sub at the various ships which appear. The sub moves back and forth across the bottom of the screen without the players guidance. Two players can take turns at this timed contest. The characters in Game 4, Maze Shoot, are monsters from Mattel's **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** game. One or two players protect their treasure from greedy monsters by shooting arrows at just the right time. There is added strategy from the ricochet effects as arrows bounce off angled maze walls. These games are short and easy enough to appeal to the small child with a limited attention span. Continued practice should help them prepare for the tougher battles ahead with older siblings and friends. Recommended.

SID THE SPELLBINDER (★★★/★★★★) is an educational game geared to children between the ages of six and ten. SID is a giant segmented worm that snakes across the screen while the child aims missiles from his launcher positioned at the bottom of the screen. This is announced with great flourish by the Voice, proclaiming "Monster attack Open fire!" The player has a limited supply of missiles, and a few will be eaten by SID if any of his segments reach the bottom of the screen. In between monster attacks, the child has the opportunity to win extra missiles by spelling words correctly. The player has two chances at each word; if he misses the second time, the voice will spell out the word correctly, the word will appear on the screen, and its on to the next word or Monster Attack. Since the words used are available for study in the "SID THE SPELLBINDER Word Book" provided with the cartridge, it might be better training for the youngster NOT to be allowed the reward of attacking SID with missiles once more. Our only other quarrel with this game is the fact that the computer voicing of the words to be spelled is not always easy to understand. A child could become very frustrated by correctly spelling the word he thinks he hears, only to be told its not correct. Taking into account the fact that there is necessarily a limited vocabulary in this game, it seems an enjoyable way for children to improve their spelling skills. (MSR \$39.95)

IMAGIC

DRAGONFIRE (★★★★/★★★★) is an original game in which you play the role of a dashing young prince who must challenge ferocious dragons to recapture the castle and all its treasures from the fire-breathing monsters. As in the Atari-compatible version (reviewed January, 1983), there are two stages.

First the prince must cross a moat-spanning castle bridge while dodging fireballs thrown by the dragon hatchlings. Once across the bridge, he enters a castle storeroom where he must gather up the treasures by touching them, all the while avoiding the fiery belches of the dragon that guards the precious objects. Once he has cleared the storeroom, an escape doorway appears on the screen, and it's back to the bridge to dodge a few more fireballs. In this Intellivision-compatible version, the bridge and castle scene is far more graphically detailed, and an archer has been added to the castle parapet on the left. He is inactive at first, but as your score climbs he begins raining arrows on the hapless prince, as if the fireballs weren't enough of an obstacle! There's an added touch of realism in this version when fireballs or arrows claim the prince's life: he tumbles head first into the moat, diving with a convincing splash into the water. This is a highly challenging game, and the action escalates quickly as dragons become faster and smarter - you won't wonder why you're given seven princely lives once you've played a few times. Dragonfire's graphics are superb, and the sound effects add a great deal to enjoyable game play. Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)



ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

COUNTERMEASURE (★★★★/★★★★) is a superb combination of war-game action and strategic planning with elements of real edge of your seat suspense. Terrorists have seized a missile silo complex, and they're threatening to blow up Washington, D.C. You are the commander of a supertank, and you must destroy all seven silos in the complex before the computerized launch sequence timer reaches zero. If you cannot destroy all the silos in time, then your only chance is to guess the three-letter fail-safe code that will disarm the missiles. The playing field is a scrolling map of the missile complex, showing the locations of supply depots, silos, defensive pillboxes (all held by terrorists), trees and buildings. The top of the screen shows scores and tanks remaining for one or two players, high score for the current playing session, and the real-time launch sequence timer that starts with ten minutes. The bottom of the screen shows the fuel gauge and an occasional clue to the fail-safe code when your tank stops for fuel at a supply depot. As you move your tank through the complex, the pillboxes' rotating guns will fire at you while you're trying to knock out the silos, so you'll have to destroy many of them. Fortunately, your tank is highly maneuverable, and the firing position of your gun turret can be controlled separately from movement of the tank itself. (Naturally, your tank can move faster over open ground than it can over obstacles.) The longer you survive, the tougher the terrorists become - they'll begin to send out remote-controlled jeeps and tanks plus **CRUISE MISSILES** to stop you. Until you've played this game many times, it's doubtful you'll manage to blow up all seven silos, but you can try guessing the fail-safe code. Approach a silo, and you'll be transported to the War Room with its giant map of the world: the pressure mounts as lines converge toward Washington, and you madly punch in every possible combination of the letters E-O-L. If you fail, it's curtains for our nation's capitol, and the graphic display on your screen is one of the most dramatically chilling pictures we've seen. Should you guess the correct code out of the 21 possibilities, you're rewarded with 10,000 points, an extra life, and an idyllic scene of your supertank atop a hill, silhouetted against the moon. This game is complex, yet not time-consuming to learn, and it's one you can play again and again without becoming bored by identical situations. Recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

We spent a lot of time with the very nice people at Coleco and got a preview of some pretty exciting things. First, to address the MOST ASKED questions we get from YOU. There will be a keyboard for the ColecoVision, but it will not be available until sometime after the summer. Because of the competitive quality of the marketplace, Coleco is not showing a prototype at this time. There are other hardware plans but, again, they are waiting to formally introduce those items until they are closer to being able to ship. It seems as though everyone has trouble finding the newest cartridges. Coleco explains that they usually ship to their NATIONAL (and biggest) accounts FIRST, (such as Toys R Us, J. C. Penney, etc.) to get a national spread, albeit a small one. Also, because their production facilities are in the northeast, the shipping tends to roll from east to west. They are in the enviable position of having a product that they cannot keep up with on demand. They have also postponed the release of several games in order to produce enough quantity on cartridges already shipped. TUNNELS AND TROLLS will not ship until at least the 2nd half of the year. (What we saw looked good in its early form). Reminiscent of ZAXXON in effect, this game will use the Roller Controller (see below). They also did not introduce any new cartridges for the driving module, although it was indicated that at least one is in the development stage. Coleco was kind enough to let us take a sneak look at their release schedule for the next 6 months (see the "availability update") and we want to run through brief descriptions on the games for the 3 systems. In many cases, there was no game to play. However, wherever we did get a look at something partially finished, we will give you a brief opinion. Please keep in mind that many of these games are NOT FINISHED and it is unfair to truly judge them at this point. This should only serve as a guide for you to place PRE-ORDERS at your favorite video game store!!!

For ColecoVision owners, the first part of the year should unveil SPACE FURY (Sega) where you must hold off the Furious Forces of the Alien Commander. In SPACE PANIC (Universal) you must eliminate the dreaded space monsters by racing your spaceman along the floors of a giant girder structure. Climb up and down ladders from floor to floor, or leap through the holes for a quick descent. DONKEY KONG JUNIOR (Nintendo) subtitled THE REVENGE OF MARIO, probably needs no introduction. Based on what we saw, this is one cartridge that any DONKEY KONG fan will definitely want to add to his collection. In GORF (Midway), prevent the evil robot Gorf from conquering the entire galaxy. Defeat one fleet, and Gorf sends another. As we move further into the year, in PEPPER II (Exidy), you have a maze-crazy time guiding Pepper around a track, zipping rooms shut to earn points and treasures. Watch for vicious Roaming Eyes and a Zipper Ripper. Enclose a room containing a pitchfork and temporarily turn Pepper into an "Eye-Catching Devil" that eliminates opponents and stuns the Zipper Ripper for a few seconds. With LOOPING (Venture Line), get ready to loop, climb and dive your way on a dangerous airborne mission unlike any other! While dodging rising air balloons, you



Super Action Controller

must release the gate controls secured inside a flight terminal. Test your flying accuracy through an unearthly maze riddled with menacing enemies. In VICTORY (Exidy) you're in command of a battleship! Spin and fire in any direction to defend your planet against alien ships that try to get past you and drop paratroopers. In The Official BUCK ROGERS PLANET OF ZOOM (Sega), Buck is out to save the galaxy and only you can help him do it! Guide his ship at high speed, dodging the missiles and saucers that stream past you. MR. DO (Universal) needs your help to harvest his orchard. Start Picking cherries and have Mr. Do throw his "power ball" to eliminate some of the bad guys. In ROCKY BATTLES THE CHAMP, get set to go head-to-head with the video challenger as Rocky Balboa captures the excitement of a true-to-life boxing match-up! Other cartridges we had a look at but will not be available until the 2nd half of the year, are FRENZY, DRACULA, and SUBROC. And, yes, more controllers are coming. The first, THE ROLLER CONTROLLER (Coleco's "TRACKBALL") comes packaged with SLITHER, an encounter with deadly snakes and other creatures that you must elude by maneuvering over a desert landscape. The unit has compartments which house the Coleco keypad/joystick units. A pair of SUPER ACTION CONTROLLERS come packaged with CONTACT BASEBALL and will also be used with CONTACT FOOTBALL. Each controller is held in one hand, and four large buttons fall naturally under the fingers. Each button controls a separate function such as swinging the bat. By pressing the triggers in certain combinations, the player can precisely control specific areas of game play. Atop the controller are an 8-button keypad which allows innumerable play options, a speed roller that provides precise control of the characters' speed and an 8-direction joystick that offers full field movement of the characters. Early prototypes of this controller allowed the player to actually "feel" the action of, say the ball hitting the bat, or a catch of a football pass. Unfortunately the production costs ended up being on the "high side", so Coleco decided to go without that special function. You will, no doubt, read about this as a "coming soon" feature from ColecoVision, but the LATEST news is that it won't be part of the controller. Many of the Titles mentioned above, in addition to ColecoVision cartridges already available, are planned for the Atari 2600 and Intellivision units during the year (see Availability Update). While, again we did not see many of the cartridges in finished form, we did get a chance to see and play some. And, while we don't realistically expect to see "ColecoVision graphics" on the Atari or Intellivision, we do question the release of some games which simply don't translate due to the limits of the other systems. Specifically, TURBO and ZAXXON for Atari were a major disappointment, both in graphics and gameplay. You would be hard pressed to recognize ZAXXON in the Atari form. Our best word of advice is to watch for our reviews and DON'T automatically purchase a cartridge because of its name value or its excellence in ColecoVision form.

Coleco, in a continuing quest for new and innovative ideas, has reached an agreement with John Dykstra who will develop new games for Coleco. His company, Apogee, Inc., is noted for special effects, including Star Trek the Movie, Firefox, and Star Wars (for which he won a deserved Academy Award).



We gave you an overview of the new products coming for the Vectrex system last month; however, now that we've gotten a look at them, we can tell you that the system is looking better and better. Coming for the Vectrex (which has 64K capability, by the way), are WEB WARP, a game with a 3-dimensional effect where you must capture the aliens and take them to your trophy room. Vectrex plans a contest where you can, after finding the 20th and final alien, send in a picture or drawing of that alien and be entered in a contest with prizes to be announced! We were also impressed with BEDLAM which is, simplified, a reverse TEMPEST; SOCCER (2-player only) which has true-to-life players; SPIKE, which will be cute for kids; and FORTRESS OF NARZOD. NARZOD is difficult because your bullets can ricochet to come back and kill you as you work your way up a crooked path fending off the Guardians!

We also saw a sneak preview of the Vectrex TOUCH SCREEN, scheduled for fall, where you learn to spell by touching the screen, spelling words. Every time you touch a wrong letter, one more portion of a hangman appears on the screen. Also planned for fall is the LIGHT PEN where you can draw and connect the dots. This is great for the budding artist in the family and will retail in the area of \$30 to \$35.

Milton Bradley, the parent company of Vectrex, is also entering the 2600-compatible market with STAR TREK. Although we did not see the finished product, it's promised to play in a similar manner to the Vectrex version. They will also introduce a free-standing, 2-handed joystick in the summer for the 2600, planned to retail around \$25 (single). It can best be described as holding a gun without the barrel. The firing button is where the trigger is on a gun and the joystick is mounted on top. Although light, it had a pretty nice feel.

LATE BREAKING FLASH FROM



GEMINI VIDEO GAME SYSTEM



GEMINI SOUND I VOICE MODULE

COLECO

In a move that will undoubtedly shake up the industry on Feb. 7th, Coleco announced the release of GEMINI, making no bones about the fact that it is a VCS capable of doing everything your 2600 is capable of doing!! Scheduled to retail around \$100, the main difference between this unit and the Atari is the "combo" joystick/game paddle controllers (see picture). The GEMINI will be packaged with DONKEY KONG. Later in the summer, they will be releasing the GEMINI SOUND I VOICE MODULE (retail around \$70). The Sound Module is an audio cassette deck capable of inter-reaction with the player. With specially designed cartridges and tapes, it adds realistic human and character voices and sound effects. Initially geared towards the educational and family games, BERENSTAIN BEARS play 'n learn with three voice cassettes comes packaged with the Module. This cartridge combines these characters with entertaining and educational gameplay. Also look for SMURF cartridges and others to be announced. For those of you who already have an Atari 2600, take heart as this Module will interface with that unit!



**EXPANSION MODULE #3
(SUPER GAME MODULE)**

The BIG announcement here in New York is the SUPER GAME MODULE #3, an advanced expansion module designed for the game aficionado. If you LOVE the REAL arcade games, this unit is designed for YOU!! How would you like to see all 10 screens of DONKEY KONG at home, complete with the opening, closing and intermission scenes??? WOW! That's what this little item is designed to do — play them like you've always wanted. With superior graphics, this truly is a Fourth Generation machine. Superior gameplay make this a relatively inexpensive (around \$125) way to, as they say on their TV ads "bring the arcade experience home"! What we do applaud is that you do NOT have to buy an entirely new unit to upgrade for these features. The basic premise is this: with their most popular games, Coleco will offer a separate, smaller cartridge (referred to as a "wafer") that inserts into the Module #3 to make the game what they call a "Super Game". For the technically minded, the Module adds over one million bits of information! This tremendously increased memory capability allows games played through the module to have complete game screens, more action, more play variations and more detail than ever before. With these new "wafers", now you'll be able to play SUPER ZAXXON, SUPER TURBO (with Module #2), SUPER DONKEY KONG JR., SUPER SMURF, to name a few. Although your current ColecoVision cartridges will plug in, you will not experience the additional gameplay and graphics unless you purchase the game wafers (suggested retail around \$30 each). By the way, the SUPER GAME comes packaged with SUPER DONKEY KONG and SUPER GORF. (you may read somewhere else that only SUPER DONKEY KONG is included; however, in an exclusive interview with VIDEO GAME UPDATE, Michael Katz, Vice President of Corporate Communications at Coleco, told us that SUPER GORF will also be included in the package. ColecoVision owners, start saving your quarters now...If you REALLY want the arcade experience, you have GOT to have this unit!

Additional cartridge titles for COLECOVISION are WILD WESTERN where you are the sheriff who can stop the outlaws out to ambush the train. You can't shoot over the train, but you can fall back and get the bandits from behind, or gallop on ahead of the train and shoot back over the shoulder at them. In SATAN'S HOLLOW, you do battle with the Prince of Darkness...Satan of the Hollow! He reigns over the infernal underworld, a kingdom of frightening garboyles and demons whom you must conquer. Beware of his twisted swirls of flame and other tricks. Once you cross the blazing River of Fire you must build a bridge to escape to safety. In TAC-SCAN you're the formation leader of a band of spaceships, hurtling through a hostile corridor of the galaxy. Direct your squadron into battle, changing course at lightning speed to avoid the heavy enemy fire. Battle aircraft from every era in TIME PILOT, from ancient biplanes to WWII monoplanes to helicopters to jet planes to UFO's from the future. TARZAN will come to your ColecoVision screen as you help the Ape Man save his jungle friends from the Great Safari Hunters. Additional titles include (expect late '83 delivery on all these games) WIZARD OF OZ, as you try to get Dorothy and Toto back to their farm in Kansas; PAPA SMURF'S TREASURE HUNT; and SWORD AND THE SORCERER, a multi-screen adventure as you help TALOM, wielder of the magic sword, rescue the fair ALANA from the evil sorcerer XUSIA. Coleco indicates that most of the above titles will also be made available for the Atari 2600 and Intellivision. We will get into more specific breakdowns closer to release dates as it is unrealistic to expect any of these games to appear before the second half of the year, at the earliest.

COMING NEXT MONTH...

REVIEWS OF:

Ms. Pac-Man
Jedi Arena
Entombed
Swords&Serpents
Tron Solar Sailer
...AND MANY SURPRISES!

VIDEO TAKE-OUT'S TOP 10 SELLERS

1. RIVER RAID (Actv AC)
2. PITFALL (Actv AC)
3. ESCAPE...MINDMASTER (Strp AC)
4. FOOTBALL (At 5200)
5. E.T. (At 2600)
6. VANGUARD (At 2600)
7. DRAGONFIRE (Imgc IC)
8. DRAGONFIRE (Imgc AC)
9. DEFENDER (At 5200)
10. MISSILE COMMAND (At 5200)

ACCESSORY UPDATE

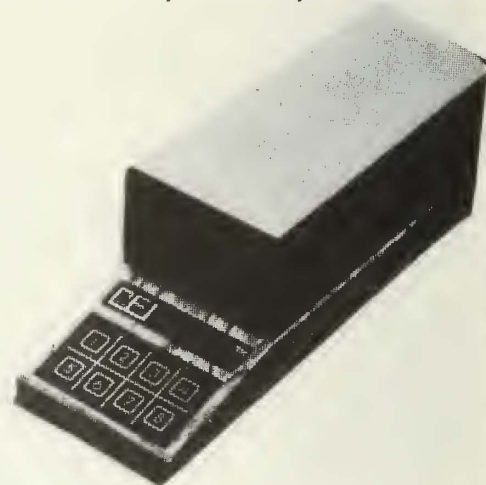


Coming shortly from Discwasher is the POINTMASTER PRO, different from the original POINTMASTER in a couple of areas. First, there are suction feet and, secondly, a "constant fire" circuit which allows the user to fire constantly by holding down the fire button. Also being introduced shortly is the POINTMASTER FIRE CONTROL which connects between your existing 2600-compatible joystick and the game unit for constant firing while holding down the fire button. This feature promises to make higher scores possible. Several small add-on items are being introduced by several companies. First, from Video Masters, comes the THUMB SAVER, a directional disc cushion which sticks on your Intellivision disc. This raises the playing surface, eliminating thumb soreness from "video overplay" (Manufacturers Suggested Retail \$3.95).

Under the "they should have thought of this ages ago" category, COMPRO ELECTRONICS has introduced its VIDEOPLEXER, an electronic game selector. Two models are planned - one for the Atari 2600 and the other for the Intellivision. This handy little unit holds up to 8 different cartridges and allows you, with the push of a button, automatic interchangeability. The concept is a good one as it provides less wear and tear on your cartridges, the cartridge connector in the game unit, and quick access to your favorite games. It also provides a nice dust-free environment for the games you store inside. Be forewarned though as some non-standard cartridges such as CommaVid and Ultravision will, in all probability, NOT fit! Planned for availability in February, it will retail for \$59.95.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING... GAME ACCESSORIES

INJOY-A-STICKS, formerly available only for Intellivision owners, are now made for ColecoVision as well. The package includes a pair of sturdy, grey plastic two-inch sticks and instructions for installation. It's a simple matter of prying off the silver disc on top of the controller knob, removing the phillips-head screw and the knob, putting the stick in place and reinstalling the screw (the shaft of the stick is hollow). We found the Injoy-A-Sticks truly a joy to use on all Coleco games currently available, especially for DONKEY KONG and the maze games. They're a must for any ColecoVision owner, and should be available at \$10.00 or less for the pair. Recommended.

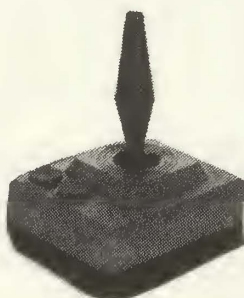


From Desanna of Canada comes the INTEL JOYSTICK. This item replaces your Intellivision disc (you must take apart your controller) with a disc having a removable joystick! With this item you get the best of both worlds. For games using the disc, just unscrew the joystick handle and use the disc base!

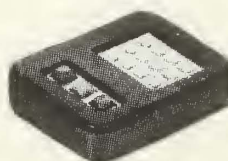
WICO In typical Wico fashion, the new joysticks and game controls they are adding to their line are innovative and extremely well-made. First, an ANALOG JOYSTICK is coming for the Atari 5200 (MSR.: \$59.95), Apple II (69.95), IBM Personal Computer (69.95); and Radio Shack TRS-80 Color Computer (49.95). Each will feature 2 fire buttons, modified grip handle, and selection switch for centering/non-centering option. Also coming is their 3-Way DELUXE JOYSTICK (44.95) with 2 independent fire buttons and 3 interchangeable handles (a bat handle and two styles of grip handle). A POWER GRIP JOYSTICK, with grip handle and two fire buttons (36.95) is coming for your Atari 2600, 400/800, VIC-20 and VIC-64. And finally, a standard touch-tone keyboard engineered to interface with your ColecoVision for ease in working with the keyboard commands (\$19.95 - *All prices are manufacturers suggested retail)



3-Way Deluxe Joystick



Analog Joystick



Touch-Tone Keyboard



Power Grip Joystick

COMPUTER GAME UPDATE

COMPUTER SOFTWARE NEWS

CBS Three programs are planned for the Atari 400/800. **BOULDERS AND BOMBS** has 99 levels of tunneling adventure under the surface of an unknown planet, as hostile alien vultures seek to turn you into a buried fossil. You must clear a path to safety through tons of earth, boulders, and ever-spreading green cave fungus. Unearth time bombs along the way to blast away the hazards the vultures toss at you. In **MOUNTAIN KING**, you will journey through diamond-laden mountain caverns in search of the elusive Flame Spirit - the mystical key that unlocks the door to the ancient Throne Room and the golden crown kept within. Giant spiders, cryptic chests and vivid musical clues add to the adventure and danger.

In Education, CBS will bring us **TIME TRIALS** for ages 5 through 10. It's a timed road rally that gives kids practice in the mathematical skills of estimation, using familiar addition and multiplication problems. Kids must drive their racer through the randomly-generated fork-filled course, choosing the paths that will get them to their numbered goal as fast and in as short a route as possible.

THORN EMI has announced new computer games for the first half of the year, including: **MUTANT HERD**, an action adventure strategy game; **FOURTH ENCOUNTER**, **SAVE THE SEVEN SEAS**, **ORK ATTACK**, **MAJOR LEAGUE HOCKEY** and **LIBERATOR**.

DISNEY has announced entry into the computer software market with educational-based programs featuring Mickey Mouse and other Disney characters. The programs are designed to develop mastery in math, science, logic and the use of the English language. Planned for initial introduction in March or April, the first titles will be **MICKEY GOES HIKING** and **MICKEY GOES EXPLORING**, designed for 7 to 10 year olds.

TELESYS will ship **FAST FOOD**, a big seller for them, in the Atari 2600 format, has been announced for the VIC-20. Other titles are planned in the future for the VIC-20 and perhaps other home computers.

ACTIVISION plans to enter the computer software field later this year with introductions for the Atari 400/800. They are also studying other home computers for possible entry into other formats. **STARPATH** plans entry into the 400/800 field by summer.

Two Nexa games coming for the 400/800 are **CAPTAIN COSMO**, a fast-action arcade-type game with 99 levels allowing up to 4 players, and **ADVENTURES OF THE BABY SEA TURTLE** where you guide Clyde (a newborn sea turtle) through a trail of its natural enemies to reach a safe haven in an underwater cave. This one is designed for any Atari home computer with at least 32K and disk capability.

Roklan Software will release two new games for the Atari 400/800. They are **LIFESPAN** and **ANTI-SUB PATROL**. **LIFESPAN** is a series of five games which have the feel of an arcade game. The game puts the player in control of events in the game to accomplish various goals without being destroyed. The suggested list should be around \$44.95 and will be available in cartridge only. **ANTI-SUB PATROL** is a strategy game which allows the player to be a submarine-seeking destroyer which is attempting to find and destroy a moving enemy sub target before the sub sinks the player. Suggested \$19.95 for the cassette, \$29.95 for disk.

Scholastic, Inc. has announced its entry into the home computer software arena with **WIZWARE**, designed for children between the ages of 8 and 14 years. The first titles are scheduled for the spring in disk and cassette formats, compatible with Apple II Plus, Atari 400/800, TI 99/4A, and VIC-20. Among the titles being released are **MICROZINE**, the first computer "magazine" for kids, and designed to allow them to participate in its features. They will have the opportunity to simulate activities such as riding in a hot air balloon by programming its flight. They may also program the outcome of an adventure story or interview a popular personality in the news with their own questions. **SQUARE PAIRS** develops basic learning skills such as matching numbers, words and patterns. Topics can be just as simple or complex as the user wants. **TURTLE TRACKS** (formerly **KIDSTUFF**) allows kids to learn the fundamentals of computer programming as they control the movements of a "turtle", commanding it to select colors, draw lines, circles and other shapes. Pictures can be stored in memory, then later be called up as part of more complex projects. As the child becomes more familiar with the program and creates more sophisticated commands, they learn problem-solving skills that help them prepare them for the study of Basic, Logo, and other computer program languages. **YOUR COMPUTER** is a hands-on introduction to computer technology for first-time users. **ELECTRONIC BIRTHDAY** becomes a birthday party's master - of - ceremonies, leading kids through such activities as electronic pin-the-tail!

Those of you familiar with the Datamost programs currently existing for Apple II will be glad to know they plan to make many of those titles available for the VIC-20, Atari 400/800, and TI 99/4A during the year. Among those titles are **AZTEC**, **SPECTRE**, and **TUBEWAY**. A new title planned for the 400/800 is **NIGHTRAIDERS**, a fast-action space game which takes place in the 21st century. You are the leader of an attack mission assigned to fly over enemy terrain at night, destroying tanks, missile cannons and plasma depots. Moving your joystick forward activates your ship's thrusters, and by leaving them on for more than 2 seconds you can go into Hyperdrive. When you're in Hyperdrive, the enemy's tracking system cannot lock onto your ship. Suggested retail \$29.95 disk only.

ZIMAG also has several games coming for the Atari 400/800 computers. All will be available in three formats - disc, cassette, and ROM cartridge. **NINEBALL** combines the accurate geometrics of pool with the random surprises of pinball. Zimag tells us that it's enough to drive you batty (MSR \$19.95 disc/cassette & \$29.95 ROM cart).

In **KERPLOP** you climb aboard Kerplops mischievous hot air balloon, float high above the city and drop water balloons on unsuspecting citizens (\$39.95 disc/cassette & \$29.95 ROM cart). In **RIVER RAT** you race your speedboat up the river where you have to watch out for rafts, ducks, swimmers, and other wildlife. Open your throttle as wide as you dare and don't forget the ramps and the feeling of exhilaration that comes from soaring above the river and the spray in your face as you touch down (\$29.95 disc/cassette & \$39.95 ROM cart).

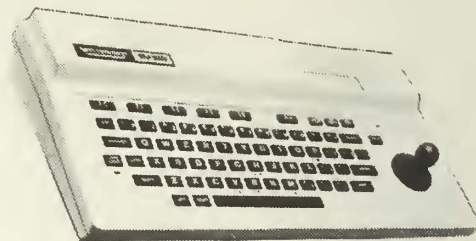
It's you against dangerous mine fields and killer satellites in **COLLISION COURSE**. Your mission is to protect cargo ships loaded with precious gems as you escort them back home through the galaxy. You also have to contend with mysterious time beacons along the way (\$29.95 disc/cassette & \$39.95 ROM cart).

CAT-NAP is a game of skill and chance as you try to quiet the cats outside your window as you sleep. Don't wake the dog because the cats make even more noise and watch out for the police if it gets too noisy (\$29.95 disc/cassette & \$39.95 ROM cart).

For adventure, look for **QUEST FOR INCA GOLD** as you must find the fabled Inca Sun God even though you've lost your map and your guide (\$39.95 disc/cassette).

Ultravision®

On the hardware side, Ultravision has introduced their "Home Entertainment Center" after many changes. Retailing for \$999, the package consists of a color console, 2 joysticks, set of headphones, and a 64K keyboard. They will market their own software but, according to the company, you can also use Apple, Commodore, and Atari 800-compatible software. Planned for March are modules to allow you to play 2600-compatible and ColecoVision cartridges on this system. Each module will retail for \$99. Disk drive will be made available later in the year. In addition, the unit is AC and can be hooked up as a home security monitor. We got a look at the unit and, although there are some nice features, we question its viability at such a high price tag when powerful home computers are being introduced at several hundred dollars less.



SPECTRAVIDEO

Spectravision also announces entry into the home computer industry with their SPECTRAVIDEO SV-318, retailing at \$299.95. It features built-in 32K ROM memory capacity, expandable to 96K; built-in 32K RAM memory expandable to 144K; built-in Microsoft BASIC interpreter; internal monitor program (machine code); and built-in 80-column CP/M and new CP/M Plus compatibility. Several peripherals will be made available, including Data Cassette Drive, Floppy Disk Drive, Dot Matrix Printer, and Modem. A ColecoVision game adaptor is also planned (retail under \$70.00) which will connect to the SV-318 and allow you to play ColecoVision games on the SV-318. They also indicate they will have over 100 software programs for delivery at the same time as the mainframe (March).

One note worth mentioning is the built-in joystick on the keyboard. The left-handed player will simply NOT be able to adapt to the system because it is built-in to the right of the keyboard. We feel this feature is awkward to anyone as many right handers would rather move the joystick to a more comfortable position.

Also introduced games for for the VIC-20 and Atari 400/800 including REAGONOMICS and VORTEX, a game with a different twist. In VORTEX, you command an intergalactic space vehicle. Your objective is to successfully maneuver the craft through a barrage of meteor showers while defending yourself from alien ships. The difference with this game is that it is being touted as a 3-dimensional game and, in fact, 3-D glasses are packaged with the game! We saw the game briefly and felt the effect more apparent than real, as 3-D is difficult at best to pull off on a television set

commodore

Commodore is introducing the DIGI-DRUM for their VIC-20 and COMMODORE-64. The peripheral plugs into the expansion port and comes with software that lets the user simulate a snare drum, base drum and high hat cymbal. The combination of computer and DIGI-DRUM visually displays 3 animated drums on the TV screen which "perform" with each dromstroke. Promised to retail for the price of a game cartridge, its availability is set for Spring.

In education, GORTEK - a robot-like character who will help kids learn to program in a series of books and cassette tapes was introduced. Initially, GORTEK AND THE MICROCHIPS will ship in February and is designed to teach kids to program, combined with a space adventure story. The first lesson is for kids under 14 and consists of 2 tapes containing 12 educational programs and a colorful instruction book which reads like a comic book, yet teaches the fundamentals of BASIC. As the story goes, the planet Syntax is being invaded by the fearsome Zitrons. Gortek is working furiously, teaching the microchips to program the computer to repel attack. The "Microchips Training Manual" teaches the child how to help stop the Zitrons.



Atari has announced the retail price of their new 1200XL computer (see our January issue) will be \$899. At the same time, they have substantially lowered the price of both the 400 and 800 computers.



ACCESSORY UPDATE

Several new products coming our way from TG PRODUCTS, maker of the Apple - compatible joystick and trackball. First, an enhanced version of their joystick has all the features of its predecessor, plus a pair of pushbuttons that can be used to defeat the unit's auto-centering function. It should be available sometime this month. Available in March, at \$39.95 a pair, is the GAME PADDLE with a unique feature: a firing button that can be switched from one side of the paddle to the other, and enables the unit to be used comfortably by either right or left-handed players. The TRACK BALL, mentioned above, will be made available for the IBM system this month and for the Atari 400/800 and VIC-20 in March.

CARDCO will produce an interface which will allow 2600-compatible cartridges to be plugged into and played on a Commodore VIC-20. Available in February, retail should be about \$89.95.

Intellivision

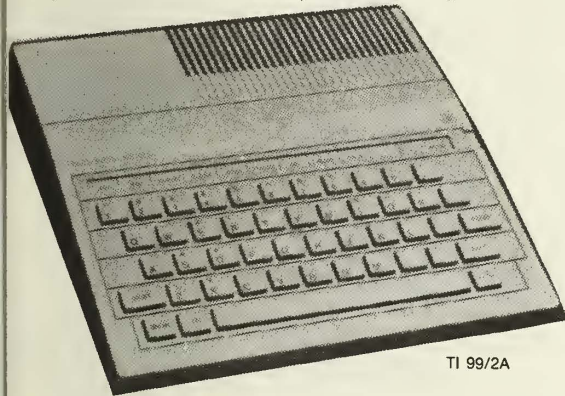
Mattel electronics enters the home computer market with their AQUARIUS home computer which uses built-in Basic, and Logo languages in cartridge form. The consumer can purchase the basic unit for about \$150 without buying any other peripherals, and add to it later.

The basic unit features 256 difference graphic characters as well as 16 colors. It has a "built-in" 4K. The initial peripherals to be available are a Data Recorder, Thermal Printer, and the Mini Expander (two memory cartridges, one with 4K and The other with 6K will also be available), used primarily for game cartridges and as a port for the memory expander cartridges. In late 83, Mattel plans a master expander module designed to allow the use to add up to 8 more peripherals to the system. In addition to several of the more popular Intellivision games that will be adapted for use in the Aquarius (ASTROSMASH, SNAFU, TRON DEADLY DISCS, ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, LOCK'N CHASE, BASEBALL, etc.), they will also introduce programs such as FINFORM, a family financial planning program and FILEFORM, allowing families to maintain and update various



records. The Aquarius unit has begun initial, albeit small, shipments. We feel it necessary to sit back and wait a bit on this unit as far as passing judgement. as with the any hardware system, it is only as good as the software available for it. At this time, and the foreseeable future, Mattel will be the only company making software for it so the library will be EXTREMELY limited for a while. Meanwhile, Mattel has also made the decision to market six M Network games for the IBM and APPLE computers. Planned for the first half of the year are BASEBALL, BURGERTIME, LOCK'N CHASE, NIGHT STALKER, SPACE BATTLE, and HEAVY ARTILLERY (name subject to change) where you are involved in tank vs. tank combat.

A low-cost (under \$100) beginners computer is being introduced (the TI-99/2). The computer has 4.2K bytes of built-in RAM and can be expanded to 36.2K. Most peripherals for the system will plug into an interface connector in the rear of the console. Initially, LEARN TO PROGRAM and LEARN TO PROGRAM BASIC will be available (\$19.95) with this unit and 20 software programs promised for the 2nd quarter of the year.



TI 99/2A



TEXAS INSTRUMENTS INCORPORATED

Many new educational software programs for the TI 99/4A will be made available during the first half of the year, featuring math learning exercises for kids in kindergarten through grade 9. ALIEN ADDITION requires kids to answer addition questions correctly before their missile bases will fire on waves of alien invaders. Quick reflexes, in both recognizing answers and firing on attackers, help children defend their bases while practicing addition with numbers. MINUS MISSION has the kids working to solve subtraction problems contained in blobs of slime. Correct answers enable a robot to shoot and destroy the blobs. METEOR MULTIPLICATION requires quick skills and rapid firing to battle meteors from space. DEMOLITION DIVISION features 4 tanks advancing, each with a division problem. The players only defense is the correct answer as he moves from one tank to another to solve problems and fire before the foremost tank reaches its

goal. DRAGON MIX features both multiplication and division problems that children must answer correctly so the dragon can defend the city. Match the correct answer and aim the dragons mouth at the enemy to fire. Four additional learning aids software cartridges will also be made available via Millikan. They are NUMBER READINESS for kids in kindergarten through grade 2 where they work basic math problems. LAWS OF ARITHMETIC wherein kids grades 4 through 8 learn laws of arithmetic. EQUATIONS is drill and practice problems for kids in grade 6, 7 & 8, as is MEASUREMENT FORMULAS. All the above retail at \$39.95.

During the second quarter, several more cartridges are planned, including COMPUTER MATH GAMES I through IV and NUMERATION I and II.

Still in the field of education, TI will offer the PLATO courseware packages, which cover reading, math, and grammar for Grades 3 through 8 and math, writing, science, social studies, and reading for Grades 9 through 12. The first package containing the interpreter, survey, and questionnaire will retail at \$49.95. To use this package in your 99/4A you will need a TI Peripheral Expansion System, Memory Expansion Card, Disk Memory Drive, and Disk Controller Card.

In a joint effort, TI and Milton Bradley will develop voice recognition, plus voice synthesis, for the 99/4A through the use of a plug-in peripheral. It will be sold with a 64-position keypad with overlays for each cartridge, a 3-axis joystick, and headset microphone for the voice command function. The software cartridges will include video games, as well as learning cartridges for kids aged 4 through 9.



CC-40

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS is entering the mini-computer field with the Compact Computer 40 (CC-40). Being touted as a small personal desktop cordless computer, this unit has 34K/ROM and contains BASIC which is compatible with the TI BASIC used in TI's Home Computer Family. It has 6K/RAM, expandable to 16K. It is planned for the first quarter (initially set to retail for \$249.95). Low-cost peripherals are planned in the near future and include an RS232 interface, a printer/plotter and a digital tape drive. Modems, printers, black & white monitor, etc. will be available later in the year. Several software packages will also be available shortly, including MATHEMATICS, FINANCE, PERSPECTIVE DRAWING, STATISTICS, BUSINESS GRAPHICS, etc. These plug-in cartridges will have retail prices ranging from \$39.95 to \$124.95!

COMPUTER SOFTWARE NEWS

UMI will be releasing VIDEO VERMIN and ARACHNOID for the VIC-20 shortly. VIDEO VERMIN is set in a peaceful garden where a horde of hungry vermin - spiders, ants, and beetles, are invading. Shoot them, and their fallen bodies spread a barricade of mushrooms to conceal more swarming raiders. As the gardener, you shoot as many of the invaders and their mushrooms as you can, earning extra gardeners for each 10,000 points (\$49.95). In ARACHNOID, you are the guardian spider of Arachnoice and the only way to survive is to protect the eggs in your nest against invading killer ants and gnats. Your armaments consist of spider webs which you shoot out to trap the invaders. If you're overwhelmed by the invasion, there's a wasp waiting to suck the life out of your future generations of guardian spiders (\$49.95).



Cosmi will be releasing games shortly for the 400/800. The most interesting project they are working on is the "tri-compatible" cassette. In other words, one cassette will load the same program onto the three most popular home computer systems, namely VIC-20, Atari 400/800 and TI99/4A. The same thing for the disk systems would apply (three-in-one) Not only is it an interesting idea, but they will go one step further by selling the cassette for only \$9.95 to 12.95!! For those games they make available in disc, the price will be around \$14.95.

ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE

JANUARY

x-Gopher (USG)
x-M.A.D. (USG)
x-Name That Game(USG)
x-Picnic (USG)
x-Reactor (PB)
x-Squeeze Box (USG)

FEBRUARY

Advs of Tron (MNTK)
Air Raiders (MNTK)
Cosmic Corridor (ZIM)
Crypts of Chaos (FOX)
Disaster (ZIM)
I Want My Mommy (ZIM)
Jedi Arena (PB)
Ms. Pac-Man (AT)
Phoenix (AT)
Revenge Beefstik Tom.(FOX)
Sequest (ACTV)
Strawberry Shortcake(PB)
Tanks But No Tanks (ZIM)
Zaxxon (COL)

MARCH

Centipede (AT)
Earth Dies Screaming(FOX)
Entombed (USG)
Frankensteins Monster(DA)
G.I. Joe (PB)
Immies and Aggies (ZIM)
Kyphus (AP)
Piece O Cake (USG)
Pizza Chef (ZIM)
Pompeii (AP)
Raft Rider (USG)
Shootin Gallery (IMGC)
Sky Skipper (PB)
Smurf Action (COL)
Squooosh (AP)
Turbo (COL)

ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

FEBRUARY

Centipede
Countermeasure

MARCH

Qix

APRIL

Realsports Baseball
Realsports Tennis

SECOND QUARTER

Dig Dug
Jungle Hunt
Kangaroo
Pole Position
Space Dungeon
Vanguard

APRIL

Escape From Argos (IMGC)
M*A*S*H (FOX)
Meltdown (FOX)
Oink (ACTV)
Realsports Football(AT)
Realsports Soccer (AT)
Realsports Tennis (AT)

MAY

Dolphin (ACTV)
Donkey Kong Jr (COL)
Fall Guy (FOX)
Groovers Music Maker(AT)
Keystone Kapers (ACTV)
Looping (COL)
Mr. Bill (DA)
9 To 5 (FOX)

SECOND QUARTER

Burgertime
Enduro (ACTV)
Galaxian (AT)
Jungle Hunt (AT)
Kangaroo (AT)
Plaque Attack (ACTV)
Robotank (ACTV)
Super Cobra (PB)

THIRD QUARTER

Dig Dug (AT)

ATARI 400/800

JANUARY

Atlantis (IMGC)
Juggles House (AT)
Juggles Rainbow(AT)

FEBRUARY

Cat-Nip (ZIM)
Collision Course(ZIM)
Demon Attack(IMGC)
Nineball (ZIM)
Qix (AT)
River Rat (ZIM)

MARCH

Boulders & Bombs(CBS)
E.T. Phone Home (AT)
Kerplop (ZIM)
Mountain King (CBS)
Quest for Inca Gold(ZIM)
Time Trials (CBS)

APRIL

Dig Dug (AT)

AVAILABILITY UPDATE

(based on projected release dates by
mfrs. May change without notice)

INTELLIVISION-COMPATIBLE

JANUARY

x-Dragonfire (IMGC)
Moustrap (COL)
x-Shark Shark (MAT)
x-Sharp Shot (MAT)
Venture (COL)

FEBRUARY

Chess (MAT)
Ice Trek (IMGC)
Lady Bug (COL)
Swords&Serpents(IMGC)
Tron Solar Sailer(MAT)

MARCH

Dracula (IMGC)
Nova Blast(IMGC)
Vectron (MAT)
Zaxxon (COL)

APRIL

Cosmic Avenger(COL)
Donkey Kong Jr (COL)
Frogger (PB)
M*A*S*H (FOX)
Meltdown (FOX)
Truckin (IMGC)

MAY

Fall Guy (FOX)
Looping (COL)
Mission X (MAT)
Tropical Paradise(IMGC)
9 TO 5 (FOX)
Safecracker (IMGC)
Shootin Gallery(IMGC)
Smurf Action (COL)
Turbo (COL)
White Water (IMGC)

ODYSSEY

MARCH

Atlantis (IMGC)
Demon Attack (IMGC)

VECTREX

MARCH

Bedlam
Fortress of Narzod
Pinball
Web Warp

MAY

Spike

COLECO

FEBRUARY

Donkey Kong Jr. (COL)
Gorf (COL)
Space Fury (COL)
Space Panic (COL)

MARCH

Blackjack (COL)
Earth Dies Screaming(FOX)
Skiing (COL)
Spacemaster X-7 (FOX)

APRIL

Looping (COL)
M*A*S*H (FOX)
Pepper 2 (COL)
Victory (COL)

MAY

Buck Rogers (COL)
Fall Guy (FOX)
9 TO 5 (FOX)

VIC 20

FEBRUARY

Demon Attack (IMGC)

MAY

Atlantis (IMGC)

IN THIS ISSUE...

REVIEWS OF:

Advs of Tron
Countermeasure
Advs of Tron
Countermeasure
Gopher
Reactor
Flash Gordon
Ram It
.....and more

All the news from CES
NEWS FLASH FROM COLECO
and the all-new
COMPUTER GAME UPDATE!

Company Name Codes:

ActV - Activision
Ap - Apollo
At - Atari
CBS - CBS Video Games
Col - Coleco
CoVd - CommaVid
DA - Data Age
Fox - 20th Century Fox
Imgc - Imagic
Mat - Mattel
MNTwk - M Network
Ody - Odyssey
PB - Parker Bros
SpecV - Spectravision
Strp - Starpath
Tel - Telesys
TigV - Tigervision
UltraV - Ultravision
USG - U.S. Games
Vec - Vectrex
VV - VentureVision

x-this notation indicates the game has shipped as of press time, but may not be in national distribution as yet

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