

arcade express

THE BI-WEEKLY ELECTRONIC GAMES NEWSLETTER

VOLUME ONE, NUMBER NINETEEN

APRIL 24, 1983

SINGLE ISSUE PRICE \$1.50

ATARI ENTERS HOME COMMUNICATIONS WITH NEW DIVISION CALLED ATARITEL

Atari unveiled its fourth and newest division, Ataritel, and announced its intention to enter the home telecommunications market early in 1984 with a family of new products. The new division joins Atari's already-successful trilogy of sections: Home Videogames, Computers, and Coin-Operated Arcade Games.

The new department is to be headed by Peter Wensberg, formerly an official of Polaroid. Although Wensberg declined to describe products under development by Ataritel, industry watchers expect them to combine computer capabilities with telephones, possibly in a telephone-video screen combination to be used for home electronic information services. The device could be usable for a variety of purposes, such as home security, household appliance control, as a computer interface, and possibly ultimately to allow Atari to distribute videogames over the telephone lines.

PARKER ACCUSES ATARI OF ANTITRUST VIOLATIONS

The fur is flying again, this time between Parker Brothers and Atari. Parker filed an antitrust suit against Atari, claiming that Atari is trying to induce wholesale distributors of videogames not to sell any competing brands. The suit charges that Atari tried to sign contracts with certain videogame cassette distributors, offering 25% to 40% discounts on some games, but preventing them from selling products of any Atari competitors. Parker claims that \$15 million of orders were cancelled in one month when Atari offered this contract to at least 26 wholesalers.

A temporary restraining order has been issued to halt Atari from entering any new contracts until the Court schedules a hearing. A spokeswoman for Atari says that company is in fact signing exclusive videogame distributorship agreements with certain dealers, but wouldn't comment on specifics of the case until after the hearing.

AVALON HILL READIES 2600 CARTRIDGES

Non-electronic game superpower Avalon Hill will flex its corporate muscles in a new arena during the second half: the still-lively Atari 2600-compatible cartridge market. Says Jackson Dott, the man in charge of AH's Microcomputer Games Division, "We intend to show three games at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago in June." The cartridges, which the company developed in-house over the last six-eight months, are expected to utilize a special chip to produce more intricate graphics and play-action than the standard 4K configuration of most 2600 programs.

COSMIC CHASM GOES COIN-OP

"Cosmic Chasm", originally developed by General Consumer Electronics as a cartridge for its Vectrex vectorscan stand-alone programmable videogame system, will instead appear first as a coin-op machine. Cinematronic has purchased the license for the title from GCE and intends to distribute a play-for-pay version to arcades as soon as possible.

**ELECTRONIC ARTS PLANS
SUPER SOFTWARE**

"The people that create games are artists," insists Trip Hawkins, president of Electronic Arts, a newly minted producer of computer games, "and that's the way we're going to treat them." What this means is that the company, which plans to have eight computer games available by summer and about two dozen published before Christmas 1983, employs game designers on a freelance basis instead of putting them on staff and trying to make them conform to the work-a-day business world. Electronic Arts assigns a producer to each project who is responsible for getting the programmer any help, such as the services of a graphics expert, that may be needed to bring it to completion. The publisher is also sinking big money into software development aids and tools, which Hawkins believes will eventually make it possible for those whose design talents outstrip their technical programming ability to get games from concept to finished code a lot faster and easier.

Among the well-known designers who have games scheduled to appear under the Electronic Arts banner are Jon "Temple of Apshai" Freeman, Bill "Raster Blaster" Budge and Dan "Computer Quarterback" Buntin. The first titles will be playable on the Atari 800 with subsequent releases for the VIC-20, Commodore 64 and other major systems expected.

**ELECTRONIC GAMES
PROMOTES FOUR**

In line with the magazine's continued expansion since its introduction in late 1981, Electronic Games has promoted four key editors to positions of increased responsibility. Rick Teverbaugh becomes Midwest Editor, David Lustig takes up the mantle of West Coast Editor, Tracie Forman is moving up to Associate Editor, and Lisa Hondon is the new Assistant Editor. "The magazine is about three times the size it was just a year ago," notes co-publisher and editor Arnie Katz, "so we felt it was time to create more slots for editors with senior responsibility for the content of the publication. These promotions recognize the major contributions of four individuals to the overall success of EG."

**COLECO MANUFACTURERS
MILLIONTH MACHINE**

ColecoVision passed a major milestone during the third week of March, when the one millionth ColecoVision console rolled off the assemblyline. Thus this third-wave system achieves the minimum customer base necessary to support bigtime third-party production of cartridges in just six months. A spokesman for the Connecticut-based company predicts there could be as many as 2.5 million ColecoVision systems installed by mid-summer.

**WATCH OUT FOR
SPACE ALLIGATORS**

Russ Whetmore, designer of "Preppie" and the just-released "Preppie II", tells Arcade Express that the saga will continue through at least one more title. "I can't say too much about it yet," Whetmore says apologetically, "but it will concern Preppies in outer space." Russ adds the tidbit that, at one point, he considered calling the third part of this electronic gaming trilogy "Revenge of the Preppie" (satirizing the third film in the "Star Wars" series, originally announced as "Revenge of the Jedi".)

EDITORIAL STAFF: Editor, Joyce Worley; Managing Editor, Lisa Hondon
Contributing Editors: Henry B. Cohen; Tracie Forman; Charlene Komar; Dave Lustig; Les Paul Robley

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: Publisher, Jay Rosenfield, Co-Publisher, Arnie Katz; Editorial Director, Bill Kunkel;
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**CREATIVE GETS NEW HOME;
EXPANDS GAME CATALOG** Seems like everyone in the electronic gaming industry is hunting for new quarters. Creative Software cites their dramatic growth in the past six months, coupled with plans to enter the Texas Instrument and Timex markets, as reasons for relocating to new offices at 230 E. Caribbean Dr., Sunnyvale, Ca.

Three new Creative titles for the VIC-20 reflect their interest in homes. "Rat Hotel" casts the gamer as the rat scurrying from a rodent-hating maintenance man. "Pipes" helps young arcaders learn to manage various supplies, by connecting pipelines from the water source to the houses using as little pipe and spending as little money as possible. "Spills & Fills" is educational, teaching perspective and ratio skills by filling up or spilling out liquids.

Creative also has four games for the Commodore 64. Two of these, "Astroblitz" and "Trashman" are translations of previous VIC-20 games, and the other two are original titles. "Moondust" (to be released for both the VIC-20 and the Commodore 64) is a science fantasy contest requiring the gamer to drag trails of colorful moondust through glowing concentric circles, in what the company describes as a "fusion of hypnotic color graphics and mesmerizing computer-generated music." Last, and certainly most important to we Big Apple residents, is "Save New York", scheduled for release early in June.

**TOP SPIDER FIGHTER
WINS PRIZES & TRIP** Activision's "Spider Fighter" tournament concluded the competition co-sponsored by Radio KMGG-FM in Los Angeles. It ran three nights a week for three weeks, ending February 26. Harry Lubin of Venice, Ca. won with 176,000 points, beating more than 100 gamers for a 6-day, 5-night all-expense paid grip to Honolulu, plus a complete library of Activision cartridges. Lubin said he had practiced "Spider Fighter" every day for hours. It must have helped, since he scored over 100,000 points more than his nearest opponent. Second prize, a 25-in. Panasonic t.v. and 10 Activision games, went to Alfonso Del Monte of Downey, Ca., with 71,650 points; and Ed Cabrales of Los Angeles came in third with 48,400, winning a Pioneer AM-FM cassette player and five Activision games.

**PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT
FOR LADY VIDEOGAMER** Ronda Kirby, a 33-year old femme from San Jose, is the champion of Telesys' Fast Food competition held at Marine World/Africa USA in Redwood City, Calif. The contest, held over two weekends, helped raise money for Multiple Sclerosis. Ronda played for 25 minutes, scoring 11,556 points to win a trip for two to Hawaii. She had entered the competition on the first weekend but didn't do very well. "But I was determined to win the grand prize trip," she said, so she bought the game to practice at home. But she didn't own an Atari VCS - yet the lady's determination stopped at nothing! She bought a videogame system to practice for the week. It all paid off for her at the end of the week, when she proved that practice really does pay! Good gaming, Girl!

**"TYPO ATTACK" NAMED BEST
USER-WRITTEN ATARI PROGRAM** Atari has announced the winner of the Atari \$25,000 Star Award, for the year's best user-written home computer program. It went to the author of the design judged as most outstanding in the Atari Program Exchange annual contest. Each quarter, APX gives over \$18,000 in Atari equipment in prizes, then gives a \$25,000 grand prize to the author of the year's best program. This year's top user-written home computer program came from David Buehler, 17, of St. Paul, Minn. "Typo Attack" helps players learn the location of keys, and improves touch-typing speed and skill, by having animated typo invaders try to destroy bases protected by the gamer. The only way to avert this disaster is to type the correct character.

COMPANIES HELP SCHOOLKIDS LEARN ABOUT COMPUTERS Everyone wants school kids to develop computer literacy, and here's a couple more companies helping to make it happen. IBM Corp. has announced plans to donate 1500 personal computers to 84 public and private schools in New York, California and Florida, as part of an \$8 million program that IBM hopes will improve computer education in secondary schools. IBM will also provide grants to train the instructors to teach students how to use the computers when the program starts this September.

Tandy Corp. also has an instructional program designed to help all U.S. elementary and secondary school teachers acquire a basic understanding of computers. Tandy is mailing packages to 103,455 schools, with handbooks showing how microcomputers are used in schools, a computer literacy packet to teach basic computer and programming concepts, and practical examples of how computers can be useful in the school system for educational purposes.

TELESYS PUTS DEMO MODES IN GAMES FOR IN-STORE PLAY Telesys is responding to the difficulty facing many retailers in merchandising any game when the purchaser is choosing between so many titles. Telesys is programming nearly all their games with an in-store play mode. The demo mode lets the game play itself while shoppers observe, thus freeing the merchant to do other things instead of personally demonstrating the new title. "You could equate this to in-store play of records," says Rich Taylor, Telesys president. "It gives the consumer a sneak peek at what he's buying."

JOYSTICK COMPANY TO MARKET COMPUTER GAMES Most manufacturers design a game, then hope that there'll be a good joystick to do it justice. Here's a company going about it the other way around. TG Products claims to be the world's oldest manufacturer of joysticks, track balls and game paddles for personal computers. Now the company is going into the software market so that more people will use TG Products game controllers! Don Geyer, Director of Marketing for TG Products, says the credibility that the company has established with accessories will carry into their software, but stresses "our goal is not to become a major software company, but to provide special arcade-style programs that will complement our products."

Initially two games will be released on cartridge for the Atari 4-8-1200 and VIC-20 computers. First is "Nightstrike". You command a tank protecting a city from missiles, bombers and planes. The second program is set in space: "Droids" created to maintain the life support system on your spaceship have gone awry, and are turning off the equipment. They've got to be stopped, and the life support systems must be maintained.

TG Products will follow these first two games with additional titles to be introduced at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in June, in Chicago.

THE COMMODORE 64 COLLIDES WITH FUN The list of game titles for the Commodore 64 is growing. The latest company to program for the 64 is Topologic. Players of "Collision!" maneuver a growing line across the field, avoiding crashes with walls and other obstacles, while trying to make their opponents collide. The steering-avoidance game has nine difficulty levels for one or two players, and sells for \$13 on cassette or \$16 on disk.

ASTROCADERS FORM BALLY USERS GROUP Hunting someone to talk to about your Bally Astrocade videogame system? Join BUG, the Bally Users Group. Contact Kevin O'Neill, President of the Niagara Regional BUG, at 6 Wood-dale Dr., St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2T 1Y8. This is a great way to get information on new products and programs, while hearing about the top achievements of other Astrocade hobbyists.

YANKEE GROUP PREDICTS 1983 SOFTWARE BOOM The Yankee Group predicts that 1983's big boom will be in software and peripherals, just as 1982 was the year for computer and videogame hardware. In a report released early in March, the Yankee Group forecast 1983 sales of over five million home computers, and software sales of \$810 million, with games accounting for just over half of the total. According to this Boston-based research group, 26 companies announced 317 new game titles at the January 1983 Consumer Electronics Show, but the Yankee Group projects there will actually be over 1000 new games in 1983. This will lead to a shakeout by yearend of undercapitalized vendors who can't win shelfspace or afford adequate advertising. A number of smaller software houses, both for games and computers, will be acquired, as distribution consolidates into the hands of a few major vendors.

Other trends for '83 predicted by the Yankee Group are more user-friendly software; emergence of the microwafer as an alternate to tape cassettes or disks; more input devices such as graphics tablets, lightpens, voice recognition and speech synthesis devices, and touch screens; interactive videodisk games; increased use of RAM memory; increased focus on targeted software markets; and tiered pricing of software combined with a general decline in all software costs.

This information, and the chart below republished courtesy of the Yankee Group, is part of a major report, "Software Strategies: The Home Computer & Videogame Marketplace". It's one of six annual reports that go, along with many other services, to subscribers of the "Home of Future Planning Service". If you're interested in the \$11,500 package, call Jack Brown at the Yankee Group, 89 Broad Street, Boston, Mass.02110, phone 617-542-0100.

NEW GAME TITLES ANNOUNCED AT JANUARY CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

Company	Consoles	Cartridge	Disk	Cassette
Activision	2600, Intellivision	10	---	---
Atari	2600, 5200/400, 800	26/5	---	---
Broderbund	400, 800, Apple II, VIC 20	2	1	3
CBS Software	400, 800, VIC 20	7	---	---
CBS Videogames	2600, Intellivision, Colecovision	8	---	---
Coleco	Colecovision, 2600, Intellivision	23	---	---
Comavid	---	3	---	---
Computer Magic	---	---	4*	4*
Data Age	---	4	---	---
Datamost	Apple II	---	10	---
Datasoft	---	---	2*	2*
Disney	---	10*	24	38
Epyx	---	---	1	---
Fox	400, 800, 2600, VIC 20, Colecovision, TI 99/4A Intellivision	24	---	---
GCE	Vectrix, 2600	8	---	---
Imagic	Intellivision, 400, 800, 2600, Odyssey, VIC 20	14	---	---
Mattel	Intellivision/Aquarius	12/3	---	---
Milton Bradley	TI 99/4A	10	---	---
Parker Brothers	2600, 5200, VIC 20	18	---	---
Sirius	400, 800, VIC 20, Apple II, IBM, Commodore 64	12	11	---
Spectravision	---	17	---	---
Synapse	400, 800	---	10*	10*
Telesys	2600, VIC 20	3	---	---
Tigervision	---	5	---	---
Timex	TS-1000	---	---	8
U.S. Games	2600	9	---	---
26 Vendors: 317 New Titles		Total:	225	63
			63	65

THE HOTSEAT

Reviews of New Products

- RATINGS: 10 - Pure gold and about as good as a game could be. A rare rating.
 9 - An outstanding, state-of-the-art game.
 8 - A very good to excellent game.
 7 - A good game.
 6 - Better than average, but maybe not for everyone.
 5 - An average game that does what it promises.
 1-4 - The item has serious flaws.

KEY: The information heading each review follows the same simple format. First is the name of the item, then its classification and, if it's a home arcade software program, the system/s with which it is compatible. Finally, the manufacturer's name.

CRITICS THIS ISSUE: AK-Arnie Katz; CK-Charlene Komar; JW-Joyce Worley

DEADLY DUCK/Computer Game (for VIC-20)/Sirius Software

There's aquatic action when the ducks' new neighbors turn out to be not just crabs, but downright belligerent. The crabs want sole pond-rights, so they've taken to the air, grasping bricks in their pincers to bomb Deadly Duck. If it hits the water, a brick creates a floating roadblock until it eventually sinks, but that's a pleasure compared to what happens if it hits the duck. These unpleasant and unnatural shellfish even enlist the aid of outsiders, using dragonflies to shield the crabs and drop their own missiles. Luckily, Deadly's no sitting duck, and uses his "Bill Bullets" to blast both the crabs and falling bricks. Ed Hodapp has produced a winner, both for its cute graphics and the extra touches that make the contest different from the typical invasion game. Rating: 8 (CK)

SHAMUS/Computer Game (for VIC-20)/HES

If you don't expect a game that fits into the old-fashioned gumshoe mold, as should be reasonable with a hero named the Shamus and a villain (?) dubbed the Shadow, you'll find an outstanding game in this HES effort. In the Berzerk tradition, this features the Shamus moving from room to room, fighting off a variety of murderous foes to find the Shadow's headquarters. To do so, he must gather color-coded keys to open matching keyholes, thus allowing him to pass from one level to another. There's plenty of action and interesting details, with outstanding playability. The beginner should be able to progress enough not to be discouraged, while the tough fighting and navigating keep the experienced arcader enthralled. Rating: 9 (CK)

LUNAR LEEPERS/Computer Game (for Apple II)/Sierra On-Line

"Lunar Leepers" is more fun than Chuckles' earlier "Laff Pak" disk, but the pseudonymous designer still has room to improve. The program looks promising at first, but it turns out to be a sheep in wolf's clothing. What might have been a contest of split-second maneuvering turns out to be much more sedate. In the first phase, the player tries to rescue people before they're gobbled up by the leepers, which can snatch a ship right out of the air if you're not careful. The player guides the ship through a tunnel in the second phase and tries to destroy the huge eye at its end. A stop-and-go strategy reduces the first phase to a matter of timing, and the second isn't much challenge. The graphics are attractive in an understated way, but the play action could've been more lively. Rating: 6 (AK)

WEB WARP/Videogame Cartridge (for Vectrex)/GCE

An original title specifically designed for the Vectrex, this shows off the vectorscan monitor to best advantage in a non-stop, high-action contest that hurls enemies from the center of the screen outward toward the player-controlled defense on the perimeter of a giant spider web. The player is a winged creature gathering lunch from the waves of aliens born in the vortex. They are slung outward from the epicenter, and the player must stop them before they make it to the edge of the web, where they are even more deadly adversaries. The web itself twists and turns like a living thing, in a piece of virtuoso programming for the Vectrex. This has great visuals, hot play action, and increasingly dangerous challenges from the web creatures. "Web Warp" is a system-seller. If I didn't already have a Vectrex videogame system, I'd want one just to play this game, it's that good! Rating: 10 (JW)

U.S.C.F. CHESS/Videogame Cartridge (for Intellivision)/Mattel

This one- or two-player chess program is arguably one of the finest of its type ever produced for use in the home. Certainly, it is the most sophisticated and powerful chess cartridge available for any videogame system at the present time. When playing against the machine, a human pawn-pusher can take advantage of such options as the ability to retract the last move, set up special board positions, replay a sequence of moves, reverse the view of the board, or even switch sides and continue the struggle. Rating: 9 (AK)

CENTIPEDE/Videogame Cartridge (for Atari 2600)/Atari

Publication of this version of the popular invasion coin-op title completes Atari's project of getting a home edition of the contest for each of its hardware systems. The 2600 cartridge lacks the visual glories of the original -- or even the 5200 and 400/800/1200 cartridges -- but the superb play action is still very much intact. The player controls a "magic wand" at the bottom of the playfield which has full horizontal and limited vertical mobility. Pushing the action button fires at the mushrooms, centipede, fly, spider and scorpion. It may look somewhat blocky and plain, but this 4K package does, indeed, bring the excitement of this play-for-pay classic to the home market. Rating: 9 (AK)

POLARIS/Videogame Cartridge (for Atari 2600)/Tigervision

Without a lot of the fanfare that attends the doings of some of the other software publishing houses, Tigervision has quietly assembled an enviable catalog of highly playable and entertaining videogame cartridges. "Polaris" is a multi-scenario naval combat arcade contest that casts the gamer as the skipper of a submarine that must contend with dangers beneath the sea, on the surface and from the air. Pushing the action button launches a torpedo straight upward. You'll need all the firepower you can muster, too, because the dangers build up rapidly as the home arcader progresses from level to level. The main part of the game consists of moving the submarine around a smallish lake -- seen in side view -- while trying to shoot the bombers, subs, dive bombers and PT boats, all of which are after your hide. When the submarine conquers the waves of bombers and destroys the single dive bomber, the machine automatically displays the transition field, in which the submarine must navigate through a narrow undersea channel. The sounds are especially well-done in "Polaris", lending an unexpected air of authenticity to what is, after all, a fairly streamlined simulation. Rating: 8 (AK)

THIS IS THE LAST NOTICE of our change of address. The new address for Electronic Games is 460 W. 34th St., New York, New York 10001. Make a note!

HONOR ROLL

The Nation's Highest Scores

THE BEST IN THE LAND This is the current list of high rollers, the top scores from around the country, as compiled by the editors of Electronic Games and Arcade Express. To compete, send a photo of the game screen showing the final score clearly enough for the judges to read the numbers. All photos become property of EG and none can be returned. Include your name and address, and mail to Electronic Games, 460 West 34th Street, New York, NY 10001.

HOME VIDEOGAMES:

Asteroids/Atari VCS/Game #6 - Lance Simon, Carmichael, Ca. - 579,660
 Defender/Atari VCS/Game #1 - Jim Rizza, W. Roxbury, Ma. - 12,185,200
 Lady Bug/ColecoVision/Game #1 - Dean Odice, Bridgeport, Ct. - 407,470
 Pac-Man/Atari VCS/Game #1 - Tom Steinhop, West Germany - 239,000
 Tron Deadly Disc/Mattel Intellivision/Game #1 - Ed A. Mandziuk - 14,041,750
 Space Hawk/Mattel Intellivision/Game #1 - Brad Fath, Wooster, Oh. - 25,328,380
 Space Chase/Apollo/Atari VCS/Game #1 - Tom Garcia, Whittier, Ca. - 185,075
 UFO/Odyssey/Game #1 - Dave Jacksch, Raf Bentwaters, UK - 6,136
 USAC Auto Racing/Mattel Intellivision/Course #1 - Ray Lomstock - 2:48
 Grand Prix/Activision/Atari VCS/Course #4 - Mike Ratledge, Charleston, SC
 - 1:35:41

ARCADE GAMES:

Wizard of Wor/Midway - Terry Prince, Roseland, NJ - 839,450
 Dig-Dug/Atari - Art Solis, Jr. - Hollywood, Ca. - 9,999,990
 Burgertime/Midway - Jim Liebler, Clarendon Hills, Il. - 4,206,350
 Q*Bert/Gottlieb - Mike Verret, S. Burlington, Vt. - 4,325,790
 Lady Bug/Universal - Jon Morgan, Jacksonville, Fl. - 288,890
 Robotron/Williams - Eric Edwards, Milford, Mi. - 386,967,400
 Tutankham/Stern - Lars Lind, Greenfield, Ma. - 272,200
 Kick-Man/Midway - Paul Parsons, Saskatchewan, Canada - 27,525,000
 Wild Western/Taito - Neal Parsons, Ontario, Canada - 957,300
 Sub Roc 3-D/Sega-Gremlin - Stefan Libero, Beaumont, Tx. - 465,900

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