

# arcade express

THE BI-WEEKLY ELECTRONIC GAMES NEWSLETTER

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**VIDEOGAME SALES SET TO SOAR** Lower across-the-board hardware and software prices announced by most manufacturers during first-half 1983 is causing most industry observers to sharply increase their sales predictions for the year. The feeling is that as electronic gaming becomes a less expensive hobby, it will become easier for blue collar families to get in on the home arcade action. It now appears that Americans will buy at least 12 million programmable videogame systems and 85 million cartridges during 1983. There are currently approximately 14 million homes in this country equipped with a videogame machine. The EIA (Electronic Industries Assoc.) estimated 1982 cartridge sales at 65 million units.

**COLECO INVADES COMPUTER FIELD** Not content to offer a computer module that allows for the expansion of the ColecoVision unit, Coleco has decided to market a complete computer system. The Connecticut company is playing its corporate cards mighty close to the vest, but those lucky enough to get an advance peek report that the Coleco Computer is likely to shake up the already chaotic computer field. "It's going to impact the computer market just as much as the ColecoVision did the videogame market," boasts a Coleco executive who declined to be quoted for attribution.

**IMAGIC SHUFFLES SOFTWARE PRIORITIES** Imagic, which logged videogame cartridge sales of \$75 million in its most recent fiscal year, is about to redefine its image, according to William F.X. Grubb, president of the Los Gatos, Ca., firm. Although Imagic plans to continue to make games for the Atari 2600, Mattel Intellivision and Coleco ColecoVision, it will now devote a much greater portion of its research and development effort to producing games for popular microcomputers.

"No one adequately anticipated the magnitude of industry changes of recent months," Grubb comments. "The merger of the videogames and home computer industries was seen in the distance -- and it's happening now!"

**CBS CHANGES MONIKER** CBS Video Games has a new name. Henceforth, this unit of CBS, Inc. will be known as CBS Electronics, and will develop game software for videogame and home computer systems. Meanwhile, if you aren't already confused, CBS Software, another unit of CBS, Inc., continues responsibility for development and marketing of educational, personal enrichment and home management programs through its joint venture relationship with the CBS Educational and Professional Publishing Division.

**ARCADE EXPRESS TO CHANGE NAME** Effective with its first August 1983 issue, Reese Communications' "Arcade Express" will change its name to "Electronic Games Hotline". "It's time to give the nation's most widely read electronic gaming newsletter a name that's truer to its field-encompassing scope," explains co-publisher Arnie Katz. "Some people incorrectly inferred from the current title that this publication deals only with coin-ops. 'Electronic Games Hotline' gives a better picture of the content."

"We'll be taking this opportunity to make a few upgrades in the newsletter," adds editor Joyce Worley. "'Electronic Games Hotline' will be even more indispensable to the hardcore electronic gamer than ever!"

**ROMOX UNVEILS REPROGRAMMABLE GAME CARTRIDGES** Things aren't always what they seem, and that is certainly true of Romox, Inc., which has produced a half-dozen cartridge games for use with the Atari 400/800/1200 computers. The carts themselves, it turns out, are considerably more innovative than some of the programs contained on them. The manufacturer has announced that it has a patent pending on a revolutionary "Edge Connector Programmable Cartridge (ECPC)", which will permit Romox to offer the first 100% guarantee on computer software. The world's first "Returnable" cartridge uses EPROM - as opposed to ROM - chips that can be programmed in minutes without the need to extract it from the plastic casing of the housing.

"We expect to be second only to Atari in cartridge production by year-end," claims Paul Terrell, Romox president and CEO, who believes many software publishers will switch to using the ECPC-based carts. Romox plans to make cartridges for the Commodore 64 and Texas Instruments 99/4A as well as for the Atari 400/800/1200 systems.

**ATARI FORMS NEW DIVISION: PLANS MOVIE/TV-INSPIRED GAME SOFTWARE** Atari has entered a new joint venture with MCA Video Games, Inc., to be called Studio Games, for the purpose of producing coin-op, home video and computer games based on hit movies and tv shows. Since MCA, Inc. is the parent company of Universal Pictures, Studio Games will have access to a large library of film and television titles.

Commenting on the agreement, Raymond Kassar, chairman and CEO of Atari, said, "This venture is a logical extension for us. As MCA continues to develop exciting properties ... Studio Games will be able to offer an array of attractive new product to the public."

Currently being considered for game use are the tv hits "Knight Rider" and "Magnum P.I.", but Studio Games hasn't yet announced plans for play mechanics of these titles.

**MATTEL SUES ATARI: CLAIMS SECRET PIRATING** Mattel has filed a lawsuit against Atari, charging that company with obtaining trade secrets from former employees of Mattel. The toy company claims Atari hired three former Mattel employees in order to obtain trade secrets so that the company could develop Intellivision-compatible cartridges before the 1983 Christmas season. The three ex-employees were described by Mattel as key people involved in the development of Intellivision products. Mattel is seeking \$40 million in punitive damages plus an unspecified amount of actual damages.

**DREXEL UNIVERSITY ORDERS A CASE OF MACINTOSH APPLES** Drexel University has agreed to purchase 3000 MacIntosh computers from Apple, about half of which will be offered to freshmen in the incoming 1983 class. Drexel, a technically-oriented school, requires students to own a personal computer with the same capabilities as the Apple, and expects to offer the new machine to students for about \$1000. The computer is reported to contain its own video screen, disk drive and keyboard in a single unit, with a 16-bit microprocessor, and 64K RAM, and of course is fully Apple software-compatible.

Apple Computer, Inc. has a policy of never commenting on any unannounced product, but did confirm there was an agreement with Drexel. However, Apple refused to discuss the machine, or even to confirm that there's a product code-named MacIntosh, or that any new computer would be introduced this year. However, rumors flying about the new product describe the MacIntosh as an inexpensive version of the \$9,995 Lisa computer.

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- HERE'S SOMETHING TO CHEW OVER:      Now cereal makers are discovering videogames, too.  
DONKEY KONG/PAC-MAN CEREALS      General Mills has licensed "Pac-Man" from Bally/Midway, to be the star of a breakfast cereal that the company hopes will keep kids gobbling at tables all over the country. Ralston Purina also hopes to climb to the top of the video-cereal competition with a license from Nintendo for a presweetened cereal called "Donkey Kong", to be shaped like the barrels the ape throws.
- ACTIVISION GOES PUBLIC;      Activision seems to be winning the contest to become the first  
OFFERS COMMON STOCK      independent videogame software manufacturer to go public, filing a registration statement with the Securities & Exchange Commission. The initial registered public offering will cover 4,500,000 shares of Common Stock. The company, which was incorporated in October of 1979, plans to offer 3,000,000 shares and the remaining 1,500,000 will be sold by current stockholders as soon as the registration statement is declared effective.
- MARKETING RESEARCH FIRM      International Resource Development, Inc., an independent  
COMPARES SIMULATORS TO GAMES      consulting firm in Norwalk, Ct., has published a study comparing videogames to simulators such as those used to train pilots, astronauts, navigators, etc. The study points to the similarities in educational simulators and videogames, then predicts the two technologies will eventually interconnect. David Ledecy, speaking for IRD, points to computer-based simulators already in existence, such as Perceptronics' tank gunnery trainer, and suggests the technologies involved are mutually supporting, both in development and ultimately to the user, since videogamers find simulators more approachable due to their gaming experiences. The report goes on to review products and companies in this field, and forecasts simulator markets in the coming years. For more details on the \$1285 report, call (800) 243-5008.
- NINTENDO CRACKS DOWN      Nintendo is throwing barrels of trouble at defendants with un-  
ON FAKE VIDEOGAMES      lawful copies of "Donkey Kong", "Donkey Kong Junior" and "Popeye". In less than one month, over 300 defendants were successfully sued for copying, selling or operating unlawful versions of the Nintendo games in Massachusetts, California and Michigan. The company promises to continue their vigorous war against similar villainry around the country as it is discovered.
- ANDY BERGMAN JOINS      Andy Bergman has joined Action Graphics as Vice President of Re-  
ACTION GRAPHICS      search & Development. Bergman, who has 11 years of design experience for Fisher Price Toys, most recently was manager of product development for U.S. Games, where he was in charge of game development, packaging and corporate identity. He left U.S. Games when the parent company, Quaker Oats, decided the game business wasn't for them and folded the unit.  
Action Graphics will develop a line of entertainment and educational products for various companies, working as an independent studio. The company was founded by Bob Ogden, formerly head designer for Astrocade and most famous for his program of "The Incredible Wizard" for that system.
- TEENS SPEND      The Rand Youth Poll says spending on coin-operated videogames by 13 to  
BIG BUCKS      15 year old males moved up to fifth place in all spending categories  
ON VIDEOGAMES      in 1982. This is up from seventh place in 1981. Spending in this category ranked sixth for 16 to 19 year old males. The percentage of all teens owning video games moved from ninth place in 1981 to sixth place in 1982.  
Other studies from the Rand Youth Poll indicate that videogames are in the third place slot of products most teens urge their parents to purchase for the home. This is up from eleventh place in 1981. Two out of three teens maintain that their parents are strongly influenced in their purchases by their urging for specific items.

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS ADDS VIDEOGAMES** The Special Olympics just added a new dimension to their 1983 Summer Games - electronic gaming! A "special" fund-raising tournament is scheduled to be held this summer in order to benefit the Olympics (contests in which handicapped children compete in games tailored to them) and Louisiana's Public & Parochial schools. There is even a possibility that videogames will be added to the actual calendar of events for the Special Olympians, what with the technological breakthroughs in mouth controllers for paraplegics.

A total of \$60,800 in prizes will be awarded among the various age groups entered in competition, \$20,000 of it in cash. The marathon will run over 16 weeks, and it's hoped that members of the videogame industry will play an important role in bringing this event to fruition. "The start-up costs are very heavy," explains Paul Adams, director of this fund-raising project. "We need financial support to cover everything from printing the registration certificates to offices, staff, data processors and telephones."

Companies wishing more information about supporting, or perhaps even sponsoring, this event, should contact Paul Adams c/o the Baton Rouge headquarters (504) 346-0400.

**PDI ANNOUNCES "MOONBASE IO" WINNERS** Program Design, Inc., makers of innovative Atari computer software, recently announced the winners of their first game tournament, a contest based on their Arkie-wikning title, "Moonbase Io". The multi-scenario challenge was best met by winner William Kemp of Frederick, Maryland, with a score of 47,730. The 26-year old videogamer walked off with \$500 for his efforts.

The runners-up each copped \$300, with Jason Smith, a 13-year-old from Painted Post, New York (45,480), and Hosea Battles Jr., a 26-year-old airman from Mathers A.F.B. in California (44,100) taking the honors.

**APPLE EYES JAPAN MARKET** "A reverse Sony" is how Apple president Mike Markkula Jr. refers to the company's latest expansion plan. Having put a general manager in Japan to get closer to the market, Apple now plans to compete for that island nation's computer business in a big way. "The objective is to find Apple a year from now being a very competitive participant in the Japanese market."

In another announcement that will directly affect the future of Apple, Markkula has announced his resignation as president and chief executive officer. Sliding into the chair just in time for the summer CES trade show is former Pepsi Cola Company president John Sculley.

**SHAW RIDES THE 'HAPPY TRAILS'** You're a bounty hunter on the trail of desperado Black Bart in a new cartridge for the Intellivision designed by Carol "River Raid" Shaw and published by Activision. Physical coordination and good strategy are needed to triumph in this Wild West chase.

Activision has launched a \$35,000 sweepstakes to support "Happy Trails". Entry blanks will be available on special "Bounty Hunter" easel cards displayed by retailers. A participant must cut a puzzle piece out of one of the newspaper ads supporting the contest, take it to an Activision retailer, and match the piece with the puzzle shown on the easel card. Those who take things this far will get a secret "Bounty Hunter" bonus. Top prize in the overall contest is \$5000. In addition, Activision will give out three \$1000 prizes, 20 \$100 cash rewards, and 5000 belt buckles.

**ATARI & WILLIAMS GET TOGETHER** Two gaming giants, Atari and Williams Electronics, have announced a long-term agreement. The new arrangement gives Atari the right of first refusal to market home games based on Williams' coin-operated videogames. Two popular arcade hits from Williams just now popping up on Atari's software lists for videogames and computers are "Moon Patrol" and "Joust". Ray Kassar, Chief Executive Officer of Atari, says, "We are confident that our arrangement with Williams will provide Atari the opportunity to market many new, exciting games for the home market."

HARRY AND MARIO      The continuing slugfest between man and beast goes on this month, when  
DUKE IT OUT            "Pitfall" Harry takes a tumble to the stupid ape and "Donkey Kong"  
FOR TOP HONORS        jumps back into first place in the Electronic Games monthly poll.  
                          Meanwhile the grande dame of videogames put in her first appearance on  
the list: "Ms. Pac-Man" for the Atari 2600 gobbled her way to fifth place. "Star Raiders"  
gave way to "Pac-Man" for first place in the computer game division; and Sega's "Zaxxon"  
topped the poll of most popular coin-op games. New on the coin-op hit list this month  
are Nintendo's "Popeye" and Midway/Data East's "Burgertime".

POSITION	TIMES				
THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	ON LIST	GAME TITLE	SYSTEM	MANUFACTURER

MOST POPULAR VIDEOGAME CARTRIDGE:

# 1	# 2	# 9	GAME TITLE	SYSTEM	MANUFACTURER
1	2	9	Donkey Kong	ColecoVision	Coleco
2	1	9	Pitfall	Atari 2600	Activision
3	3	8	Zaxxon	ColecoVision	Coleco
4	4	5	Lady Bug	ColecoVision	Coleco
5	New	New	Ms. Pac-Man	Atari 2600	Atari
6	6	5	Advanced Dungeons & Dragons	Intellivision	Mattel
7	8	5	River Raid	Atari 2600	Activision
8	5	5	Turbo	ColecoVision	Coleco
9	13	9	Venture	ColecoVision	Coleco
10	7	9	Frogger	Atari 2600	Parker Bros.
11	New	New	Lock 'n Chase	Intellivision	Mattel
12	New	New	Donkey Kong Jr.	ColecoVision	Coleco
13	New	New	Centipede	Atari 5200	Atari
14	-	3	Megamania	Atari 2600	Activision
15	12	2	Mouse Trap	ColecoVision	Coleco

MOST POPULAR COMPUTER GAME:

# 1	# 2	#14	GAME TITLE	SYSTEM	MANUFACTURER
1	2	14	Pac-Man	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
2	1	16	Star Raiders	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
3	3	15	Castle Wolfenstein	Atari/Apple	Muse
4	4	9	Centipede	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
5	7	6	Choplifter!	Atari/Apple/VIC-20	Broderbund
6	5	3	Miner 2049er	Atari/Apple	Big Five/MicroFun
7	New	New	Astrochase	Atari 4-8-1200	First Star
8	New	New	Gorf	VIC-20	Commodore
9	New	New	Aztec	Apple	DataMost
10	New	New	Frogger	Atari/Commodore 64	Sierra On-Line

MOST POPULAR COIN-OP VIDEOGAMES:

# 1	# 3	#11	GAME TITLE	MANUFACTURER
1	3	11	Zaxxon	Sega
2	5	6	Joust	Williams
3	3	10	Dig-Dug	Atari
4	6	11	Tron	Midway
5	8	13	Ms. Pac-Man	Midway
6	1	10	Donkey Kong	Nintendo
7	2	7	Donkey Kong Jr.	Nintendo
8	New	New	Popeye	Nintendo
9	7	14	Tempest	Atari
10	New	New	Burgertime	Midway/Data East

# 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's compatible. Finally, there's the manufacturer's name.

CRITICS THIS ISSUE: TF-Tracie Forman; AK-Arnie Katz; CK-Charlene Komar; JW-Joyce Worley;  
 SD-Steve Davidson

MOUSE TRAP/Videogame Cartridge (for ColecoVision)/Coleco

Coleco's rendition of Exidy's arcade cat-and-mouse maze chase is as true to form as the company's other fine arcade-to-home translations. Packed with special keypad overlays, the first such accessories to be included with a ColecoVision cartridge, the game pits the player's mouse against a corridor filled with prowling cats. Escape the ferocious felines by rearranging the colored doors within the maze, or transform your mouse into an attack dog and turn the tables on the tabbies. But be quick, before a carnivorous hawk flies over and gobbles up your wee timorous beastie, and you lose a game life. (TF) Rating: 7

G.I. JOE COBRA STRIKE/Videogame Cartridge (for Atari 2600)/Parker Brothers

Multi-player capability, eye-pleasing graphics, and the option of playing from the monster's point of view combine to make this one of the year's most innovative releases. Players can use the shield to protect recruits fleeing the deadly venom of the Cobra, or can assume the role of the super snake against one or two human opponents. The graphics are unusually good, and the option of old-fashioned person-to-person competition is always welcome. (TF) Rating: 8

MUTANT HERD/Computer Game (for VIC-20)/Thorn EMI

Prevent crazed mutants from reaching an energy-providing powerhouse, while guiding a Mutant Slayer to their burrows to destroy the Mutant Queen and her eggs, in a quartet of strikingly executed situations. Start with a power station located mid-screen, with entrances to the burrows in each corner. Keep the mutants away using laser fire, then use the same laser beams to guide your Mutant Slayer into the burrow. Once inside, the scene shifts, and the Slayer must climb to the lowest level, avoiding falling obstacles, then place a bomb next to the Queen's eggs and return to the surface to detonate the explosive before the lady moves the missile. All four burrows must be cleared before you can battle the Mutant Queen herself. The graphics are fun, the action is challenging, and this cartridge-game takes at least one step off the beaten game-track with its unusual concept. (CK) Rating: 8

SKIBBEREEN/Computer Game (for VIC-20)/UMI

Play the part of a larcenous leprechaun defending a pot of gold hidden behind a vertical rainbow wall. Each player fields a line-paddle in front of his wall, to deflect the bouncing ball while trying to chip away at the rival's barrier to reach his treasure. St. Patrick must not have done a complete job on the snakes, because this Irish fantasy

has reptiles slithering upscreen devouring the bopping ball from time to time, and if three balls become a snake's snack, the game ends. Lilted Irish music plays throughout the game, and the winner gets a leprechaun performing a jig as his visual prize. This game is presented attractively, and is especially suited to young players, since it isn't very difficult even at its top level. (CK) Rating: 7

LAZARIAN/Computer Game (for Commodore 64)/Commodore

Missions of rescue and cosmic revenge are combined in this three-phase science fiction action game from Commodore for its new C64 computer. The player uses the joystick to control a spaceship which must rescue another similar craft from a meteor swarm, help a second ship trapped in a different fashion and, finally, duel with space's version of Moby Dick, a one-eyed Lazarian. The action is fairly exciting, and the graphics are about par for the course for this computer - at least so far. At the very least, this is a marked improvement over the games Commodore previously marketed for its VIC-20. (SD) Rating: 7

KICK-MAN/Computer Game (for Commodore 64)/Commodore

This excellent cartridge version of Midway's 1982 coin-op must be regarded, at least at present, as the flagship of Commodore's 64 line. The home arcader employs a joystick to move a clown riding a unicycle back and forth across the bottom of the screen. Balloons fall to Earth from four vertical columns situated near the top of the screen, and the clown must puncture - and in later rounds catch - the colorful spheres before they hit the ground. After the "bozo level" first round, good old Pac-Man even gets in on the fun. He appears periodically to gobble up the balloons which the clown has precariously balanced on his head and makes it easier to latch onto some more of them to keep the score rising. Graphics are fairly good and undeniably true to the original play-for-pay machine. A little challenging for poorer players, but well worth the effort to learn. (AK) Rating: 8

QIX/Videogame Cartridge (for Atari 5200)/Atari

If anything kept "Qix" from becoming one of the most popular coin-ops ever produced, it was that the swirling madness of the typical amusement center is not the best place to delve into the mysteries of this subtle contest based on the territorial imperative. It ought to be ideal as a home cartridge, however, since players can try as many strategies as they can invent without fear of crippling their financial health. The 5200 edition is absolutely beautiful, drawing luminously sharp lines and filling areas with pleasantly even tones. "Qix" is an eye-pleasing, mind-teasing tour de force. (AK) Rating: 9

TOMYTRONIC 3-D SKY ATTACK/Stand-alone Game/TOMY

Here's something different! "Sky Attack" is housed in binoculars to put 3-D action right before your eyes with controls at fingertip level. Turn it on and peer through the goggles for the most eye-popping graphics ever seen in a stand-alone game. The colors are bright, the action is hot and heavy, and it really is three-dimensional! Control three futuristic tanks, then fire lasers at oncoming bombers from three defense positions. The enemy soars toward you, then maneuvers his lasers to fire straight down or at an angle. Hit one and it disintegrates right before your eyes. "Sky Attack" increases in difficulty when 20 ships are destroyed, for seven skill levels. At the end of each level, there's a special bonus fight. Four super high-speed enemies come barreling down out of the sky, one at a time, each worth 50 points; then the game goes on to the next level.

This delightful stand-alone is a perfect beach companion since strong light just makes the visuals shine brighter - a rarity in videogame graphics! It even comes with a convenient carrying strap so you can wear it around your neck, fieldglass-style. This is definitely one of the best stand-alones of the year! (JW) Rating: 9

VIDEOGAMES STAR IN  
ART GALLERY EVENT

The Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., was the cite of a special event called ARTcade on February 18 and 19th. The museum installed over 200 videogames in its main lobby as a fund-raising event to benefit the Corcoran School of Art. At least one Corcoran trustee called the exhibition "the first serious look at videogames as an art form."

"Video technology has the potential to create a legitimate and exciting means of expression," according to William C. Barnett, dean of the Corcoran School of Art.

The Gallery awarded a series of medals for outstanding artistic achievement in the field. Taking home the gold were ColecoVision's "Zaxxon", and Mattel's "Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Cloudy Mountain" for the Intellivision. Silver medals went to Atari's "Qix", and to ColecoVision's "Smurf". Certificates of Merit were awarded to Mattel's "Star Strike" and "Frog Bog", Coleco's "Cosmic Avenger", Telesys' "Fast Foods", and Broderbunds "Choplifter!"

COLECO SALES SOAR;  
PLANS PRICE CUT

According to Coleco Industries, ColecoVision is the nation's fastest selling videogame system, and is responsible for net sales during the first quarter more than tripled from the same period last year. Coleco's president Arnold Greenberg says the company shipped as many ColecoVision units during the first quarter as the 560,000 shipped during all of '82. He added that the 1983 growth was boosted by sales of expansion modules, totalling over 400,000 units during the first quarter.

Meanwhile, Coleco cut the wholesale price of the ColecoVision system by \$20 in May, and purchasers should see this reflected in a lower retail price.

The company expects earnings to continue to improve due to the new merchandise going into the marketplace. "Gemini", the low-cost Atari 2600-work-alike, as well as numerous new game carts, will start shipping in the second quarter. The third quarter will bring to market a device that adds sound to the Gemini and Atari 2600 systems, and a module to turn the ColecoVision into a home computer. Greenberg didn't discuss the specifics of the new module, but did say that the computer module and ColecoVision game unit together would cost slightly less than \$400.

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