

HOTLINE

THE BI-WEEKLY ELECTRONIC GAMES NEWSLETTER

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**APPLE BEEFS UP STAFF
WITH EX-ATARI PRESIDENT**

John Cavalier has resigned his post as president of Atari Products Co., to become the new Vice President and General Manager of Apple's personal computer systems unit. The move is seen as an attempt by Apple to sharpen up the corporation's marketing division, one area that many industry watchers feel Apple has never adequately developed. Mr. Cavalier had been in charge of developing and marketing home computers and video games for Atari since June, and prior to joining that company, was with American Can Co.

**THE TI-99/8
BITES THE DUST**

Here's yet another new machine consigned to limbo before it ever gets out of its carton. Texas Instruments has shelved plans to introduce the new TI-99/8 computer originally scheduled for release this Fall, and declines to predict whether it's been completely cancelled or only retimed for next year. Norman Neureiter, TI VP, announced that there would be no home computer console introduced this year, but wouldn't comment on the reasons for the change of plans.

Earlier this year, TI dropped the 99/2 computer that was originally slated as a less-expensive version of the 99/4A, due to the slashes in price on that machine.

**COLECO CUTS BACK ON ADAM'S ADS;
FACES CLASS ACTION SUIT BY STOCKHOLDER**

Coleco has decided to hold back roughly \$4 million out of the \$20-25 million ad budget originally scheduled for this Autumn's introduction of the Adam computer, and to use the money instead in the first quarter of 1984. The change in plans was brought about by the delay the company experienced in bringing the Adam to market, and according to Morton Handel, Coleco's Executive VP, this rescheduling of the ad budget will permit the company to coordinate the t.v. ad campaign more exactly with the shipments of the new computer.

Meanwhile, a stockholder who's disgruntled by Coleco's sinking stock prices has entered a class action suit on behalf of persons who bought the stock between May 27 (when the Adam was announced) and September 29. The suit charges that Coleco concealed the problems the company was experiencing in perfecting the new computer. The Coleco stock went from a high of over \$60 a share, at the time the Adam system was announced, to under \$30 when shipping dates were postponed. The suit further accuses that certain Coleco officials, knowing the company was facing serious engineering problems in perfecting Adam, sold a total of 183,000 shares in June, and alleges that this was in violation of Securities & Exchange Commission rules governing such transactions.

**PRICE PARING
PERKS PENGUIN**

Penguin Software has found a way to increase sales that gamers really love! The company has just completed a six-month experiment in price-paring and according to Penguin Prexy Mark Pelczarski, "It worked!" Pelczarski says, "Our customers are very happy about the move, and we're selling more than enough software to justify that pricing." So, the company plans to keep game prices at \$19.95. "Games should be fun and affordable," says the Penguin Prexy. "We want kids to be able to play our games without having to spend next year's allowance on a single disk." He went on, "Our authors are making more money now than they did when our prices were higher. Many dealers report that they sell two of our games for every one of another company's games." That's a pretty powerful reason for making a decision everyone likes!

**DYNASTY, THE FULLER BRUSH OF COMPUTERS,
IS GIVING AWAY FREE EQUIPMENT**

The next time your doorbell rings, it may be a door-to-door salesman with an offer you don't get everyday. Dynasty Computer Corp., Dallas, Tx., is offering a free Dynasty Smart-ALEC Jr. micro-computer with the purchase of any 25 pieces of Dynasty software. The company markets micro-computers through a network of over 3,250 independent distributors who sell the machine through in-home demonstrations, a la Avon or Stanley Products. Now they're giving away a 4K Smart-ALEC Jr., complete with a 16K memory expansion module to bring the usable memory up to 20K, to anyone purchasing at least 25 software programs. The machine has color graphics, music capability, is expandable to 64K, and is CP/M compatible. The average cost of 25 programs, picked from the company's large catalog of their own software designs, is about \$390.

For more information, contact Ms. Bobbie Weis, Dynasty Computer Corp., 14240 Midway Road, Dallax, Texas 75234, or call 214-386-8634.

**WIN TRIPS TO EPCOT, NYC
IN KRAFT KIDEO GAME CONTEST**

Here's a game contest you can win even if you don't own a computer! The Kraft Kideo Game Contest is for anyone 18 or younger. All you have to do is write a description in 500 words or less of your own concept of a good computer game to teach kids about nutrition. The game should focus primarily on the importance of eating a balanced diet, but can also include other healthy habits such as brushing teeth, getting enough sleep, fresh air and exercise. In addition to the essay describing your idea for the game, include a sketch of what the game screen should look like. For complete rules, send a self-addressed stamped #10 envelope to The Kraft Kideo Contest, Box 845, South Holland, Illinois 60474. Kraft cautions kids that only legible entries can be considered, so type or print clearly!

The grand prize is a 4-day trip to EPCOT/Walt Disney World for the winner and his/her family (up to four people), an estimated value of \$4000, plus a chance to visit New York City with one guardian, on a promotional media tour. Second prize is a \$1000 gift certificate for computer equipment, and 20 runners-up will get \$50 certificates for equipment.

**ROMOX TERMINALS
GET MARKET TEST**

Romox has begun testing the market for its electronic software distribution system, at retail locations in Northern California. The Romox terminals, each with capacity of 500 or more titles, lets gamers buy a title, play it until they're ready for a new game, then take the old cartridge back to the store to be reprogrammed with a new contest. According to Romox President Paul Terrell, kids typically play games for only a few weeks before tiring of them. By purchasing blank cartridges (ranging in price from \$15 to \$25 each) the gamer can select a game in a local store, then recycle the cartridge later to get new titles. The gamer benefits from this versatility, and so does the merchant since his entire catalog of games will be permanently "in stock", in the Romox library computer.

**GAMELINE ANNOUNCES
NEW SERVICES**

Bill von Meister, President of Control Video Corporation, parent company to the GameLine service, says that GameLine will be expanded to include StockLine and SportsLine in December, and that electronic mail will be available to subscribers starting in January. The two new services coming in December will make it possible for GameLine subscribers to receive information about stocks and sports on-screen, using their CVC Master Module, and the electronic mail service will let GameLiners communicate with each other over the module.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: Publisher, Jay Rosenfield; Co-Publisher, Arnie Katz; Editorial Director, Bill Kunkel
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"BOUNCER" PUTS GAMERS IN ANIMATED CARTOON CANTINA

Entertainment Sciences' newest play-for-pay machine, "Bouncer" is a 3-D, real time interactive arcade videogame, animated by a veteran cartoonist. The result is a game that looks like it was drawn for a movie, with 500 separate images (compared to 50 or less in the average arcade game.)

The arcader acts as bouncer in four nightspots, ejecting undesirables before they offend the regular patrons. The bouncer walks or runs around the clubs as directed by a trackball, knocking over tables, breaking windows, and knocking people to the floor, until all the bad guys have been put out. If at least one well-behaved customer stays in the club, the bouncer moves to the next bar for the next round of play.

Seven characters star in the 3-D story that features high-quality graphics and an extensive soundtrack that uses both speech and music to enhance the on-screen action.

SYNERGISTIC SOFTWARE TO PHASE OUT OF MARKETING

Synergistic Software, one of the earliest microcomputer software publishing companies, is getting out of the software publishing business. Robert Clardy, President, says that Synergistic is leaving the marketing end of the business, to concentrate on creating software for publication by other companies. "Since industry trends are changing, we're getting out of marketing," said Clardy. "Our strong point has always been software design and execution, and our products have consistently received rave reviews..."

Currently many Synergistic products are being translated for other computer systems by the 18 programmers at the company, and publishing rights to the games are under negotiations with several companies.

Synergistic plans to continue servicing all existing customers, provide replacement and back-up discs, and provide customer assistance.

HIGH TECH SERVICE PAMPERS HOTEL GUESTS

International Anasazi, Phoenix, Ariz., has the latest thing in in-room video systems for hotel guests who like to relax in comfort with all the amenities computer technology can provide.

The Personal In-Room Communication System (PIRCS) lets guests use a remote channel selector to tune in special services on their t.v. sets, downloading information from the hotel's central computer. PIRCS lets guests tune in a videogames channel to play a broad selection of currently popular games and, unique to the PIRCS system, actually lets guests in different hotel rooms compete with one another. Gamers tell the computer they're seeking an opponent for a specific game, then the message is relayed to other PIRC-users in the hotel until a match game is set up. Other services available to PIRCers include a message channel, wake-up calls via computer, on-screen information about hotel amenities, express checkout, a "where to go" channel listing area highspots, and even video music. The music channel operates like a jukebox, playing each selection in turn so all guests can see and hear the choices made by other rooms. PIRCS lists limo and flight schedules, and even has word processing and financial spread-sheet calculators available. It also allows business travelers to access corporate computers through switching networks right in their own rooms.

The PIRCS service got its first test in the Doubletree Hotel, Scottsdale, Ariz., and International Anasazi is currently negotiating with several chains that plan to install the two-way interactive system in 1984.

PDI SALES UP

Robert Hall, Vice President of Marketing for Program Design, Inc., reports a 92% increase in sales this year, and predicts an increase next year of at least 125% over this year's record sales. Hall says that the company currently has over 20 new educational software programs under design, bringing the total PDI catalog to over 60 titles. The company also plans many translations of programs originally developed for the Atari, Apple and TI computers, into formats for the Commodore 64 and IBM.

**GAMES STAY UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS
WITH VERTZ ELECTRONIC SYSTEM**

Vertz Systems, San Diego, Ca., has a videogames system that takes merchandising of videogame cartridges, cassettes and discs out of the dealer's hands and turns it over to the machines. A display cabinet uses an electronically activated product dispenser, and a high speed VTV Network video display monitor demonstrates up to 72 product selections. Then the computer clerk cashier terminal collects the money and keeps track of sales and inventory. Customers first look over the selection of games in the cabinets, then play their selections on the display monitor. A human clerk enters the customer's selection into a terminal and collects payment, then the customer takes his receipt (encoded on a magnetic card) to the display cabinet to activate the dispensing mechanism. Voila! Just like coffee pouring out of a hot drink machine, the game comes to the customer without ever being handled by a clerk.

According to Vertz, this high-tech retailing tool lets gamers see and hear demonstrations of games, while eliminating the in-store crowding common around game-play stations.

**HAYDEN BOOK LETS VIC-USERS
PROGRAM ARCADE-STYLE GAMES**

"VIC Games" is a new book from Hayden containing programs for arcade-style, strategy and educational word games, for use on the VIC-20. Written by Nick Hampshire, the book includes action games like Racer, Car Race, SpaceWar, Hangman, Find the Word, and Break-out, plus many more -- a total of 36 in all -- to keep VIC-users gaming, all for only \$12.95. It's available now in most bookstores.

**ACTIVISION RELEASES QUARTET OF TITLES
FOR ATARI 2600, 5200 AND INTELLIVISION**

As the Holiday Season approaches and the geese are getting fat, new games are boiling out of Activision like froth on a pot of soup.

"Pressure Cooker", designed by Garry Kitchen, keeps Short Order Sam busy assembling burgers as diners have them their ways, and Sam has to check to make sure he puts the correct ingredients on each sandwich. Things get out of hand when the food dispenser starts pouring condiments and sandwich-fixings all over the room. When Sam finally gets each burger put together, he's got to carry it into the Wrapping Room in order to score. Sam loses performance points every time he makes a mistake in the ingredients or drops something, and when his efficiency rating reaches zero, the game ends.

Other new games from Activision include "Worm Whomper" by Tom Loughry, for play on Intellivision. It stars Farmer Felton Pinkerton, protecting his corn crop from garden insects by spraying the creepy-crawlies with blasts of bugspray. Also new for Intellivision is "Beamrider", a one to four-player game by Dave Rolfe. A hostile empire cast a restrictor shield around the player's planet, and arcade aces must pilot spacecraft along the beams of light forming the shield to engage enemy starships.

Activision hits "River Raid" and "Kaboom!" have been reprogrammed for the Atari 5200. Each of these titles sold more than a million units for the Atari 2600, and Activision's president Jim Levy promises, "The arcade-like game features of the 5200 will heighten the action for sophisticated game players."

**GE GIVES A CHARGE
TO SMALL BATTERIES**

Now even teeny-tiny batteries can be recharged. GE just introduced their AAA rechargeable battery for use in the new slim-line electronic products taking this size battery. They'll sell for \$7.99 a pair, or \$9.99 for a pair of batteries with the recharging module. Then they'll last-last-last, for years-years-years!

**BALLY UNVEILS
FUTURISTIC PINBALL**

Bally/Midway's pinball game "Goldball" is a futuristic game that periodically kicks a gold ball into the plunger lane. Then it takes fast reactions to spell out "G-O-L-D-B-A-L-L" and win 100,000 points. Changing lanes and roll-over buttons combine to let the gamer hit new heights of pinball wizardry, according to the company, predicting that "Goldball" will set records for arcade owners when aces line up for a try at the new machine.

**DRAGON'S LAIR IS THE MOST
POPULAR COIN-OP IN THE USA**

The hot laser disc game from Cinematronics is breaking records, as arcaders line up to eyeball the spectacular graphics in "Dragon's Lair", and the game's popularity is reflected in the EG Popularity Poll by leaping all the way to first place in its very first appearance on the lists! On the home front, "Donkey Kong Jr." is clinging to the top notch, and "Miner 2049er" is still the most popular computer game in the country. But there are some new kids on the block, so don't make any bets on what happens next month!

<u>POSITION</u> <u>THIS MONTH</u>	<u>LAST MONTH</u>	<u>TIMES ON LIST</u>	<u>GAME TITLE</u>	<u>SYSTEM</u>	<u>MANUFACTURER</u>
# 1	# 1	6	Donkey Kong Junior	ColecoVision	Coleco
2	11	10	River Raid	Atari 2600	Activision
3	New	New	Miner 2049er	ColecoVision	MicroFun
4	5	14	Pitfall	Atari 2600	Activision
5	8	5	Pac-Man	Atari 5200	Atari
6	14	13	Zaxxon	ColecoVision	Coleco
7	6	10	Lady Bug	ColecoVision	Coleco
8	New	New	Robot Tank	Atari 2600	Activision
9	4	14	Donkey Kong	ColecoVision	Coleco
10	3	6	Ms. Pac-Man	Atari 2600	Atari
11	2	6	Centipede	Atari 5200	Atari
12	-	11	Frogger	Atari 2600	Parker Brothers
13	7	2	Keystone Kapers	Atari 2600	Activision
14	New	New	Enduro	Atari 2600	Activision
15	12	2	Miner 2049er	Atari 5200	Big Five

MOST POPULAR COMPUTER GAMES:

# 1	# 1	8	Miner 2049er	Atari/Apple	Big Five/Micro Fun
2	2	21	Star Raiders	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
3	6	19	Pac-Man	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
4	New	New	Donkey Kong	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
5	3	14	Centipede	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
6	5	11	Choplifter	Atari/Apple VIC-20	Broderbund Creative Software
7	4	6	Astro Chase	Atari	Parker Brothers
8	New	New	Aztec	Apple II	Data Most
9	-	2	Shamus	Atari 4-8-1200	Synapse
10	New	New	Kick-Man	Commodore 64	Commodore

MOST POPULAR COIN-OP VIDEOGAMES:

# 1	New	New	Dragon's Lair	Cinematronics
2	6	2	Star Wars	Atari
3	1	5	Pole Position	Atari
4	2	5	Q*Bert	Mylstar
5	7	4	Burgertime	Bally Midway/Data East
6	3	3	Xevious	Atari
7	8	15	Donkey Kong	Nintendo
8	-	10	Joust	Williams
9	-	2	Popeye	Nintendo
10	New	New	Front Line	Taito

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 comes 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, the manufacturer's name.

CRITICS THIS ISSUE: SD-Steve Davidson; AK-Arnie Katz; BK-Bill Kunkel

SPRINGER/Videogame Cartridge (Atari 2600)/Tigervision

The premise behind this one- or two-player climbing game sounds like something right out of a fairy tale book: A rabbit must hop from cloud to cloud until he reaches the sun at the top of the screen, hopefully before the on-screen clock ticks down from 999. The rabbit, Springer, encounters both bonus items such as carrots, and potential obstacles like dragons. An unhatched egg is easy pickin's for the heaven-bent hare, but if they start to hatch (or turn into full-fledged dragons), only pushing the joystick straight up to make Springer kick is of any avail. If you can get past the concept of clouds that look like rectangles of various widths, the graphics aren't at all bad for a 2600 cart, even pretty cute! "Springer" relies much more heavily on finesse than speed, and those players who haven't the patience to line up each jump with painstaking accuracy will send one bouncing bunny after another crashing to the bottom of the playfield. (AK) Rating: 7

MUSIC CONSTRUCTION SET/Computer Game (Apple II)/Electronic Arts

This marvelously easy to use and flexible program applies the concept pioneered by Bill Budge in "Pinball Construction Set" to the creation of musical compositions. A melody-minded Apple owner will need a Mockingboard and speakers to take advantage of this incredible programming accomplishment, but the modest additional investment will be worth it for many. Even a non-programmer, non-musician will quickly be astounding him- or herself by turning out computer versions of familiar and original tunes. This is the kind of disk that can provide hours upon hours of enjoyable tinkering to the adventurous gamer. (SD) Rating: 9

THE SPY STRIKES BACK/Computer Game (Apple II)/Penguin Software

This very slick sequel to "Spy's Demise" is even better than the first disk in what now appears to be a continuing saga. This time the secret agent is trying to piece together clues hidden in a five-story complex with 16 major rooms on each level. Every large room is further subdivided into crisscross paths that create 16 mini-chambers. The unicycling guard robots actively chase the spy if they have direct line-of-sight, but otherwise roam the paths looking for trouble. The spy, guided by the home arcader's joystick, must collect the bonus objects for extra score while finding the clues which will unravel the mystery of "The Spy Strikes Back". To go from room to room, the spy either ducks into an elevator roomlet inside the big chamber or touches the ring symbol that flashes invitingly somewhere within the chamber. Finding the ring creates an exit on one of the screen's four edges so that the spy can hurry into the next room. Successfully

leaving a room earns bonus points, the number depending on how the countdown clock at the lower left is doing. If a guard sees the spy, the remaining total on the clock is halved so evasive action is an important aspect of this contest. Sound and graphics are both solid--and a significant improvement over "Spy's Demise". (AK) Rating: 8

MR. COOL/Computer Game (Commodore 64)/Sierra On-Line

Color-changing games are all the rage these days, so it's nice to see a fairly good one become available to gamers who own the popular Commodore 64. The computerist employs the joystick to move an animated ice cube called Mr. Cool around a playfield composed of hotplates arranged in the shape of a pyramid. The idea is for Mr. Cool to hop from plate to plate, changing the colors as dictated by the goal for that particular round. Fireballs cruise across the screen horizontally, while hot springs bounce along from the top of the field to the bottom. Mr. Cool has an extra weapon, "cool time", which the player activates by pushing the action button. This turns the fireballs into snowballs which Mr. Cool can absorb for bonus points. "Mr. Cool" isn't starkly original, but it packs enough entertainment to make it worth at least a tryout by 64'ers. (SD) Rating: 6

MISSILE COMMAND/Videogame Cartridge (Atari 5200)/Atari

This home version of an Atari-produced coin-op smash shows how close "third wave" videogame systems like the 5200 can come to the quality of the play-for-pay units. In this edition of the classic, the player must defend six friendly cities lined up along the bottom edge of the playfield against a shower of ICBMs, motherships, missile-launching jets, smart bombs and other menacing flying bombs.

"Missile Command" is especially enjoyable when played using Atari's recently introduced trackball controller, through it will work with the standard control device as well. This 5200 edition is satisfyingly faithful to a venerable classic. (BK) Rating: 8

BERZERK/Videogame Cartridge (Atari 5200)/Atari

Suddenly, without a lot of warning, the 5200 has learned how to talk. And it's no babyish babble. 5200 "Baseball" includes an electronic umpire who hollers the call on each play, and now there's a suitably motormouthed version of "Berzerk".

This home cartridge faithfully reprises virtually every aspect of Stern's original coin-op. For instance, leaving a maze-room before destroying every mechanical monster earns the arcader a derisive "Chicken! Fight like a robot!" Although many home and coin-op designs have appeared since "Berzerk", which offer more complex action and ornate graphics, there's something special about this maze-shoot-out that keeps joystick wielders coming back again and again for "just one more round". Atari has produced a superb home edition for the 5200. (BK) Rating: 9

MARIO'S CEMENT FACTORY/Stand-Alone Game/Nintendo

Once Mario saved his fair lady from the giant ape, life went back to normal for the little construction worker, and now that he has a wife to support, it's up at dawn every day, to work in the cement plant. Mario is foreman of a truck loading dock. It's up to him to fill the hoppers with liquid concrete, and then load the cement-mixer trucks. Concrete comes out of the machine in gloppy loads. Three scoops of the sticky mess fill the top hopper, then Mario has to open a loading chute so the mess can flow into the lower container. When the lower hopper has filled, Mario must open the gates and let the mud fall into the waiting cement truck. Sounds simple enough, but complications always set in! There are loading hoppers on both sides of the playfield. Poor Mario has to race from side to side, and from the upper chute to the lower one, by riding elevators from floor to floor. But it takes good timing, since he has to leap off a rising lift before he crashes on the ceiling, or off a descending elevator before he plunges to the basement. And, if he doesn't open the hoppers before a fourth load of concrete flows in, the mess will overflow and fall right onto the head of the waiting mixer-truck driver. The game is beautifully matrixed with glowing, sky-light enhanced graphics. And, if that isn't enough, it's also a dependable musical alarm clock! (JW) Rating: 7

MERRY-GO-ROUND: Steve Diener has been promoted to president of CBS/FOX VIDEO
NEW FACES - OLD PLACES International. He formerly served that company in the role of Executive VP...COLECO has appointed Gerald Kuckler to act as Vice President of Technical Services. He'll be responsible for all technical services including manufacturing engineering. Mr. Kuckler was formerly with General Electric Corp. ...Dr. Keith Mielke is the new President and Chief Operating Officer of the CHILDREN'S COMPUTER WORKSHOP. He formerly was Executive Director of the Workshop's science series for kids, 3-2-1 Contact...Leslie Willis Neff is the National Sales Manager for TRONIX PUBLISHING. She'll head up all national sales programs for the company. Ms. Neff was formerly with Mattel, and prior to that, with U.S. Pioneer Electronic...Robert S. Beattie has joined MILTON BRADLEY as Corporate VP of Marketing Research. Mr. Beattie was formerly with Hunt-Wesson Foods...Robert G. Schneider has joined SIERRA ON-LINE as VP and General Consul. He formerly practiced corporate and business law in Irvine, Calif...Bruce T. McDonnell is the new SIERRA ON-LINE VP of Marketing, and will be in charge of all sales activities. He was formerly with Heublein Wines Company.

SIRIUS GETS SERIOUS Sirius Software is busily producing translations of some of
WITH COMMODORE GAMES their top hits, to formats for play on the Commodore 64. "Bandits", the well-known shoot-em-up, lets Commodore owners guard a lunar supply base against hordes of alien bandits trying to steal the goodies, in a game that up til now had only been available for the Apple, VIC-20 and Atari computers.

The adventure hit, "Blade of Blackpoole" is also newly available for the Commodore 64, in addition to the Apple and Atari versions released earlier. This single-player adventure makes gamers solve puzzles as they try to locate a magical sword and other objects useful in the quest.

EPYX LETS HOME GAMERS Epyx has released a home version of the Exidy hit educa-
GET THEIR FACTS STRAIGHT tional arcade game, "Fax", for play on the Apple or
WITH "FAX", FROM EXIDY HIT Commodore 64 computers. "Fax" is a video quiz with about 900 questions in each of four categories: sports, trivia, history and entertainment, with three levels of difficulty. Gamers gain additional points for quick answers to questions that are enhanced by clever graphics, while wrong answers get humorous warnings from the computer, such as "Put your mind in gear!", and "Do your homework!"

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