

Computer Entertainer

the newsletter

12115 Magnolia Boulevard, #126, North Hollywood, Ca. 91607

January, 1987

Volume 5, Number 10

\$3.50

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HE TOP TWENTY

Marble Madness (EA/Co)
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Bard's Tale (EA/Ap)
Bard's Tale II (EA/Co)
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Top Twenty is the result of telephone
polls with a selected group of retailers
and distributors throughout the country

COMING...

Complete & In-Depth Account
C.E.S. as we go one-on-one with
the companies - big & small!
FIFTH BIRTHDAY PARTY Continues!
REVIEWS Include...
Trek: Promethean Prophecy
...for Commodore
Ice Hockey
Sports Pad
Warrior
...for Sega
Quest III
...for IBM

OUR C.E.S. PREVIEW BEGINS...

Commodore to Feature Amiga at CES

After focusing exclusively on the Commodore 64 and Commodore 128 computers in their last two Consumer Electronics Show (CES) booths, Commodore has finally decided to showcase the Amiga at CES this January. As they have done at past shows, Commodore has invited a variety of third-party software developers to show off their latest designs. Watch for our full report on all the new Amiga software in our February issue.

New Joystick for Nintendo Entertainment System

Gamers hoping for a "real joystick" to use with their NES won't have to wait much longer. Epyx plans to introduce a special model of their 500XJ Joystick just for the NES. Currently available in a 9-pin connector model for Atari and Commodore computers and Atari 2600 and 7800 game systems, the 500XJ is a very responsive, ergonomically designed controller that we use regularly.

New Games to Be Shown by Sega

According to a company spokesman, Sega will be showing about a dozen new games in their booth at CES. These will include licensed games (GHOSTBUSTERS, ROCKY), a new game for the Light Phaser (SHOOTING GALLERY), arcade conversions (QUARTET, WONDER BOY, WOODY POP, SPACE HARRIER) and sports games (GREAT BASEBALL, GREAT FOOTBALL, GREAT VOLLEYBALL). Note that the Sports Pad, required for the "Great" series of sports games, is also usable with ALL Sega games except those that require the Light Phaser. Of interest to arcade fanatics: the home version of SPACE HARRIER will be the first two-megabit game for the Sega system. (Two megabits = 256K bytes.)

New Offerings from Epyx

Continuing its expansion into new areas, Epyx will be showing everything from entertainment programs to productivity software and joysticks at CES. STREET SPORTS BASKETBALL is the first in a new series of "Street Sports" games which will feature sports as they are played by ordinary people—in neighborhoods, parks, and back yards. The basketball game has a choice of neighborhood settings, permits each player the choice of a three-person team selected from ten potential players, and includes hazards not encountered in a regulation game (curbs, oil slicks, and apartment windows, for example). Epyx will also introduce the "Masters Collection," a series of simulations and adventures for advanced players. First in the series is SUB BATTLE SIMULATOR, featuring complex instrumentation and scenarios taken from actual historical data.

More Epyx Introductions

New productivity entries are GRAPHICS SCRAPBOOK VOLUME 3: SCHOOL (over 100 images for use with "The Print Shop" or "The Newsroom," designed to appeal to students, teachers, PTA groups, etc.) and CREATE A CALENDAR (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly—various formats with graphics and borders). All Epyx software titles will be done for Apple IIe/IIc, Commodore 64/128, and IBM PC. The Masters Collection will also be available for Atari ST, Macintosh, and Apple IIGS.

500XJ Joystick for More Systems

The Epyx 500XJ Joystick, which has been a major success in its initial version for Atari and Commodore computers, will be joined by new models designed especially for use with Apple II and IBM computers and the Nintendo Entertainment System. Each of the three new models will have the same ergonomic construction as the original model along with special features needed by each system.

Busy Year Ahead for Intellivision

Nearly three years ago Mattel closed its electronics division after a swan-song appearance at the 1984 Winter CES, selling the rights to Intellivision to a group of investors headed by Mattel Marketing Vice President, Terrence Valeski. Although some thought he had taken leave of his senses, Valeski and his crew at INTV, Inc. have proved the doubters wrong by keeping Intellivision alive and producing new games. Coming off a very strong 1986, INTV returns Intellivision to the show floor at CES this month with nine new games scheduled for 1987. The games are TOWER OF DOOM (240K of the "most complex fantasy role-playing game" ever done for the system), TRIPLE CHALLENGE (Checkers, Backgammon, and a third game on one cartridge), DINER (sequel to "Burgertime"), CHIP SHOT SUPER PRO GOLF, COMMANDO, SLAM DUNK SUPER PRO BASKETBALL, LEARNING FUN ALBUM (enhanced versions of "Word Fun" and "Math Fun" on one cartridge), SUPER PRO HOCKEY, and POLE POSITION. And fulfilling their promise of upgrading the game console itself while maintaining compatibility with all cartridges, the company will have a limited, by-invitation-only CES showing of the improved INTV SYSTEM 4, which is planned for late 1987 release.

ISSN #0890-2143

COMPUTER ENTERTAINER 1986 AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

The Fifth Annual AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE are listed below, covering the various home computer and game systems. The awards are voted on by the reviewers of the newsletter and reflect the best in their class. As has been the case in the past two years, the overall quality of product being released makes it tougher and tougher to choose "the best." Please note that awards were not given in all computer classes in the *Sports Category*. This was due to the fact that we did not feel any program that we saw deserving of the Award. And, back again, because of renewed activity in the field, our *Video Game Awards of Excellence!* All awards are based solely upon Computer Entertainer's discretion.

PROGRAM OF THE YEAR - ENTERTAINMENT

- Amiga: ARTICFOX - Dynamix for Electronic Arts
 Apple II: AIRHEART - Broderbund
 Atari ST: THE PAWN - Firebird
 Atari XE/XL: ALTERNATE REALITY: THE CITY
 - Datasoft
 Commodore 64: ACE OF ACES - Artech for Accolade
 (tie) ALIENS: THE COMPUTER GAME
 - Activision
 IBM: BALANCE OF POWER
 - Chris Crawford for Mindscape
 Macintosh: FERRARI GRAND PRIX - Bullseye

PROGRAM OF THE YEAR - PRODUCTIVITY

- Amiga: DELUXE PAINT - Electronic Arts
 Apple II: ANIMATE - Broderbund
 Atari ST: PAINTWORKS - Audio Light for Activision
 Atari XE/XL: BLAZING PADDLES - Baudville
 Commodore 64: GEOS - Berkeley Software
 IBM: TERM PAPER WRITER
 - Personal Choice Software
 Macintosh: COMICWORKS - Mindscape

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR (ALL SYSTEMS)

SILICON BEACH SOFTWARE:

W.C. APPLETON & CHARLIE JACKSON
 for *WORLD BUILDER* for Macintosh

EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN GRAPHICS AND SOUND

MASTER DESIGNER SOFTWARE

for *DEFENDER OF THE CROWN*

MOST INNOVATIVE PROGRAM (all systems)

ALTER EGO - Peter Favaro for Activision

BEST ADVENTURE/FANTASY (Text only, all systems)

TRINITY - Brian Moriarty for Infocom

BEST ADVENTURE/FANTASY (w/Graphics, all systems)

MOEBIUS - Greg Malone for Origin Systems

BEST ACTION/ARCADE-STYLE GAME (all systems)

MARBLE MADNESS - Electronic Arts

BEST STRATEGY/WARGAME (all systems)

ROADWAR 2000 - Strategic Simulations Inc.

BEST EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (all systems)

DONALD DUCK'S PLAYGROUND - Sierra

BEST SPORTS PROGRAM

- Apple II: SIERRA CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING - Sierra
 Commodore 64: GBA CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL TWO-
 (tie) ON-TWO - Gamestar
GFL CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL - Gamestar
 IBM: MEAN 18 - Accolade

VIDEO GAME AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

GAME OF THE YEAR

- Atari 7800: FOOD FIGHT - Atari
 Intellivision: SUPER PRO FOOTBALL - INTV Corp
 Nintendo: SUPER MARIO BROS. - Nintendo
 Sega: WORLD GRAND PRIX - Sega

Chess On Your Laptop

It was inevitable...someone would come up with entertainment software for you laptop owners looking for a little fun during that long plane ride. After all, how many spreadsheets and letters can you write before you start staring out the window? Mindscape will be releasing *COMPUTER LAPTOP CHESS* for all you chess addicts who own a Toshiba, NEC, IBM PC Convertible, Zenith, and other MS DOS portables. Suggested retail is \$39.95.

Critically Speaking...Atari XE/XL Compatible

THE BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA (♦♦1/2/♦♦♦) is one of two Atari strategy games released under the Affiliated Labels program of *Electronic Arts, Game Designers' Workshop* brings this Civil War battle (a reenactment of the battle which took place in September of 1863) to you where you command either a Union or Confederate army of approximately 50,000 men with artillery. As you give your army orders, the computer keeps track of all the men, guns, in addition to fatigue, communication, and morale status. As in any good strategy game, you'll have many decisions to make relating to movement, attacks, effect of fire, and gauging your men's fatigue and morale. All commands can be entered via your joystick or keyboard, whichever you prefer. The game offers three levels of play, allowing the beginner to try his or her luck and move on to more difficult levels and more choices.

Flexible Options

There's an interesting feature in this game which allows you, in the middle of a game, to switch sides with the computer (!), change the fatigue or morale factor, visibility, etc. At the beginning of the game you can choose to start battle on the second day if you wish. You can, as in many games, save your game to disk for another day. In addition to a terrain map included in the box, you'll get historical notes on the battle, a reference manual giving you all the details needed to play, as well as quick reference sheets for a quick start, as well as a quick reference sheet on your mid-game options. As is typical with many strategy games, the graphics are certainly not dazzling, but, instead, practical in their nature showing strategy display, as well as sections of the battle map. (one player; two player simultaneous; also available for Commodore 64/128)
 Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

ROMMEL BATTLES FOR TOBRUK (♦♦1/2/♦♦♦1/2) is the second of the *Game Designers' Workshop* strategy games released through *Electronic Arts* for Atari 8-bit owners. We move to the African desert in the years of 1941 and 1942. This strategical wargame covers the four battles fought between Rommel's *Panzerarmee Afrika* and the British 8th Army. You'll be dealing with two small forces (each under a single commander), as you control battalion level units with each man, tank, artillery piece and anti-tank gun counted. As is typical for this type of action, you'll need to make decisions regarding movement and attacks, with fatigue, communications, etc. all being affected. You'll be dealing with infantry, 12 types of tanks, air power, supplies and more as you move through the battles. The movement and combat are resolved simultaneously and you have full control over that review as you can even back up and watch any part over again in order to help you with your next decision.

Changeable Rules

This game also has a good deal of flexibility as you can actually change many orders and rules anytime during gameplay. There are three levels of play, and complexity changes a great deal as you change the rules. Included in the package are battle maps, detailed rules, a quick-start rule sheet, and historical notes which will give you background on the battles you are engaging in. By the way, in addition to being able to save your game, their is also a feature allowing you to save in such a way to allow play-by-mail with a friend across town or across the country. (one player; two player; keyboard or joystick; also available for Commodore 64/128)
 Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

New from Access

Riding the success of their LEADER BOARD golf simulation game (available for C64/128, Atari XL/XE, Atari ST, and Amiga), Access has recently released EXECUTIVE TOURNAMENT DISK #1 (\$19.95 for C64/128). The add-on disk contains trees, sand traps, rough, water hazards, and two new 18-hole golf courses. Coming in early 1987 are FAMOUS COURSES (C64/128 add-on for LEADER BOARD) plus Amiga and Atari ST versions of TENTH FRAME BOWLING. Access has also announced a \$19.95 Triple Pack containing three classics for C64/128, Apple II, and Atari XL/XE. The three programs are BEACHHEAD, BEACHHEAD II, and RAID OVER MOSCOW.

THE RATING SYSTEM:

4 SYMBOLS = EXCELLENT 2 SYMBOLS = FAIR
 3 SYMBOLS = GOOD 1 SYMBOL = POOR

♦ = ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS (1st set of stars=quality graphics; 2nd set=quality of game play and entertainment value)
 ◇ = APPLICATION PROGRAMS (1st set of diamonds=quality graphics; 2nd set=quality of performance and suitability of use home)

NA - Not Applicable (i.e. all-text programs not rated for graphics)

Book Review

FLIGHT SIMULATOR CO-PILOT, written by Charles Gulick for *Microsoft* and is the perfect companion piece for SubLogic's *Flight Simulators* and scenery disks for various computer systems. As indicated in the introduction, this is not a book to read, but to use while you're at the computer with Flight Simulator. This book will take you through a flight and panel familiarization before anything more complex is attempted (a great help to the novice flight simulator pilot). From there, the author takes you through, in great detail, such things as standard climbs and descents, turns, altitude management, as well as preflight taxi, takeoff, and more. You'll learn how to use your OMNI equipment and radar and then go through a test to see how well you've learned.

On to Challenging Flights

After learning all the basics (or maybe you have them down already!), you'll move on to over 12 challenging actual flights. (These flights use the Western edition Scenery disk as well as the Flight Simulator program.) You'll try everything from high altitude flying over Bryce Canyon to aileron rolls over Long Island Sound.

Great Companion Piece

Whether you're an accomplished computer flyer or not, you'll find this book has something for you. The book is well laid-out and easy to follow, talking in terms more familiar to the layman than the documentation for the program itself. The book gives the program added dimension and adds just that much more to a simulator which has proven extremely popular, and long-enduring. Recommended (MSR \$9.95 - paperback only)

Critically Speaking...Commodore 64 Compatible

GUNSHIP (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) is the latest simulator from *Microprose*, taking you on a dazzling journey aboard the AH-64 Apache Attack Helicopter. This is a very complex program which will take you some time to master. Before you step into your Apache, you'll choose which pilot you wish to employ (or, add your own by erasing one of the ones included). Then, choose which of five assignments you wish to tackle, each portraying a different skill level. You'll have to pick your style of flying as well, indicating the amount of danger you prefer, and, finally, select between a "realistic" simulation or "easy" version (stay with that one until you become proficient). Once you've made all your choices, you'll receive your flight orders, some of which you must write down for later use. You'll also receive your password at this point. You must now arm your helicopter before taking off. A standard armament for the region selected is offered; however, you can adjust it based on your personal preferences. Now it's time to step into the cockpit where you'll see an array of instrumentation, with the landscape laid out in front of your armored glass. You can, at any point, look away to your sector map which shows the terrain features, as well as installations, friendly troops, and your objective. Status displays within your cockpit include stores, which indicates what ammunition you still have on board and a systems damage console. Now that you're familiar with all the features available to you, you'll need to learn how to fly your copter, as well as learning how to recognize and deal with the enemy. The documentation will help you out in these regards, as well as a template which fits over your C64 or C128, giving you the various command keys and what they do.

Tremendous Depth and Playability

Microprose has done a great job with this simulation, giving you tremendous 3-D-like graphics, as well as great action and a fine flight simulator. There's a wide variety of gameplay available as there are many exciting missions to accomplish, and rewards for successful missions (medals and rank promotions). With all the choices available to you prior to your flight, you can change the mission quite a bit. Once we sped across the landscape at over 200 mph, we felt as though we were at the controls of *Airwolf*! This game should quickly become a classic in the simulation arena and, considering how great it looked and played on the C64, we can't wait to see the Atari ST and Amiga versions planned (as well as other machines). This is a "must-own" for any flying fan. (one player; joystick required; coming for Atari ST, Atari XE/XL, Apple II, IBM, Amiga) Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

PILOT (♦♦♦♦/♦♦1/2) is the latest from the *UXB* line of *Vinniker Software*. It comes to America following a successful run as a bestseller in England. It's as simple a premise as you're going to find - you're at the controls of a jet fighter attempting to shoot down enemies coming at you from all angles. Your ship will rotate and fly any direction as you keep your finger on the fire button, spewing anti-enemy missiles. There are areas, surrounded by a glowing green bar which must be avoided. If you hit the glowing material, you'll lose a great deal of energy. Lose all your energy, and that's it! You can get more energy by watching for the energy units (they appear after you've destroyed ten aliens). Destroy the energy unit and a energy capsule floats out. Catch up to it and collect it to obtain energy bombs. There are plenty of aliens, UFOs, meteorites, and enemy mother ships to keep you busy as long as you want! You'll fly

over city and country as you move over a spherical planet surface for unlimited flight all in directions.

Pretty Basic Stuff

This is, in every sense of the word, a space ship "shoot-'em-up." The graphics are quite nice, crisp, and colorful (although they don't rival Amiga graphics as indicated on the package). The key here is the low retail price, which gives it its attractiveness. The problem, however, is that most people have a game virtually identical to this already in their library so there is nothing here to compel the purchase of this particular game. If, however, you've just added a Commodore under your tree and you're looking for a simple but effective "shoot-'em-up," this is a good choice. (MSR \$9.95)

Critically Speaking...IBM Compatible

RADIO BASEBALL (NA/♦♦♦1/2) is yet another baseball simulation to hit the home computer market, this time developed by *Diamond Edge Software* for *Electronic Arts*. You'll be managing one of over a dozen teams (you choose, of course) with the computer or friend playing against you. Teams included in the basic set (more team disks planned) include the '68 Detroit Tigers, '55 Brooklyn Dodgers, and six other championship teams, as well as teams consisting of pre-war National League or American League heroes, as well as post-war National and American League greats. Before the game, you can make changes in the team roster, bench players from the computer's team, rest pitchers, etc. Once you've made all your managerial choices, you can choose to play at a normal speed, speeded up, or auto play where you can watch the two managers complete the game themselves.

Play Ball

Once you take the field, you'll have to make several decisions (everything is menu-driven for ease - just type in the corresponding number of the strategy you wish) such as holding the runner on first, guarding the lines, intentional walk, fielding change (allowing you to make adjustments), as well as viewing the game statistics so you can take a look at the accumulated batting and pitching statistics to that point in the game. You can also check your bullpen and start to get one of your relievers warmed-up or stop throwing. Then it's on to the play-by-play which will appear on the lower part of the screen under the line score and team rosters (the current batter is highlighted). The action is based on actual statistics for the real-life player involved in the play. The announcer then takes the call and it might go something like this...

Marichal winds up...

Musial swings the bat...

The ball is carrying .back...back...back

Cobb races back to the wall...

Ruth is rounding second base...

Cobb loses the ball in the lights...

Ruth scores...

Musial slides into second..

He's SAFE.

...And so on. If you're playing offense, you'll also have several choices such as hit-and-run, hit away, stealing options, etc. If you go into the "stealing options" sub-menu, you'll be able to indicate double or triple steals, give the green light to your man on any of the bases, etc. Once the game is finished, you'll get a summary of the game, including line score, all the batting and pitching statistics, errors, game-winning RBI, winning and losing pitcher, etc. Just like picking up the morning paper and reading the box scores. If you wish, you can print out the information on a scorecard.

New Twist to Old Theme

We've seen baseball simulations, but this is a new approach. With the radio announcer giving us the action, we almost felt as though we could hear Vin Scully's voice (Vinnie is the superb voice of the Los Angeles Dodgers, as well as announcing several sports for NBC). There are plenty of player-controlled options which give you enough varied play to keep the game interesting. Initially, there is a 1985 team disk available which includes data for all 26 major league teams, as well as updates for the Superstars team sets and 4 news teams to add to the Champs Team Set. If you purchase the game, you'll find a coupon inside allowing you to buy, for a limited time, the team disk direct from Electronic Arts for \$9.95. If you enjoy sports simulations, you should have a good deal of fun with this. In fact, if you have hesitated in the past to buy a simulation because you feel they tend to be "dry," this might be the one to try since it doesn't have the dull matter-of-fact approach that so many simulations have. (one player; two player simultaneous) Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

Cluebook for Starflight

Electronic Arts has just released a cluebook for its IBM outer-space adventure, *STARFLIGHT*. The 24-page book contains the log entries of Max Zarfleen, Captain of the ISS Intrepid. The recorded results of the ship's interstellar investigations reveal facts and hints that are helpful to Starflight players. Also included in the cluebook is a Flux Log, which provides players with the necessary coordinates for transporting from one sector to another and an index to various objects that are found within the game. Retail price for the booklet is \$12.95.

Critically Speaking...Macintosh Compatible

NORTH ATLANTIC '86 (♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) becomes the first wargame strategy game for Macintosh from *Strategic Simulations Inc.*, being converted from its original Apple II format. This simulation is set in the present, after the Great War in Europe (thank goodness we can say this is fiction!). Russia has won and controls Norway and Germany. By isolating Great Britain, the Motherland plans to dominate all of the North Atlantic. In this Soviet-NATO confrontation, you'll choose which side you wish to represent (the NATO force must be controlled by a human so, if you are playing solitaire, you will not be able to choose the Soviet side). As the Soviet aggressor, you'll launch a paratrooper assault against Iceland and bomb England's main base in Scapa and Flow. As the commander of the NATO forces, you must attempt to hold Iceland against the Soviet aggression while getting convoys through to England with supplies. You'll control state-of-the-art weaponry in surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missiles, as well as nuclear subs, missile cruisers, MIG-23's, F-16's and more. You'll assemble your task force by selecting ships and moving them into the task force area. Within the "Ships" menu, you'll be able to load your ships with infantry companies and/or supply units. You'll make additional choices such as launching air strikes, transferring troops or supplies between airbases, etc. Once you've made all your choices, the computer takes over in the Combat Resolution phase. Within that phase, all areas of combat are resolved, from air strikes, missile strikes, repairing of ships, reinforcements, etc.

There are two mini games and a short campaign included which are estimated to take 3-5 hours to complete. The 232-turn complete campaign will take anywhere from 50 to 100 hours of playing time! The minigames cover the invasion of Iceland in November 1986 and a North Atlantic convoy operation in September 1986 while the campaign games cover September 7 to December 31, 1986 or, in the shorter campaign, November 1 to December 31.

Conversion Takes Advantage of Mac

SSI is always known for their strategy games and this one is no exception. The plus is, by using the features of the Macintosh, it makes the game much easier to manipulate. With the "point-and-click" scenario, you can easily load your ships, check stats, while enjoying the same level of wargaming strategy. By the way, we were pleasantly surprised when our computer "spoke up" and told us about the enemy being sighted! Another added extra in this version. All in all, this intermediate level wargame is a terrific addition to any strategy-loving Mac owner. (one player; two player alternating; requires 512K; also available for Apple II)
Recommended (MSR \$59.95)

THE KING OF CHICAGO (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦) is the newest *Cinemaware Interactive Movie* from *Master Designer Software* and *Mindscape*, taking us to Chicago in the 1930's during Prohibition and the Mobs. The scenario is reminiscent of a silent movie. The dialogue is brought to you in "balloons" (ala what's used in the Sunday comic strips), with you playing the character of Pinky Callahan as he tries to take over the Chicago gang scene. As the scenes move along, there come points where two or three balloons appear, all with different approaches to the situation at hand (you know you're at that point as sound effects play, letting you know it's time to make a decision). You must point and click on the solution (or direction) you wish quickly (if you don't, the computer will make the choice for you) with the story heading in the direction you've sent it. For instance, if you constantly make aggressive decisions, you'll probably find that Pinky quickly decides to "blow away" the current boss, usually ending up dead himself. Depending on how your story branches, you'll meet up with different members of the cast, from the policeman that Pinky grew up with; Bull, a soft-hearted thug; Tony Santucci, Capone's heir; and a few others. In all the stories we played (we went back to the game about ten times to see variations), we always ran into Ben who's with the Northside gang, and the Old Man, who's currently the gang leader.

We Wanted To Like It...But

This was one of those games that when it came in that several people wanted to sit down with it as we felt it would be terrific fun. It was mainly because it didn't "thrill" us the first time around that we kept going back to it, thinking we were missing something. After all, it had been over two years in development, and Master Designer had shown us several things in development--all dazzling. The problem is twofold. First, we found that the story was a bit slow as we plodded through the dialogue, waiting to come to points (sometimes close together and other times it seemed as though they were a long time in coming) where we could make decisions to send the story off in a certain direction. The directions indicated that we could hold the mouse button down to "fast forward" through the dialogue; however, that sent us through too quickly--we couldn't read fast enough before it would disappear into the next dialogue. While each time we booted the game up it started in a new way, we found ourselves in very familiar surroundings over and over again, especially after the first half dozen times. We purposely chose very different ways to send the story where sometimes Pinky would be aggressive and gun-happy, and others where he would compromise and try and work with the boys. (For instance, one time we chose the aggressive way where Pinky would go

"gun the Old Man down," while another time we chose to "reason with the Old Man, asking him to retire." In both scenarios, Pinky drew his gun and shot the Old Man--it just took longer when we reasoned with him. Once that happened, the same conclusion hit the screen where Pinky ended up dead.) It wasn't long before the group of four around the computer became three, became two, and finally only one person sat there. The others had lost interest.

The second problem has to do with sound. We must preface this by saying the visual graphics are phenomenal with eyes blinking and jaws moving as the characters "talk. When you are in a situation where you've drawn your gun, you see your arm with the gun in your hand and you can move it with the mouse before you press the mouse button to fire. Back to the sound problem...there just aren't enough sound effects! There's some gunshots during the intro as well as some music (as well as during the intermission you can pull up on the screen where a still picture of a hotdog and a drink appear with the message that you can get the items in the lobby). Other than that, there's the sound whenever you have to make a choice (if we had to describe it, it would be a steady boom-boom-boom with little change in pitch), and a gunshot sound when someone is shot. Other than that (at least in the times we played), we ran into tearful music after Pinky's demise when his mother comes forward to talk about him as a child. We found the game, overall, strangely quiet. We kept hoping for some nifty sounds to enhance the fact we were just sitting there reading dialogue, but it just didn't appear. We think it's potentially a great idea for a software program, but it just doesn't have the hook to keep your interest level up where it should be. Perhaps with the sound capabilities of the Amiga, ST, and IIGS, the designers plan to add more in those versions scheduled for '87. We hope so. By the way, an important footnote...you *MUST* own a Macintosh Plus, or have the Plus upgrade (the 512E with 128K ROM) with the 800K disk drive (this is the upgrade which costs 512K owners \$299). It will *NOT* work with a Macintosh 512K machine! (one player; coming for Amiga, Atari ST, Apple IIGS; requires Mac Plus)
Not Recommended (MSR \$49.95)

THUNDER (NA/0001/2) is the latest utility from *Batteries Included* featuring a very good Spell Checker for Macintosh owners. The main function of the program is to act as a spell checker, working from a 50,000 root-word dictionary. You can also add to supplemental dictionaries which you develop based on your needs. Do you have a mental block about a certain word...always misspelling it? Ours is missile. With the "learned word" feature, simply type in the way you always misspell your word (in our example, it's always misile), and tell the program to replace that misspelled word every time it comes across it with the correct spelling (missile). Installation of Thunder on your desk top is extremely easy, with instructions included. You can choose to activate Thunder as you're typing, "beeping" every time it senses a misspelled word, or, the way we like it (the beeping drove us nuts), we have the spell checker go over an entire document after we finished it. As it checks through your document, it will stop on questionable words and give you several options close to the word you've written (i.e. worp might trigger several selections such as word, work, warp, etc.). You can click on the correct word and it will change it for you. If you have a word that the program doesn't know but it is correct, you can add it to your dictionary, choosing several suffixes which the dictionary will learn as also being correct. Do you ever wonder exactly how long your article is? The Stats section of Thunder will calculate number of words, sentences, characters, paragraphs, etc. of the section you've just checked.

Word Expander

A feature which we find very useful is the Word Expander which allows you to build in words you constantly use but wish to avoid typing in the entire word each time. For instance, you can tell the program to automatically change FYI into *For your information*. The program has two abbreviations already built-in...it will produce current time and date will give you today's date (both work in conjunction with your Mac's clock).

The program is compatible with a surprising number of Macintosh programs in addition to word processors such as MacWrite and Microsoft Word. It will also work with MacTerminal, Pagemaker, Jazz, Excel, Multiplan, MacPaint, FullPaint, SmartCom, HomeTerm, MacDraw, and others.

A Good Program

Overall, we found this to be a very good program with very minor drawbacks. One problem we encountered, vs. other spell checkers we've seen for other systems is that the checker does not stop on hyphenated words if both sections are spelled correctly as individual words (i.e., the program would not stop for best-speller because both words are spelled correctly in their own right; however, the correct word here is best-seller). We also found that the program did not stop when we typed "the the" (instead of just one "the"). These are small complaints to be sure as every Spell Checker we've ever looked at has one drawback or another. Perhaps we should put the test to you as we have made a point to run our entire January issue through Thunder. You can tell us whether it passed the test! (available for Macintosh and Atari ST; coming for Amiga)
Recommended (MSR \$49.95; \$39.95 for ST and Amiga)

Critically Speaking...Atari ST Compatible

SUPER CYCLE (♦♦♦♦1/2♦♦♦♦) has just been converted for the Atari ST by *Epyx*, allowing ST owners the thrill of motorcycle racing. It's a simple premise allowing you to choose the colors of your cycle, as well as jacket colors and level of difficulty. Then you go against other drivers, as well as road hazards (pylons, barricades, ice, water, etc.) as you race against the clock, shifting through three gears. Each of the nine courses has a time limit so speed is critical. Control is tricky as you lean into turns with the slightest joystick movement. If you crash, you'll be given another bike; however, you'll lose valuable time. You'll race both day and night, through the country, and with city skylines in the background as you move up through one difficulty level to another, based on success. By the way, if you make it through a few courses in the prescribed time, you'll race on one of the three bonus courses where you can pick up extra points and time.

Fast

As you sit low on your cycle, you'll get the feeling of moving very fast. As the your man leans into the turns, you'll have the tendency to lean with him, hair flying (under a helmet, of course), goggles adjusted. Joystick movement, as in the Commodore 64 version, needs to be minuscule as the slightest touch sends your rider into deep leans. It's just plain good racing fun for anyone who loves to get out on the track! (one player; joystick required; will *not* work on ST using TOS on disk)

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

MERCENARY: ESCAPE FROM TARG (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) is a combination of adventure game and flight simulator designed by Paul Woakes for *Novagen Software Ltd.* of Great Britain and distributed in the U.S. by *Datasoft*. Cast in 3-D, vector-style graphics, the game lets you become a 21st century soldier of fortune stranded on the planet Targ when your spacecraft crashes there. With the help of your portable artificial intelligence computer, Benson, your ultimate goal is escape from the planet. There are many routes to that goal, including hiring yourself out as a mercenary to either of the warring factions on Targ, the Palyars or the Mechanoids. The game lets you explore the vast surface of Targ on foot, in ground-based vehicles, or in any of four flying craft. Other areas to explore for solutions to your temporary inability to leave the planet are the mazes of the underground Central City and the three levels of the orbiting Colony Craft. You get some help in the form of maps provided with the program, but good navigational skills are still crucial to your success. Like the earlier versions for 8-bit Atari and Commodore 64/128 computers, this new version of **MERCENARY** treats the gamer to a wealth of playing variety: role-playing adventure, flight simulation, strategy, exploration, and battle action. This much depth guarantees that you won't soon tire of the game's possibilities, especially with the availability of a supplementary data disk (**MERCENARY - THE SECOND CITY**, \$19.95). (Solo play; Joystick & keyboard; Color monitor & TOS in ROM required; Blank disk required for game-saving.) Atari ST version reviewed; also available for Atari XL/XE and C64/128 at \$29.95.

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

DEGAS ELITE (NA/0000) from *Batteries Included* is an upgrade of **DEGAS**, the first graphics package for the Atari ST. Originally constrained by memory limits when the ST's operating system consumed nearly half the computer's RAM, designer Tom Hudson has more freedom now that TOS resides in ROM. He has also checked out competing programs for both ST and Amiga, adding new features and calling the upgrade "**DEGAS ELITE**." Both the original **DEGAS** and **DEGAS ELITE** were designed exclusively for the ST. They aren't ports from another computer, nor do they attempt to emulate "MacPaint" or "DeluxePaint."

Vastly Improved

The vastly improved **ELITE** is a two-screen drawing program with the second screen displaying menu options. Many enhancements in **ELITE** are now in GEM drop-down menus, removing command boxes from the menu screen. The right mouse button still toggles between the two screens, but you now have the option of invoking drawing commands via keystroke from the drawing screen. Admittedly, toggling between screens can be cumbersome, but it does free portions of the drawing screen from the clutter of many icons. Icons are used only for brushes and color choices at the top of the menu screen, with other drawing options selected from the list of menu options below.

Features

DEGAS ELITE works in all three drawing modes and has the same geometric shapes, drawing modes, and pattern fills as competing programs. There are now multiple workscreens with the ability to cut and paste among them (up to four workscreens with 512K or eight with 1M memory). Block operations in particular have been enhanced. You can define any size area in your drawing and then stretch, flip, rotate, or distort it. The distort feature allows you to grab and stretch the corners of your block, even folding one corner on top of itself for some strange effects. Blocks can be used as brushes for effect, but they are slow and don't have the versatility or power of those in the Amiga drawing packages. Other enhancements include multiple levels of magnification and a "stipple" mode that allows airbrush effects with any shaped brush. Colors can even be blended along hard intersecting

surfaces with the "smear" mode. The "animate" feature cycles a range of colors in the color palette, creating nice effects if you have designed your drawing for this feature. Text effects are still powerful. There are six sized fonts included with the program plus an editor for creating your own fonts. A good feature useful with fonts, not seen elsewhere, is the shadow option. You can create shadows by specifying direction, color, and distance from the main object. While shadowing isn't useful for most drawings except 3-D solid modeling, it does enhance text nicely.

Better Manual

The totally rewritten, 90-page manual is light years better than the old one since it contains nearly five times as much information, including table of contents, index, command summary, and technical information for file format and printer drivers in case the program doesn't support your printer. Most popular B&W and color printers are supported, but check the package before you purchase. I found **DEGAS ELITE** to be a real improvement over the original **DEGAS**, although it still isn't my personal favorite on the ST. I find the user interface awkward with its two-screen approach. Although most of my previous complaints have been remedied with enhancements, I still miss the ability to create a full-page drawing that Activision's "Paintworks" offers. (Not copy-protected.)

Recommended. (MSR \$79.95)

--Jeff Stanton

STARGLIDER (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦1/2) from *Firebird* gives colorful, vector-graphics shoot-em-up games a real shot in the arm. It closely follows the standard "defend the planet with a lone starfighter" scenario. A fleet of evil Egron spaceships has invaded the planet Novenia by tricking the robot sentinel ships that guarded the approach to the solar system. Egrons disguised their fleet as Novenian stargliders, huge flapping planetary birds that strangely migrated to the stars. They soon laid waste to the defenseless planet but missed one ancient starfighter stored in a museum on a nearby moon. You become pilot of this ancient craft equipped with lasers and a few missiles that were intended for the sentinel ships. The big problem is that even the last remaining sentinel repair depot, which has a supply of missiles and can recharge your shield and laser cells, lacks equipment to recharge the starfighter's plasma drive. Fortunately, the Egrons left many of the planet's energy towers intact so they wouldn't need to rebuild Novenia's power system. If a daredevil pilot flies low over the powerlines between the twin towers, the plasma drive can be recharged with inductive energy--a risky maneuver since you can easily hit the tower.

Playing the Game

Your craft is almost entirely controlled by mouse, which acts like a yoke. (Pull back to increase altitude, left to bank, etc.) The starfighter is highly maneuverable, can make tight turns, and is impossible to crash. The left button fires the lasers; the right button accelerates and decelerates in conjunction with forward and backward movement of the mouse. A few keys are used for functions such as missile launching and pausing the game. As you take your craft into battle, you learn that Egron forces are numerous and deadly. Some are easy kills, but the flapping starglider drones and walkers (resembling those in the movie "The Empire Strikes Back") are impervious to laser fire. A guided missile is the only way to destroy these deadly opponents. The missile is mouse-guided, but it flies for a limited few seconds and targets are always moving.

Graphics and Gameplay

The vector-style graphics define 3-D shapes with a series of colored lines and nicely animated enemy ships. The landscape is stark black as if you were flying in a nuclear winter, broken up by a few energy towers, your supply depot, and one other ground structure. Like any flight simulator, the graphics tilt and move when you are flying. The frame rate is quite respectable. Sound effects are the usual explosions but the program has a digitized female voice which informs you that "docking is completed." This digitized sound, a first for an ST game is nicely implemented in the opening music. Gameplay is better than average, with hundreds of attackers always shooting at you. Instructions in the manual are often vague, but you can obtain a full description of all enemy craft while you are inside the repair depot. (Since it is difficult to avoid damage, it's best to return to base often for repair and more missiles.) There is little strategy involved in this game. The biggest challenge is attempting to refuel your plasma drive. If you manage this, you may have a chance for some high scores. Although **STARGLIDER** lacks some of the intensity of the old eight bit "Star Raiders" game, many players who enjoyed that game will like this one. (Solo play; Mouse & keyboard; Pause.) Atari ST version reviewed. Coming soon for Amiga.

Recommended. (MSR \$44.95)

--Jeff Stanton

New Mindscape Division

Mindscape has initiated a new division, the Thunder Mountain line which will feature software at a suggested retail of \$9.95. Initially *Rambo: First Blood Part II* will be available in this new line.

Critically Speaking Atari ST & Amiga Compatible

FLIGHT SIMULATOR II (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) from the programming wizards at *SubLogic* takes advantage of the speed and power of the new 16-bit microprocessors in the Amiga and Atari ST with the redesign of this classic favorite. The full-color 3-D graphics, displayed at a respectable seven or eight frames a second, are smooth and there is virtually no feedback lag in the user interface. There are numerous new features, such as multiple view windows, a scrolling map window, weather conditions, and the ability to fly with a friend via modem hookup. Even the sound is superb, at least on the Amiga version, which features sampled digitized engine and brake sound effects. (ST version has the usual 8-bit engine drone.)

More Realism than Ever in New Version

Since realism is the key to the popularity of this simulation, Bruce Artwick and Chris Green have added every conceivable factor that a pilot could encounter, from various level cloud decks and wind turbulence to the reliability of the aircraft. The flight characteristics and instrument package for both the Cessna 182 single propeller craft and the Gates Learjet 25g class business jet are precise. A full complement of instruments, including artificial horizon, turn coordinator, rate of climb indicator and heading indicators, takes up the lower half of the display. Six radios are provided. Pilots can train under either VFR or IFR (Visual or Instrument Flight Rules) using five of the most common navigation aids: VOR, DME, ADF, ILS, and airport beacons for night flight. The plane is controlled by mouse or keyboard (joystick option on Amiga only). The best combination is to use the mouse as a control yoke and the keyboard to activate supplementary features. The mouse in the yoke position controls ailerons and elevator. Moving the mouse up and down while holding the button controls throttle, while side movements release and apply the brakes. The right button shifts the mouse to cursor control, allowing the pilot to activate pull-down menus to adjust flaps, trim the plane, change VOR settings, and put the landing gear up or down. (These functions all have keyboard equivalents.) I found it easier to bring up a map with a function key while flying than to change the mouse to cursor mode and select an item from the menus.

Viewing Modes

The program features four visual 3-D view modes, the usual one being the view through the cockpit window above the instrument panel. You can choose the view direction, perhaps looking out over the starboard or port wings. A more interesting option is to view your plane from the vantage of a spotter aircraft flying next to or behind you. A "set spot plane" menu allows you to adjust the view direction and distance from your plane. Or you can watch your plane take off and land from the control tower or set it for "track" mode and follow it (viewed from the ground). You can also combine two or more modes by opening a second 3-D window. Windows can be sized individually, allowing you to expand the cockpit view by pulling down the instrument window or even overlay a scrolling map of the area and zoom in for detail. The map with crosshair indicating your present position is especially useful if you have lost your bearings.

Airports and Scenery

Oakland, California is the default startup airport on the disk, chosen because of the picturesque scenery in the San Francisco Bay area. The scenery is extraordinarily detailed here: two bay bridges, Alcatraz Island, San Francisco's skyscrapers, hills and docks, and the nearby scenic Pacific coastline stretching northward just beyond the Bay. A jaredevil pilot can guide his or her craft beneath the San Francisco Bay Bridge with startling realism. If you set the program to Learjet mode, you can fly south along the coast to Los Angeles. In contrast, the L.A. scenery is a disappointment—just a bunch of freeways and airports with no skyscrapers in the downtown area, and the only distinguishable landmark the sawtooth-shaped Marina del Rey harbor just north of LAX airport. Both Chicago and New York City are more detailed with landmarks, but not like the San Francisco Bay area. One can change flight areas either by calling up areas on the pull-down menu or by setting the coordinates of an airport from navigation charts. Another interesting method of adjusting position is by "slewing" the plane or jet. This is like riding a magic carpet in the pause mode. Numerous keys or a combination of mouse and keyboard change the aircraft's heading, altitude, pitch, bank, longitude, and latitude. This is particularly useful for quickly setting up final approaches to practice landing technique. In fact one can save up to 12 of these interesting positions to disk and use them later for practice.

Special Features

FLIGHT SIMULATOR II has an instant replay feature which lets you observe the last 75 seconds of flight. Perhaps you crashed on landing and want to see what went amiss. You switch to the spotter plane view and replay these final seconds. It's almost like being on the FAA crash investigation team. Another feature allows two players to connect their computers (any combination of Amigas and/or Atari STs) together by modem or null cable and fly as a team. (There is a mini-communications package built into the program.) It's fun to watch our friend take off in front of you or play follow the leader. If you get separated, the program has some features that will help you find each other. If you really get stuck, you can send written messages via the dialogue box.

Combat Simulation

Last, but not least, there is the World War I Ace game. The object is to bomb the enemy's fuel depots and factory in territory west of the river. The mission is complicated by the presence of six enemy fighters stationed at their airbase. Your old plane has been modified to include modern radar display but has only old-fashioned, space-bar-activated machine guns for defense. The enemy planes here look like real aircraft, shoot accurately, and are often lethal if they get behind you. Fortunately, your plane is highly acrobatic for fast defensive and offensive maneuvering. You are supposed to be able to select the game from the "File" menu, but if your gunsight doesn't appear try selecting World War I Ace first from the prerecorded scenery on the "Situation" menu and then selecting the game. I'm not sure—it may be a bug.

Fantastic!

For years **FLIGHT SIMULATOR II** has been one of the top selling software packages on the eight-bit and IBM computers. I predict a similar fate on the Amiga and Atari ST computers because the program offers individuals a chance to experience an activity that they may not be able to afford financially—or they might not be willing to risk their lives. These new designs achieve a sense of realism that was only hinted at in earlier versions of the program. It is simply fantastic! This program with its clear and detailed, 130-page spiral-bound manual will teach you the ABCs of flying. (Solo play; optional 2-player version with modem; Mouse &/or keyboard.) Amiga and Atari ST versions reviewed; also available for Apple II, Atari XL/XE, C64/128; IBM PC/PCjr.

Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)

—Jeff Stanton

Critically Speaking...Atari ST Compatible

GATO (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦1/2) is a World War II GATO-Class submarine simulation from Spectrum HoloByte, now available for the Atari ST in an enhanced version with some new features. It is a strategic game requiring knowledge and skill at navigation, naval warfare tactics, and submarine operations in order to succeed. With the complete instrumentation of the submarine under your control, you may engage in 15 different missions at any of 10 difficulty levels, with 5 additional, advanced missions available at level 6 and above. (An additional missions disk, which includes a "create your own mission" feature, will be available directly from Spectrum HoloByte next month at \$19.95.) Missions are assigned by COMSUBPAC and may include rescues, mine-laying operations, and search-and-destroy missions. Once a mission is assigned, you must determine your torpedo-to-mine ratio, set your course using the navigation charts, and then use your best naval tactics to complete the mission. (At the lower skill levels, you get help in the form of weaker enemies whose trails show on the charts.) Screen displays include all instruments and controls, such as throttle, rudder and dive planes, radar and navigation chart, and many others, along with bridge and periscope views of your surroundings. Once you're underway, the success or failure of the mission is almost entirely in your hands, with just a few random elements introduced by the program. Fans of simulations will definitely appreciate the realism of GATO, which has been a great success in its earlier versions for other systems. ST owners reap the benefits a few extras, including the ability to lay mines, a choice of firing forward or aft torpedo tubes, and the ability to save games in progress. (Solo play; Mouse &/or keyboard; Pause; Color monitor; Blank disk required for game-saving.) Atari ST version reviewed. Also available for Apple II, C64/128, IBM, Macintosh; coming soon for Amiga.

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

SDI (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) is a Cinemaware "interactive movie" from *Master Designer Software*, distributed by *Mindscape*. The initials stand for "Strategic Defense Initiative," the space-based particle-beam defense system popularly known as "Star Wars." The time is the year 2017, when the SDI satellite shield is nearly operational and a radical faction of the KGB has started a second Russian revolution. The radicals want to attack the U.S. before SDI is complete, which could start World War III. Set against this background is a tale of heroism and love. You are the hero, Captain Sloan McCormick, in charge of America's space station and SDI. Your fellow veteran of the Soviet-American Mars mission in 2009, Natalya Kazarian, commands the Russian space station. She has been ordered by her government to defend the station against the KGB radicals and to work closely with you. And you two have a lot of experience at working closely.

Multiple Goals The game has multiple goals worthy of a hero. When KGB fanatics send ships to destroy U.S. satellites, you go to your starfighter and fly out to destroy enemy fighters and repair any damaged satellites. This portion of the game is an action-filled flight simulation and battle game, which would be easy enough if you could just stay out there and fight. However, you may need to return to the station for fuel or repairs, and you'll definitely have to return if the Russians launch a missile strike. This is when you find out about a tricky little maneuver known as computer-aided docking. The computer's idea of aid is to give you a green targeting screen, and it's up to you to line everything up very precisely. (We blew the docking

sequence many times before finally getting it right.) Repairs and refueling are easy enough, but a missile launch throws you into the next higher level of danger. Call up the SDI control screen, and you'll see the red trails of Russian missiles arcing their way toward U.S. cities. The screen even tells you which city is the target--this is SERIOUS, folks! Making a few quick strategic decisions (try to save Salt Lake City or Las Vegas?), you target an arc, decide on the satellite for sequencing, discharge full or pulse beam, and get on to the next missile. (This segment is like a highly sophisticated version of the old "Missile Command" game.) The tension mounts almost unbearably, until you get an urgent message from Natalya that the Russian space station is under attack.

Lots of Suspense, Tension, Excitement

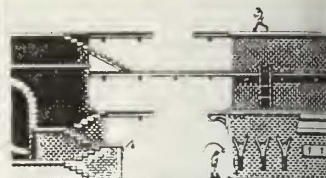
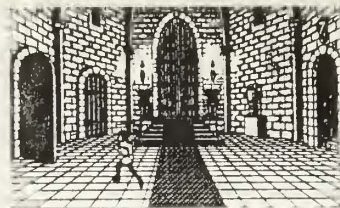
With luck, you quickly finish off the Russian missiles, dash through the airlock to your starfighter, and try to rescue Natalya. This means another close encounter with a docking sequence, of course, but she needs you! Into the Lenin Defense Station you go, only to face a dodge-and-shoot gun battle with the radicals until you reach the command center and a grateful Natalya. Assuming you make it this far (after many attempts), you're still not through, because you're expected to finish off the last of the Russian fighters. Altogether, SDI is a game with lots of suspense, tension, and excitement. A sense of great risk is always present because you come to care about the characters and have the feeling that you won't be able to accomplish all your goals in time. And the various sequences demand the best of your gaming skills. Fortunately, too, there are changes in the storyline that keep the game from being exactly the same every time you play. Stunning graphics, life-like animation, and a good soundtrack add to the feeling of a movie-like story that brings SDI well above the level of the typical action-adventure. If you enjoy action games, this one is a must! (Solo play; Joystick; 2 disks with RAMdisk option on 1040ST; Color monitor.) Atari ST version reviewed. Coming soon for Amiga, Apple IIGS, Macintosh; for IBM at \$39.95; for C64/128 at \$29.95.

Recommended. (MSR \$44.95)

THE KARATE KID PART II: THE COMPUTER GAME

(♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦1/2) from *Microdeal Ltd.* of Great Britain is a licensed game based on the second "Karate Kid" movie and features the musical theme, "The Glory of Love." (Sounds great when played through a MIDI keyboard!) The game itself is a blend of standard karate contest with elements from the film, all set with beautifully detailed backgrounds of oriental splendor. In the solo game, you take the role of young Daniel, who has entered the world of real karate where the goal is to win--and to survive. You guide Daniel through a succession of opponents, trying to defeat each one by reducing his strength to zero while maintaining Daniel's strength. Using a joystick, you have a repertoire of 16 extremely authentic-looking moves, from incisive punches to lethal kicks and graceful leaps. With practice, the moves feel as good as they look, and the screen action is punctuated with digitized sounds for realism. After a few rounds, there are bonus screens, including one where Daniel tries to break sheets of ice with his hand and another where Miyagi tries to catch a buzzing fly with chopsticks. (The drawing is an excellent likeness of actor Pat Morita, and the animation of his eyes as they follow the fly must be seen to be believed!) The fighting rounds continue, escalating in difficulty, until Daniel meets the evil Chozen in the Castle of King Shohashi. If Daniel defeats Chozen, he must solve the secret of the drum or die. (The screen with Chozen is omitted in the two-player game, which is more like tournament-style karate.) KARATE KID is the best martial arts computer game we've seen since "Kung Fu: Way of the Exploding Fist" from UXB for Commodore 64. (That was also a British game, by the way.) Thanks to the capabilities of the ST, though, KARATE KID is much stronger graphically, and we think the gameplay is better, too, because of the unusual bonus screens. No ST owner who is a martial arts fan should be without this game! (Solo or competitive play; Joystick; Color monitor; Optional MIDI keyboard for music output.) Available for Atari ST only. Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

DARK CASTLE (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) is the latest effort from *Silicon Beach Software*, and it's one that should further the company's reputation as first-class Mac experts. The game is an arcade-style action-adventure loaded with tricks, tests, pitfalls, perils, magic spells, a wonderful cast of creatures, and plenty of excitement. The player controls a hero seeking to defeat the nefarious lord of the Dark Castle, the dreaded Black Knight. But long before the hero can battle the Black Knight, he must negotiate some of the most treacherous territory imaginable: the fourteen rooms of the Dark Castle. The movements of the hero--running, jumping, climbing, ducking--are controlled from the keyboard (keys are user definable). His only defenses are fleetness of foot and a sack full of stones he can throw at adversaries such as bats, rats, and zombies. The hero's aim is mouse-controlled, and stones are thrown when you click the mouse button. Considering the fact that absolutely NOTHING moves slowly in this game, mastering the control scheme with keyboard and mouse takes a fair amount of practice. (The hero is slain quickly and often until you've played the game quite a few times.)



Wide Variety of Challenges

Just keep practicing, please, because this game is worth it! Anyone who loves arcade-style action will be thrilled by the wide variety of challenges facing the hero: swinging ropes, floating platforms, fire-breathing dragons, bouncing boulders, flying griffins, dancing magic brooms, knife-throwing guards, spell-casting wizards, and much, much more. The game features rich graphic detail, superb animation, more and better digitized sound than we've ever heard in a Mac game, and endlessly entertaining play action. We're told that it took a year and a half to complete DARK CASTLE, and we believe it. Our compliments to the design team--Mark Pierce (game design, graphics, animation), Jonathan Gay (action sequences), and Eric Zocher (sound)--wizards all! Their loving attention to detail has yielded a classic piece of action-game programming. (Solo play; Keyboard & mouse; Pause; 2 disks; Blank disks required or may be installed on hard disk.) Available for Macintosh 512K/Macintosh Plus only. Recommended (MSR \$49.95)

...Multi-Systems

SPACE QUEST CHAPTER 1: THE SARIEN ENCOUNTER (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦1/2) takes the *Sierra* 3-D animated adventure into space, where it has never been before. It is also loaded with a smart-alec brand of humor, giving it a different flavor from the "King's Quest" series and "Black Cauldron." In this adventure, you are Roger Wilco--or you can rename the character to suit yourself. Not very substantial material for a hero, you are a mere janitor on board the spacelab Arcada. But the hero's mantle falls on your shoulders when revenge-bent Sarians board Arcada and blast all the scientists aboard in their determination to capture the Star Generator. This device was being tested by the scientists, its purpose to turn a lifeless planetoid into a new sun and replace the planet Earmon's dying source of light and heat. It's up to you to find a way to disable the Star Generator, rendering it useless to the Sarians. Unfortunately, with your very low security clearance, you have little idea of where to find the device, much less disable it. But off you go, exploring the corridors and chambers of Arcada. Though you must search carefully, you dare not take too much time lest the Sarians find you. (They tend to shoot without asking questions.) If you're fairly resourceful, you'll find a way off the ship to the nearby planet of Kerona, a place of temporary refuge where you may engage in a little gambling or visit the local Droids'R'Us store. If you're very resourceful, you'll even find a way to board Deltaur, the Sarians' starship.

More Territory to Explore

In the tradition of the earlier Sierra 3-D animated adventures, SPACE QUEST features a player-controlled character who moves through 3-D surroundings. This game has a larger playing area than the earlier ones, giving the player even more territory to explore. And like the other 3-D adventures, SPACE QUEST has multiple solutions to some puzzles and random events that make the game re-playable. The parser is quite good, especially for a game as graphically intensive as this one is. Text generated by the game appears in a window that overlays a portion of the graphics until you respond. This allows for fairly lengthy descriptions without enlarging the small text input area below the graphics. Control of the character's action with joystick, keyboard, or mouse is easy and smooth. Mechanics aside, SPACE QUEST is just plain fun to play. The science fiction theme is a nice change from typical role-playing adventures, and the consistently sarcastic humor is equally refreshing. (The program never hesitates to point out your dumbest errors.) As much as we have enjoyed the medieval splendor of the "King's Quest" series, we're glad to see Sierra using their 3-D animated techniques with a new theme. (Solo play; Joystick &/or keyboard; Mouse option on ST and Amiga; Pause; IBM requires 256K and CGA or EGA; Amiga requires 512K; Blank disks required; IBM can be installed on hard disk.) Atari ST, Amiga, IBM versions reviewed; coming soon for Apple IIGS. Recommended (MSR \$49.95)

Mindscape Introduces C64 Titles at CES

Mindscape plans to show 5 new arcade games at CES. All planned to retail for \$29.95, URIDIUM finds you fighting off a squadron of enemy Super-Dreadnought ships. TRAILBLAZER is a series of soccer ball races taking you through hyperspace networks of changing color grids. PARALLAX puts you and four other astronauts on an alien planet. UCIII MATA, based on Judo, is a martial arts simulation while FIST: THE LEGEND CONTINUES puts you in the role of Kung Fu master with over 100 puzzles and trap-filled screens to explore.

Critically Speaking...Macintosh Compatible

THE PAWN (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦1/2) is an illustrated text adventure designed by Magnetic Scrolls for *Rainbird Software* of Great Britain and distributed in the U.S. by *Firebird Licensees*. This Macintosh incarnation of THE PAWN is essentially a black and white version of the original adventure for Atari ST, sharing the innovative characteristics that made the game one of the first best-sellers on the ST. The heart of the program is a text game with an extremely sophisticated parser, a role-playing quest that lets you wander the land of Kerovnia meeting a strange and wonderful cast of characters. Your goals are not clear at the start of the quest but are revealed as you run errands, uncover secrets and solve riddles. The illustrations in this game remain hidden until you activate a bar at the top of the screen, causing a picture to roll down like a window shade over the entire screen. Also attached to this bar are a group of scrolls containing mouse-activated commands, including the usual ones for saving and restoring a game. Other commands let you change the drawing style of the pictures, turn on the printer for a transcript, or define personalized function keys. (Function keys allow you to enter a frequently used command of several words with just two keys pressed simultaneously.) Macintosh owners who enjoy a good text adventure will find THE PAWN a satisfying experience that's made even more enjoyable by the accompanying illustrations on rolling window shades. (Solo play; Keyboard & mouse; Blank disks required; Printer optional.) Macintosh version reviewed. Also available for Amiga, Apple II (text only), Atari ST, C64; coming soon for Atari XL/XE, C128, IBM. Recommended. (MSR \$44.95)

...Multi-System

WORLD GAMES (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦1/2) continues a series from *Epyx*, acknowledged masters of multi-sports-event games. This one is a globe-hopping tour of international events, which may be played or practiced individually. If you compete in all eight, a Grand Championship is awarded at the end. The tour begins in Russia with weightlifting (both "snatch" and "clean and jerk"), a tough test of joystick timing that becomes more critical with increased weight. (The strain shows in the face of the weightlifter, too.) Then it's on to Germany for barrel jumping (build up skater's speed and jump over the most barrels to win). Cliff diving in Mexico is the next event, where you must control the diver's body position and allow for wind and swell of waves to avoid smashing your diver into the rocky cliffs. Then it's slalom skiing in France, followed by a trip to Canada for a lumberjack's log rolling contest. The next stop is a U.S. rodeo for a timed bull riding contest with a choice of five different bulls. The action then moves to Scotland for the caber toss, an unusual event in which a kilt-clad highlander runs with a tree trunk the size of a small telephone pole, finally tossing it end over end when he builds up enough speed. The final event is sumo wrestling in Japan. Skill, practice, and timing are the keys in all eight events, which will appeal to anyone who has enjoyed the earlier Epyx olympics-style games. Graphics and animation are outstanding in all the versions we tried, with especially good sound in the Amiga version. (1 or 2 players; joystick; Keyboard option on IBM; Color monitor required; 512K Amiga, ST.) Amiga, Atari ST, IBM versions reviewed. Also available for C64/128; coming soon for Apple II. Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦1/2) from *Epyx* features eight wrestling characters as colorful and zany as the ones on TV. As humorous as these wrestlers appear, though, the game is a serious challenge requiring fast reflexes and plenty of practice to master the wide variety of 25 wrestling moves. When the game is first played in solo mode, the computer-controlled wrestlers are so tough that it's difficult to last more than about 30 seconds. We suggest "cheating" by playing against a non-existent opponent in the two-player mode to give yourself the opportunity to learn the various moves, including the best positions for initiating them and the preliminary moves needed to get into position for others. Then you'll be better able to survive a match against the computer or a friend. With some time spent really mastering the moves, CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING becomes a very satisfying contest of skill and strategy. Graphics are quite good, with even the facial expressions visible in the ST version. (1 to 8 players; Joystick; Apple requires 128K and has keyboard option; ST requires color monitor.) Apple II, Atari ST versions reviewed; also available for C64/128. Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

Critically Speaking...Apple Compatible

TAKE YOUR OWN MURDER PARTY (NA/♦♦♦) is an interesting twist on the "Clue" theme, brought to you courtesy of *Electronic Arts*. Capitalizing on a very popular theme, the disk provides you with everything you need to host a murder party for up to eight of your friends (you should have at least five participants for the party to be a success. Within the disk are host instructions giving you step-by-step guidance on how to plan and throw a successful murder party; personalized invitations and envelopes to mail to your guests;

personalized profiles for each of the characters your guests will portray; a clue book for each guest; note sheets; verdict sheets; as well as a confidential profile page for each of the guests revealing some of their characters' secrets. You don't even need a computer at home to play the game as you only use the computer to create and print out all of the above material used for the party.

Two "Whodunits" Included

The first setting, *"The Big Kill,"* brings a group of friends together to reminisce about college days in the 60's and to discover which one of them is a murderer. *"Empire"* is set in the midst of a rich and powerful family attempting to uncover which one of them could have murdered the group's matriarch. The extent of possibilities is not limited to just two murders as the computer changes the murderer's identity each time a new party is thrown, allowing for up to sixteen different parties.

Perfect for a Fascinating Evening of Sleuthing

The package is a very clever way to design a great evening of sleuthing. We also like the fact that during your evening of entertainment, you do not need to consult the computer for anything...it's a little difficult to keep the mood going when you have to gather all your guests to stand around the computer awaiting instructions, or some other tidbit needed to continue. The package includes suggestions for appropriate dress for the evening. You'll even find recipes for the evening's dinner, fitting the mood of the murder you've chosen! (available for Apple and IBM; coming for C64; printer required) Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

Critically Speaking...Commodore 64 Compatible

GHOSTS'N GOBLINS (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦1/2) is an adaptation of *Capcom's* own popular arcade game, a quest by a knight to save his lady from the supernatural forces of the Devil. The player controls the knight clad in armor, who begins his arduous trip through the multiple stages of the game in a cemetery. Accompanied by eerie music, zombies rise from the ground between the gravestones and attempt to block the way. The knight throws knives to stop them, occasionally gathering a bonus carried by one of the zombies. (Later in the game he acquires other weapons.) He clammers over gravestones, meeting a flying bird, a flower that hurls projectiles at him, and then a hopping demon. It seems that everything he meets is a deadly messenger from Hades! One hit from any of these demonic enemies causes the knight to lose his armor; a second hit turns him into a skeleton. As he moves farther on his trip to Hades, he is met by ever more horrible creatures, but some of the most difficult to defeat are Satan's generals who guard the gates between stages of the trip. With each new stage, the dangers increase. He must face demons, dragons, skeletons, and even a sea of fire.

Challenging Action-Adventure

GHOSTS'N GOBLINS is a very challenging action-adventure which will test even the most accomplished of game players. The action is very fast and full of surprises at every turn. Joystick response is very good. Graphics are clear and well animated, although not as richly detailed as the first home version of this game for the Nintendo Entertainment System. (There are fewer screens in the Commodore 64 version than there are in the NES version, also. We're told that this is due to limits in disk capacity.) Unless you own a Nintendo System and have access to the NES version of GHOSTS'N GOBLINS, the C64 version is a great arcade translation and a game that's a lot of fun to play. (Solo play; Joystick.) C64/128 version reviewed. Also available for Nintendo Entertainment System; coming soon for Apple II. Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

Conversions Available from Electronic Arts

AMNESIA, an entertaining text adventure first released for Apple II by Electronic Arts, is now available for IBM/Tandy and compatibles (MSR \$44.95). A Commodore 64/128 version (\$39.95) is imminent. The adventure takes place in New York City, where the player becomes a character who awakens in a seedy hotel room with no memory of how he came to be here without clothes, without money, without a notion of who he is. Even worse, the police are after him, a strange woman wants to marry him, and someone wants to kill him. New for Macintosh is SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD (\$39.95), an interactive game of exploration in the New World. Electronic Arts has also just released conversions of two Origin Systems programs done originally for Apple II. Both are based on classic strategic board games, OGRE for C64/128, Atari XL/XE, Atari ST, and Amiga (\$39.95) and AUTODUEL for C64/128 (\$49.95). Soon to come are an IBM/Tandy version of OGRE and AUTODUEL for Macintosh, Amiga, Atari ST, and Atari XL/XE.

Nintendo Note

Of interest to our many Canadian subscribers: Mattel of Canada has been appointed the exclusive distributor of the Nintendo Entertainment System in Canada.

Critically Speaking...Commodore 64 Compatible

THE BARD'S TALE II: THE DESTINY KNIGHT (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦) is the sequel to "The Bard's Tale," both by *Interplay Productions* for *Electronic Arts*. For those who loved the first adventure, the sequel is a must because it enlarges and improves upon its predecessor. (Experience with the first game is NOT required, although characters developed in "The Bard's Tale" or even "Ultima III" can be used in THE DESTINY KNIGHT.) Your goal is to recover seven pieces of the Destiny Wand, stolen by followers of the evil Archmage Lagoth Zanta and scattered across the land. (Pieces are hidden in "Snare of Death" real-time puzzle rooms.) You travel through territory 50% larger than "The Bard's Tale" with a party of up to seven adventurers. The territory includes 6 cities, 25 dungeon levels, many castles, and a vast wilderness. Adventurers come in a variety of races and classes, including that singer of magical songs, the Bard. If you leave an open spot or two in your party, wandering characters both good and bad may join the group. The magic system has been expanded: seven spell levels, 79 spells, and an advanced new class of magic user, the Archmage. (You'll need one of these before you can face the Archmage Lagoth Zanta.) Combat, always necessary, is much more sophisticated in this game because range-to-combat is critical. For example, you meet a group of enemies at ten feet, which can be fought hand to hand, but they may be reinforced with a rear guard of archers at 20 feet. To avoid having your party decimated by archers, some fighters will have to use missile weapons or magic spells. We like this new combat system because it keeps the inevitable fighting scenes from being little more than mindless bashing contests. Other improvements include greater use of animation, better-sounding music, and easier going in the early stages of the game (fewer monsters, more gold, and a level-one healing spell). Overall, however, THE DESTINY KNIGHT is more challenging than the first game and requires more strategic thinking, making it a truly worthy successor to "The Bard's Tale." (Solo play; Keyboard; Pause; Blank disk required.) C64/128 version reviewed; coming soon for Apple II.

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

221 B BAKER ST (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦1/2) is one of the most famous addresses in literature, the residence of Sherlock Holmes. This program from *DataSoft*, based on the boardgame, lets you try solving 30 cases, either on your own as Holmes, Dr. Watson, Inspector Lestrade or Irene Adler, or competing against one to three friends. (A data disk with 30 more cases is available for \$14.95.) The playing area is a multi-screen layout of old London in diagonal perspective for a 3-D look. After reading about the crime in the Case Book, players spin an electronic die to determine how many moves they may take and then set off to gather clues and beat the others back to 221 B Baker St. with the solution. (To avoid giving away clues to other players, everyone can opt for coded clues. This introduces the possible tactic of trying to decipher other players' codes to win more quickly!) There's more to the game than just methodically checking every location for clues, because there are secret tunnels (shortcuts between locations), and you can lock certain clue locations if you're carrying a badge from Scotland Yard. (Extra keys are at the Locksmith.)

Great Party Game

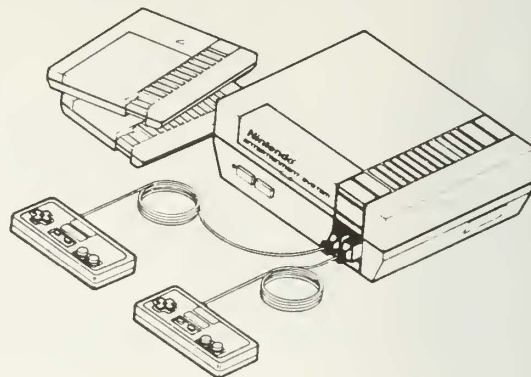
We had been looking forward to the release of this game, and it lives up to our expectations. The sleuthing is great fun, and it's spiced with charming 3-D graphics, good music, and even synthesized speech. Although enjoyable as a solo game, 221 B BAKER ST. really shines as a multi-player contest. In fact, it would make a wonderful centerpiece for a theme party, perhaps with guests dressing as characters from the Sherlock Holmes stories and playing the game in teams. (1 to 4 players or teams; Joystick or keyboard.) C64/128 version reviewed; coming soon for Apple II, Atari XLXE. Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

SPECIAL EDITION A First for Computer Entertainer

In conjunction with our celebration of publishing for five years, we are working on a unique SPECIAL EDITION which will be mailed, free, to all current subscribers in April, 1987. This collector's item will take you from the infancy of videogames to the present and beyond as we look at the sometimes tumultuous, but always fascinating industry. We will also feature reviews of our ten favorite games of all-time. In addition, we will be printing a list of the favorite games of many of the movers and shakers of the industry! ...and, as usual, there'll be a few surprises. Watch for this exciting special issue in April!

It's Our Fifth Birthday Party... And You Get the Presents!

We're having a three-month birthday celebration and we want you to join in. You can win software and accessories for the system you own. It's easy, all you have to do is enter! We're going to have loads of prizes so your chance of winning is very good.



GRAND PRIZE is a *Nintendo Entertainment System*, along with games such as *Hogan's Alley*, *Super Mario Bros.*, *Kung Fu*, *Baseball*, *Excitebike*, and *Volleyball* (all courtesy of Nintendo), as well as some third party software to be announced. A prize package worth over \$250.00.

There's loads of other prizes too as we will be putting together packages of software (all prizes worth at least \$50) for the system you own. We're still gathering the prizes but already we have exciting titles from many companies who have graciously donated software and accessories to make this a birthday party we won't forget!

Strategic Simulations Inc. has provided gift certificates, allowing you to choose anything from their exciting collection of programs. SubLogic has sent us *Flight Simulator II* for Amiga, ST, and IBM, as well as *Jet* for Commodore and Apple, and a great selection of *Scenery disks*. Broderbund has sent some of their hottest titles, including *Toy Shop* and *Print Shop* for Macintosh, *Animate* and *Airheart* for Apple, and more. Accolade's package includes *Mean 18*, *Ace of Aces*, *Hardball*, *Fight Night*, and *PSI Trading Co.*...all for multiple systems. Batteries Included has provided some of their most recent programs including *DEGAS Elite* and *Thunder* for the ST, *Paperclip II* for C128, and *Thunder* for Macintosh.

More is on the way...Flrebird is sending *The Pawn* for all the systems it's available for. Capcom is sending software for Nintendo and Commodore. More coming from...

Activision
Baudville
Electronic Arts
Epy
Infocom
Master Designer Software
Mindscape
Polarware
Silicon Beach
Suncom

Sound Great? You bet! And by the time March rolls around, we're going to have even more! Everyone is coming to our party. Be sure you do too!

Here's how to enter...

Send us a postcard (letters will not be accepted). The following information is REQUIRED to be eligible:

1) PRINT your name, address, and the system(s) you own (Please be specific...for example, C64, C128, or Amiga, not just Commodore as this will ensure you get your prize in a system you own!).

2) List your THREE all-time favorite ENTERTAINMENT programs, specifying which system they are for and which is your #1, #2, and #3. These will be your votes for the COMPUTER ENTERTAINER READERS' HALL OF FAME awards (based on your votes, 5 programs will receive HALL OF FAME awards, to be announced in the May, 1987 issue.)

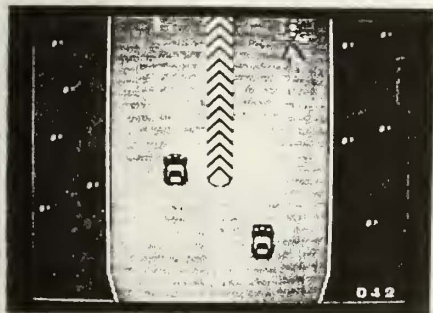
3) Send that information back to us with a postmark NO LATER THAN March 31, 1987 and received by us no later than April 10, 1987. Send your postcard(s) (multiple entries are permitted. Each entry must be on a separate postcard and fulfill all the above requirements) to: Computer Entertainer, PO Box 4702, North Hollywood, CA 91607. Winners will be announced in our May issue from a random drawing held on April 20, 1987.

WOW! Now this is a birthday party! Remember, you can't win if you don't enter! And, be a part of our first annual READERS' HALL OF FAME. It's your chance to tell us what you think are the best games of all-time, covering all computer and game systems!

THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

Critically Speaking...Sega Compatible

ACTION FIGHTER (♦♦♦/♦♦♦), reminiscent of Coleco's *Spy Hunter*, is the latest "mega cartridge" from *Sega* for their master system. In this action game, you're the Super Rider, attempting to carry out five different assignments given you, such as destroying attack submarines, anti-aircraft tanks, up through Round 5 which is "Top Secret." As you move through your assignment, you can switch your motorcycle to a customized car or jet plane in a matter of seconds (if you collect the right parts along the way). The trick is to know when to switch as you'll encounter ground and air battles. You have several enemies...from various motor vehicles and tanks on the ground to jets, helicopters, and missiles in the air. Your directional button (on the left of your controller) acts as your steering, as well as your accelerator. The buttons on the right set off your ammunition, as well as transforming your vehicle between the motorcycle and car (once you've collected the parts needed). Occasionally, the "Sega" truck will appear on the road. If you can "dock" with it, you'll receive extra capabilities to help you in your quest, such as the ability to fire missiles. You can crash as many times as you like as you're working against a clock, not a certain number of "lives." As long as there's still time on the clock, you'll receive another vehicle to pick up where you left off.



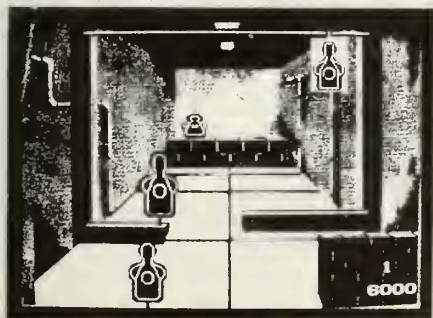
Really Good Action

This is a straight-ahead, good action game in which there's lots going on. Maneuver around the other vehicles (or shoot them down for points), and make sure you don't run off the road as you attempt to accomplish your task for the round. If you slow down too much, watch out for the enemy helicopter which will come into view, hovering over you for the kill. You'll work the controllers in a fine manner as they react to every slight movement you make. The graphics are nice and bright, crisp, with vertical scrolling of the scenery. If you like a good action game, you'll enjoy this one. If, however, you already own *Spy Hunter* for your ColecoVision, you may find this game too similar to add to your Sega library. (one player)
Recommended (MSR \$35.00)

MARKSMAN SHOOTING & TRAP SHOOTING (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦/1/2) features two games in one for the Light Gun from *Sega*. Both games give you the chance to polish off your shooting skills as you sit back and take aim at your television screen.

In Training for the FBI

Marksman Shooting takes you into the interior shooting ranges where you must watch for the targets as they move across the screen, jump up from behind a wall, move across the top, etc. It will take a steady hand and eye as you can't move on to the next round unless you hit more than the designated number of targets in any given round. If you miss one of the targets you'll see the small explosion of your bullet as it hits the wall, floor, etc.



In the Great Outdoors

If you enjoy recreational shooting, you can opt for the Trap Shooting portion of the game. After the warning "beep," two clay pigeons are launched. It's up to you to shatter them for points. Just like in the real thing, you'll find the targets being tossed out in different directions, opposite directions, crossing each other, and more, all to make you stay on your toes. If you hit the required number of clay pigeons, you can move on to the next round. As you move through the rounds, you'll see a change in scenery and, naturally, harder and harder situations.

Addictive

We've found the light phaser for *Sega* and *Zapper* for *Nintendo* just a bit on the addictive side (based on the booths at the electronics shows, we're not the only ones who can't put the guns down) and both these games are simple, but extremely effective, uses of the light phaser. The graphics are superb, with extremely bright colors, sharp outlines, and a definite sense of bullet action. You may think that this game is too simple for you, but you'll have a tough time putting down the gun (we only did after the arm just became too tired to continue!) once you've started. We also like the fact that *Sega* opted to give us two different shooting games in one "combo cartridge," giving the player more ways to play. (one player) Recommended (MSR \$35.00)

PRO WRESTLING (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦) brings the craziness of TV-style pro wrestling to the *Sega* system, complete with all the slams, jabs, and free-for-alls you would expect in such a game. Four two-man teams, each with their own special techniques, are available for solo play against the computer (timed matches) or head-to-head play with a friend (untimed matches). Surviving, much less doing well at the game, requires memorizing your fighter's three special moves and mastering the position and timing necessary to execute them and the other possible moves. *Sega* got a lot of mileage out of just two action buttons in this game. For example, when both opponents are standing, button #1 yields a punch and the other a kick. If your opponent is rebounding from the ropes, a very quick push and release of button #1 throws him into the ropes or a slower push activates one of your special moves. The buttons are also used for tagging your teammate, pinning your opponent, climbing the corner post, or attacking with a chair when you're outside the ring. Once you get all of the moves down, the game is very lively and a lot of fun to play. And it has crisp, clear, cartoon-like graphics. (Solo or competitive play; Pause.) Available for *Sega Master System* only.
Recommended. (MSR \$35)

THE NINJA (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) is a challenging action-adventure from *Sega* which incorporates many of the popular legends about Ninja warriors. You take the role of Kazamaru, a brave young Ninja who attempts to rescue a princess locked in the evil Gyokuro's Ohkami Castle. You must make your way through 13 progressively more difficult settings: fields, cliffs, across a river, up a stone wall, and others. At the start of the quest, you are armed only with Ninja darts. As you progress, you may find scrolls that give you the power of "Pinwheel Darts" (shuriken) or of extra speed. You must also locate five scrolls that show the way through the castle maze. The action scrolls vertically in many of the scenes, and you soon learn to move up the screen like a broken-field runner, tossing your darts or shurikens at the onrushing Ninja warriors sent by Gyokuro. You can even make yourself invisible (and invincible) for short periods. The enemy Ninja are full of surprises—they materialize from rocks, slash with swords or sickles, disguise themselves as wolves, and even multiply themselves. We really enjoyed this game. The Ninja theme is fascinating and the challenges of the varied screens give the game a lot of depth. The graphics, with their high-view angle on the action, are excellent throughout. We rate this one of the best games yet for this system. (Solo play; Pause.) Available for *Sega Master System* only.

Recommended. (MSR \$35)

ALEX KIDD IN MIRACLE WORLD (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦1/2) is a whimsical adventure in which the boy, Alex Kidd, travels through Miracle World to try to save the city of Radactian from the evil Janken the Great (The exact method of saving Radactian is revealed as the game progresses.) from *Sega*. Along the way, Alex gathers gold and treasures, encounters many strange and deadly creatures, and breaks lots of rocks with his tough little fist. Miracle World has eleven different locations, from mountains and cliffs to an underwater screen, and Alex must make his way through all of them. On his travels, he may enter shops to purchase useful items with the gold he has collected, including some magic, an extra life, and a few vehicles to

make his travels easier. There's a zippy little motorcycle, a helicopter-like flying contraption, and a speedboat. While walking, riding, or jumping through the locations of Miracle World, Alex occasionally runs into Janken the Great or one of his followers. When this happens, Alex is immediately challenged to three games of Janken (otherwise known as scissors/paper/stone). If Alex loses two of three games, he is turned into a stone and loses a life; if he wins, he moves on to the next location.

Delightful

ALEX KIDD IN MIRACLE WORLD turns out to be one of those delightful games with lots of surprises and things to discover. Graphically, the game is cute and colorful, making it visually appealing to children. Unlike most other Sega games, it starts off slowly and gives you a chance to explore before you're killed three times and have to start over. However, the speed and difficulty level increase soon enough, offering gamers the kind of challenge that keeps them coming back for more. (Solo play) Available for Sega Master System only.

Recommended (MSR \$35)

Critically Speaking...Nintendo Compatible

GRADIUS (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦1/2) by Konami is the first space game for the NES, and it's a fast-moving, horizontally scrolling shoot-out with many screens. The theme is familiar: the peaceful planet Gradius is under attack from the alien amoeboid Bacterions, and it's up to you to save Gradius by flying your Warp Rattler through a fearsome gauntlet of alien fire while stealing enemy power capsules, blasting Bacterions to smithereens, and finally destroying the Bacterion superfortress, Xaeros. The Bacterions have a wide range of weapons and vehicles capable of tracking your ship and anticipating its moves. At times they throw up entire walls that seem impenetrable. Fortunately, your Warp Rattler may be the most awesome fighting ship ever let loose in the galaxy. In addition to its basic firing ability, it can capture enemy power capsules and use them for power boosting. Activating a power boost gives your ship new capabilities, such as double-beam or high-penetration lasers, air-to-surface missiles, extra speed, force-field barrier, or even a "ghost ship" or two to double or triple your firepower. The game is challenging in the extreme—definitely not for beginners. With its endless hordes of fast and evasive enemies, GRADIUS will test your reflexes to the limits. (At least the pause control keeps you from getting terminal wrist cramp.) If you like shooting games with fast action, this is one of the best we've seen. (Solo or 2-player alternating; Pause.) Available for NES only.

Recommended. (MSR approx. \$35.00)

KARATE CHAMP (♦♦♦♦/♦♦1/2) was adapted by Data East from their own popular coin-op game, and it features a series of karate matches in nine settings. The tournament-style matches are started and scored by a talking referee. Players have a range of eight karate kicks, punches, and sweeps, plus the ability to jump, squat, block, or move from side to side. All moves are directed with a combination of the two action buttons and the controller pad, and it takes a bit of practice to keep them all straight. Between matches, the winner gets a chance to earn bonus points by blocking thrown flower pots, splitting wooden blocks, or knocking out a stampeding bull. This version is quite close to the arcade game, offering plenty of action in brightly colored surroundings. Unfortunately, the graphics are flat and two-dimensional. It's difficult to be too critical, however, since the coin-op's graphics are just as flat, and it's still a popular game. If you're looking for three-dimensional realism and graceful moves in a martial arts game, this is not a good choice. But if you're a fan of the coin-op game, you will probably find this version of KARATE CHAMP to your liking. (Solo or competitive play; Pause.) NES version reviewed; also available for Apple, C64/128.

MSR \$29.95

Critically Speaking...Atari 2600 Compatible

SOLARIS (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) by Douglas Neubauer for Atari is a surprise: a new game for the venerable Atari 2600 that is strong enough to hold its own in an era of game systems with far greater capabilities than the modest 2600. The goal of this game is to travel through 16 space quadrants, battling Zylon enemies, to find the planet Solaris and rescue the stranded Atarian Federation Pioneers. You command a speedy StarCruiser loaded with Galactic Scanner and all the photon torpedoes you need. The game starts by launching your StarCruiser into hyperspace. Your Scanner appears, showing the 48 sectors of one of the game's 16 space quadrants. Sectors may be occupied by a variety of Zylon enemy craft, a Zylon or Federation planet (shades of "Star Trek!"), or assorted surprises. Set course for one of the sectors and guide your ship carefully through the hyperwarp to conserve fuel. If you've chosen to engage a Zylon force, you'll find yourself in deep space where unseen enemy ships can be spotted on your Targeting Computer. The ships appear from the distance, moving

quickly and evasively as they shoot at you. When the sector is cleared, you are returned to the Galactic Scanner. (Keeping a second joystick plugged in gives you instant access to the Scanner, even during battle.) Be especially careful of Zylon forces near the Federation planet. If it is destroyed, the whole quadrant becomes a Red Zone and joystick control is reversed. Federation planets are also critical because they are the only place you can repair and refuel your StarCruiser. Flying over Zylon planets is worthwhile because you can rescue stranded space cadets for bonuses. Other sectors contain different challenges, such as the long, narrow corridors where you must watch for Zylon Guardians and fly over a key to earn safe passage through Ion Doors.

Best Space Game for 2600

Without question, SOLARIS is the best space game ever done for this system. Calling on both strategic planning and joystick skills, the game has long-term playability and plenty of depth. In fact, it's difficult to believe it was done on a 2600 because of the beautifully smooth graphics and extensive play options, all achieved with the tricks of 16K of bank-switched RAM. Kudos to Douglas Neubauer for a superb job of programming. (Solo play; 1 or 2 Joysticks.) Available for Atari 2600 only.

Recommended. (MSR \$12.50)

Critically Speaking...Atari 7800 Compatible

XEVIOUS (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦) is an adaptation of the Namco arcade game by Atari for the 7800 ProSystem. The theme, a switch on the usual one, is that WE are the aliens, and the Xevions are the original inhabitants who now want Earth back without humans. Xevion forces are both airborne and on the ground, commanding a wide array of sometimes deceptively slow-moving vehicles. The game is playable at four skill levels, putting you in command of a Solvalou Fighter equipped with a Zapper for destroying airborne enemies and a Blaster for eliminating Xevion ground forces. The action scrolls vertically as your fighter moves up the screen. Attacking forces in the air weave and shoot, sometimes trying to pin you in a crossfire. Xevion ground forces also fire on your fighter. Enemy citadels are hidden underground, but your target sight glows red when you fly over one. Raise a citadel with a Blaster hit and then destroy it with additional shots. Points are also earned by raising flags hidden in the ground and waterways; fly over raised flags to earn extra ships. Survive the enemy forces and you will face the Andor Genesis Mother Ship. A shot to its central reactor disables it, but it will be followed by more Xevion attack forces and another Mother Ship.

Detailed graphics

XEVIOUS features excellent, detailed graphics with especially good representation of moving, three-dimensional objects. Gameplay is highly challenging and will certainly appeal to fans of the arcade game. However, the game is marred by Atari's skimping on the instructions. They provide a list of 21 Xevion forces worth varying amounts of points, but no pictures. As a result, there's no way to plan your strategy for maximum points until you play the game many times and watch score increments to guess what you've hit. A Garu Derota Mega-Station is worth 2000 points while a Logram Sphere Station is only good for 300. It would be nice to know which is which, especially when hitting the former would give you just enough points for a free ship. We don't object to Atari's trying to save money by printing instructions in black and white instead of color, but omitting the pictures of 21 different enemy forces is inexcusable. (Solo or 2-player alternating; Pause.) Available for Atari 7800 only.

Recommended. (MSR \$12.50)

Coming from Baudville

Baudville plans to show several new products at CES, including AWARD MAKER PLUS (Apple II), 816 PAINT (Apple IIGS), and VIDEO VEGAS (Amiga, Atari XL/XE, C64/128). Additional conversions of their "Hacker Jack" line of titles (VIDEO VEGAS, GUITAR WIZARD, RAINY DAY GAMES) are planned for Atari ST, Macintosh, and IBM during the first quarter of 1987.

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE...

Don't miss out on all the great back issues! We've been covering the computer and dedicated game field for five years. Most issues are still available (none left of Vol 1, #1,2,3). Send \$2.00 for each back issue you want. Buy six or more, and they're just \$1.50 each. Make certain you have a complete set!

Our Japan Visit -- Part 2

Well, we've had some time to thumb through the dozen or so magazines we brought back and it appears that the Japanese get more detailed information on games than ever provided here, even when the 4-color videogame magazines existed. The reason we say "it appears" is simple...all we can do is look at the pictures and an occasional word in English. These are very colorful magazines with detailed information on featured games each month. One issue featured a 4-color pullout section on every screen and peril of *SUPER PITFALL!* Now, wouldn't that be a nice reference piece to have! In every issue there are tons and tons of actual game screens (again, all published in color) along with descriptions and hints (we think). Each issue appears to feature dozens of games in issues which run over 100 pages each!

Loads of Software Advertised

There's lots of advertising too which gives us a feel of the number of games out there (LOTS). Based on all the feedback from readers from our last issue, we're going to run all the titles down, with manufacturer (this is based on our deciphering what little English there is on the pages of the magazines so please bear with us if we make an error.). Games advertised in the magazines we picked up were (in no particular order, but all for Nintendo or their disk system): *Dragon Slayer J.R.* by Falcom; *Buggy Popper* by Deco; *Exed Exes* and *Lot Lot* by Tokuma Soft; *Super Mario Bros. 2* for the Nintendo Disk System by Nintendo; *Labyrinth* by Tokuma Shoten; *Sqoon* (submarines and sharks) by Irem; *The Adventures of Chatran* (Chatran is a cat) by Ponyca; *Dead Zone* by Sunsoft for the Nintendo disk; *Super Xevious*, *Skykid*, and *The Tower of Druaga* by Namco (we picked up a Namco flyer which showed pictures of 18 different titles on the back!); *Terra Presta* and *Crazy Climber* by Nichibutsu; *King Knight*; *Galaxy Odyssey* by Imagineer Co for the Nintendo Disk system; *Super Star Force* by Tecmo; *King Slender*, *Great Puma*, *The Amazon*, *Kin Corn Karn*, *Giant Panther*, and *Starman* by Tokumasyoten for the Nintendo Disk System; *Dragonball* by Bandai; *Murder on the Mississippi* (sound familiar?); *Little Computer People* (also sound familiar?) for the Nintendo Disk System; and seemingly dozens of games which had no English so we can't translate them for you. Whew!! By the way, we are not leaving Sega out; however, we saw no advertising in the magazines that indicated Sega system and when we were in the stores, we only saw the familiar white and blue boxes made by Sega themselves...and titles we have either seen or are expecting in the US.

Controllers Galore

The Japanese, unlike here, have a vast choice of third party controllers to plug into their Nintendo (we bought two, but the pin configurations are different so we'll have to work on that too). From Seta, you can purchase a *Wireless Commander*, large controller with big buttons on the right and the t-shaped button on the left. The price is 5,800 yen (about \$36.00). You can also purchase a *Joyball*, featuring a huge, bright yellow ball joystick from Hal. Then there's Ascii Corporation's *Stick Turbo* which looks a little like the new slimmed-down Atari 2600 console. It features a joystick on the left and big buttons on the right for Trigger A and B and "Turbo Speed". From Hori there's the *Laser Commander* (about \$24.00) that features a big red button replacing the t-shaped controller. The same company will let you "take off" with its *Wing Commander* (about \$30). It has a t-bar controller so you can grab it just like a airplane controller. Nothing strike your fancy yet? How about Spital's *Family Camp Turbo* featuring a big red joystick in the middle and big controller buttons on both sides (allowing left-handed use). We counted thirteen different fancy control "decks" available from third party companies...and that's not counting numerous replacement joysticks.

Other Stuff

Want more? How 'bout a cleaner cartridge for your Nintendo? Or a Super Mario wall clock or alarm? There's carrying cases to take your cartridges to a friend's house in bright plastic colors. There's Super Mario Bros. beach towels, place mats, car mats (!), and posters. And, we even saw an ad for the hilarious VideoGame CD we found in Los Angeles (reviewed in our August, 1986 issue). It seems there's a collection of ten (!) different CD's. There's *Capcom Game Music*, *Tecmo Game Music*, *Hudson Game Music*, *Konami Game Music Vol 1*, *The Return of Video Game Music* (now, that sounds interesting!), and more. By the way, for anyone interested in attempting to track down

any of these (IF any besides the one we found are being exported), they are all released on ALFA.

Other Systems

In addition to the Sega and Nintendo systems, we ran into the Twin Famicom System from Sharp. The controllers look virtually identical to the Sega and Nintendo systems. There are two slots with the one on top taking a cartridge and the one on the front accepting a 3-1/2" disk. We ran into the system in just a few places and couldn't find anyone who spoke English to tell us more about it. We also ran into an item made by Nintendo we weren't aware of before and, again, were unable to get any information on. It's the Hacker Junior and appears to be a smaller version of the regular Nintendo system.

By the way, we want to thank the few readers we heard from who had adapted cartridges they bought in Japan for their Nintendo. Just as soon as we can get some time (after CES and our Birthday Celebration), we're going to try some of the hints that were passed along to us.

Konami To Unveil New Nintendo Titles

Konami, a familiar name in coin-op worldwide, plans to unveil four new Nintendo-compatible titles at CES. They've already released *Gradius* (review in this issue) for the system and now will augment their Nintendo involvement with *Track & Field* (a familiar title to most of us), as well as *Rush 'N Attack*, *Castlevania*, and *Double Dribble*. We'll bring you details of the games next month; however, you can check our Availability Update for planned release dates.

C64 and Apple Too

Konami will also be showing titles for Commodore 64, including *Track & Field*, *Gradius*, *Jailbreak*, *Iron Horse*, *Super Basketball*, and *Circus Charlie*. Apple titles will include *Track & Field* and *Yie Ar Kung Fu*.

New Campaign Game from SSI

Strategic Simulations is planning their newest campaign strategy game with *War in the South Pacific* (Commodore and Apple). Three scenarios included in this semi-real time game are The Battle of the Coral Sea (May, 1942); the Invasion of Guadalcanal by the American Marines (August, 1942), and the Japanese attempt at counterattack on Guadalcanal (October, 1942). Suggested retail will be \$59.95.

British Invasion, Part Two

Back in the 1960s, the immense popularity of British rock & roll groups in the U.S., such as the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Herman's Hermits and many others, was known as the "British Invasion." In case you haven't noticed, a second wave of entertainment with a British accent has invaded, this time in the form of computer games. A couple of the newer software companies (Firebird and Mastertronic) in this country are U.S. branches of British companies, and several American companies have begun importing British designs. A few examples: Datasoft's *MERCENARY* and *THEATRE EUROPE*, Electronic Arts' *COMPUTER SCRABBLE*, Epyx's *500XJ Joystick*, Spinnaker's *UXB* label products such as *KUNG FU: WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST*, and Activision's *Electric Dream* label products including *ROCKY HORROR SHOW*, *SPINDIZZY*, and *TITANIC*. Recently we had the opportunity to see the impressive *CAULDRON* and *CAULDRON II* when we met two representatives of Palace Software, who were on a whirlwind California tour from London. These titles, which have won awards in Europe, have been licensed to Broderbund for distribution in the U.S. in 1987. The complex action-adventures may be re-named when released by Broderbund. We'll keep you informed!

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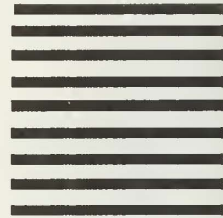
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"New" Third-Party Game for 2600

We recently came across a game called *TAX AVOIDERS*, apparently a new third-party release for Atari 2600 although it bears a 1983 copyright. Conceived by Darrell Wagner, a licensed tax consultant and former IRS Revenue Agent, and developed by Todd Clark Holm, an independent investment advisor, the game is produced by American Videogame, a division of H & L Schwartz, Inc. The object is to become a millionaire (after taxes) in one year. The first of two screens has you maneuver a stick-figure character along four horizontal lines (levels of bureaucracy), collecting dollar signs and avoiding government red tape symbols. In the second screen, your character attempts to acquire the best of seven Tax Shelter Investments, avoiding audits by the IRS Agent and using the advice of a CPA and an Investment Advisor. Taxes are collected quarterly by automatic withholding, the amount depending on which tax-sheltered investment you have in your portfolio. The game is very cleverly conceived but primitively implemented with barely acceptable graphics and less than smooth control. It would be of value chiefly to collectors.

"GameMaker" Contest Winner Announced

Activision recently announced the winner of its "GameMaker" contest: Cleophus W. Davis III. The 27-year-old mail carrier from Hayward, Calif. won the \$5000 grand prize for his 100-room maze adventure, "Deadline." The game was selected by designer Garry Kitchen and his staff from hundreds of entries. We had a chance to talk to Mr. Davis, known as Cleo to his friends, and he told us that he bought his Commodore 64 computer in January, 1985. When he purchased "GameMaker," he said he had "a fairly decent knowledge of BASIC" but was having a rough time trying to teach himself Assembly language. Cleo credits working with "GameMaker" as a great help in understanding Assembly language. He spent four months designing "Deadline" in his spare time, when he wasn't delivering mail in Hayward or playing guitar in a rock and roll band that plays club dates in the San Francisco Bay area. He recalled thinking that "some kid" would probably win the contest, so he was quite happy when he got the call from Activision. Asked what he plans to do with his prize money, Cleo said, "I'd like to buy a new computer, but I think my wife and I may save it toward buying a house." Cleo's award-winning game is available from Activision to anyone who purchases a specially marked package of the "GameMaker" or "GameMaker Library" programs.

Rumor of the Month

Rumor has it that Atari will introduce a new "super" game machine at CES, described by one source as "an ST without a keyboard." We were unable to confirm the rumor as of presstime, but we will have information in the February issue if the rumor turns out to be true. If it is true, Atari may have a little difficulty convincing knowledgeable gamers of their ability to follow through with software support, considering the fact that they delivered less than half of what they had originally promised for the 7800 ProSystem in 1986 (10 of 26 games).

Critically Speaking...Atari XE/XL Compatible

MAIL ORDER MONSTERS (♦♦♦/♦♦♦) from *Electronic Arts*, converted for Atari 8-bit owners, gives you a kit full of monsters for battling against a friend's creature or one controlled by the computer. The monsters, called "Morphs" (short for Mail Order Psychon Heroes), can be put together with different body parts and equipped with various armaments from the Weapons Shop, with defenses from the Sundries Shop. One your monster is created, you can battle another creature in one of three scenarios - The Horde, where you prevent invaders from crossing the playfield; Capture the Flags, where you must collect eight flags that are scattered around the playfield; and Destruction, where you must defeat from one to five opponents. There are three levels of play with "The Horde" and "Capture the Flags" only available in the two higher levels.

Fun to Outfit

Because there is a nice array of body types, body enhancements, as well as weapons and defenses, there are lots of options within the building portion of the game. However, we still feel the same about the battle as we did in the Commodore version. The battles become very boring after a short while. These types of battles work well when integrated into a role-playing adventure; however, when put on a steady diet of bashing about, it just doesn't hold up. One thing we must point out in its favor. When the Commodore version originally released, the suggested retail was \$32.95. Since that time, the retail for the title has lowered substantially, reflecting more realistically the value of the game. (one player; joystick; also available for Commodore)
MSR \$14.95

1986 Awards of Excellence Announced...See Page 2

1986 Index of all the programs we've reviewed
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