

Computer Entertainer

INCLUDES

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THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

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A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman

Laser for the Home Introduced!

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Reviews!!
including...
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and Pole Position II
Super Action Football
Rock N' Rope
Bump N' Jump
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HESGames
Viking Raider
for C64
Gyruss and Stor Wors
for multiple systems
Beyond Castle Wolfenstein
for Apple
The First Home Loser
Atari Announcements
A Complete C.E.S. Wrap-Up
...and more

TOP 10 SELLERS

Game Systems

1. Pitfall II (ACT/2600)
2. Goteway to Apshoi (EPYX/COL)
3. Jumpmon Jr (EPYX/COL)
4. Burgertime (COL/COL)
5. Wargames (COL/COL)
6. Space Shuttle (ACT/2600)
7. Q*Bert (PB/COL)
8. Cabbage Patch Kids (COL/COL)
9. Kongoroo (AT/5200)
10. Squish 'Em feat. SAM (INT/COL)

TOP 10 SELLERS

Computer Entertainment

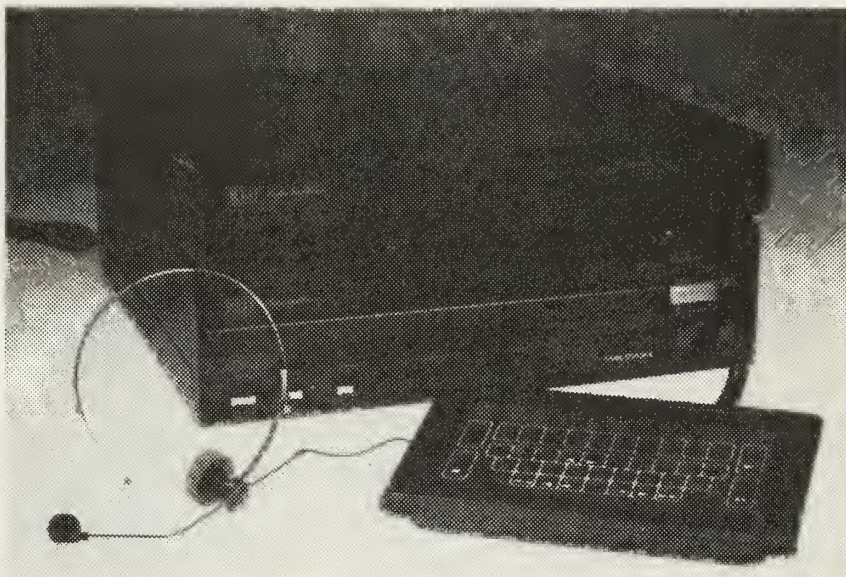
1. Flight Simulator II (SubLogic/AP)
2. Summer Games (EPYX/C64)
3. Ultima III (Origin/AP)
4. Beoch Heod (Access/AP)
5. Julius Erving (EA/C64)
6. Lode Runner (Broder/AP)
7. Beyond Castle Wolfenstein (Muse/AP)
8. Millionaire (Bluechip/AP)
9. Jungle Hunt (Atorisoft/C64)
10. Ms Poc-Mon (Atorisoft/AP)

(Top 10's are compiled from a panel of retail outlets, chain stores, and distributors)

COMING NEXT MONTH

REVIEWS

including
Software for the 7800
Track and Field for 2600
Computer Title Bout
for Atari Computer
Bounty Hunter
SmartLogo
for ADAM
Total Health
64 Doctor
for C64
and, as always...
MUCH, MUCH MORE!!



RDI Video Systems, the developer of DRAGON'S LAIR, took everyone by surprise with the introduction of an incredible interactive videodisc system for the home! Clearly ahead of its time, HALCYON puts you in control of all the action on your television. You become an active participant by controlling the action by spoken word! Halcyon takes your voice print and then understands your spoken commands through a feather-light headset which you wear during your adventure. Halcyon has a personality too! He remembers your name and learns about you as you play, keeping track of your progress and even allowing you to pick up exactly where you left off months later! Hal speaks in his own voice and recognizes acquaintances by the sound of their voices. Each adventure allows dozens and dozens of choices among hundreds of possibilities from thousands of possible combinations of choices; so the events differ, the sequence differs and the outcome differs each time that world comes to life.

History to Horror to Fantasy

THAYER'S QUEST, a fantasy adventure, will come packaged with HALCYON. You journey to a realm of magic and wonder where a young hero strikes against ancient evil. You join Thayer in his quest to find an amulet of great power. Other laser adventures planned include SHADOW OF THE STARS, where you command a star cruiser 1000 years in the future; THE SPIRIT OF THE WHITTIER MANSION, in which you spend a night in a haunted mansion; ORPHEUS, in which you venture into the Underworld where heroes and Gods of Greek Mythology dwell; and VOYAGE TO THE NEW WORLD, in which you face the danger of the New World in the Age of Columbus.

Our Experience With Halcyon

We were given the opportunity to play with Halcyon at a private showing so we could pass on some first person experiences with this revolutionary system. We began by sitting down in a Pioneer Bodysonic chair which enhanced our experience a great deal. Before we go further, an explanation of the Bodysonic chair is in order. This "easy chair" wraps you in sound by sending deep bass vibrations from two drivers hidden in the back and seat of the chair through every part of the body. Full range wing speakers located at ear level allow you to hear music and dialogue. Controls for speaker volume, body vibrating volume, and on/off are built-in. Being sold as the "ultimate TV viewing chair," the enhancement to an interactive adventure is beyond belief! Of course, a chair like this does not come cheaply. The chair itself is \$800, the optional footstool is \$130, and a synthesized surround processor is \$70 (all suggested retail). Back to our adventure...we donned our headphones and typed our name into the keyboard so Halcyon could address us by name. He mispronounced our name, we told

Continued on Page 53

C.E.S. Trends At a Glance

Impressions were many and we thought we'd pass on what some of those things which we noticed.

Gone was the frenzy of the past couple of years. The people attending the show were subdued, BUT ready to buy. Those who had been "burned" by game and/or computer software told us, in no uncertain terms, that this area of the business is DEAD. However, we spoke with many specialty store owners who told us that while their software sales have leveled to an extent, they feel very positive about it and were prepared to place large orders for the second half of the year. The business, to a large degree, is returning to the "expert in his field."

Too Much Education

With entertainment software having taken a beating with sub-par games, bad press, etc., we saw more companies than ever jumping on the education bandwagon. We predict a shake-out in this area just as there was in entertainment as the market cannot support the number of titles that were introduced. After all, how many counting games do we really need? Negative press and more "doom and gloom" will undoubtedly result with, once again, the strongest companies and education titles surviving.

Ton's of //c's!

Apple //c's were everywhere — special software just for the machine being introduced by several companies while other companies showed product that had been adapted to run on Apple's new portable. Third party support for this machine is stronger than we've seen for any other new computer in a long time!

Meanwhile, Where were the PCjr's?

On the other hand, there were fewer PCjr's in evidence than at the January show when we saw less than a dozen. We had trouble finding them at all as third party companies pull back to wait for IBM's enhancements for the machine and a "wait and see" attitude as far as consumer demand.

Macintosh Software Missing Too

Although it should not be bundled in with the other home computers due to price point and marketing strategy, we were concerned over the lack of product for the Apple Macintosh. In fact, after all the ballyhoo about the machine, WHERE is all the third party software which was promised six months ago??? We're still waiting for some of the basic home productivity software which was announced a few months ago.

No ADAM Software Either

Making good on their recent reticence regarding ADAM, there was NO software being introduced by the third party companies at the show. Once again, we asked several what their intentions were, especially in light of Coleco's obvious renewed efforts surrounding the machine (see related story in this issue), and everyone indicated they have no immediate plans to produce software for ADAM, at least until the installed base of the computer is quite a bit larger than it is currently.

Trends of the 80's

Breakdancers and trivia games were in evidence throughout the software hall with big crowds being drawn to both!

Testing the Waters

With the cost and risk factor regarding the release of sub-par product higher than ever (the companies have finally figured out that you are selective in your purchases!), we found more companies than ever showing product which they readily admit may never make it to the market. Using retailers, distributors, etc., as a guideline, they will go home with suggestions for improvement, or may even scrap the project all together if they feel it was met with a lukewarm reception. We see that as a very positive development.

Datasoft Shows New Titles

Among the new product at Datasoft's booth were JUNO FIRST, a space arcade game initially scheduled for C64; LOST TOMB, a 91-chamber maze game for Atari and C64; MERIDIAN III, an action-packed war game scheduled for all home systems; and MANCOPTER, where you fly high as the pilot of a fast-paced copter (all home computers).

BOOK REVIEW

THE BOOK OF ADVENTURE GAMES by Kim Schuette is a mammoth collection of maps, hints and commentaries on seventy-seven fantasy and puzzle games from *Adventure* to *Zork*. The author has spent many hours on what is obviously a labor of love, solving the puzzles and mapping the realms of the fascinating games. He provides a brief description and assessment of each adventure's playability, but the most valuable items for the game player are the maps and hints. Some maps are awe-inspiring in their scope, such as the thirty pages of charts for Sierra On-Line's *Time Zone*. Others are laid out on a single page. All maps have certain locations that are numbered, and these numbers refer to corresponding clues in the back of the book. Although solutions for the games are provided if you read all the clues, the author encourages the reader to use single clues only when he or she really becomes stuck while playing a game.

Classics and Recent Releases

THE BOOK OF ADVENTURE GAMES covers a wide range of products for most personal computers by companies such as Adventure International, Avalon Hill, Infocom, Microlab, Sierra On-Line, and Sirius, to name a few. The popular classics are well represented along with several recent releases, such as Origin Systems' *Ultima III*. This is an invaluable book for anyone who has ever become frustrated while playing an adventure game. And if you can't find the answer you need in this book, the author has thoughtfully provided a list of the represented software companies including addresses and telephone numbers. (Large format paperback from Arrays, Inc., The Book Division.) Recommended. (MSR \$19.95)

Scarborough Introduces Personal Finance Program

YOUR PERSONAL NET WORTH, planned for Apple, IBM, C64, and Atari computers, is designed to set up a budget, keep a record of all banking and credit card transactions, reconcile statements instantly (we could use that feature!), and can handle up to 10 bank accounts and print checks too! In addition, the program keeps a balance sheet of assets and liabilities, records all tax deductible expenditures, documents household valuables, and records stocks, bonds and other investment transactions. The program is written in machine language for fast key-to-screen action and features a special help key, allowing the user to recall instructions at any time. The Atari and C64 versions will be made available on one disk for \$79.95 while the other versions will retail for \$99.95.

MAD Magazine Cartoon To Debut

First Star Software will bring **SPY VS. SPY**, the cartoon strip from MAD Magazine to computers this fall. The game will feature two characters — the White Spy and the Black Spy who play tricks on one another and oppose each other in competitive, dangerous, and humorous situations. Designer Mike Riedel is planning plenty of animated graphics as he simultaneously develops a C64 and Apple version (later available for IBM and Atari).

Romper Room License

A series of educational programs based on Romper Room will debut this fall with the initial offering entitled **ROMPER ROOM'S I LOVE MY ALPHABET**. Other characters featured in Romper Room including DO-BEE, GRANNY CAT, UP UP, and KIMBLE will appear in later programs. In other educational software, First Star will introduce **U.S. ADVENTURE** which teaches American history, geography, states and capitals, presidents, and U.S. trivia by taking the player on an interactive exploration of the United States. Development on all these programs will be across the board for C64, Atari, Apple, and IBM.

EXPLANATION OF RATING SYSTEM:

- ★★★★ — EXCELLENT
- ★★★ — GOOD First set of stars — Quality of Graphics
- ★★ — FAIR Second set of stars — Quality of Play Action
- ★ — POOR

N/A — Not Applicable (i.e. Adventure games are not rated for graphics)

Any game for a given system is compared only to other games for the same system. In other words, all Atari 2600-compatibles are judged separately from ColecoVision-compatibles, etc. The same system is used for computer software, except where noted (i.e. many Atari and C64 software is virtually identical)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

BEACH-HEAD (★★★ 1/2 / ★★★ 1/2) from Access Software

is a multi-stage battle fought on sea and land. During aerial reconnaissance, the player must decide whether to approach the enemy through the difficult, secret passage to catch them unaware, or to take the direct route and avoid the perils of the hidden passage but face a well-prepared enemy force. In the first stage of battle, enemy fighter squadrons attack the player's fleet. The enemy planes look and sound very real as the player aims the anti-aircraft guns. If the player can save at least one of his or her ships, the naval battle is next with its heavy artillery fire on both sides. A readout on the bottom of the screen lets the player know if each shot is long or short. Ships will be sunk—if they're yours, the game is over! If the player survives the naval battle, each ship releases two tanks so they can establish a beach-head. Then the player's tanks must make their way through the island defense systems to reach the fortress of Kuhn-Lin. A sequence of ten targets on the fortress must be hit, and it takes a task force of tanks to do it because the fortress is defended by a huge cannon that never misses once it has a tank in its sights.

Maximum in Realism

This game is bound to be a hit with those who like battle simulations. It has been programmed with great care to offer the maximum in realism along with a well-varied sequence of skill-testing situations. Graphics are rendered with a sense of depth, and the sound effects are excellent. The premise of *BEACH-HEAD* is simple but it is very well executed. If warfare simulations appeal to you, this one is a must. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Joystick; Pause; Disk or Cassette.) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

PUZZLEPANIC (★★ 1/2 / ★★★) is a challenge for puzzle fans.

There are 43 separate puzzles arranged in eleven families. The player controls Benny the Bulb, a little guy who's not all that bright unless the player helps him to understand the clues. The puzzles range from fairly easy to devilishly difficult. The player even has to learn the correct way to exit each one to find the hidden meanings of the symbols associated with each puzzle. When all the puzzles have been solved in the right order, and all the symbols have been deciphered, the player gets a chance to solve the big one, the "MetaSequence." All of the puzzles involve strategy, and most demand action-oriented skills as well. The player may be working with visual or sound clues, catching polygons, playing "Simon Says" with the computer, copying musical phrases. The puzzles are seemingly endless in their variety. Graphics are fairly simple because all emphasis is on the play action. Some may like the constant musical background, but we found it annoying. Fortunately, it's possible to turn it off. Puzzle fans—you know who you are—will have a great time with this one. (Solo Play; Joystick; Disk.) (Also available for Atari computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$35.00)

DEATH IN THE CARIBBEAN (★★★ 1/2 / ★★★ 1/2) is a graphic adventure adapted from the original game for Apple computers. The player seeks buried treasure on a Caribbean island that is littered with clues, puzzles, and scary treats such as a zombie that appears in an opening coffin. There is an underground maze, a river and a crevasse to be crossed, and assorted creatures to deal with. The parser is the standard two-word type with a fairly limited vocabulary for the commands, but the game is absorbing and challenging nonetheless. Graphics are nicely detailed and quite scenic in spots. Anyone familiar with the original version for Apple computers may become impatient waiting for the loads between scenes, but this is a function of the Commodore 1541 disk drive rather than a shortcoming in the programming. Lots of Commodore owners have been waiting eagerly for this one—they won't be disappointed. (Solo Play; Keyboard; 2 Double-sided Disks.) (Also available for Apple II+ / IIe.) Recommended. (MSR \$35.00)

HESGAMES (★★★★ / ★★★ 1/2) is another program designed to capitalize on the interest in this summer's XXIII Olympiad in Los Angeles. Olympic-themed games we've reviewed previously are *The Activision Decathlon* for Atari 2600 (reviewed Aug., 1983), soon to be available for other game and computer systems, and *Summer Games* by Epyx for the Commodore 64 (reviewed June, 1984). Yet to be released are several home versions of *Track and Field* by Atari, the officially sanctioned video game of the Summer Olympics.

Six Events

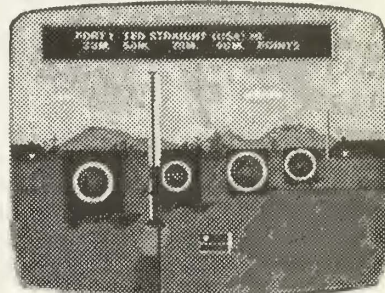
HESGAMES includes six events. All are rendered with beautiful, colorful graphics and smooth animation. Starting at the Main Menu Screen, players enter their names, affiliations, choice of shirt and sock colors, and then choose among 100-Meter Sprint, 110-Meter Hurdles, Long Jump, Archery, Springboard Diving, and Weightlifting (including two-hand snatch and clean and jerk events). Sprint, hurdle, and long jump contests require rapid back-and-forth movement of the joystick to build speed, while the hurdle and long jump events add a bit of timing as the runner leaps over the hurdle or takes off into the jump. The archery event is full of variables that can affect the player's performance, including wind speed and direction, changing weather conditions, and a fatigue factor if the player takes too long to aim and shoot after drawing the bow. Springboard diving includes seven types of forward and reverse dives rated by a panel of five judges. This one demands practice to master the series of joystick moves required to run, spring off the board, do aerial somersaults, and enter the water vertically. The weightlifting events, clean and jerk and two-hand snatch, are the ultimate tests of timing. Most players will drop even the lightest, 25-kg weight many times before getting the timing of the moves required. World record performances for all events are stored in the program, giving the player a goal to strive for.

Realistic Sports Simulations

Although demos are available for all but the archery event, we found they didn't help much. Particularly in those events requiring an exquisitely timed sequence of actions, there's no substitute for lots of practice. As it turns out, these are the most satisfying events for the player once they're mastered, simply because they demand more finesse with the joystick. Graphics are superb throughout, with an eye to details such as applauding crowds and the athletes' reactions to their own performances. The player will appreciate being able to see an instant replay of any performance or save an especially good one on a separate disk. Although *HESGAMES* doesn't offer the opening ceremonies and medal awards that add to the enjoyment of *Summer Games* from Epyx, it does offer a varied menu of realistic simulations that will appeal to all who love video sports games. In fact, there is so little duplication of events in these two programs that many gamers will want to own both. (Solo Play; Multiple Player Alternating; 2-Player Simultaneous in 100-Meter Sprint only; Joystick; Disk.) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

STAR WARS: THE ARCADE GAME (★★★★ / ★★★ 1/2) is essentially the same as the version for ColecoVision, which is reviewed in the *Video Game Update* section of this issue. Graphically, the Commodore 64 version is slightly more detailed. The *Star Wars* musical theme is used only occasionally, rather than throughout the game. All difficulty levels are more challenging than the corresponding levels in the ColecoVision version. Players who can breeze through the first wave on ColecoVision may have a tough time with the first wave here. (Solo Play; Joystick; Pause; Cartridge.) (Also available for Atari computers plus Atari 2600, 5200 and ColecoVision.) Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)

PARKER BROTHERS





VIKING RAIDER (★★★/★★★★) is a graphic adventure in which Lief, the Norseman, attempts to save the imprisoned Queen Dana from the greedy ogre, Smoth. To do this, Lief must find the Golden Key to unlock the gates of Castle Osk. This adventure uses the joystick to control Lief's movement and the keyboard to enter the typical two-word commands. (A screen with a list of acceptable verbs and nouns is accessible at any time during the game by typing "help" or "pause.") Lief must gather treasures, depositing them in his longhouse or ship to double their value. He must also find and use weapons, eat and rest in order to survive. (A status panel on the right side of the screen keeps the player informed of the weather, accumulated wealth, and other necessary statistics.)

Giants and Trolls

As he wanders the land and sea around his home, Lief runs into some pretty nasty characters. If he's not well armed for the encounters with dragons, frost giants, trolls and such, he'll soon be off to Valhalla. The game may be played at any of three skill levels, affecting the frequency and nastiness of his enemies' attacks. Our best advice is to find weapons as quickly as possible—Lief is very vulnerable without them.

This adventure has a little more action than many we've played, which should make it appealing to the gamer more accustomed to action than strategy. However, there's no shortage of planning required to achieve the goal of freeing Queen Dana from Smoth's prison. Graphics are very colorful; sound effects are few. **VIKING RAIDER** is an enjoyable game for all ages. It's especially good for newcomers to adventure gaming because more than the usual amount of on-screen help is provided. Incidentally, the combination of cartridge and disk required to play this game is an attempt to foil software pirates—neither component works without the other. (Solo Play; Keyboard and Joystick, Disk and Cartridge.) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

Two Packages for Beginning Programmers

Two book/software packages of note from Hayden Book Company's "Dr. Watson Computer Learning Series" are both aimed at the beginning programmer. **Commodore 64 Assembly Language Programming** is a gently paced tutorial in book form by Derek Bush and Peter Holmes that is accompanied by a full-featured assembler/disassembler and binary hexadecimal conversion tutor on cassette. The package introduces the budding programmer to all the essentials of assembly language programming, including branching, screen display, addressing modes, interrupts, macro instructions, floating point calculations, and using the built-in subroutines of the Commodore 64. The book includes numerous exercises with solutions and explanations.

Lost in Space is a book and cassette combination designed to teach the fundamentals of BASIC programming to children from eight to twelve. The book contains an entertaining story about a ship that is lost in space, and the young reader learns to use BASIC applications to control the spaceship's Commodore 64 computer. Delightful companions help the youngster to save the ship, and the accompanying cassette contains programs from the spaceship's computer. (MSR \$29.95 each)

EASYDISK is designed for any Commodore 64 owner who ever had difficulty understanding remembering the disk drive command the Commodore manual—in other words, just about anyone who has a Commodore 1541 Disk Drive. The disk is loaded like any other and occupies the upper 8K of memory where it does not interfere with normal operation of the computer. A menu gives the user choices allowing the loading, viewing, editing and saving of program and sequential files. It's a simple matter of finding the desired operation in the menu, moving the highlight with the arrow key, and pressing the RETURN key. For example, if you've just bought *Ultima III* and you need to format a new disk to store your characters, why run to the manual because you can't remember the right command? Use *EasyDisk*'s "Newdisk" command instead. You'll be prompted to enter a disk name and identification number, and that's all there is to it! It's just as easy to create backup disks, rename files, and do several other operations. When you use the "Save" command, *EasyDisk* even checks to be sure there is enough room on the disk before saving your file. This is a very helpful program that simplifies the use of a Commodore 1541 disk drive.

Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

GYRUSS (★★★/★★★★½) from Parker Bros. is nearly identical to the version for Atari 5200, which is reviewed in this issue's *Video Game Update* section. Graphics are just a bit more detailed here, and the rendition of the music is especially full and satisfying. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Joystick; Pause; Cartridge.) (Also available for Atari computers, plus Atari 2600, 5200 and ColecoVision.)

Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)

FINANCIAL COOKBOOK is identical to the version for Atari computers, which is reviewed briefly in this issue. For more complete coverage, see our review of the Apple version of this program in the June, 1984 issue. (Keyboard; Disk and IBM PC.) (Also available for Apple II+ /IIe/IIc, Atari and IBM PC.)

Recommended. (MSR \$50.00)

Trivia Mania Coming

We felt it was inevitable when we talked about it a few months ago, and this show confirmed our suspicions—the massive popularity of the Trivial Pursuit board game has spurred computer versions. Professional Software showed **TRIVIA MANIA**, the closest adaptation of Trivial Pursuit we saw. This game consists of approximately 3,500 questions on disk (64K is needed) and in printed form, in three levels of difficulty and in seven categories: Science and Technology, Geography, History, Sports, Film and Entertainment, Famous People, and Nature and Animals. Players must fulfill user-selected point requirements in five of the seven categories, answer a Category Completion Question, and then the final "game winning question" in order to win the game.

"Add-On" Games Planned

Also under development are a series of specialty "add-on" diskette packages which include subjects such as **SUPER SPORT**, **MOVIE MADNESS**, **WHAT'S IN A WORD**, and **EDUCATIONAL LEARNING DISKETTES**. The learning diskettes will contain questions and answers in various subjects as English vocabulary, American History, Geography, Mathematics, and several Science

First For C64

The first system which will be released is the C64, with versions for Apple, IBM PC and PCjr, and TRS-80 planned later in the summer. All versions will retail for \$39.95 and will include the program on disk, the "Trivia Mania Book of Questions and Answers," and the "Trivia Mania Tally Scoresheets." Watch for a review in our newsletter shortly.

Thought You'd Like to Know...

Sierra On-Line, which encompasses SierraVision, etc. has just changed its name to simply **SIERRA**. The logo has been changed slightly and all divisions of Sierra software will be released under the one name.

ni so, and he said, "spell more creatively". With that, we spelled h name phonetically, and away we went! Halcyon took a voice ort from us (once you do this on each new laser disc, it does nd have to be done again—Halcyon can store up to five names ar voice prints) which took about 3-4 minutes. Once these rminaries were taken care of, we could begin our adventure of HAYER'S QUEST. There is much less action in QUEST than AGON'S LAIR, however, it contains the same type of animated pgraphics and interactive story. If you miss a clue in a particular scene, you can ask Halcyon to "Repeat" and that scene is replayed for you. THAYER'S QUEST does play a bit on the slow side, with th scenes just a few seconds long — then it stops and asks you to make a choice of your next move. The colors, sounds, and con- cect are dazzling. The voices on the adventure are human voices ail very clear; while Hal is a computer-generated voice and, therefore, is not as clearly understood.



Shadow of the Stars



Thayer's Quest



The Spirit of Whittier Mansion



Voyage to the New World



Orpheus

The Ultimate Gift

As with any new technology (look at home computers and video ame systems), the initial offerings are VERY expensive and clearly ot for everyone. The HALCYON system which includes a laser isc player made by Pioneer (it also plays all laser disc movies, usic videos, etc), main control unit, microphone headset, eyboard, and Thayer's Quest laser disc will retail around 2,000.00. For those who already own a laser disc player (Pioneer odels LD-700, VP-1000, LD-1100), you can purchase the HALCYON modular system which includes the main control unit, eyboard, microphone, and Thayer's Quest for approximately 1,400.00. Additional laser titles will retail in the \$80-\$100 range. Initially, HALCYON will be marketed in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego in September. Obvious utolets would be some of the finer department stores such as bloomingdales, Marshall Fields, and we can picture it in the Nieman arcus Christmas Book.

Obviously, DRAGON'S LAIR has made its inventors a great deal of money and we applaud them in their reinvestment in home laser which they've taken a step further than anticipated with the in- teractive/voice recognition aspect. This should open the doors for this technology and eventually, less expensive versions are destined to hit the market. The HALCYON exhibit was tucked away in a corner of the convention hall where many people didn't even discover it; however, we truly feel this was the most exciting new product at the show this year!

Epyx Booth Live With Breakdancers

In order to promote their upcoming BREAKDANCE game, Epyx brought in some young breakdancers to perform for the crowds. While everyone was watching the live version, we slipped over to a screen to get a feel of the actual game. Unfortunately, the game is only partially programmed so you can't do much with it yet. Graphics looked pretty good; however, it is hard to visualize at this point what sort of "staying power" a game of breakdancing could realistically have for a game player. We'll have to wait until we can see more.

Pitstop II Introduced

Meanwhile, over in another corner, Epyx has expanded upon PITSTOP, and are introducing PITSTOP II (disk format) with two player competitive racing on the track and in the pits. In this ver- sion, you battle your opponent in a race against the clock on a split screen. You can also play against the computer, race in a prac- tice lap, or race against a computer-controlled pace car. The graphics look excellent and versions are planned for C64, Atari, and Apple.

More Adventure

ROBOTS OF DAWN, a murder mystery based on Isaac Asimov's novel will be an all-text adventure game, initially sched- uled for C64. MORETA: DRAGONLADY OF PERN, based on Anne McCaffrey's book, hurls you into the faraway planet of Pern whose future rests in your hands as you search for the secret remedy for a mysterious illness plaguing your people (initially for C64). IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, for C64 and Apple, thrusts you into the role of the world's savior who must stop Elvin from annihilating the world.

Toys In Your Computer

G.I. JOE, BARBIE, and HOT WHEELS will be released for children's education and entertainment. In G.I. JOE the child selects the battlefield activity in which he wants to interact and then equips his G.I. Joe with the proper clothing, equipment and transportation. With HOT WHEELS, children construct a HOT WHEELS vehicle on the screen, including details such as tires, seats, chassis, etc. They can then move the car through various activities including a Hot Wheels garage, city scene, and demoli- tion derby. BARBIE allows young ladies the chance of dressing and redressing Barbie, changing her hair style and color, etc. Ver- sions will be made available initially for C64 with versions for Apple, IBM PC/PCjr, and Atari to follow.

Software Movies!

Maximus Inc. has come up with a new idea for educational soft- ware which is intriguing. SOFTWARE MOVIES combine compu- ter-generated animation with live sound. Each program in the series comes packaged with two stories, review of themes, plus four interactive games which reinforce the theme of the program. In each program, the characters actually talk with narration synchronized with the animation. With compu-sync™ soundtrack, lip and sound effect synchronization from soundtrack to screen is accomplished with the use of any ordinary audio cassette recorder!

Initial Software

Initially, five programs are planned: STORYLINE includes classic fairytales narrated by Clover the Clown (ages 4-10); SAFETYLINE, narrated by Max the Cat, teaches your child how to cross the street, what to do when lost, etc (ages 4-8); VISALIZER, a home graphics management package with soundtrack adaptability which lets you create anything from arts to charts; SCIENCeline, is a series of science lessons; and TRAVELLINE, a series of travel adventures. All the programs are planned for Atari, C64, and Apple and will retail for \$39.95 (Visualizer will retail for \$49.95 and does not need an audio recorder).

BASEBALL'S BEST (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★) from *Windcrest Software* is a baseball game only for the statistics aficionado as it lacks in the action some other baseball games offer. This program offers a detailed statistical treatment of nearly 200 past and present baseball stars who perform according to their individual stats. Your job is to manage the team, decide on lineups and fielding positions, order bunts, steals, hit and runs and order defensive changes. You begin by choosing from among the 16 teams on file, or create your own teams. The computer decides whether or not the batter gets a hit based on a series of calculations including whether to use the batter's statistics or the pitcher's stats. Also factored in is the PR (pitcher's tired rating), which side of the plate the batter is batting from, etc. The location of the flight of the ball is based on whether the batter is left or right handed. You do not have control of the batter once he hits the ball, nor do you have control of the fielder. The computer takes your runner over and the fielder is also controlled by the computer. Whether or not the batter gets to first base again will depend on the statistical factors.

A Real Manager's Game

This game will truly give you a chance to see how good you are at putting a baseball team together as the player's good and bad characteristics will definitely come out. It took us awhile to get into this game as we were used to sports "action" games; however, once we got the hang of it, we found ourselves enjoying the challenge of trying to put together the ultimate team. There are so many choices, with so many variables, that this program will keep you busy for a long time! Graphics are nothing special, although we enjoyed the swirl of dust when Maury Wills stole second. There is an interesting perspective when you have a fly ball which goes to the fence as you get a side view of the outfielder stretching for the ball. If you like action, it's not for you; however, if facts and stats fascinate you, this will provide many hours of entertaining baseball managing! (one or two-player; two joysticks required; BASIC cartridge required; 32K disk)

Recommended (MSR \$29.95)

PANZER WAR (★ ★ / ★ ★ ★) from *Windcrest Software* is billed as a war simulation game which includes arcade action and strategy. Your strategy board depicts the battle fronts between Germany and Russia in WWII with the period of battle running from September through April. Beginning in December, the snows fall and your tanks tend to bog down and are less mobile. As you begin your battle you can choose to change the coordinate grid if you wish to change the placement of your 12 tank units (6 each for the Germans and Russians) for more varied play. After you've maneuvered your tank divisions, and your opponent (or computer) has maneuvered, you will enter the battle phase. The computer searches for enemy tank divisions in adjacent squares. There are then battles of 45-second duration between any two enemies in adjacent squares. The screen becomes an exploded view of the square and the two tanks do battle. Following the battle, a summary and battle results will show the damage inflicted on each side. The computer looks for additional tank divisions in adjacent squares, additional battles are fought, and you move to the next month. There are four different scenarios which can be played with many variations.

Not Our Favorite

We've seen several war simulation software programs and this, frankly, did not rate among the best we've played. Graphics are a bit muddy, especially in the months when the background is dark. The strategic aspect of the game is not, in our opinion, among the best war simulations out there for the various systems. There's not enough strategy or action to recommend it in either genre. (one player; two-player simultaneous; joystick; 32K disk; requires BASIC cartridge)

Not Recommended (MSR \$29.95)

GYRUSS (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is identical to the version for the Atari 5200, which is reviewed in the *Video Game Update* section of this issue. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Joystick; Cartridge.) (Also available for Commodore 64, plus Atari 2600, 5200 and ColecoVision.) Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)



FINANCIAL COOKBOOK is identical to the program for Apple computers which was reviewed fully in the June, 1984 issue. This program is the ideal tool for coping with the usual financial questions that occur so frequently in everyone's life. Should you rent or buy a home? How much life insurance do you need? How much money must you save every month to sock away enough for the kids' college education, a special vacation, a computer, or whatever? What will your IRA be worth at retirement? What's the difference between mortgages with balloon payments and those with different variable rate setups? Should you spend the money to fix the old car or buy a new one? There are thirty-two financial "recipes" that are a cinch to use, even if math isn't one of your strong points. Just supply the "ingredients"—the numbers requested—and the program does all the work. You can even save the results to disk or print them out. (The program takes inflation and tax rates into account if you supply the figures.) While an electronic spreadsheet program is a powerful tool in the hands of an accountant, it can be terribly intimidating to many people—so much so that it may gather dust in a corner. **FINANCIAL COOKBOOK** supplies answers quickly and easily, and it's fun to use. What more can you ask of a piece of home management software? (Keyboard; Disk.) (Also available for Apple II+ / IIe / IIc, Commodore 64 and IBM PC.)

ELECTRONIC ARTS™

Recommended. (MSR \$50.00)

Sierra Offers New Adventures

KING'S QUEST, which has been available only for the IBM PC, is being readied for the Apple computers. It features 3-D graphics where the player guides Sir Grahame on his quest through dozens of animated cartoon-like sequences.

B.C. Sequel

Responding to the enormous success of **B.C. QUEST FOR TIRES**, Thor will once again appear in **B.C.'S Grog's REVENGE**. In this sequel, Thor tries to climb a mountain and collect clams (points) on his way. Of course, he encounters all sorts of obstacles. It's planned on disk for Apple, C64, and IBM PC and PCjr (\$34.95), while cartridges are planned for Coleco, C64, and Atari computers (\$39.95).

New Strategy

SIERRA CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING is a strategy game which allows the player to manage his choice of 55 world-famous boxers - history's heavyweight champions, today's contenders, and popular fighters from other weight divisions. Rematches from great boxers can be staged; imaginary boxers created, etc. The player determines his boxer's statistics and in between rounds, strategies are formed, locked in, and then put into action. The game includes three books of documentation: "History of Boxing", complete instructions, and "The Boxing Guide", a booklet on strategy, tips and boxing terms. It's planned shortly for IBM PC/PCjr, Apple, and later for C64 (retail \$34.95). **STUNT FLYER**, for Apple, C64, PC/PCjr, and Coleco, allows the player to experience what it's like to fly a stunt plane. Aerodynamics will be correct, as well as implementation for maneuvers such as stalls and spins. The player will be able to perform a wide range of stunts and to view the flight from both inside the plane and from the ground, comparing his execution of the stunt to that of a real stunt flyer.

Agreement With Walt Disney

Sierra and Walt Disney have reached agreement to co-develop software based on Disney characters for five educational games. The first project, **DONALD DUCK'S BAKERY**, develops math skills for children ages 4-9. Other games currently being worked on feature Winnie the Pooh and Goofy. The Disney games should be available before Christmas.

Back issues are available for most issues of **COMPUTER ENTER-TAINER/VIDEO GAME UPDATE** (none left of Vol 1, #1,2, or 3). Send \$2.00 for each back issue you wish. Buy any four for \$6.00 and any six for \$9.00. Make certain you have a complete set!!! Remember, we reviewed over 325 games in 1983 alone!!!

Wico Introduces SmartMouse™ and SmartBall™

Wico is planning the release of an Apple-compatible Mouse and SmartBall — both touted as good controllers for spreadsheets, word processing, and window programs. Both units will come packaged with the SMARTLINE SmartCard™ which plugs directly into your Apple and can be programmed to define any character string up to seven characters long for each controller action. An alternate character set can be programmed for each of seven possible controller actions (four directions and up to three buttons). The controller sensitivity can be varied between 1 and 9 and the user can select any one of 12 different modes of operation. The SmartCard™ supports all 128 ASCII characters plus the Open Apple® and Closed Apple® keys on the Apple® //e. The SmartCard™ with SmartMouse™ will retail for \$259.00 and the SmartCard™ with SmartBall™ will retail for \$249.00 and both should be available in August.

Expander Port Announced

Wico will also be making an Apple Auto Expander Port which will allow 4 16-pin or 4 9-pin "D" controllers to be used. In addition, a //c adaptor, to be packaged with a joystick, should be ready for your dealer's shelves before the end of the month.

Redesigning Coleco Controller

Due to several complaints from users, Wico is in the process of redesigning the ColecoVision controller for more ease of use. The new model should be ready in August at a retail of \$49.95.

Infocom Introduces Interactive Fiction for Kids

Infocom, known for their rich library of interactive computer games, is introducing SEASTALKER, designed for 9 year olds and up. This interactive fiction finds you in a specially equipped submarine in which you must save the Aquadome, the world's first undersea research station. Within the package the player will find a submarine Logbook, eight top secret Infocards, Infocard decoder, a nautical chart of Frobton Bay, and a Discovery Squad decal. Planned for several systems, it will retail for \$39.95.

Infocom Supports Macintosh

Macintosh owners will shortly be able to play the entire library of interactive fictions as Infocom is releasing all its titles, including the Zork trilogy, Planetfall, Infidel, and more in the Macintosh format.

Batteries Included Expands

Canadian-based Batteries Included is expanding its line of home productivity software for various systems. HOMEPAK combines a telecommunications program with an unlimited capture buffer, on-screen clock, and text edit window; an information management system with English command language; and a word processing program featuring full-screen editing and other word processing features including the ability to link with the information management system for Mail Merge. Planned for release in the second half of the year for Atari, C64, Apple //, and PCjr, HOMEPAK will retail for only \$49.95!

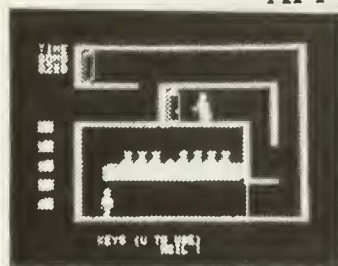
Biofeedback System

THE STRESS MANAGER, initially available for C64 and later on other systems, includes applications software which interprets data sent by a "G.S.R." (Galvanic Skin Resistance) module to the computer which is then displayed in three detailed graph forms. The graphic analysis and related data can be saved on the disk and printer for later comparisons. Retail is planned at \$79.95.

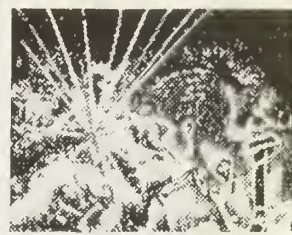
A Literature Challenge series is also planned which will act as a study tool and competitive activity for literature buffs. All programs in the series are designed for one to six players. The user selects the questions, refers to subject files, and then inputs the answer. Titles planned initially include the Shakespeare Challenge Series (Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, and Julius Caesar); Playwright Challenge Series (Arms and the Man by Shaw, The Mousetrap by Christie; and Death of a Salesman by Miller); and the Novel Challenge Series (Adventures of Huck Finn by Twain; Lord of the Flies by Golding; and Tale of Two Cities by Dickens). The series is planned initially for C64 and Apple with later conversions to Atari and PCjr.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

APPLE-COMPATIBLE



The Fuehrer's Secret Conference Room



Detonation of the Bomb

BEYOND CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN (★★★/★★★★) is

MUSE
SOFTWARE

the sequel to Castle Wolfenstein and it's another winner! Although a sequel, it is not necessary to play or know the original game to enjoy this one. You enter a German bunker at ground level and must make your way down to the third level where the Fuehrer's conference room is located. Each room in the bunker has at least one doorway that leads to an adjoining room, or an elevator which leads to another level. Your mission is to find the bomb in a closet somewhere on the first floor, locate the private conference room, leave the bomb timed to detonate and return to the courtyard from which you entered the bunker. All along the way, you will encounter German guards who you can try to bribe, show the correct pass, or kill him. Hide the body, though, as the guards will set off the alarms if they see a body. You can also try and disarm the alarm — if you can. Your decisions must be made lightening quick — when a guard speaks to you in German, you better be ready to answer!

Action/Adventure at its Best

This is an extremely tough game with five skill levels to master. You can generate a new bunker or keep the same one and you can save your current game for later play. Both action and adventure fans can enjoy this one for hours as it involves quick thinking and fast manual response. The German-speaking guards add a great touch of realism to the game as we ventured from room to room collecting tools, keys, dagger, and other items along the way. It will take the avid game player some time to eventually make it to the conference room, detonate the bomb, and get back out of the bunker. Muse has done a fine job in this sequel. If you enjoyed Castle Wolfenstein, you'll love Beyond Castle Wolfenstein! (one player; joystick, paddle, or keyboard; also works on //c; also available for C64) Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

Companies Support //c

From Broderbund, DAZZLE DRAW has been designed specifically for the Apple //c to take advantage of the //c's "double high resolution" capabilities. Pull-down menus, multiple windows, pen strokes of various shapes and sizes in 16 colors, and printer-generated copies of your work are all included in this package.

Koala's Gibson Pen for //c

The Gibson Light Pen and software programs such as PEN-PAINTER, PEN DESIGNER, PENANIMATOR, and PENMUSICIAN are being designed for the //c, a graphically superior computer to the //e. The pen is planned as a fall release at a retail of \$249.00

Studying for the SAT

CBS Software is converting its popular MASTERING THE SAT for the //c. It's a 4-disk program including two full-length exams, question by question analysis of answers for the exams, identification of areas requiring further study, skill builders, and a 144-page workbook.

Special Edition of Zaxxon

Datasoft will release a specially enhanced version of ZAXXON expressly for the //c

Coleco Bullish On ADAM

Admitting to past problems with ADAM and "over-announcing" of new product in the past, Coleco came to the Summer C.E.S. with the most realistic approach we've seen from them — working ADAMs throughout the booth which anyone could walk up to and work with. That in itself is a vast change from the past. We were also pleased to note that, again for the first time we can remember, the software programs they were displaying were either in finished form or were partially complete. In virtually every case, you could at least play the program to a point. In the past, we have reported films of arcade games, non-moving title screens, etc. which always left us deeply concerned about the eventual release of the product.

Disk Drive About Ready

There were several disk drives whirling away around the booth and we learned that a third quarter release (most likely August) is planned for the 160K drive which is being manufactured for Coleco by disk drive maker, Micro Peripherals Inc. (MPI). The add-on digital datapak is also about ready to go (JVC is manufacturing this peripheral). The modem should ship by the end of the summer also.

Coleco Software Is It

With no third party support (although MicroLearn will introduce two programs shortly — see last month's issue) yet, Coleco realizes the ball is in their court and it's up to them to get the software rolling to enhance ADAM's future. We saw some interesting educational programs in both datapak and cartridge format. Coleco plans a "Monopoly-type" game entitled FORTUNE BUILDERS. A complete list of titles and planned availability is included in our Availability Update on the back cover. The software flow is still, obviously, extremely soft and only time will tell if enough is made available to revive ADAM's chances at a long-term survival.

Software for Other Systems

Following the lead of several other companies, Coleco announced plans to release some of their titles for other computers including Atari, C64, and Apple. Among the titles planned for conversion are TARZAN, WAR GAMES, CABBAGE PATCH KIDS, FORTUNE BUILDERS, and DR SEUSS FIX-UP THE MIX-UP PUZZLER. Availability dates and prices aren't set yet; however, they should start appearing in the second half of 1984.

All in all, Coleco appears to be committed to the success of ADAM, extending the warranty period to six months; providing a better manual; and for consumers who purchase ADAM before September 16, 1984, they will provide the ADAM Home Software Library which contains 32 application, educational, and entertainment programs. There is no question that ADAM is far from a resolved issue — its success truly is in the hands of Coleco. We spoke with a representative from Scholastic which had planned on introducing a computer magazine specifically for ADAM users. They backed down when Coleco could not provide them enough owner names to justify the publishing costs. Smart Publications has also postponed the debut of their ADAM magazine from August to December. We still believe that, conceptually, the ADAM is a great idea and we wish Coleco well — the next six months will tell us a great deal!

DesignWare Announces New Educational Software

Four educational programs are planned by DesignWare including MISSION: ALGEBRA for kids ages 13-18 where the only way to find an errant sister ship is to solve a linear equation which will locate its position. STATES & TRAITS challenges families to hone their knowledge of U.S. geography, history, and current trivia. THE GRAMMAR EXAMINER is designed to help kids ages 10-14 improve basic grammar skills by landing a job as a cub reporter with the Grammar Examiner newspaper. Finally, THE NOTABLE PHANTOM teaches children ages 5-10 basic keyboard and note-reading skills as they compete against specters, spiders, and a phantom.

Commodore Announces Another Incompatible Computer!

Commodore has announced yet another incompatible computer — the COMMODORE 16. This 16K machine is targeted for the first time computer user and replaces the VIC 20; however, it is NOT compatible with VIC 20 software!!! Commodore touts such features as built-in machine language monitor, built-in graphics and sound commands, built-in BASIC 3.5, and screen window capability. This "under \$100" computer has us baffled as to why it would be brought out — there's no third party support and, frankly, we would be surprised if anyone produced software for this machine based on the incredible popularity of the C64 and other home computers already on the market.

The Same But Different

As we reported last month, Commodore has indeed decided to market the 264 computer (described in depth in our February issue); however, they've changed the name to the COMMODORE PLUS/4 — obviously referring to the four built-in programs (word-processing, database, spreadsheet, and graphics). Commodore appears to be positioning this computer for the small businessman or productivity-oriented home user. It runs very little of the C64 software so we will have to wait and see what sort of software will be available for this one.

Several New Peripherals

Peripherals for the two new computers were introduced including the DPS 1101 daisywheel printer designed for the PLUS/4 with a speed of only 18 cps; the MPS 803 Dot Matrix printer and Commodore 1531 cassette for the COMMODORE 16; the CM 141 Color Monitor which is compatible with the full line of Commodore computers; the MCS 801 color dot matrix printer for the C64 which has a speed of 30 cps; and the MPS 802 Dot Matrix printer, a bi-directional, 60 cps unit compatible with all Commodore computers.

New Telecommunications Packages

Commodore is developing a new graphics and telecommunications package for the C64 to be available later this summer entitled VIDEOTEX 64. This package allows you to create business graphics or other pictures in high resolution color and combine them with text before transmitting them via a modem to other VIDEOTEX 64 users. Featuring single keystroke switching between interactive text and graphics functions, or between color and monochrome, you create "pages" of information, which can be displayed, saved and recalled from disk, sent and received by modem, edited or printed. Instead of using the traditional ASCII protocol, it uses the new NAPLPS protocol, which is more powerful in creating and transmitting graphics. Another C64 program on display was EASYCOMM 64, a disk-based terminal emulator which allows the user to transfer messages from electronic bulletin boards and programs in CompuServe's library to and from their own computer's memory or disk drive. The program features a 32K RAM buffer which can capture data, printer support, color graphics, and 10 programmable function keys to give ID or other frequently-used commands.

Marvel Comic's Super Heros

Commodore has entered an agreement with Marvel Comics and Adventure Intl. to produce and distribute six programs featuring the Super Heroes, including the HULK and SPIDERMAN. Marvel has introduced a new series of comics called QUESTPROBE, showcasing a different Super Hero in each issue, with a corresponding software program to be made available. The first program will be THE HULK and will run on the C64 and PLUS/4.

Sirius Software Files Chapter 11

Blaming the glutted market and their earlier deal with Fox Games which they have indicated was a major money loser, Sirius Software has filed Chapter 11 in order to reorganize their debts. While they do not foresee reentering the market anytime soon as Sirius Software, they do intend to continue to develop software for other companies. Meanwhile, gamers can still get support on their games through their regular office numbers.

CBS Continues Aggressive Education

CBS showed another large selection of software geared towards different age levels at the show which we'll break down for you. Attention adventure lovers! ADVENTURE MASTER, a 2-disk program, allows you to design your own text adventure! The user can create up to as many as 60 "rooms" within each adventure, describe places, plan events, create secret exits, hide objects, and create entire worlds to travel. The program includes a built-in graphics system for illustration purposes. The entire game can be saved to disk and the program includes one complete adventure and two partially-completed adventures! Planned for Apple, IBM PC and PCjr, C64, and Atari, we can't wait to get our hands on it alone!

Children's Education

Programs which fall into this category include ASTRO-GROVER which uses Sesame Street's Grover to teach early number skills; BIRD'S FUNHOUSE, a game of hide-and-seek which teaches concentration, memorization, and sequencing; and SESAME STREET LETTER-GO-ROUND, which provides practice in recognizing and matching letters and word formation. All the above products are geared for 3-6 year-olds, include the EasyKey keyboard overlay, and will be released for both Atari and C64 computers. THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT, for ages 10 and up, allows the user to build a Victorian, Georgian, Colonial, or cottage of several rooms, manipulate floor plans, decorate rooms, "paint" or use "wallpaper", and even landscape the front entrance! The program is perfect for future architects and interior designers (planned for C64 and Apple). KEYS TO RESPONSIBLE DRIVING is designed to help future drivers become responsible, defensive drivers with safe driving and defensive driving techniques, in addition to a preparation for your state written exam. The program is planned for the Apple and IBM families of computers.

Adventures in Science Series

For ages eight and up, two programs are initially planned in this series. T-REX examines the day to day life of Tyrannosaurus Rex during the late Cretaceous period; and THE HONEY FACTORY is the player in the role of the "scout" bee in charge of finding locations for pollen and nectar collections. Both programs are planned for the full range of home computers. FORECAST! is your home weather station and helps users track weather patterns and gain understanding of how atmospheric conditions interact to produce the weather.

News For KoalaPad Owners

Koala will introduce GRAPHICS EXHIBITOR, designed to interact with the touch tablet and KoalaPainter enabling Apple users the ability to print out high-resolution drawings onto Apple's new Scribe printer as well as other popular high graphics printers. It allows the user to print a graphic hardcopy and select six of 16 colors or 16 shades of grey, depending on the printer.

Educational Software for Koala

Futurehouse, Inc. is adapting its Playground Software series for the KoalaPad. Programs include COMPUTER CRAYONS, BEDTIME STORIES, ANIMAL CRACKERS, and ALPHABET CONSTRUCTION SET.

A Book Too

THE KOALAPAD BOOK will be a practical hands-on guide to using the touch tablet and is written by David Thornburg, inventor of the KoalaPad technology. The book explains why the tablet is considered the perfect computer input device and outlines the tablet's programming capabilities — from music composition and time playing to programming in such languages as BASIC, Logo, and Pilot. It's planned as a September release at a retail of \$12.95 (paperback).

Program Pitfall Harry!

Activision has come up with a terrific idea for C64 owners. David Crane, designer of Pitfall and Pitfall II, has written a booklet which contains a program for putting Pitfall Harry on your C64 screen, and also includes instructions for modifying elements of Harry's appearance and running speed!

The booklet is available free through many retail outlets around the country or you can send 25 cents for postage and handling, with your name and address, to: The Activision C-64 Club, P.O. Box 7287, Mountain View, CA 94039.



Affordable Color Printer

Okidata, a well-known name in dot matrix printers, introduced the OKIMATE 10, a revolutionary low-cost color printer for the Atari and C64 computers. It uses a new technology of thermal transfer printing which does not require the use of specially coated paper. It prints color by mixing the primary colors of yellow, red, and blue. In other words, to create a shade of green, the printer will first print yellow dots and then make another pass printing blue dots over the yellow. Letter quality text is produced with a black ribbon. There are four character sizes at a speed of 60cps. The unit uses 8" paper and can use plain or thermal paper. The printer is compact and weighs 7 lbs.

Plug 'N Print Module

The printer comes in two parts — the printer itself and a PLUG 'N PRINT module which you choose for whichever computer you have. The module kit includes a connecting cable, ribbon cartridges, software on disk and cassette, and sample paper. The printer and module retail for \$239.00 and should be available in August. We spent a good deal of time watching demonstrations in both color and black ink and what we saw was very impressive!

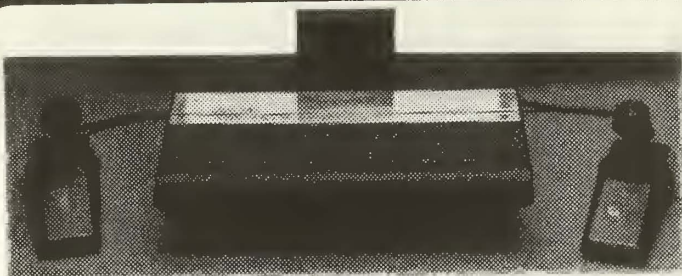
Tech Sketch Introduces Lite Sprite

LITE SPRITE, designed to be used in conjunction with the Tech Sketch light pen (reviewed last month), will allow owners of the C64 to design up to 200 high-resolution sprites. They can be viewed in four different sizes and a special eight-power magnification mode to facilitate their being animated. Editing capabilities include deletion, insertion, centering, image flipping, etc. An interesting feature of the program is that the sprites are created using the light pen, rather than by typing in coded instructions. The program automatically converts the finished sprite figures to code and will print out both the code and the sprite figures so that a hard copy can be retained as a backup.

Command Your Computer By Voice!

We saw a potentially exciting product by the name of CHIRPEE™ Voice Command Module which initially will be made available for Apple and C64 computers only. Once plugged in, the Chirpee module allows users to command their computer to perform a variety of functions by using spoken words. The unit can be trained to respond exclusively to one operator or to several operators and can accept commands spoken in any language. The planned retail is \$179.95 and reminds us of a conversation several months ago with a computer software programmer who told us that "before long you won't even need a keyboard for your computer!"

THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE



More on Atari 7800 ProSystem

While in Chicago for Summer CES, we spent a lot of time at the Atari booth. We tried to anticipate the questions our readers would ask about the new 7800 ProSystem while we had access to engineers and several other people at Atari involved with the development of the system.

Everyone at Atari is excited about the 7800, and it's easy to understand why. The graphic capabilities, made possible by the custom "Maria" chip, surpass *everything* currently available for the home. (We'll have a graphics comparison of the 7800 to other game and computer systems in the August issue.)

Some of our readers have already asked how the 7800 can reproduce arcade-quality games with "only 4K" of random access memory (RAM). According to Mike Palmer, product manager for the 7800, the 4K RAM is merely "utility memory" which "works hand-in-hand with the Maria chip." All software, including the titles for the 7800 computer keyboard, is on ROM (read-only memory) cartridges. (The first batch of games for the 7800 range from 8K ROM to 32K ROM.) We heard the same point emphasized by several members of the Atari team: RAM is designed for temporary storage of data. For example, in computer applications the data is stored temporarily in RAM before being transferred to cassette or disk for permanent storage. In systems that use disk-based software, more RAM is required in the computer to hold the software program where the computer user can reach it. ROM-based cartridge software doesn't use up any RAM space in a computer at all.

High-Score Cartridge

Getting back to the 7800 as game system, one very attractive feature is the High-Score Cartridge. This cartridge with memory ("static RAM") has a tiny battery that keeps the memory refreshed and a slot into which the game player inserts any 7800 cartridge. All 7800 games are designed to interact with the High-Score Cartridge, producing an animated title of the game along with a list of scores with names or initials. You can even enter something like "The Smith Family's High Scores" in a line that will appear under the game title!

The Terminal Cartridge is one add-on that bridges the gap between game system and computer. Atari engineer, Alan Hodgkinson, says it is one of his favorite items for the 7800 because it is an integrated combination of modem and terminal emulator program. It allows the user to connect the 7800 via phone line to the Source or other on-line systems, and it will even dial the phone number for the user. Although only 40 columns of text can be shown on the screen, the built-in software provides scrolling to display and store a full 80 columns, which can be subsequently printed or stored on cassette or disk.

Keyboard Add-On

The computer keyboard will be sold with two pieces of software (titles yet to be determined), and it's expected to sell for about \$100.00. The keyboard is used with the 7800 Video Writer for word processing, and it provides the means for connecting Atari computer peripherals to the 7800, including Program Recorder, printers, or even a disk drive. Audio jacks on the back of the keyboard permit connection of the user's own cassette recorder, so it isn't absolutely necessary to purchase the Atari Program Recorder. Although the system is capable of running a disk drive, it is not expected that most individuals interested in such an entry-level system would want to spend the money for a disk drive.

In addition to the word processing program, other ROM cartridge software for the computer will include the AtariLab Temperature and Light Modules, a typing tutor game, and BASIC programming language. BASIC will be especially exciting for 7800 owners

because this version will give them access to the Maria graphics and the sound channels. When we asked if the 7800 owner will have access to the sprites, we were told "Yes—but they're not actually sprites. It's a fairly complicated data structure, but you will have access to it."

It's obvious that Atari is planning even more goodies for the 7800 ProSystem. The expansion interface on the side of the base unit promises to be a gateway to future technology. We were told that the signals present there will allow the 7800 to interface with video discs—an intriguing possibility. The expansion interface also contains the means to connect the 7800 to a monitor, although the unit is not currently set up to do so.

As Atari Senior Vice President of Marketing says, "We believe in the video game market. We intend to solidify our position in the market with these products." Atari has definitely provided the ultimate game unit in the 7800 ProSystem. All that remains to be seen is whether game players will support it. A successful 7800 would be good not only for Atari, but for the video game industry as a whole.

Attention 5200 Owners!

In our front page coverage of the new Atari 7800 ProSystem last issue, we said that the 7800 Adaptor for the Atari 5200 would allow 5200 owners to play both 7800 and 2600 cartridges. This is true. However, we also said that the 7800 cartridges played through this adaptor would not reproduce 7800 graphics and gameplay. This is most definitely *NOT* true! We were given incorrect information, which we promptly passed along to our readers. The 7800 Adaptor, scheduled to be available in the fourth quarter, contains the heart and soul of the 7800 ProSystem, the proprietary "Maria" chip. This adaptor will upgrade any 5200 to a full-fledged 7800, even to the point of accepting the planned computer keyboard. Since we played several 7800 games on a 5200 with adaptor at CES, we can attest to the fact that there is NO difference between a 7800 and a 5200 with 7800 Adaptor. Graphics and gameplay are totally alike with both configurations.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

GYRUSS (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is a simple but hypnotic shooting game based on the Konami coin-op. The object is for the player's ship to make a journey from Neptune to Earth, with stops along the way at Uranus, Saturn, Jupiter and Mars. Multiple waves of rhythmically gyrating enemy ships complicate each step of the trip. The player's vessel traces a circular path around the enemy fleets, firing at the ships, satellites and meteors. All this swooping, swirling action is played against an exciting musical background that adds a lot to the enjoyment of the game. If the player's ship survives the two or three waves between planets, the "Chance Stage" at each planet offers the opportunity to shoot down non-lethal enemy craft for bonus points.

Dance of the Spaceships

This game could easily carry a subtitle of "Dance of the Spaceships" because of the graceful movements on the screen. Although not spectacular, the graphics are quite true to the original arcade game. The real attraction here is the combination of music and movement. (Thank you, Parker Brothers, for identifying the music as Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* in the instruction booklet. Sometimes we go a little crazy trying to identify classical themes in video games!) The circling action of the player's ship, the flow of the enemy ships, and the pulse of the music work beautifully together. Yes, it's another shoot-em-up, but it's an elegant one. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause.) (Also available for Atari 2600, ColecoVision and Atari and Commodore 64 computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

SUPER ACTION FOOTBALL (★★/★★) is a very good football game for armchair quarterbacks; however, it is disappointing in some aspects, and, apparently has not been

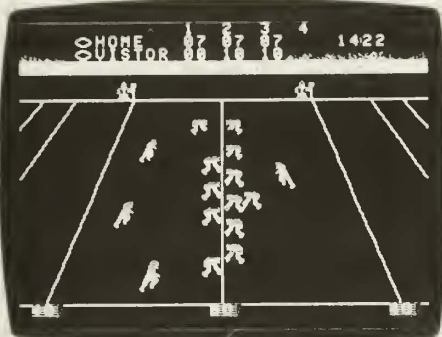
totally debugged, in spite of the numerous delays in releasing the game. First, we'll give you a overall description of the game. It requires the use of the Super Action Controllers which were released last year. Once again, as in the Baseball cartridge, full use of the controllers is in evidence with many capabilities as a result. You have the ability to set offensive blocking patterns, running, passing, and kicking plays, as well as a full compliment of defensive plays from the blitz to rushing the passer, etc. It will take you a great deal of time to master the controls and become proficient, whether you are playing a friend or the computer. Coleco has provided a 33-page Playbook which offers diagrams and descriptions of several play options. You choose your play while in the huddle while your opposition does the same. In the one-player option, you always play offense while the computer plays defense.

Players Blink

We were frankly surprised to note how much the players "blink" while moving, reminiscent of some 2600 games we've seen. The background sound becomes very monotonous as it is meant to be a continuous crowd noise with no real sound differences during the game. We were also a bit disappointed as we expected the inset screens, ala **BASEBALL**, especially in light of the fact that there are some close-up drawings on the back of the packaging. Although you cannot call the packaging misleading, we were expecting just a bit more. The main problem which we encountered was that no matter what we tried, we could not pass to the bottom of the TV screen (right end zone's right side). The ball would disappear right before the pass completion and the game treats it as an incompletion. If you make the same play to the left end zone, you will not encounter the problem. We tested a few cartridges with the same results and find this as a major drawback in an otherwise good rendition of the real thing. (one-player; two-player simultaneous; Super Action Controllers required)

BUMP 'N JUMP (★★/★★) is the second Mattel-originated cartridge for ColecoVision which Coleco took over when Mattel left the business. The most enjoyable way to play it is to use your Expansion Module 2 driving unit, although you can also use the ColecoVision controller or Super Action Controller. Through a birdseye view, you must

maneuver your racer through all sorts of roadways, bumping into other cars along the way. You gain points for sending other cars to the side of the roadway, or you can vault over an opponent and land on other racers for additional points. You must also jump to clear water hazards which appear along the way. The game features 20 different roadway patterns with each successive pattern taking you through a season of the year. A beeping sound warns you a water hazard is coming up (you must be going at least 100 mph for the Jump Ahead signal to indicate it's okay to jump.)



Pretty Ordinary

While young ones will probably enjoy bashing and crashing, we found ourselves becoming very bored within a short period of time. Although there are many different patterns, we did not find them varied enough to hold our interest. The graphics are somewhat blocky, although there is a nice shadow effect when your car is in flight. The musical accompaniment is constant and nothing spectacular. All in all, we found ourselves anxious to get back to **TURBO!** (one-player; two-player alternating; pause) Not Recommended

ROC 'N ROPE (★★★/★★★★) is the newest climbing game from Coleco in which you engage in a quest for the Golden Bird. The landscape consists of prehistoric cliffs and caves which you must scale with your rope. You can use your flashlight to daze the dinosaurs and fast-moving cavemen who try to chase you at every turn. Along the way, the Golden Bird has left a trail of eggs which contain magical powers. Gather them as you go and use their powers to make the dinosaurs and cavemen disappear into the depths below. At the top, the Flying Roc tries to hit you with bouncing boulders. As you climb your rope, watch out for the rope-shaking dinosaurs who will try and shake you off — you may have to stop midway in your climb to hang on. When you reach the top ledge, get to the Golden Bird, and you're off to the next level. Each level gets progressively more difficult with more dinosaurs, a Wheel of Fortune which can help you reach hard-to-reach cliffs, and in the third and final level, you'll have to climb over rushing water.

Good Climbing Fun

Great maneuvering fun is to be had as you toss your rope up to the various cliffs while trying to avoid your enemies. The game requires that you either use the ColecoVision controller or another one with dual firing buttons as you shoot the rope with one button, and shine your flashlight with the other button. We tried the game out with the Super Action Controller and found we actually liked the control better with this controller. The graphics are colorful with a nice depiction of the prehistoric landscape. There are lots of moving figures, the spinning Wheel of Fortune, and the waterfall in the third screen is especially nice. All in all, this is a totally different climbing game for the ColecoVision which can provide hours of entertainment. (one-player; two-player alternating; also available for VCS) Recommended

ALPHABET ZOO (★★★/★★) is a letter and spelling maze game for children 3-8 years old.

SPINNAKER
We make learning fun.

Both segments of the program feature a maze with a picture which is drawn in the middle. You must use your character to search for the first letter of the picture on the screen in The Letter Game. For instance, if the picture is a Lion, you must maneuver around the maze finding all the L's you can. You can jump around the maze by placing your character on one of the hyperspace circles in the corners and pressing the joystick button. This will hyperspace you to another part of the maze. You continue to catch all the L's possible until you either have all of them or time runs out. Another picture is then drawn and the process repeats itself. In The Spelling Game, the premise is the same except you must spell the entire name. In other words, if the Lion appears, you must find L-I-O-N and spell it out.

Maze Difficult

Our feeling, in maneuvering our joystick, that the maze would be extremely frustrating for a young child to get around with all the deadends. Also frustrating is the fact that the letters keep "jumping around" and, just as you are reaching one, it may jump off to another spot in the maze. This could be very frustrating as the child attempts to spell. The pictures in the middle of the maze are bright and attractive graphically but this is not enough reason to recommend the game as there are other spelling games available which we believe are better for young children. (one player; also available for Atari and C64 computers) Not Recommended

Atari Abounds With New Products

Atari was the company with the big press conference this time around, announcing several new products (in addition to the 7800 which we announced last month). Again, based on the new guidelines set by Atari's president, James Morgan, (announcements are only allowed on new product which will *definitely* ship, and within 120 days) we should see *all* new products well before Christmas.



MindLink System Fascinating

It's right out of a science fiction movie — controlling action on the screen by using a headband which detects slight electrical impulses generated by muscles in the forehead which then are transmitted by infrared signals to a receiver connected to your 2600 VCS, 7800, or Atari computer! MindLink will come packaged with Bionic Breakthrough, a thought-directed version of the earlier Breakout video game. We gave it a try and listened to other comments while other players donned the headband. Frustrating to most at first, many people adapted very quickly (you can adjust the sensitivity on the unit), although some complained it simply gave them a headache. We enjoyed it and quickly adapted to moving our paddle with the slight tensing and untensing of forehead muscles. The MindLink will *ONLY* work with special software and the obvious directions it will go include biofeedback where users can monitor stress and learn relaxation, among other interactive entertainment and educational uses, including ESP and thought games. The retail is planned to fall somewhere under \$100.

7800 Computer Keyboard Shown

The keyboard was in evidence and resembles, in configuration, the 600XL keyboard. Four initial software programs were shown including ATARI TERMINAL, a software program which includes a cartridge with built-in modem; ATARILAB, which includes the Temperature Module and Light Module; TYPING TUTOR, a lesson in typing for first-time users; THE WORD PROCESSOR, which has some of the basic features of word processing programs; and BASIC, a tutorial in BASIC language which also allows the user to program his own games for the 7800, and save them with a cassette recorder.

Futuremaker and Milestone Series

Two software space tours will be offered for the Atari computers via the Futuremaker series. THIS IS GROUND CONTROL takes the user on an odyssey to discover the Solar System while THROUGH THE STARBRIDGE incorporates fact and science fiction as travelers explore the universe encountering everything from black holes and quasars to alien beings. The Milestone series will include the ATARILAB STARTER SET, as well as YAACOV AGAM'S INTERACTIVE PAINTING which will be sold through art galleries as well as computer outlets! The IBM version will contain an original, signed limited-distribution Agam serigraph while the Atari and Apple versions will contain a special poster created for this computer art package. FIND IT! is a group of computer activities designed for the development of visual perception skills; THE ABC OF CPR is a tutorial in CPR; WHEELER DEALER teaches the principles of setting up and maintaining a profitable business — a automobile manufacturing company; SIMULATED

COMPUTER uses a computer to show what goes on inside a computer; and TELLY TURTLE is a pre-Logo version of the turtle graphics concept.

Children's Software

Child psychologist Dr. Lee Salk is involved in developing a series of early learning games for toddlers one to three years old. The first to be made available is PEEK-A-BOO, help children learn about cause and effect, spatial relationships, colors, shapes, etc.

Other early learning products will include LETTER TUTOR and WORD TUTOR which are planned to help children 4 to 12 become writing and spelling wizards.

The "Superchip"

A series of "superchip" games for the 2600, 5200, and Atari computers has been developed which expands the memory capabilities of the standard cartridges, enhancing graphics and allowing for more complex gameplay. The technology is achieved by boosting Read Only Memory (ROM) in the cartridge from the standard eight kilobytes to 16K or by using a proprietary Random Access Memory (RAM) chip nicknamed "Sara". New superchip games announced for the 2600 include TRACK AND FIELD (based on the arcade game), THE LAST STARFIGHTER (from the upcoming movie of the same name), JR PAC-MAN, MILLIPEDE, STARGATE, CRYSTAL CASTLES, and MID-NIGHT MAGIC, based on the popular pinball game, David's Midnight Magic. Titles included for the 5200 are TRACK AND FIELD and MILLIPEDE. The XL computer titles are TRACK AND FIELD, LAST STARFIGHTER, JR PAC-MAN, and CRYSTAL CASTLES.

Other Software Titles, including Atarisoft

Steven Spielberg's summer movie, Gremlins, will spawn video game versions for the 2600, 5200, and computer. ELEVATOR ACTION, for the 2600 and computer, places you as Agent 17 who must steal government documents from a top-secret defense building and THE A-TEAM, for the 2600, will be based on the hit TV series. Meanwhile, Atarisoft will introduce its first titles for the PCjr with CENTIPEDE, DONKEY KONG, MOON PATROL, and PAC MAN being the first ones to release. In addition to the PCjr titles, Atarisoft will release GREMLINS for the C64, Apple //e, and IBM PC, TYPO ATTACK for PCjr, PC, Apple //e, C64, and VIC 20. TRACK AND FIELD, MARIO BROS, and DONKEY KONG JR will find their way onto C64, Apple //e, and IBM PC screens shortly, while CRYSTAL CASTLES will be made available for all the above computers in addition to VIC-20. There was, unfortunately, no evidence of any further titles for the TI99-4A.

High End Computer Later This Year

A potentially exciting "high-end" computer is in the development stages at Atari with a release before Christmas anticipated. This computer, unnamed at this time, replaces the 1450 computer announced last year — although it does not appear to have many features in common with the aborted 1450. What we know about this computer at this point is that it is a 64k computer and will feature a built-in, double-sided, dual-density disk drive which will store 352K of RAM, which is promised to operate five times faster than the disk drive planned for the 1450 last year. Other features will include a special built-in database called Atari Grapevine for telecommunications that is made possible by a built-in, auto-answer and auto dial 300 baud modem. Atari customer service information will be made available via the service. Atari promises complete compatibility with current Atari computer peripherals and software. An 80-column ccard and clock-calendar card will also be made available.

Alternate Operating Systems

The computer should expand to 128k and will feature optional cards for alternate operating systems such as MS/DOS and CPM. According to Marketing Vice-President Dave Ruckert, "we would expect less than 100% compatibility with software written on those two operating systems, and one of the reasons is the limitation in RAM." These operating systems will "open the system up. Atari computers have a proprietary operating system, a closed system, and we think that the more serious owners of Atari computers will be very enthusiastic about what we're doing. And we think the 3rd party (software companies) will probably convert their software so that it will be usable with the configuration we are offering. We think it's a good thing to do for our products and to take another step to assure people that Atari is serious about computers and

wants to support them." In fact, Atari was showing a prototype of the computer to third party software companies at the show to get early support in software for the new computer.

Product Discontinued

Meanwhile, the 5200 has been officially discontinued, as well as the 600XL due to lower sales than anticipated. The 5200 can be found heavily discounted in several areas of the country which leads us to this thought...the 5200 boasts several outstanding software titles by Atari and third party companies, which makes the 5200 an attractive buy right now. In addition, with the promised 7800 adaptor (see Atari 7800 story elsewhere in this issue) coming, you could then play all the planned 7800 software. It could be quite a bargain!

CRITICALLY SPEAKING...ATARI 7800

The ATARI 7800 PROSYSTEM is the newest, and perhaps last, dedicated video game system to come on the market. The unit is small, sleekly designed, and very light. Along the front of the top panel of the unit, from left to right, is a Power Button (with on/off light); Pause Button which allows pause on all games; Select Button which allows selection of difficulty, number of players, etc.; and Reset Button. Along the vertical portion of the front panel are the two joystick ports and difficulty switches for 2600 games. 2600-compatible cartridges fit easily right into the same slot on top which handles the 7800 cartridges.

The Joystick

The joysticks packaged with the unit are the ProLine joysticks, with modifications. The controller is approximately two inches across and, therefore, extremely comfortable to hold in long sessions. There are big square buttons on either side at the top which are also extremely easy to use. These buttons have been modified for the 7800 to allow for games which require dual button capability (Pole Position II, Xevious, and 3D Asteroids will be the first to use this feature). All other games allow the use of either button for firing. We had both left and right-handed players use the joystick and both encountered total ease of use. The shaft is short throw, with very tight control. We were curious to get an idea of how well this joystick worked with various types of games. We played Ms. Pac-Man, Centipede, Robotron, and Joust (reviews of the games next month) which gave us a full range of game types and we were extremely pleased with the results on all of them. The tight control made maneuvering through Ms. Pac-Man very easy, but it also works well on Centipede which can be "jerky" with some joysticks. All in all, this is an extremely good joystick which also appears to be well-made. We will report back to you after many more hours of gameplay to let you know how the joystick holds up. It should also be noted that any 2600-compatible joystick, rackball, etc. will work with the 7800; however, if you are playing a game which requires the dual button option, your replacement joystick will, of course, have to also have the dual button.

Software The Key

Overall, we're very impressed with the 7800 as the "ultimate" home gaming system and the software we've seen so far appears to be superior to other system versions currently available. Obviously, plentiful and good software will be the key to the success of this unit. If arcade gaming at home is important to you, you should definitely consider adding a 7800 to your home entertainment library!

MSR approximately \$150-\$170)

POLE POSITION II (★★★★/★★★★) is packaged with the 7800 ProSystem, initially as a cartridge, and later this year it will be "burned" onto a ROM chip directly in the 7800 unit. Everyone should be familiar with the original Pole Position by now as the premiere driving game—both in the arcades and at home in various systems. This enhanced version features four different tracks: a "test" track which

a simple oval; the Fuji track which is the easiest of the actual tracks with the fewest obstacles—billboards, puddles, and other cars—to steer clear of. The Seaside track is the intermediate course,

set in a landscape near the ocean. The Suzuka track, set in the midst of a traveling carnival, is the most difficult with several hair-pin turns and many competitors to maneuver around.

Start Your Engines!

Once you choose which track you wish to race on, you must qualify for the race by finishing a lap in 73 seconds or less. Once you finish your lap, your starting position will be indicated (1 through 8). Then, with your car in the correct position at the starting line (your car will also flash briefly so you immediately identify your position), the red light/green light countdown begins. You begin in low gear and move to high gear by pushing the joystick to the up position. Your left button is your accelerator while your right button acts as a brake. If you make the first lap within the maximum time of 75 seconds, you gain a new lap, with an additional 60 seconds to complete it. Each race has a varying number of laps you must complete. If you crash into another car or a billboard, you will receive a new car as this is strictly a race against the clock. At the top of the screen all the information you need is constantly displayed (low or high gear, lap time, etc.).

Incredible Graphics!

The first time we tried each track, we found ourselves losing our racer as we gazed at the distant scenery. From the ferris wheel and roller coaster in the Suzuka race, to the seaside resort, ocean and bridge in the Seaside track, we were dazzled. Your racer is, without question, the most realistic car available in home games AND the competitor's cars have just as much detail! We didn't even mind crashing too much as the graphics of the car exploding, with tires flying off to the sides, was absolutely terrific. What is important to point out here is that gameplay is also great. The joystick responded extremely well as we worked our way around cars and the perilous tracks, and we felt in total control of our racer during the entire race. This is a truly state-of-the-art driving game and a great start for the 7800!

Recommended

Observations From C.E.S.

This was a different C.E.S. from the past couple of years. Gone was the frenzy among the attendees as many retailers who have been hurt by the roller coaster ride of the home computer and game industry have gotten out of this end of the business and back to what they know best — whether it be audio, video, or something else. Instead, though the crowds were smaller, they were "serious". Many software manufacturers we spoke with during the show indicated this was their best show ever — writing more business than at any other C.E.S.! We thought that extremely interesting in light that so many are so quick to say that entertainment software is "dead". Could it be we have simply grown up as an industry, put the brakes on, and are stabilizing into a force which will always be there and always hold its important part in the scheme of things? We think so!

Several people who dropped by our booth felt that it was great that there wasn't the dearth of new and confusing product to be absorbed. At the same time, there were, as always, several new companies showing product be it entertainment, educational, business, accessories, or whatever. Many of the new companies showed innovative and potentially exciting product. We believe the new and young companies will always be the lifeblood of our industry as they reach out in new and exciting directions. It won't always work — some are underfinanced, some are not prepared to play in the big league, and most will have, at least initially, problems getting their product into stores and distributors as everyone is afraid to be "burned" again.

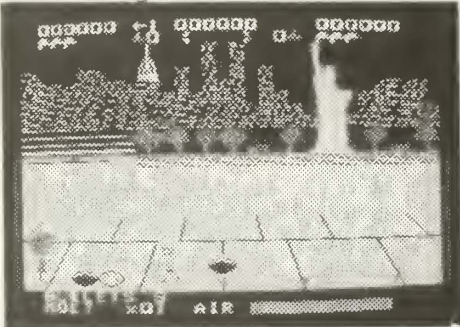
We truly love this industry — its excitement, how quickly it changes, and the breathtaking new developments that continue to surface. Many technical people, including designers and engineers, stopped by our booth to chat "off the record" and some of the things which are being worked on for the next year or two are incredibly exciting! As a matter of fact, we're probably less than a year away from "laser optical storage" — a system in which you can store data for your computer via laser disk instead of the traditional floppy disk. Can you imagine being able to store as much information on ONE laser disk as you could on about 300 5-1/4 floppy disks???

So, stay tuned. It's fun staying on top of all the new developments and reporting on them for you!

SEWER SAM (★★★/★★★★) is an adaptation of a game designed originally for Intellivision in which Sewer Sam, city sanitation worker, descends into the depths of the New York sewer system to save the city from three Russian submarines that have blocked the sewers. If this strains credibility a bit, remember that anything can happen in a video game! First-person perspective in the underground passages gives a three-dimensional quality to the game, as Sam encounters the creepy denizens of the depths.

Since Sam can talk, he cries, "Oh, no!" when the creatures approach. He carries a six-shooter to defend himself against bats, sewer gulls, spiders, snakes, crocodiles, sharks, and the Russian subs. A mere touch of one of these creatures causes him to say "Ouch!" and means instant death. He also dies if he stays too long in one tunnel, turning blue just before he keels over. (His oxygen is replenished each time he moves into a different passage.)

Although Sam spends time in tunnels with solid floors and others with open pits, his ultimate goal is to find the watery canals where the subs are waiting. The presence of a sub is signalled by a bit of the "Song of the Volga Boatmen." Sam has to move back and forth quickly to avoid being shot by the sub while he demolishes the sub's three missiles—no easy task. If he destroys all three subs, Sam is reunited with his girlfriend on the sidewalks of New York.



Graphics a Bit Sparse

SEWER SAM and **Squish 'Em** featuring Sam (reviewed in the April, 1984 issue) both feature the same talking character. **SEWER SAM** is a cute game, but it doesn't have as much personality as **Squish 'Em**. Graphics are good, but a bit on the sparse side. (The best visual display occurs in the opening of the game with its representation of New York City. This is not actually part of game play.) The addition of voice to this first-person maze game certainly makes it a better game than it would be without the voice, but there are too many sequences in the tunnels that become repetitious. The most challenging parts of the game are the battles with the subs, and they occur infrequently. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause.) (Also available for Intellivision.) (MSR \$39.95)

AQUATTACK revisited

In a May review, we rated play action as "fair" (below average for the system—two stars) in the Interphase game, **Aquattack**. Due to some confusion with the preliminary version of the instructions we received with the cartridge, we thought that the the control knob, both firing buttons, and four keypad positions had to be manipulated simultaneously in order to move our hydroship, fire straight up and down, and fire in four diagonal directions. As you can imagine, this is nearly impossible to manage. However, there are two keypad positions for firing up and down, and these should be used with the diagonal keypad positions for maximum firepower. The firing buttons are used only if the player doesn't want to use diagonal firing at all. Firing from the keypad still isn't easy, especially for female players with long fingernails, but it can be done. Due to our misunderstanding of the controls in the original review, we're upgrading the play action rating to two-and-a-half stars (average for the system).

GYRUSS (★★★/★★★★½) from Parker Bros. is nearly identical to the version for Atari 5200, which is reviewed elsewhere in this *Video Game Update* section of the issue. Unlike the other versions, the player has a choice of starting difficulty levels in this one. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause.) (Also available for Atari 2600 and 5200, plus Atari and Commodore 64 computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)

STAR WARS: THE ARCADE GAME (★★★★/★★★★½)

PARKER BROTHERS

is a satisfying adaptation of the Lucasfilm/Atari coin-op that has been such a hit in the arcades. This is the ultimate battle in space—the player fighting for the Rebels against the forces of the Empire in three different settings. In the first screen, the player aims at Imperial Tie Fighters and fireballs that swarm toward the Rebel X-Wing Fighter. Each time a fireball hits the ship, one of nine shields is destroyed, so the player must be quick and accurate. Next the player's ship skims across the surface of the Death Star, weaving through the maze of laser towers and still watching for fireballs. Shooting the tower tops earns points in this scene. The final challenge is the Death Star's Equatorial Trench. The Rebel Fighter must be guided through the narrow passage, avoiding catwalks and shooting fireballs on the way to the Main Reactor Port. Like Luke Skywalker, the player must try to drop a proton torpedo into the port to destroy the Death Star. Once this is accomplished, the player moves to the next level, and additional shields are awarded.

Play Action Close to Coin-Op

The designers have done an incredibly good job of duplicating the colorful vector graphics of the original arcade game in this adaptation. Every detail is just as bright and crisp as can be. (One of our favorite graphic moments is the shattering of a laser tower's top into crystalline shards.) Play action is as close to the coin-op as possible, given the difference in controllers. (The arcade controller looks something like half a steering wheel and is gripped with both hands. The firing buttons fall naturally under the index fingers.) The control mechanism in the home version takes some getting used to because of the inertial feeling—the player's aiming cursor tends to continue moving somewhat after the controller knob is released. Although this feels a little strange at first, it adds to the sense of realism as the player becomes accustomed to it. This is a great first-person space game for *Star Wars* fans, especially with the constant accompaniment of the movie's musical theme. It's definitely the best of the home video games based on the Lucasfilm movies. (Solo Play) (Also available for Atari 2600 and 5200 game systems and Atari and Commodore 64 computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)

Take Over a Recording Studio

Spinnaker's **ROCK N' RHYTHM**, planned for Atari and C64, allows one to three players to take over a recording studio and record hits songs. You can write your own music or recreate your favorites and then perform it by playing the drums and bass keyboard. One player acts as the recording engineer who puts on track on at a time and edits the piece to get it just right. Retail planned at \$39.95.

Or Be The President!

In **PRESIDENT'S CHOICE: GUNS OR BUTTER**, the player as the President, must review the state of the economy and prepare a national budget in order to keep the American economy running smoothly. Based on real data from the past five presidential administrations, you will find that balancing the budget is no easy task! Daily newscasts keep the President abreast of the issues and if the President does a good job managing the economy, success will be reflected in positive opinion polls and re-election. Planned for Apple and IBM, it will retail for \$39.95.

Robot Construction Set

The Learning Company introduced **ROBOT ODYSSEY**, aimed at teens and young adults, which is an adventure game where the user must design and build robots to escape an underground city inhabited by robots. In the Innovation Lab a toy kit is provided to design the circuitry of the robots, a prototype chip and three robots for use for experimentation, a burner room to create chips and a library to store chips with special capabilities. The program comes with a set of tutorials to assist play throughout the game. Skills which are taught include design, planning, logic, hypothesis formulation, and collecting and analyzing data. The program is planned for Apple.

AVAILABILITY UPDATE

continued

COLECOVISION

SEPTEMBER

Montezuma's Revenge (PB)

THIRD QUARTER

Antarctic Adventure (COL)

Boulder Dash (MF)

Crisis Mountain (MF)

Dukes of Hazard (COL) ★★★★★

Fortune Builders (COL)

Joust (AT)

Jungle Hunt (AT)

Lunar Leeper (SOL)

Moon Patrol (AT)

Pole Position (AT)

Mountain King (SUN)

Short Circuit (MF)

Smurf Paint & Play (COL)

Tarzan (COL)

FOURTH QUARTER

Stunt Flyer (SOL)

★★ for use with Super

Action Controllers

★★★ for use with

Roller Controller

★★★★ for use with

Expansion Module 2

ATARI 5200

JUNE

x-Gyruss (PB)

JULY

H.E.R.O. (ACT)

Meteorites (ELE)

SECOND QUARTER

Choplifter (AT)

Final Legacy (AT)

Flip and Flop (FS)

x-Keystone Kapers (ACTV)

Millipede (AT)

x-Star Wars (PB)

Tutankham (PB)

THIRD QUARTER

Ball Blazer (AT)

Gremkins (AT)

Montezuma's Revenge (PB)

Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)

Rescue on Fractalus (AT)

Scraper Caper (BIG5)

AUGUST

Beamrider (ACT)

Decathlon (ACT)

Frogger II: Threedeep (PB)

Mr. Do!s Castle (PB)

Pitfall II (ACT)

Tempest (AT)

Track and Field (AT)

Zenji (ACT)

FOURTH QUARTER

7800 Adaptor (AT)

Space Shuttle (ACT)

Toy Bizarre (ACT)

ATARI 7800

THIRD QUARTER

Centipede (AT)

Dig Dug (AT)

Food Fight (AT)

Galaga (AT)

Joust (AT)

Ms. Pac-Man (AT)

Robotron: 2084 (AT)

3-D Asteroids (AT)

Xevious (AT)

FOURTH QUARTER

Ballblazer (AT)

Desert Falcon (AT)

MindLink System

Rescue on Fractalus! (AT)

Track and Field (AT)

COMPANY NAME CODES:

ACTV - Activision

AH - Avalon Hill

ART - Artwork

AT - Atari

BI - Batteries Included

BRO - Broderbund

CBS - CBS Electronics

COL - Coleco

COMM - Commodore

CS - Creative Software

DES - DesignWare

DM - DataMost

DS - DataSoft

EA - Electronic Arts

ELE - Electra Concepts

EPYX - Epyx

FS - First Star

II - Intellivision Inc

IMGC - Imagic

INAC - Interactive

INF - Infocom

INT - Interphase

LC - Learning Co.

MF - Microfun

MICP - Microprose

MMG - MMG Micro Software

PB - Parker Bros.

PDI - Program Design Inc

PS - Professional Software

SCR - Scarborough

SCRN - Screenplay

SOL - Sierra

SPN - Spinnaker

SSI - Strategic Simulations

ST - SirTech

STRSIM - Strategic Simulations

SUB - SubLogic

SUN - Sunrise

SYN - Synapse

TRAP - Trapeze

TRO - Tronix

TS - TechSketch

TYM - Tymac

XON - Xonox

VIC - Victory Software



Break dancers were the most popular tool for drawing crowds at Summer CES. The "Chicago L Break Dancers" entertained onlookers at the Screenplay booth. (Computer Entertainer staff photos by Celeste Dolan.)

Screenplay Breakdances Too

Screenplay Software showed a Breakdance game (complete with live Breakdancers to entertain the crowds), and THE TRIVIA ARCADE, a combination trivia and arcade game where the player must "capture a subject" and then correctly answer the question. A correct answer will take you to the next screen on the playing field and award you one or two moves towards the winners' circle. Categories included are Sports, Music, Science, Television, and General. QUESTION PACK I will also be made available which includes questions in Literature, Movies, History, Comics, and General Knowledge. Planned for C64, Atari, and Apple, TRIVIA ARCADE will retail for \$34.95 and the QUESTION PACK I will retail for \$29.95.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE

ROC 'N ROPE (★★ / ★★★) for the VCS has the same premise as the version for ColecoVision (reviewed elsewhere in this issue); however, due to the fact that the VCS joystick has only one firing button, rope shooting and use of the flashlight work by moving the joystick in a specified direction and pressing the firing button.

Something a Little Different

Again, this game gives the VCS owner something a little different in the way of climbing games and, from that standpoint, it's a good game and plays pretty well. There are also three screens in this version. Once again, however, the graphics are far less than spectacular, even given the VCS restrictions. The cliffs don't look anything like cliffs; and it's a poor shadow of the ColecoVision version. If the graphic limitations don't bother you, it is a new twist in the climbing genre. (one-player; two-player alternating; also available for ColecoVision)

LATE FLASH

Warner Sells Atari to former Head of Commodore

On July 2, 1982, it was announced that Warner Communications sold the consumer division of Atari to Jack Tramiel, who recently stepped down from his position as chief executive officer of Commodore, the company he founded. (Tramiel is no longer involved with Commodore.) The affected portions of Atari are the home computer and video game segments. Warner Communications will retain some Atari assets, such as the Coin-Op and AtariTel divisions. It is, of course, much too early to predict the effects of this sale on specific Atari products now in production or development. We will keep you informed.

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ATARI COMPUTERS

JUNE

x-Gyruss (PB)
x-Imagic 1-2-3 (Wing War, Quick Step, Laser Gates)
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)

JULY

Galactic Adventures (SSI)
Seastalker (INF)
Your Personal Net Worth (SCR)
War in Russia (SSI)

THIRD QUARTER

Ankh (DM)
Aterilab Light Module (AT)
Ballblazer (AT)
Barbie (EPYX)
B.C. Grog Revenge (SOL)
Beat the Beatles II (INAC)
Breakdance (EPYX)
x-Computer Title Bout (AH)

Crime Lab (AT)
Crystal Castles (AT)
Dr. Seuss Fix Up (COL)
Final Legacy (AT)
Flight Simulator II (SUB)
Fortune Builders (COL)
Free Trader (AH)
G.I. Joe (EPYX)
Green Globbs (AT)
Gulf Strike (AH)
Habitats (tent tit) (AT)
Hot Wheels (EPYX)
Jet Boot Black (DM)
Jr Pac-Man (AT)
Juno First (DS)
Last Starfighter (AT)
Mancopter (DS)
Meridian III (DS)
Millipede (AT)
Mission Algebra (DES)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Mycess II (DM)
Pitstop II (EPYX)
Polar Pierre (DM)
Rescue on Fractulas (AT)
Rock N' Rhythm (SPN)
-fd-Millipede (AT)
Mission Algebra (DES)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Mycess II (DM)
Pitstop II (EPYX)
Polar Pierre (DM)
Rescue on Fractulas (AT)
Rock N' Rhythm (SPN)
Short Circuit (MF)
Space Cowboy (AH)
x-Star Wars (PB)
Stealth (BRO)
Summer Games (EPYX)
Tarzan (COL)
This is Ground Control (AT)
Through the Star Bridge (AT)
Track and Field (AT)
Wargames (COL)

AUGUST

Beamrider (ACT)
Computer Ambush (SSI)
Computer Baseball (SSI)
Decathlon (ACT)
Frogger II: Threedeeep (PB)
Grammar Examiner (DES)
H.E.R.O. (ACT)
Mr. Do's Castle (PB)
Notable Phantom (DES)
Pitfall II (ACT)
Reforger 88 (SSI)
Seti (TRAP)
Spelunker (BRO)
Super Football (NEXA)
Super Music Box (PPI)
Twisted (TRAP)
Whistler's Brother (BRO)
Zenji (ACT)

SEPTEMBER

Dunzinh (SCRN)
Kaiv (SCRN)
Master Home Planner (PPI)
Montezuma's Revenge (PB)
Romper Rm I Love My Alphabet
Spy Vs. Spy (FS)
U.S. Adventure (FS)
Wylde (SCRN)

FOURTH QUARTER

Elevator Action (AT)
Escape! (AT)
MindLink System (AT)
Stargate (AT)

AVAILABILITY UPDATE

COMMODORE 64

JUNE

x-Beamrider (ACT)
Beyond Castle Wolfenstein (MUSE)
Flight Simulator II (cass-SUB)
Galaxian (AT)
x-Gyruss (PB)
x-Paintbrush (HES)
Pitfall II (ACT)
Puzzle Panic (EPYX)

JULY

Crystal Castles (AT)
Decathlon (ACT)
Donkey Kong Jr (AT)
Gremlins (AT)
Heist (MF)
H.E.R.O. (ACT)
Impossible Mission (EPYX)
Juno First (DS)
Lite Sprite (TS)
Lost Tomb (DS)
Mario Bros (AT)
Pitfall (ACT)
Seastalker (INF)
Track and Field (AT)
Trivia Mania (PS)
Viking Raider (INT)
Your Personal Net Worth (SCR)
World's Greatest Baseball (EPYX)

AUGUST

Ankh (DM)
Baltic 85 (SSI)
Championship Lode Runner (Bro)
Circus Charlie (PB)
Decathlon (ACT)
Demon Attack (IMGC)
Dracula (IMGC)
Dragonfire (IMGC)
Frogger II: Threedeeep (PB)
Grammar Examiner (DES)
H.E.R.O. (ACT)
Jet Boot Black (DM)
Mabel's Mansion (DM)
Moonsweeper (IMGC)
Mr. Do's Castle (PB)
Mycess II (DM)
Notable Phantom (DES)
Nova Blast (IMGC)
Pitfall II (ACT)
Polar Pierre (DM)
Seti (TRAP)
Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)
Spelunker (BRO)
Super Music Box (PPI)
Swords & Serpents (IMGC)
Toy Bizarre (ACT)
Twisted (TRAP)
Whistler's Bros (BRO)
Zenji (ACT)

SEPTEMBER

Boulder Dash (IMGC)
Death in the Caribbean (MF)
Dunzinh (SCRN)
Injured Engine (IMGC)
Kaiv (SCRN)
Master Home Planner (PPI)
Miner 2049er II (MF)
Montezuma's Revenge (PB)
Romper Rm I Love My Alphabet (FS)
Short Circuit (MF)
Spy Vs. Spy (FS)
Time Machine (IMGC)
U.S. Adventure (FS)
Wylde (SCRN)

THIRD QUARTER

Barbie (EPYX)
B.C. Grog Revenge (SOL)
Blockade Runner (INT)
Breakdance (EPYX)
Castles of Dr Creep (BRO)
Dr. Seuss Fix Up (COL)
Fortune Builders (COL)
G.I. Joe (EPYX)
Hot Wheels (EPYX)
Impossible Mission (EPYX)
Joust (AT)
Light Waves (CBS)
London Blitz (AH)
Mancopter (DS)
Meridian III (DS)
Mission Algebra (DES)
Moreta: Dragonlady of Pern (EPYX)
Pitstop II (EPYX)
Raid on Bungeing Bay (BRO)
Robots of Dawn (EPYX)
Rock N'Rhythm (SPN)
x-Star Wars (PB)
Stealth (BRO)

Stress Manager (BI)
Stunt Flyer (SOL)
Super Pipeline (INT)
Tarzan (COL)
Trivia Arcade (SCRN)
Wargames (COL)
Weather Tamers (CBS)
FOURTH QUARTER
Ballblazer (AT)
Rescue on Fractulas (AT)

APPLE II/IIe

JULY

Boulder Dash (MF)
Championship Lode Runner (BRO)
Crystal Castles (AT)
Donkey Kong Jr (AT)
Graphics Exhibitor (KOALA)
Gremlins (AT)
Mario Bros (AT)
Seastalker (INF)
Short Circuit (MF)
Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)
States & Traits (DES)
Summer Games (EPYX)
Track and Field (AT)
Your Personal Net Worth (SCR)
War in Russia (SSI)

SEPTEMBER

Bank St Filer (BRO)
Bank St Mailer (BRO)
Romper Rm I Love My Alphabet (FS)
Spy Vs. Spy (FS)
U.S. Adventure (FS)

SECOND QUARTER

x-Beyond Castle Wolfenstein (MUSE)
Dreadnoughts (AH)
Free Trader (AH)
Galaxian (AT)
Genesis (DS)
Joust (AT)
Liberator (THORN)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Pole Position (AT)
Under Southern Skies (AH)

THIRD QUARTER

Ankh (DM)
Another Bow (IMGC)
Baltic 85 (SSI)
Barbie (EPYX)
B.C. Grog Revenge (SOL)
Breakdance (EPYX)
Capt Goodnight (BRO)
Dazzle Draw (BRO)
Dragonfire (IMGC)
Dunzinh (SCRN)

Earthly Delights (DM)
G.I. Joe (EPYX)
Grammar Examiner (DES)
Hot Wheels (EPYX)
Injured Engine (IMGC)
Juno First (DS)
Kaiv (DM)
Kings Quest (128K) (SOL)
Lost Tomb (DS)
Mabel's Mansion (DM)
Mancopter (DS)
Mercy Birds (BRO)
Meridian III (DS)
Miner 2049er II (MF)
Mission Algebra (DES)
Mycess II (DM)
Notable Phantom (DES)
Pitstop II (EPYX)
President's Choice (SPN)
Reforger 88 (SSI)
Robot Odyssey I (LC)
Seti (TRAP)
Station 5 (MF)
Trivia Arcade (SCRN)
Trivia Mania (PS)
Twisted (TRAP)
Welcome Aboard (BRO)
Wylde (SCRN)

FOURTH QUARTER

Ballblazer (AT)
Rescue on Fractulas (AT)
Stunt Flyer (SOL)

IBM PCjr

JULY

Baseball (IMGC)
x-Castle Wolfenstein (MUSE)
Centipede (AT)
Crime & Punishment (IMGC)
Donkey Kong Jr (AT)
Football (IMGC)
In The Chips (CS)
Match Wits (CBS)

Moon Patrol (AT)
Ms Pac-Man (AT)
Murder by the Dozen (CBS)
Pac-Man (AT)
Pipes (CS)
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)
Seastalker (INF)
Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)
Summer Games (EPYX)

THIRD QUARTER

Barbie (EPYX)
BC Grog Revenge (SOL)
G.I. Joe (EPYX)
Hot Wheels (EPYX)
Juno First (DS)
Lost Tomb (DS)
Mancopter (DS)
Meridian III (DS)
Trivia Mania (PS)

FALL

Earthly Delights (DM)
Miner 2049er II (MF)
Short Circuit (MF)
FOURTH QUARTER
Stress Manager (BI)
Stunt Flyer (SOL)

ADAM

THIRD QUARTER

x-Adventure Pack I (VIC)
x-Adventure Pack II (VIC)
x-Bounty Hunter (VIC)
Electronic Flashcard Maker (COL)
English I (MF)
Expertype (COL)
Flashbacks-Amer History (COL)
Flashbacks-Vocabulary (COL)
x-Grave Robbers (VIC)
Math I (MF)
Recipe Filer (COL)
Smart Filer I (COL)
Smart Letters/Forms (COL)
x-Smart Logo (COL)
Sub Roc (COL)
Trivia (COL)
U.S. Constitution (MF)
Zaxxon (COL)

FALL

American History (MF)
Health (MF)
High School Algebra (MF)
High School Geometry (MF)
Jr High School Algebra (MF)
Jr High School Geometry (MF)
Physics (MF)

ATARI 2600

SECOND QUARTER

x-Gyruss (PB)
x-Rock N Rope (COL)
x-Star Wars (PB)
Tarzan (COL)

THIRD QUARTER

Choplifter (AT)
Gremlins (AT)
Jr Pac-Man (AT)
Last Starfighter (AT)
Stargate (AT)
The A-Team (AT)
Track and Field (AT)

AUGUST

Circus Charlie (PB)
Frogger II: Threedeeep (PB)
Mr. Do's Castle (PB)

SEPTEMBER

Montezuma's Revenge (PB)

FOURTH QUARTER

Elevator Action (AT)
MindLink System (AT)
Peek-A-Boo (AT)

COLECOVISION

JUNE

x-Bump 'N Jump (COL) ★ ★ ★
x-Dragonfire (IMGC)
x-Gyruss (PB)
x-Star Wars (PB)
x-Super Action Football (COL) ★ ★

JULY

Decathlon (ACT)
H.E.R.O. (ACT)
Temple of Apsah (EPYX)

AUGUST

Circus Charlie (PB)
Frogger II: Threedeeep (PB)
Mr. Do's Castle (PB)
Pitfall II (ACT)
Summer Games (EPYX)
Zenji (ACT)

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Continued inside back cover