## Atari CANCELS Booth at Consumer Electronic Show

The industry has been buzzing since the middle of April when it was learned that Atari has pulled out of the .C.E.S. to be held in the beginning of June in Chicago. The company has been watched closely ever since Jack Tramiel took it over and there were VERY mixed feelings following the January C.E.S. regarding their ability to bring the ST (the Macintosh "lookalike") to market as Tramiel has promised (see February 1985 issue of Computer Entertainer). Rumors abounded that the company was in a severe cash-flow problem, attempting to get dealers and distributors to commit heavily to Atari at the January show. In addition, the ST models which were shown at that show were not working models — simply shells over machines which only had certain portions finished. There was NO "hands-on" allowed. After the problems of the home industry in general, people in the industry were very leery indeed! At that time, Atari indicated that they would begin shipments of the ST's in the Spring (around this time) and, in that light, certainly we would see finished products at the June show. It now appears that the ST is no further along, in a production sense than it was in January (there are prototypes which we reported on last month which software developers can purchase for BIG bucks — many developers simply are holding back not wanting to develop for something that is unsure, as well as the fact that they would all like to see many thousand units in customer's hands before commiting the dollars required.) You may read reports that Atari has just finished showing the ST at the Computer Faire in Hannover, Germany (a show that Tramiel has always attended with product debuts when he was at the helm of Commodore); however, we have learned from sources that the ST which was shown at Hannover was also a "no-touch, just look at" computer. With the trade feeling that the Summer Show in Chicago being the more important of the two C.E.S.'s held every year, the news of their pull-out is magnified that much more. In other Atari developments, we understand that they have shipped small quantities of their 130XE (the 128K 800XL-type computer) into distributors; however, they have just encountered another lay-off and Atari employees were grumbling last week when reportedly, they opened their paychecks to find their pay had been cut anywhere from 5-20%!!

### Several Software Developers Not Showing Either

Meanwhile, we've learned that several software companies have either chosen not to book a booth or have also recently cancelled (CBS Software has just cancelled their booth, while others are contemplating doing the same). The list of who's NOT showing on the floor is pretty astounding. Frankly, with the industry still trying to stabilize, it's not surprising since a booth of some size can cost anywhere from $250,000 - $750,000 when you figure floor space, booth shipment and set-up, staffing, etc. The cost is enormous and many companies are beginning to question the value, instead opting for private showings in hotel rooms where they invite their dealers and distributors up. Companies have told us that system is more condusive to order placing, and

# CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI COMPUTERS

**MAXWELL MANOR** (★★1/2/ ★★1/2) , from Avalon Hill, finds you in the role of Professor Arabesque as he must find the Skull of Doom that controls the haunted Maxwell Manor and destroy it. Your adventure is two-fold. As you make your way through the grounds and house (no easy task), you must look for the answers as to how to destroy the Skull, all the while picking up treasures, vases which contain bullets and lives, and special objects such as crosses and gold coins which can put you out of danger, for a moment at least.

The scene opens with you outside the gate of the manor. You must find your way into the front yard park, and then into the house, garden maze, and clue cave. The instructions give you a good layout of the house and surrounding grounds. There are sixteen treasures scattered throughout the mansion and various pieces of equipment used to help save your life as well as light your way. The mansion is inhabited, of course, with creatures which you must either avoid or destroy.

### Pretty good Action/Adventure

We enjoyed this game, and found there was a good mix of action and adventure for those who do not like a straight adventure game. There are over 100 variations levels and more than 50 screens. As a result, there's lots of varied action for you. For those who get frustrated with adventures and solving them, the instructions give away all the answers (in a clearly marked section which warns you that the answers are included). This is a game you might want to check out before buying. (joystick; 48K disk; one player; Atari and C64 on double-sided disk)
(MSR $25.00)

BALLBLAZER and RESCUE ON FRACTALUS! have been the subjects of great interest and lots of questions from our readers ever since we printed reviews of the versions for Atari 5200 (never released) in our May, 1984 issue. We first saw and fell in love with the games exactly a year ago, shortly before their public debut at a joint press conference by Lucasfilm Games and Atari. Both were scheduled to be released for the Atari 5200 and Atari computers, and they were shown in June in Atari's booth at the Summer CES (Consumer Electronics Show) in Chicago. The response to the games was excellent, and eager game players looked forward to their release. Then Jack Tramiel took over, and it soon became clear that Lucasfilm Games would never appear from the new Atari Corp. We got lots of phone calls from disappointed readers wanting to know if these games would ever be released. Then, just before the January 1985 CES in Las Vegas, we learned that Atari's loss was to be Epyx's gain. And now, thanks to the Lucasfilm Games Division and Epyx, owners of Atari computers can finally play *BALLBLAZER* and *RESCUE ON FRACTALUS!*
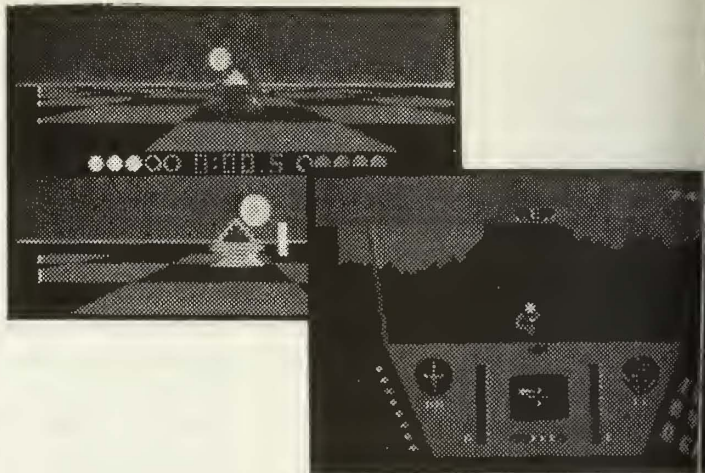


**BALLBLAZER** (★★★★/★★★★) is a sports game of the future--the year 3097, to be exact. There are a few familiar elements, such as a playing field (the Grid), ball (Plasmorb), and goal posts (Goalbeams), but playing this game is unlike any experience you've ever had with your computer and a sports simulation. First of all, if you're the type who rarely reads instructions before playing a game, do yourself a favor and read the little booklet that comes with *BALLBLAZER*. Don't just skim through it; read every word. Why should you do that? Because the guys at Lucasfilm have painstakingly created an exquisitely detailed world to make this game real for you--the history of Ballblazing as it developed from military training exercises, secrets of the Masterblazers, interviews with great Ballblazers, and a simply marvelous play-by-play of final-round action between Crockett from Earth and Xarta from the Minotaur system.

### The Game

The game opens with the Lucasfilm Games banner (one we hope to see lots more of) and a brief introduction to the two Rotofoils and the Ballblazers who guide them. Then it's on to the split-screen view of the game, which is played on the luminous Grid of an artificial asteroid. You'll notice the music right away, the "Song of the Grid." It's so infectiously rhythmic that you can't ignore it! To begin, you may want to watch a demonstration match between two Droids. The screen is split horizontally, with each half representing the view from inside one of the Rotofoils. The Plasmorb is fired into the

middle of the Grid, and both Rotofoils move to the ball. One captures the ball in its Pullfield, immediately snaps to face the Goalbeams, and then uses its Pushfield to blast the ball through the goal. All the while, the pulsating rhythms add to the excitement and the checkerboard Grid creates a dizzying flash as the Rotofoils slide over it. And the distance between the Goalbeams shrinks as the game progresses! How about it--are you ready to try Ballblazing? You can play against a Droid (level 1 through 9) or go for the real thing, human against human. According to the rules of the Interstellar Ballblazer Conference, there is only one regulation game: three minutes, two humans, one victor.)

### Learning the Game

You may want to practice by playing against a level 1 Droid, but the best and easiest way to learn the game is to find a friend who wants to learn, too. This gives you a chance to try things out without the pressure of not knowing what the Droid may do next. Once you've played a few games, you'll have the basics down, and you can both start working on offensive and defensive strategies. The game is actually a lot easier to learn than it seems, and the real fun is in perfecting such strategies as the over-the-horizon shot and buzz blasting.

### State of the Art

When we first reviewed *BALLBLAZER* as a game for the Atari 5200 a year ago, we were mightily impressed with its concept, three-dimensional graphics, music, play action, and originality. In a year's time, the general quality level of computer games has improved greatly. Only a very few changes have been made in this game, and yet we're as awestruck now as we were a year ago. Obviously, this game was well ahead of its time a year ago, and it's very much state-of-the-art today. It's a superb solo game, especially when you improve your skills to the point of being competitive against the higher-level Droids. But as a two-player, head-to-head confrontation, we think it's the best competitive game available for Atari computers. Hats off to David Levine of Lucasfilm Games, who created the concept, directed the project, and did much of the programming. David stopped by the Computer Entertainer booth at CES last June, and was obvious after a few minutes of conversation just how much of himself he had invested in this project. It was worth it, David. You and the rest of the team at Lucasfilm Games who contributed to this project have something you can be proud of. (Solo play; 2-player competitive; Pause; Joystick control; Disk; coming soon for C64.)

Recommended. (MSR approx. $40.00)

**RESCUE ON FRACTALUS!** (★★★★/★★★★) is a space game to put all other space games to shame. This is probably the kind of program most people would expect from the company responsible for the *Star Wars* trilogy, and yet it offers the game player so much more than the usual space game. As with *BALLBLAZER*, the game booklet is not to be missed. It sets the stage, builds the environment, and makes you feel that the threat to Ethercorps pilots posed by the Jaggi emplacements on Fractalus is altogether real. It even contains the complete specifications and a photograph--not just a drawing--of the modified Valkyrie Class Fighter you'll be flying. (Those model builders at Lucasfilm are something else!)

### Awesome Mother Ship

While the game is loading, an establishing shot of the exterior of the cylindrical Mother Ship sets the scene. The central section of the gigantic vessel rotates as one of the Valkyrie Class Fighters is launched toward Fractalus to rescue downed pilots. This sequence has been added to the game since we saw it last year, and it's an awesome sight. Highly detailed, the Mother Ship is rendered mostly in shades of gray. It's one of the most impressive bits of computer graphics we've seen lately! Soon the action moves to the interior of your own Valkyrie Class Fighter with its fully-instrumented cockpit. Appropriately stirring music helps create the mood of embarking on an important rescue mission as your Fighter is launched toward Fractalus.

### Approaching Fractalus

Through the cockpit window, you see twinkling stars in black space until your view is obscured by the yellow cloud layer created by the cyanitric acid atmosphere of Fractalus. Cockpit instruments come to life, and the Etheric Navigation System takes over, bringing a computer-enhanced picture of the planet's craggy surface to your viewscreen. Incidentally, this surface changes with every mission you fly, due to the application of fractal mathematics, which allows for "controlled randomness" in the computer generation of terrain graphics. This technique was also used to create the "Genesis Effect," bringing a barren planet to life in the Paramount film, Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan. Fractal techniques have never been used before in a computer game.

### The Rescue Mission

Once you start to fly over the peaks and canyons of Fractalus, you're bound to encounter Jaggies on all but the first level of play. (You may start at anything from level 1 to 16.) The Jaggies may fire what appear to be eerie streaks of green light (actually high-energy ion beams) from their mountaintop positions, or they may fly their inertialess suicide saucers directly at you. Although this is a mission of mercy, you do have defenses: your Dirac Mirror Shield and AMB (Anti-Matter Bubble) torpedoes. But your job is to rescue pilots, so watch your Long Range Scanner for the pilots' emergency beacons. When you're close enough to one of them, you must land your Fighter and turn off your engines and shields. If you're in the right spot and close enough, you may be able to see the pilot running toward your ship. Soon you'll hear a metallic "knock, knock" as the pilot raps against the hull of your ship. He (or she) wants IN! Open the airlock (great sound effect here), which will

close automatically once the rescued pilot is inside. A second set of knocks is the pilot's "AOK" signal that it's safe for you to take off. You'll also notice a boost in your energy reserves, the result of the rescued pilot's energy cells. There is a quota of pilots for each level, and once it is reached or the Valkyrie runs low on energy, you can rendezvous with the Mother Ship to refuel. Reaching or exceeding your pilot quota will graduate you to the next level. Obviously, each succeeding level is a little more difficult than the last, but it gets really challenging when you're dropped nearer the equator of Fractalus on level 16 and above. Here you're affected by the infamous nine-minute day and night cycle on Fractalus, and you must fly by instruments at night.

### Surprises

There are some surprises to be experienced in this game, but we don't want to give anything away. We will warn you that sooner or later something in this game is going to genuinely scare you. It still happens to us, even though we know what it is! Also surprising, perhaps, is the fact that it's still possible to create a truly original and engrossing space game after so many have already been done. *RESCUE ON FRACTALUS!* is unquestionably one of the most beautifully programmed simulations of another reality that we've experienced. It has so much going for it: ever-changing, three-dimensional terrain graphics, realistic flight simulation with sensitive controls, great music and excellent sound effects, touches of humor and horror, and a meticulously built world that feels quite real. It's a total package that guarantees many hours of engrossing play. David Fox and Loren Carpenter are responsible for the concept and much of the programming, and the other members of the Lucasfilm Games Division contributed to the project. We look forward to more programs from this very talented group. (Solo play; Pause; Joystick control; Disk; coming soon for C64.)
Recommended. (MSR approx. $40.00)

**MR DO** (**1/2/ ****) has been converted to the Atari computer format through Datasoft. Our resident *MR. DO* fanatic immediately grabbed the program when it came in and headed for the game room. While not quite as colorful as the original ColecoVision version, this one still has all the elements for a challenging game mowing paths through orchards. (one player; joystick; also available for ColecoVision; Apple, C64)
Recommended (MSR $39.95)

## Microbits Lowers Prices

Atari modems will cost less from Microbits Peripheral Products as they have announced that their MPP-1000E auto-dial/auto-answer modem will be lowered from $149.95 to $109.95. In addition, they have lowered the price on the MicroRam, 64K Memory Board for the Atari 600XL from $119.95 to $79.95. Microbits also features the MPP-1064 auto-dial/auto-answer modem for the C64 at $99.95.

## THE MAC - ONE YEAR LATER

Just a little over a year ago, Apple announced the release of Macintosh. One of our reporters was so intrigued, he ordered one, and then camped out on his dealer's doorstep waiting for it. After it came it, he cancelled it, saying "it's just another gadget..I'll wait for some software.

Now, just over a year old, MAC has a long list of credits, and more software coming every day. It, of course, still comes bundled with MacWrite and MacPaint, but it's the new 3rd party software that would have made your head spin a year ago.

It's important to know that the Macintosh is not another Apple II computer. Mac is a 16-bit machine (the Apple II series is 8-bit). But that's technical talk. The whole operating system of the Mac is different. Apple has managed to release a computer which marches to its own drummer. It has the "power" of the IBM PC, but the personality typically Apple.

Almost any person who has never turned a computer switch to the "on" position would have a very easy time doing functions with Mac. (In fact, that would include pulling it out of the box, and hooking it up)! The term "User Friendly" definitely applies! There's software, programs developed with Macintosh in mind: MacManager, MacOffice, Mac the Knife, Smooth Talker and the glob of software, some from Apple, themselves. Smooth Talker is one of those software programs we call a "sleeper": little (if any) advertising, low public awareness of the product, etc. But, take a few minutes to plug it in, and you're likely to spend countless hours making that Mac... talk. Unlike the stereotypical robotic sound, "Warning, warning!", the Mac says everything from "Hello, how are you," to foreign language. You can enter text for Smooth Talker to read as is, or you can teach yourself how to phonetically write for Mac.

A year ago, we ALL waited to see if Mac would "catch on". After all, a computer is no good without software, unless you're one of a handful of people who know how to program your own software. Now, there is an abundance of software, with more all the time, to keep you busy for years to come. *HAPPY BIRTHDAY APPLE MACINTOSH!*

Last month, under the heading of "COMING" was Test Driving the MAC on his First Birthday. This month, obviously, has a new look on the rag. And we owe it to The Mac! If you've been paying any attention to Computer Entertainer The Newsletter over the past several months, you've seen many areas of bad to worse typesetting. In an effort to get from point 'A' to point 'B' with the minimum amount of time, it was pointed out to us that Macintosh by Apple already had some pretty good features (as it would apply to making up a monthly newsletter), and some good software already on the market!

Well, imagine our surprise when, after years of making newsletters and reviews on thousands of software items, and hundreds of hardware items, that we'd fit into a Mac in a week!

# CRITICALLY SPEAKING..
## ADAM-COMPATIBLE

Bound to be one of the more popular CP/M releases for the Coleco ADAM, ASCOM, from Westico, is a complete telecommunications package designed to operate under the ADAM CP/M system. ASCOM offers all the features you'd expect in communications software, including up/downloading, menu or expert modes, Modem7 protocol, autodial and more. Also included is an instruction manual an reference guide of about 250 pages.

ASCOM is very simple to use. After loading CP/M, you type in the word ASCOM and press <return> and it loads. From there, ASCOM takes you through several menus in which you are allowed to make changes in the system like setting the auto line-feed, baud rate, parity, etc. Once you enter the command mode, you simply type in the word DIAL, followed by the phone number and a <return> and ASCOM dials the number. Once on-line, you can get back to the command mode to open or close files by The HANG command from the command mode will hang you up. Converted to run on the ADAM system, Westico unfortunately did not convert it to match ADAM's 36 character display. It can be quite annoying using telecommunications software that is set for 80-columns on a system designed to display only half that. Hopefully, ADAM users can look forward to an 80-column card in the future to remedy this problem, not only with this package, but conceivably all the rest of the CP/M software that will be available for ADAM.

Despite the annoying 80-column scroll, ASCOM is a good package overall and is recommended for ADAM users with CP/M, and is almost a necessity if you plan on downloading any CP/M public domain programs from CompuServe or CP/M bulletin board systems.

Recommended (MSR $195.00) ...Joe Blenke

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## Coleco Reaches ADAM Agreement

After months of negotiation regarding the remaining stock of ADAM computers and peripherals, Coleco has just concluded a deal with five store chains to close-out the merchandise. Originally, Coleco planned to ship all its ADAM merchandise through one close-out marketeer (believed to be Odd-Lot Trading of New York), they were able to strike a more favorable deal with these retailers identified as Toys R Us, Lional Leisure, Zayre Corp., KayBee Toy and Hobby Shops, and Best Products. It is not known at this time whether the price of the ADAM computer will hold at around $300 and what the availability on peripherals will be.

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## New Book for ADAM

HOME APPLICATIONS AND GAMES FOR THE ADAM has just been published by Version 1.0 Software and includes chapter topics such as Cracking secret codes, Personal Medical Records, Improving ESP Ability, Composing Music, and Saving Money on Utility Bills. Retailing for $14.50, you can send a check or money order to Version 1.0 Software, PO Box 5535, Coralville, Iowa 52241.

# CRITICALLY SPEAKING..
## APPLE-COMPATIBLE

THE SWORD OF KADASH (***/***) is an action adventure by Chris Cole of dynamix for Penguin Software. Playable at any of three difficulty levels spread over more than 200 rooms and passages, the program is full of treasures, monsters, traps, secret doorways, and even cursed objects. Your character enters the Fortress of the Dragon in order to retrieve the Sword of Kadash, but you'll have many a strange encounter before you ever find that weapon. Your character begins with a good supply of hit points, a dagger, a shield, a couple of spells—and lots of bravado. Experience points are earned with every battle and discovery, though you'll soon learn that not all you find is worth having. It can be discouraging to fight off a horde of orcs, only to find that they've been guarding a cursed sword. You picked it up, so it's yours now, curse and all. (The curse cannot be broken until you find a holy scroll or symbol.)

*Variety Keeps It Interesting*

The lure of this game is never knowing just what you're about to get yourself into when you enter a new chamber. And the variety of creatures and challenges keeps the quest interesting, even though the general theme of the game is not an original one. This game is similar in approach to Epyx's *Gateway to Apshai* and Strategic Simulations' *Gemstone Warrior*. If you like either of those games, you'll definitely enjoy *THE SWORD OF KADASH*. A word of warning: have at least one formatted, blank disk handy. You'll need a copy of the "Character Disk" (flip side of the game disk) for each difficulty level you play. Your character can be reincarnated several times when hit points run out, but you'll have to make a new character disk after a few reincarnations. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick or Keyboard ; 48K disk; also available for C64.)
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

MR DO. (***/***1/2) from Datasoft has also been shipped for Apple owners, and, once again, it holds the flavor of the original. We found the graphics in this version just a bit crisper than those in the Atari version. (joystick; also available for ColecoVision, Atari, C64)
Recommended (MSR $39.95)

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## Financial Software for Home

Tax season is barely behind us, but CPAids has come up with THE PERSONAL PLANNER for home use. Designed for such tasks as retirement planning, investing, IRA contributions, home buying, and checking your federal tax return, it retails for only $49.00
(Apple and IBM PC)

# CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. APPLE-COMPATIBLE

ELI'S SHAPES, SIZES, AND COLORS (✱✱✱, ✱✱✱1/2) from Simage ("Software for Imaging") is an early learning program for youngsters aged three to seven. Using the character of Eli, a visiting alien from outer space, it introduces and reinforces concepts of shape, size, color, and pattern recognition in four different game settings. Within each of the four games, variations allow parent or teacher and child to work on colors, shapes, sizes, shapes and colors, shapes and sizes, or on a mixture of shapes, sizes and colors.

### Four Games

The first game, "Match Me," requires the child to pick the object from a group at the bottom of the screen that matches one at the top. Geometrical shapes can be used for any of the variations, or numerals can be chosen in any variation that does not include color. "Odd One Out" asks the child to find the one shape, size, or color that is different from the others in a group. Pattern recognition is the goal in "What's Next?"; the child supplies the next item in a progression of geometrical shapes or numerals. "Matchmate" builds concentration and memory skills. One item is shown at the top of the screen, while a group of items appears at the bottom. After an interval of two seconds or less, all items at the bottom are replaced by question marks. The child must remember where the item is that matches the one at the top of the screen.

### Feedback

The character of Eli is moved from choice to choice by the spacebar, and choices are registered with the "return" key. No other keys are used, making control easy for even the youngest child. Eli shakes his head "no" and frowns in response to an incorrect choice. He smiles and nods while a short musical phrase plays when the answer is correct. After a number of incorrect choices (the number depends on the game and variation), Eli indicates the correct response and moves on to the next problem. All the games move through sets of increasingly difficult exercises, with a musical intermission and reward after each ten problems, provided eight or more were answered correctly. Fewer than 80% correct answers will cause the set of ten problems to be repeated.

### Well-Designed Package

This is a well-designed package for reinforcement of reading readiness skills. ELI'S SHAPES, SIZES, AND COLORS comes from the experience of an elementary school teacher with over twenty years in the classroom. It uses color, animation, and familiar childhood tunes to help hold a child's interest, but it does not emphasize the game aspects to the detriment of educational value. The program is very easy to use, and the support materials add to the fun and learning value. Included with the disk are a manual for parents and teachers (complete with blank progress charts), a 30-page coloring book, and awards charts and stickers. This program is available directly from the developer, Simage, at 110 Corte Ramon, Greenbrae, CA 94904. (Solo or classroom use for ages 3 to 7; Keyboard; 48K Disk.) Recommended. (MSR $19.95)

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Not many people run out and buy a computer to do video graphics on video tape, or vice versa. Not that it just isn't done... it isn't done much. That leaves the novices to play with both of the two areas: computers and video. Once you've hooked your VCR and computer together, you realize it doesn't look much better than cheap titling on a small town TV station with no budget. Mastery of both is almost a necessity to make either one look good with relationship to the other. Suddenly, here comes the VIDEO TITLE EDITOR, a small, inexpensively packaged kit which allows the VCR owner to add credits and titles to home movies, inventory, etc., on the Apple II series. The program is easy to use, and quite handy to operate. There are 26 different combinations of "Happy Birthday", "Our Daughter at Graduation," etc., as well as do-it-yourself titles! Additionally, there are 3-line and 5-line custom messages, in a choice of four fonts. When you're ready for transmission to the VCR, you may choose one of three foreground colors, and one of three background colors. One of the things which popped to mind while reviewing this product was the endless supply of fonts available through Beagle Bros Inc. Later, going through the instructions, we saw the Beagle Bros name, and that of Mr. Beagle, Bert Kersey! Can there be "additional fonts and typestyles" to follow?

### Word of Warning

For the unknowing, beware of some problems. If you "transmit" the computer signal to channel 3 or 13 or 34... there could be local interference causing you some "down time" to isolate it. Also, we tried to use the direct method of "Video Out" on our Apple to "Video In" on our VCR. There was some muddiness to the hi-res titles. Without going into great detail, we do know that *NORMAL* computer type will come out muddy. Hi-res should be able to transfer to a monitor or VCR, but may need some kind of RGB interface. Regardless of the method you choose to do it the right way on YOUR VCR, we think you'll agree this is a nice package! (also for Atari, C64, and VIC-20) Recommended (MSR $29.95)

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people getting a good feel of new product. It may very well be that we've reached the point of "diminishing returns" for companies to exhibit due to the ever-increasing costs of participation in the show itself. We have begun to see a slight shift as software companies do not hold announcements for the two specific shows, but rather announce new product when they are ready to (such as the Activision QuickDrive announced in this issue).

We will, of course, be right in the thick of C.E.S. - either on the floor or travelling to the private showings around town to bring you all the news.

# ULTIMA II: THE REVENGE OF THE ENCHANTRESS

(✱✱✱✱/✱✱✱✱) is a translation for Macintosh of the very successful game by Lord British which is published by Sierra. It's a graphic adventure in which the player's journey through time and space is a quest to thwart the evil reign of Minax, the Enchantress. The lands of ULTIMA II are many and varied, and they occur in five separate time periods. A cloth map is included which documents the time doors that lead the adventurer from one place and time to the next. The character of your adventurer is up to you. The adventurer carries the name you grant him or her, along with the amounts of strength, agility, stamina, charisma, and intelligence you choose. You also select the adventurer's race



(human, dwarf, elf, or hobbit) and profession (fighter, wizard, cleric, or thief). Each choice affects the adventurer's abilities to deal with certain situations in the game. For example, a male character has added strength, which is useful in fights, while a female has added charisma, which can get her better deals from the merchants she encounters.

## Buy Armor and Weapons

The first order of business for any newly-created adventurer is the purchase of armor and weapon(s), so you must look for a town in your earliest explorations. Throughout the game, it is very important for your adventurer to talk to the people he or she meets, and there are usually lots of people to meet in the towns. Many characters have little or nothing to offer, such as the guards who constantly ask your adventurer to pay taxes, but much can be learned from the occasional contact with a person of knowledge.

## Gaining Experience

As the game progresses, the player's adventurer gains experience points and gold, while losing provisions and hit points. Provisions can be replenished at any food stand, and hit points can be added by going to the right place and offering the right thing. (We don't want to give too much away—you'll find out for yourself!) Everywhere the adventurer goes there are creatures that attack: fighters, wizards, devils, balrons, sea monsters and others. Defeating a creature adds experience and gold and sometimes results in gaining a special possession from the vanquished foe. These creatures are found all around the countryside, but there

are some especially dangerous ones in the dungeons and towers. However, the dungeons and towers are important places to explore, because they contain much treasure and other things your adventurer may need. Just be sure to take a torch; these places are very dark. Though we haven't been there yet, it's also possible to take a rocket into space in this game. There is a whole ULTIMA II galaxy to explore. And that rocket is just one of several means of transportation in this game. The others include horses, frigates, and airplanes.

## Good Use of Mouse

This version of ULTIMA II for the Macintosh has the same basic content as the game does for other computers, but the control system has been redesigned to take full advantage of Mac's particular abilities. This is a keyboard-controlled game on other computers, but the Mac version uses the mouse extremely well. About the only time you'll use the keyboard is to assign name and attributes to your new adventurer on an initialized disk. Once that is done, the mouse makes commanding your character fast and easy. The adventurer is moved around the map by moving a pointer in the desired direction and clicking the mouse. A series of menu bars across the top of the screen can be pulled down easily during the game. These menus include lists of weapons, armor, spells, intent (attack, transact, steal, or bribe), commands (ascend, descend, ignite torch, get, cast spell, launch, view, negate time), and basic game functions such as pause, quit and save, sound off/on, and revert. By the way, if your character is killed during the game, reincarnation is possible. Ah, the joys of fantasy gaming

## Excellent Translation

Sierra has done an excellent job of translating this game for Macintosh owners, who will soon discover why it has been a bestseller in other formats. Player interface with the game is nearly effortless—much smoother than in any of the other versions—letting you concentrate on the game itself rather than trying to remember commands. Beautifully clear graphics and good animation combined with nice sound effects add to the enjoyment of the game, too. ULTIMA II has already achieved the status of a classic, and we think Macintosh owners will be delighted with their own version. (Solo play; Pause; Mouse control; also available on disk for Apple II, Atari, C64, IBM PC and PCjr.) Recommended. (MSR $59.95)

**MURDER BY THE DOZEN (NA/✱✱✱)** has been converted by CBS Software for the Macintosh and it adapts beautifully to its new format. We liked this game of sleuthing when it first shipped for the Apple II family, and find, with the windowing and mouse of the MAC, the game plays just as easily as you can imagine. You can work your way through without ever looking at the instructions. Although one can play, we strongly recommend at least two people for the most fun. It's great for parties! (one to four players; also available for Apple II; Atari; C64) Recommended (MSR $44.95)

### Electronic Entertainment: Boom and Bust

Here at the Computer Entertainer, we share our readers' undying enthusiasm for video games and electronic entertainment of all kinds. Since we began producing this newsletter more than three years ago, the computer and video game industries have weathered many storms. We've seen whole companies spring up overnight and disappear just as quickly. We've see spectacular successes and flamboyant flops in both hardware and software. Even the computer and game publications that once seemed to multiply like rabbits have submittedd to the law of the jungle: survival of the fittest. And eager journalists who once heralded the video game craze and made the computer "Man of the Year" now proclaim it all a passing fad, nothing more than the meteoric rise and fall of an ephemeral passion. At first video games and computers were over-praised, and now they're over-criticized.

### Landmark Software Programs

These are nothing more than the growing pains of a youn industry, one that is constantly changing. It seems barely old enough to have its own history. And yet it does, complete with a few landmark pieces of early software that helped to shape the growth of a whole new kind of home entertainment. A very special place in software history is occupied by such programs from the 1970's as the original "Adventure " by Will Crowther and Don Woods, "Eliza" the computer psychologist by Professor Joseph Weizenbaum, the mathematical wonders of "Life" by John Horton Conway, and Allen Acorn's "Pong," the game that assisted at the birth of Nolan Bushnell's Atari. These are more than just games; they are programs that changed the way people play.

### GOLDEN OLDIES: Software Classics

How would you like to own all four of these classics in original, uncut, author-endorsed versions? Thanks to a company called Software Country, the result of an unlikely partnership between a former TV talk-show host (Les Crane) and a computer professional (David Badly), you'll soon be able to experience these programs first-hand on your Apple II, Atari, Commodore 64, IBM PC/PCjr, or Macintosh computer. All four software classics will be published on one $29.95 disk under the title, GOLDEN OLDIES, VOLUME 1. (No, we don't know what Crane and Badly have in mind for Volume 2!)

### Historical Treasure Chest

Although we haven't seen the actual program collection yet--we've been promised a review copy in time for ou June issue--we're familiar enough with the four titles to be very excited about this project from Software Country. The fact that these are all original versions endorsed by the authors of the programs makes the disk a must for any video gamer interested in the history of this crazy business. And speaking of history, the GOLDEN OLDIES package includes a historical treasure chest of fascinating documentation. There are reprints from the Whole Earth Software Catalog, along with excerpts from Tracy Kidder's Soul of a New Machine, Steven Levy's Hackers, Scott Cohen's Zap: The Rise and Fall of Atari, William Poundstone's The Recursive Universe, and Steve Ditlea's Digital Deli. The excerpts provide background material on the computer and game industry along with discussions of the four programs: Adventure, Eliza, Life, and Pong.

### Panic Button

We're looking forward to receiving our review copy soon. And since playing games is part of our job rather than just a diversion, we won't need the "Panic Button" that Crane and Badly have included in the program. This, too, has a basis in software history. Clever gamers in the early days of mainframe computer adventures had a trick that let them replace a game screen with something that looked like work if the boss wandered too near their terminal. Now you can play at work, too. Just hit the "Panic Button" (Control-P) in Software Country's GOLDEN OLDIES, and a spreadsheet replaces your game screen!

GOLDEN OLDIES, VOLUME 1 will be available first for IBM PC and PCjr in May. This version will be followed by disks for Apple II and Macintosh, Atari, and Commodore 64 computers. The program is in full color, except, of course in the Macintosh version. It should be available wherever you usually buy your software, or you may order directly from Software Country at 800-245-2057 (outside California) or 800-245-2056 (California only).

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..
### ATARI COMPUTERS

GULF STRIKE (NA/ ***) is the newest war strategy game from Avalon Hill, with the setting being land, sea, and air combat in the Persian Gulf. Based on Avalon Hill's board game of the same name, this computer version allows you to initiate air, naval, and land offensives. You can choose to command the US/Iranian forces, or the USSR force and your strategic map covers a large portion of land around the Gulf (there are boards of the map area also included). As with any strategic game, a great deal of time must be spent with the documentation as you learn about unit types, commands, formations troop movements, and outlines of land, air, and ship which you will be dealing with.

### Good Strategy

As designer Mark Herman indicates, there has been a lack of simulations dealing with the Persian Gulf area - a part of the world in which there has been a good deal of tension and lends itself to a military strategy scenario. This program offers diverse strategy due to the fact that you're dealing with forces on land, sea, and air with all the units necessary for that type of operation. Avalon Hill rates the complexity as 7 (scale of 1-10, 10 being hardest) and we found the game to be quite complex in its execution. This is a good bet for strategy lovers. (one or two players; joystick; 48K disk)
Recommended (MSR $30.00)

```
BEGINNER      SUMMARY OF TERRIBLE TOWN    60170 PSYCHONS
              PRESS BUTTON TO CONTINUE

      TRAITS          XTRAS
   ARMOR    9      STING
                   CLAWS
   MUSCLE  10      FANGS
                   GILLS
   SPEED   10      BURROW
                   ANTICHEM
   MIND     7      ANTITHUMP
                   HEALING
   LIFE   200      HANDS
  WEAPONS  SUNDRIES     SUPPLIES       VICTORY
                                       POINTS
 LASPISTOL JET PACK   ENERGY 100
 MISSILE   MEMORYRNA  ROUNDS  50          0
 E-STEALER MEDI-KIT   FOOD    50
 GAS GUN   PSIHELM
 BOORANG   E-PAK
```

**AIL ORDER MONSTERS** (★★★1/2/ ★★) from
ectronic Arts has a clever title and a kit full of
onsters for battling against a friend's creature or one
ntrolled by the computer. The monsters are called
norphs" (short for Mail ORder Psychon Heroes). There
e three levels of play: "free trial" for beginners (pick
e of the twelve standard morphs with no extras and go
battle), "rental" for intermediate players (purchase
orphs, enhancements, and weapons with psychons, and
en go to battle), and the Tournament Game (start with
wer psychons to purchase morphs and enhancements,
lect special rules, and then go to battle). You'll notice
at going to battle is the one thing all levels have in
mmon. All three levels offer the hand-to-hand
estruction" mode of battle, while "Capture the Flag"
ab eight flags in order before your opponent does) and
he Horde" (help your fellow player keep the attacking
rdes from advancing to the bottom of the screen) are
ailable only in the intermediate and tournament levels.

*Splendidly Detailed*

We enjoyed choosing and outfitting our morphs, up to a
int. Every one of them is splendidly detailed, with
autiful colors and very good animation. However, we
on became bored with the battles. We like a good
onster bash in the midst of a role-playing adventure as
ell as the next gamer, but a steady diet of nothing but
onster battles simply wore us out. If battling monsters
your favorite game activity, you may enjoy this
ogram. However, we found it too one-dimensional
thout any motivation for the continued battles. (Solo
y; Joystick; Pause; Disk with fast-loading routine.)
t recommended. (MSR $32.95)

**ACING DESTRUCTION SET** (★★★★/★★★★)
m Electronic Arts is the ultimate racing game for the
mmodore 64. In the wonderful tradition of Bill Budge's
nball Construction Set and Stuart Smith's Adventure
nstruction Set, Rick Koenig, Connie Goldman, and Dave
rhol have created a treasure chest of options for those
o love to race cars—and for those who love to crash
m, too.

*The Demo Race*

There's a race set up and ready to go on a track named
emo" when you start the game. Two Can-Am racers
e off on a course loaded with jumps and an icy stretch
der basically normal conditions. The screen is split
izontally, one half for your car and the other for your

human or computer opponent. The designers tell us to
treat the track as a slot racing set. At least on
straightaways, your car stays in its slot until you lose
control on a turn or another car gets in the way. After
once or twice around the track, you'll find yourself
itching to try all the goodies the program has to offer.

*Plenty of Options*

Obviously, there are difficulty levels. These affect the
vulnerability of your vehicle and the skill of the computer
driver in the solo game. And you can choose to play by
Racing rules or Destruction rules. The former is
self-explanatory: the object is to win. Each driver
wants to win under destruction rules, too, but it's a
no-holds-barred kind of race in which either driver can
drop land mines, lay oil slicks, or add armor and crusher
capabilities in an attempt to eliminate the opponent's car.
Another option, believe it or not, is the gravity setting.
Want to race on the Moon, where gravity is one sixth of
Earth's? Or maybe you'd prefer Jupiter with
two-and-a-half times the Earth's gravity. This is surely
the only racing game with that particular option!

*And More Options!*

Along more normal lines of choice, you can select from
one to nine laps and four different sets of background
graphics. Then you get to choose and customize your
racing vehicle. The choices include everything from
jeeps, stock cars and pickup trucks to Baja buggies, dirt
bikes, and even a lunar rover—ten vehicles in all. You
also get to select tire type, engine size, and the
destruction elements: land mines, gallons of oil, armor,
and crusher power. (You can save your favorites to
disk.) And the inventory of tracks in this program is
truly astounding. There are 50 courses of all kinds, from
dirt motocross tracks to the Monaco Grand Prix course in
Monte Carlo. But if you want something special, you can
even build your own track and save it to race on again
and again.

*Unbeatable Play Value*

There is a greater variety of racing experiences than
you could hope to exhaust, even after weeks of playing
this game steadily. We spent several hours with it and
didn't begin to explore all the possibilities. Besides the
unbeatable play value of this program, it has excellent
graphics along with great sound effects and opening
music. The birds-eye view of the track is appropriate for
a computerized slot racing set, though it takes a bit of
getting used to if you're more accustomed to first-person
racing games. If you're fascinated by cars and racing,
don't miss this one. It will keep you entertained for
months. (Solo play; 2-player competitive; Pause;
Joystick; Double-sided disk with fast-loading routine.)
Recommended. (MSR $32.95)

## BOULDER DASH Goes Combo

First Star will re-package their hit game, BOULDER
DASH, in a combo-pack for both Atari computer and C64.

# CRITICALLY SPEAKING..
## COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

SUPER HUEY (**1/2 / ***) is a helicopter flight simulation program from Cosmi that offers a lot of value for your software dollar. The $19.95 program contains a computer-aided flight instruction mode along with three different flying missions: exploration and mapping of uncharted territory, location and rescue of downed military personnel, and a combat mission that includes enemy reconnaissance.
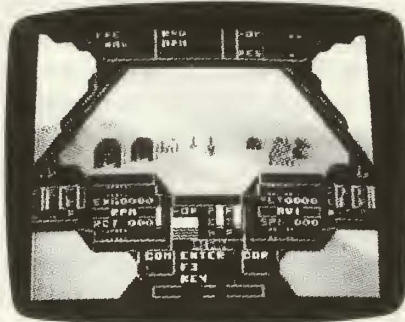


### A Natural

Flight simulation programs, most notably Sublogic's *Flight Simulator II*, have proved to be extremely popular with computer owners. A helicopter flight simulation would seem to be a natural for computer "pilots" looking for new modes of flight to conquer. *SUPER HUEY* gets high marks for realism and attention to detail with its clearly drawn helicopter interior and very good sound effects. The chopper's cockpit contains a dizzying array of instruments whose functions become better known as the new pilot gains experience at the stick. The graphic representation of these instruments is beautifully crisp, even if you are using a color TV instead of a monitor. In fact, if the graphic rating of this program were based on the helicopter's cockpit alone, we would have given it three stars—maybe even three and a half—but the sketchy exteriors lowered the graphic impression somewhat.

### Three Missions

However, while graphics are important, they're not the most critical factor in judging any program. SUPER HUEY does a good job of familiarizing the computer pilot with the special demand of flying a helicopter, and then it gives the pilot a chance to try out all those newly-developed skills on any of three missions. The first, exploring and mapping an expanse of uncharted terrain calls on mathematical skills as well as the ability to fly the helicopter. Once you have charted the entire territory, you can send your map to Cosmi (along with the Cosmi logo from the box and a self-addressed, stamped envelope), and they'll send you an exact map of the territory. The second mission taxes your navigational abilities, as you must find and rescue military personnel lost in a mountainous region. In the combat mission, a secret desert installation is under threat of attack by unkown, hostile forces. You must find the enemy, determine its ground and air strength, and make the command decision of whether or not to engage the enemy. Your helicopter's weapon system includes twin machine guns and sixteen rockets tha can be armed in sets of four. Good use of your radar is critical in this scenario, lest the enemy blast you out of the sky before you even realize they're near.

### Excellent Value

Flight simulation buffs will get a kick out of this program. It's a nice change of pace from flying an airplane. However, if you're looking for heart-stopping action and fast-moving challenges, you should look elsewhere. Success in this program is more dependent on brainpower than firepower. But if the idea of flying a helicopter appeals to you, this program is an excellent value for the money. (Solo play; Joystick and Keyboard control; Disk.)
Recommended. (MSR $19.95)

## SIERRA UPDATE

We thought we'd catch up with the doings at Sierra and fill you in on the latest (see Availability Update for date changes). SIERRA CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING is now only being developed for the Macintosh, with the Apple and C64 versions shelved (the program will require 128K). Release is scheduled for May along with a new title, BLACK ONYX, a fantasy role-playing game for C64. Early summer is the planned release for a completely re-written 128k ProDos version of HOMEWORD for the Apple series.

### New Disney Titles

In conjunction with the release of the new Disney movie BLACK CAULDRON this summer, Sierra plans a game by the same name for the PC/PCjr. Another new Disney title planned for C64, Apple, and IBM is GOOFY WORD FACTORY.

### Developing for Atari ST

One of the only developers who has indicated a willingness to write for the upcoming (?) Atari ST computer, Sierra is working on 6ATO. By the way, they have taken STUNT FLYER off schedule, at least for the present. Although it is 90% finished, there are some bugs which are driving them buggy, so they just can't project when the program will be finished.

## First Star Licenses Superman

First Star Software has just licensed software rights to a couple of comic superheroes - SUPERMAN and WONDER WOMAN. Although details aren't available yet, these two characters are set to star in a series of computer programs entitled SUPER POWERS, with the first title available this fall.

CHARD PETTY'S TALLADEGA (***/***)

kes you to the land of the good ole boys in Talladega,
abama, where a major NASCAR stock car race is held
ery year. This racing game from Cosmi requires fast
flexes and strategic thinking, since you'll be racing
ainst "King Richard" Petty himself, along with 18 other
ofessional drivers.



### Qualifying

The race is won on the course and in the pits, but
erything starts with the qualifying lap. The game opens
ith a few bars of that salute to the South, "Dixie," and
en it's onto the track. First choose your course, and
en get ready to qualify! After your lap, you'll either
alify and be given a starting position from first (pole
sition) through twentieth (last), or you won't qualify
d will have to try again. Qualifying Bonus Points are
warded, depending on your time in the qualifying lap.

### The Race

When the actual race begins, you'll be informed that
chard Petty is in first place. (You might as well get
ed to Petty's being in the lead. After playing the game
r a while, you'll learn that he's always in first place at
e start of the race, and he has a tendency to finish in
at position, too!) Although the scenery is less than
ectacular, the racing action is first-class in this game.
e sound effects are good, and the strategic possibilities
d to the realism of the race. The other cars on the
ack are driven by real pros, and their tactics are
riable enough to keep you on your toes. Of course, you
ve a few racing tricks, too, such as "drafting" behind
other car to reduce gas consumption, hitting the
urbo-Boost" to give your car a momentary burst of
ra speed, or "leaning" on another car in a turn. There
n be accidents on the track and accompanying yellow
gs—a great time to make a pit stop. Here your team
n add fuel, change tires, or check and fix the engine.
ecking the engine on nearly every pit stop turns out to
a good idea it tends to forestall unaccountable engine
oblems.) The action is fast-paced, and the feel of the
ne is very good. For
mple, the track's curves don't appear to be banked,
t your car certainly behaves as if they were. The

concept of *RICHARD PETTY'S TALLADEGA* surely
isn't an original, but it's a well-executed racing game at
a very reasonable price. (Solo play; Joystick; Disk and
Cassette packaged together.)
Recommended. (MSR $19.95)

**MACH 5** from Access Software enters the fray as the
newest attempt to improve the Commodore 1541 Disk
Drive after the fact. (That is, after you've already
found out what a slow and cumbersome beast it is.) While
coming to market after the other guys (specifically
Datamost's *Kwik-Load* and Epyx's *Fast Load*) may
hold some disadvantages, Access has played to a strong
point by including features the others don't have.
*Kwik-Load* works best with non-copy-protected
software, while both MACH 5 and *Fast Load* speed the
loading of copy-protected programs up to 500%. Both the
Access and Epyx cartridges worked with better than
95% of the programs we attempted. (Each failed to load
one program from our test group that was no problem for
the other: MACH 5 couldn't handle Gamestar's
*On-Court Tennis*, and *Fast Load* missed on Sierra's
*Ultima II*.)

### Unique Features

*MACH 5* has lots of unique features, but we'll
mention just those we liked best. The feature we used
most was the on-screen help menu—a list of *MACH 5*
commands just two keystrokes away whenever we
needed it. We also liked having both disable and re-enable
commands available without having to turn off the
computer. *MACH 5* has printer commands, too,
including screen dump—very handy. The separate *MACH
5* disk contains "BASIC Plus 4K," a program that
provides an extra 4K bytes of BASIC workspace. BASIC
programmers will appreciate this feature. Those with
large program libraries can keep track of everything
with the "Disk Organizer," which extracts and catalogs
directory information from an entire library of disks.
The information is saved to a separate catalog disk and
can be dumped to screen or printer. *MACH 5* is an
excellent value, loaded with features every Commodore
owner can use and enjoy. (Cartridge and disk)
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

## Data Management for MAC

Hayes Microcomputer Products has announced the
planned release of PLEASE, a data management program
featuring five report formats, merge capabilities,
automatic dialing, on-line help and safeguards to protect
data. In addition to designing and storing all sorts of data
files, PLEASE can transfer data to and from many
sources, including word processing programs,
spreadsheets, and other data-base management
programs. The program is designed to run on either the
128k or 512k MAC and will retail for $199 (a second
disk drive is STRONGLY recommended)

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

ILLUSIONS (***1/2/ ***) is a real mind-bender of a game developed for Coleco by Nice Ideas, S.A. Equally as difficult to describe as it can be to play, ILLUSIONS takes the player on a surrealistic, timed journey through the Mirror Dimension and into the Cubic Maze, and then back again.

### Gleebs and Strange Loops

The player controls little orange Gleebs, which are amoeba-like creatures. On the first screen, four Gleebs travel synchronously through the Mirror Dimension, moving along a series of connecting staircases that have a very unusual quality. The representation of these staircases in the Mirror Dimension depends on the phenomenon of "Strange Loops:" while moving continuously upward (or downward) through the series of steps, we and the Gleebs always find ourselves right back where we began. This paradox of constantly climbing (or descending) and yet arriving at the point where we started doesn't seem possible, but its reality cannot be denied—hence the surreal feeling of the game. We suspect that the designers of the game were influenced by the drawings of M.C. Escher, a Dutch graphic artist who often used Strange Loops in his work. In fact, his 1960 lithograph, "Ascending and Descending" may well have been the inspiration for the Mirror Dimension screen of this game. (If you are interested in learning more about Strange Loops, Escher's drawings, mathematical theories, and lots of other fascinating things, we recommend Douglas R. Hofstadter's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*.)
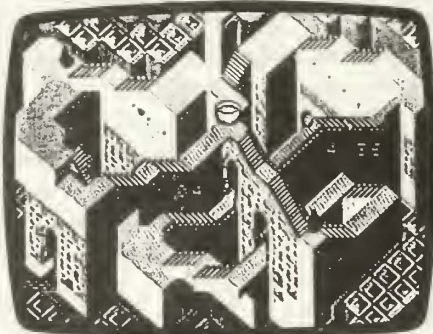


### Trapped in Mirror Dimension

The Gleebs are trapped in the Mirror Dimension with its endless staircases unless the player can manage to get the Gleebs to combine by bumping into each other until there is only one left. As a single Gleeb, they can pass through the mirror portal into the Cubic Maze. Combining is achieved by strategic leaps at the jump points in the Mirror Dimension and by quick reverses in direction of movement. It's tricky, because all Gleebs move in the same direction and at the same rate of speed. Besides, there is a time limit for accomplishing the Gleeb-melt, and the player's efforts are frequently frustrated by the appearance of additional Gleebs from the mirror and the

nasty green lizards. Lizards can be turned into fish i the Gleebs can set up a water trap; Gleeb contact with fish adds time to the clock. But beware of the fish tha transforms itself into a bird. (The lizards, too, may hav been inspired by Escher. His 1943 lithograph, "Reptiles, offers similar imagery, even to the concept o metamorphosis.)

### Cubic Maze

Many games later, when you finally succeed in gettin one combined Gleeb through the mirror, that Gleeb enter the Cubic Maze where the object is to get it to split bac into four Gleebs again. Traveling around the cube an avoiding lizards, the splitting is accomplished a separation points (corners of the cube). However, if tw Gleebs touch each other, they'll recombine. Anyor persistent and skilled enough to get the four Gleebs ou the mirrored exit will start again with a new group o Gleebs in the Mirror Dimension.

### Unusual Game

ILLUSIONS is a most unusual game, and it's definite more appropriate for older players than young one There is a certain intellectual appeal to the visu imagery and surrealistic treatment that would be lost o most children. Even the instruction booklet reaches out the older player. "The Saga" is a tale in verse th describes the creatures and characteristics of th strange land which the Gleebs have entered. If you ne more help with the game than you can decipher from th poem, there is also a sealed folder entitled "The Key which describes the requirements of the game in a less metaphorical fashion. But it's fun to try to figure it out before you open and read The Key. Even with T Key, though, this game is no pushover. We enjoyed bo the challenge and the sense of intellectual playfulne about the program. (Solo play; 2-player alternatir Pause; Standard controller.)
Recommended.
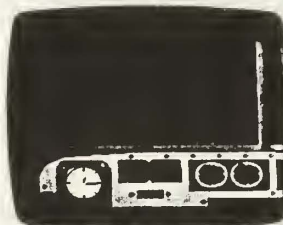


THE DAM BUSTERS (***1/2/ ****) fro Coleco was created by the talented design team Sydney Development Corp. of Canada. It's a remarkab piece of programming that combines the fascination o video flight simulation with a re-creation of an actu Allied bombing run over Germany during World War And it's even more remarkable when you realize that has been done on a cartridge. THE DAM BUSTERS much more than a mere video game, and it's aime squarely at the many adults who have secretly tak over their kids' video game machines and computers.

## Europe, 1943

One of the qualities that make game machines and computers so alluring is their ability to transport you to another time and place, to let you try doing something you've never done before. In *THE DAM BUSTERS*, the time is May 16, 1943, the place is the nighttime sky over Europe, and you're about to become a member of the 617 Squadron and fly a modified Lancaster Mark III bomber in a daring raid over the heart of Germany's industrial region, the Ruhr Valley. You'd better learn quickly, because your fellow pilots are some of the best and most experienced in the Allied forces. For the sake of this program, which is playable at two experience levels (Flight Lieutenant or Squadron Leader), you are not only pilot, but also front and tail gunner, bombardier, navigator, and engineer. The view of each crew member is summoned by pressing the appropriate keypad button. A keypad overlay is included.) If you have chosen the Flight Lieutenant Option, the program begins with the Lancaster already in flight over the English Channel. A Squadron Leader is expected to be able to take off from Scampton Airfield in England. (Don't start with this option until you're thoroughly familiar with the Lancaster's controls.)

### Lots of Crashes

We can almost guarantee that you'll crash the bomber a number of times before you get used to keeping tabs on altimeter, directional compass, artificial horizon, airspeed indicator, boosters, throttles, flaps, rudder trim, and landing gear. You'll notice that we haven't even mentioned machine guns and bombs yet. That's because you'll be the cause of more crashes than the enemy will for a while. We lost our bomber a few times before we even reached enemy action. As you gain experience, you'll fly farther and learn that planning your course is a good idea. If you fly directly over military installations, you'll find that all hell breaks loose very quickly. Stabs of enemy searchlight beams pierce the sky, the sound of Lancaster's Rolls-Royce Merlin engines, barrage balloons block your path, and ME-109 night fighters try to cut short your military career. Blast away from the gunnery positions, but your mission will come to an untimely and fiery often. At least you can learn from your mistakes, though—you're given a brief evaluation after each flight.

### Bombing the Dams

It takes considerable experience and a little luck to reach the point in the program where you can attempt to achieve your goal: bombing the Moehne, Eder and Sorpe Dams. This is where historical fact and the simulation program come together to create a fascinating and totally challenging task. Each Lancaster carried a unique bomb, which was actually a cylindrical mine especially designed to skip over the surface of the water above the dam, then drop below the surface at a position behind the torpedo nets. The mine had to be spinning when it was released from the Lancaster, and the plane had to be precisely 800 yards from the dam, 60 feet above the water, and traveling at 232 miles per hour for the mine to drop behind the torpedo nets and nestle against the upstream

side of the dam. Only if all of these specifications were met would the mine detonate with the force necessary to burst the dam. Now it's up to you to duplicate that feat and become a "Dam Buster." Take it from us, it is a delicate operation that's easily botched. This is not one of those games in which you simply maneuver your plane over the target and shout "bombs away" as you press the button!

### Realism and Excitement

If you enjoy flight simulations, particularly those with lots of action, you're going to love this program. Realism is the heart of the program, from the depiction of the Lancaster's instruments to the sights and sounds of wartime action. This is flight simulation with thrills, excitement, and some of the most challenging wargame action you'll ever encounter. And on a cartridge, no less! (One of the main differences between this version and the disk for Commodore 64 which we previewed recently is the lack of a practice bombing run on the cartridge.) We rate THE DAM BUSTERS one of the very best programs currently available for ColecoVision and Adam. (Solo play; also planned for Apple II, Commodore 64, IBM PC/PCjr.)

Recommended.

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## No Q*BERT'S QUBE

It really doesn't come as a surprise but inside sources have confirmed to Computer Entertainer that Parker Bros. is OUT of the game/computer business. Obviously, this means no sequel to Montezuma's Revenge and Q*Bert's Qubes for all systems is a "no-go." We did get the impression, however, that there MAY have been a very small quantity of Q*Bert's Qubes (format unknown) produced to fulfill commitments so those of you who love to search for rare games, this one could be quite a challenge!

### Not Leaving Electronic Area

Parker Bros., however, will not be leaving the electronics area as they have already announced and are getting ready to ship CLUE (see review next month), a VCR game. We have learned that there is a follow-up game, RICH LITTLE'S CHARADES also planned for this Spring. The concept sounds like alot of fun in that Rich Little actually acts out the charades on the videotape and the viewer(s) must beat an on-screen panel at guessing the answers. There is a board included on which the player(s) move ahead spaces. Just to add to the fun, Rich Little does some of his impressions throughout the charade game. We understand that Parker Bros. has additional VCR games under development (wouldn't MONOPOLY be fun??)

### More Lower Prices from CBS

In a move we're seeing more and more, CBS is lowering prices on more products. The category affected is their School Time programs which include MASTERING THE SAT, MASTERING THE ACT, and MICROSPEEDREAD

# AVAILABILITY UPDATE

**ATARI COMPUTERS**

*FIRST QUARTER*
x-Ballblazer (EPY)
x-Pole Position (DS)
x-Rescue on Fractalus (EPX)

*SECOND QUARTER*
Alternate Reality (DS)
BC Grog Revenge (SOL)
Breakers (SYN)
Brimstone (SYN)
Broadsides (SSI)
Great American Road Race (ACT)
x-Gulf Strike (AH)
x-Maxwell Manor (AH)
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)
x-Print Shop (BRO)
Reforger 88 (SSI)
Ronin (SYN)
x-Suspect (INF)
x-Trolls & Tribulations (CRE)

*APRIL*
x-Adventure Master (CBS)
Essex (SYN)
Halley Project (MIND)
Pole Position II (DS)
Raid Over Moscow (ACC)

*MAY*
Mindwheel (SYN)
Six Gun Shootout (SSI)

*JUNE*
Wishbringer (INF)

**COMMODORE 64**

*SECOND QUARTER*
Alternate Reality (DS)
Blackjack (SCR)
Burgertime (COL)
Caribbean Quest (MF)
Essex (SYN)
x-Forecast! (CBS)
Journey to Cavern of Doom (MF)
Maxwell Manor (AH)
Macbeth (IMG)
x-Mail Order Monster (EA)
x-Mindshadow (ACT)
Miner 2049er II (MF)
Muppet Welcome Aboard (BRO)
x-Music Studio (ACT)
Quink (CBS)
Railroad Works (CBS)
x-Serpents Star (BRO)
Speak & Seek (IMG)

Spritemaster 2 (ACC)
x-Tracer Sanction (ACT)
x-Web Dimension (ACT)

*APRIL*
Bounty Bob Strikes Back (BIGS)
x-Master of Lamps (ACT)
On-Track Racing (GAME)
x-Racing Destruction Set (EA)
Short Circuit (MF)
Time Machine (IMG)

*MAY*
Alcazar (ACT)
Ballblazer (EPY)
Black Onyx (SOC)
Breakers (SYN)
Brimstone (SYN)
Countdown to Shutdown (ACT)
Dave Winfield Batter Up (AG)
Fighter Command (SSI)
Fireworks (ACT)
Mech Brigade (SSI)
Mindwheel (SYN)
Rescue on Fractalus (EPX)
Ronin (SYN)
Six Gun Shootout (SSI)
Skyfox (EA)
Summer Games 2 (EPY)
Wings of War (SSI)

*JUNE*
Wishbringer (INF)

*JULY*
Goofy's Word Factory (SOL)
Homeword Filer (SOL)
Homeword Money Mgr (SOL)

**APPLE II COMPUTERS**

*SECOND QUARTER*
Alternate Reality (DS)
BC Grog's Revenge (SOL)
Beamrider (ACT)
Blackjack (SRN)
Breakers (SYN)
Brimstone (SYN)
Burgertime (COL)
Caribbean Quest (MF)
Carmen Sandiego (BRO)
Computer Baseball (SSI)
Computer Quarterback (SSI)
Essex (SYN)
Halley Project (MIND)
H.E.R.O. (ACT)

I Damiano (IMG)
Journey to Cavern of Doom (MF)
King's Quest II (SOL)
Mastering ACT (CBS)
x-Mindshadow (ACT)
x-Mindwheel (SYN)
Music Shop (BRO)
x-Mystery Master Felony (CBS)
Ronin (SYN)
Science Tool Kit (CBS)
Summer Games II (EPY)
x-Tracer Sanction (ACT)
War in Russia (SSI)
Wizardry Scenario 4 (SIR)

*APRIL*
Beachhead (ACC)
Quink (CBS)
x-Space Shuttle (ACT)
Raid over Moscow (ACC)
Trolls & Tribulations (CRE)
Wilderness (EDU)

*MAY*
Dave Winfield Batter Up (AG)
Donald Duck Playground (SOL)
Homeword Money Mgr (SOL)
Mech Brigade (SSI)
Six Gun Shootout (SSI)

*JUNE*
ProDos Homeword (SOL)
Wishbringer (INF)

*AUGUST*
King's Quest II (SOL)

**APPLE MACINTOSH**

*MAY*
Amazon (TEL)
Dragonworld (TEL)
Fahrenheit 451 (TEL)
Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)

*JUNE*
Rendevous with Rama (TEL)
Shadowkeep (TEL)

*SEPTEMBER*
King's Quest (SOL)

**IBM PCjr**

*SECOND QUARTER*
Alternate Reality (DS)
Blackjack (SCR)
Bruce Lee (DS)
Conan (DS)
Decathlon (ACT)
Dig Dug (DS)
Essex (SYN)
Lost Tomb (DS)
x-Mindshadow (ACT)
x-Mindwheel (SYN)
Mystery Master-Felony (CBS)
Pac Man (DS)
Print Shop (BRO)
Quink (CBS)
Railroad Works (CBS)
River Raid (ACT)
x-Tracer Sanction (ACT)

*APRIL*
Archon II:Adept (EA)
Interplanetary Pilot (CBS)
King's Quest II (SOL)
Wreth of Quintana Roo (SUN)

*MAY*
Breakers (SYN)
Brimstone (SYN)
Computer Baseball (SSI)
Dave Winfield Batter Up (AG)
Donald Duck Playground (SOL)
Mastering ACT (CBS)
Mickey's Space Adv (SOL)
Music Shop (BRO)
Ronin (SYN)
Winnie the Pooh (SOL)

*JUNE*
Wishbringer (INF)

*JULY*
Black Cauldron (SOL)
Homeword Money Mgr (SOL)

*AUGUST*
Goofy's Word Factory (SOL)

**ADAM**

*APRIL*
AutoAid (FUT)
x-Best of BC (SYN)

*MAY*
Adam Thinks (Martin)
x-Fantasy Gamer (Martin)

**COLECOVISION**

*SECOND QUARTER*
Number Bumper (COL)
Wreth of Quintana Roo (S)

**VCR GAMES**

*MAY*
Clue (PB)

*SECOND QUARTER*
Rich Little's Charades (F

COMPANY CODES:
ACT - Activision
AG - Avant Garde
AH - Avalon Hill
AT - Atari
BI - Batteries Included
BRO - Broderbund
CBS - CBS Software
COL - Coleco
COM - Commodore
CS - Creative Software
DES - DesignWare
DM - DataMost
DS - DataSoft
EA - Electronic Arts
EPYX - Epyx
FS - First Star
FUT - FutureVision
IMG - Imagic
INF - Infocom
INT - Interphase
LC - Learning Co
MAR - Martin Consulting
MF - Microfun
MIC - Microprose
MMG - MMG Micro Software
PB - Parker Bros.
PS - Professional Software
SCR - Scarborough
SCN - Screenplay
SOL - Sierra
SPN - Spinnaker
SSI - Strategic Simulations
ST - SirTech
SUB - SubLogic
SUN - Sunrise
SYN - Synapse
TEL - Telarium
TRA - Trapeze
VIC - Victory Software

(x - indicates ships to
retailers by our press d  b
may not be in national d ibuti
as yet) Editor's Note: We ,
some cases, dates given by th
manufacturers are sty a
realistic. However, we it i
our responsibility to gi you t
projected release dates they a
given to us, wit a
alteration.)

## Faster Software from Activision

Activision is taking the recent phenomenon of speed-up programs for the C64 one step further by BUILDING IN the feature on new releases! Called QUICKDRIVE and designed to speed loading Activision's C64 disk products by over 400%, the first titles to include the feature will be WEB DIMENSION, MASTER OF THE LAMPS, ROCK N' BOLT, and MUSIC STUDIO. Their upcoming releases such as ALCAZAR: THE FORGOTTEN FORTRESS, COUNTDOWN TO SHUTDOWN, and THE GREAT AMERICAN CROSS-COUNTRY ROAD RACE will also include QuickDrive.

## ADAM Clarification

It has been reported in a Computer monthly magazine tha Sydney Development and Interphase have agreed to packag *The Best of Interphase*. We have spoken with Sydne and they have told us that, although they have had discussion with Interphase, NOTHING has been commited t In fact, one of the things Sydney is weighing is the succes of the just-released *BEST of B.C.* package befor commiting to more ADAM programs. Sydney has told they have *WIZTYPE* available for packaging for ADAM but, again, will wait to make sure they can justify th expense of releasing it.

# Subscriber Buying Service

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| G.I. Joe (C64-D) | 28.80 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Golden Oldies Vol I (AP*;AT-D*;C64-D*; IBM PC/PCjr*;MAC*) | 22.30 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
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| Illusions (CV) | 29.10 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
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| Mail Order Monsters (C64-D) | 24.90 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Maxwell Manor (AT-D;C64-D) | 18.70 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Mr Do (AP;AT-D;C64-D) | 28.80 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Mr Do (CV) | 29.10 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Murder by the Dozen (MAC) | 32.90 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Murder by the Dozen (AP;AT-D;C64-D) | 26.10 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Racing Destruction Set (C64-D) | 24.90 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Rescue on Fractulas (AT-D;C64-D*) | 28.80 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Sword of Kadash (AP;C64-D) | 26.10 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Ultima II (MAC;AP;AT-D;C64-D; IBM PC/PCjr) | 43.60 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Video Title Editor (AP;AT-D;C64-D) | 22.30 | _____ | _____ | _____ |

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Commodore 64; IBM-IBM PC/PCjr; MAC-Macintosh
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**WIN GIFT CERTIFICATES**   Good towards the purchase of Software from Computer Entertainer!!
Computer Entertainer wants to know what you consider the "ultimate" in computerware. By sending us
your "ultimate" computer idea, we will enter you in our random drawing. First Prize: $50 Gift
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applicable to current Subscriber Buying Sheet, not including special sale items, and general software
stock items) Deadline for entries: June 15, 1985 postmark. Drawing to be held on June 25, 1985.

It's a common thing to talk about your home computer and say it's the best. It's also very common to
chat about what you'd like to see for your system. We have decided to ask all readers what YOU think is
the ultimate system... given NO barriers. That is to say, design your own system (and software) from
scratch, with no regard to cost, system limitations, etc. You can tell us what you'd LIKE to see, or you
can piece together products which already exist! After taking bits and pieces from all entries, we will
attempt to construct the "most wanted" or "ultimate" system.

Please begin with the few specifics we have given as guidelines and continue from there (please use
additional paper).Z1  When you're finished, send your completed entry to: COMPUTER ENTERTAINER -
The Newsletter, 12115 Magnolia (#126), North Hollywood, CA 91607.

Name:_____

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Day  Phone Number:_____

If you have a home computer system, please list all components:_____
_____

Ideal system would include:
Amount of ROM: _____  Amount of RAM:_____Built-In Disk Drive: Y/N_____
Type drive: single/double-side_____

The rest is up to you. And, while you're at it.... it's also important to do the same type of listing for
your favorite, or your ideal software program!  When all the results are in and totalled up, you'll see
the results right here in Computer Entertainer - The Newsletter!

*( We hope you enjoy our new format. So many of you have asked that we attach our
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have answered with this. We still have more "fine-tuning" to do so watch for more.
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