

# Computer Entertainer

INCLUDES

## THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

November, 1984

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A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman

### IN THIS ISSUE

Reviews!!  
including...  
Pastfinder

for Atari Computers

Fortune Builders

Dr Seuss Fix-Up

for ColecoVision

ExperType

SmartBASIC Bonanza

for ADAM

Zone Ranger

for Atari 5200

Mask of the Sun

On-Court Tennis

Breakdance

Dream House

Spy vs. Spy

for C64

Star League Baseball

The Print Shop

for Apple

INSIDE . . .



### COMING NEXT MONTH

REVIEWS

including

Computer Quarterback

for C64

Monkey Academy

for ColecoVision

King's Quest

for Apple

Best Electronic Word Book

for ADAM

...and our usual surprises!



### Bits and Pieces

#### New Developer for 5200 Software?

We have learned that a well-known Japanese manufacturer of coin-op arcade games is looking very seriously at developing software for the Atari 5200 and Atari computers. They feel the Atari 5200 is an ideal machine for home versions of arcade games. We have been asked not to reveal the name of the company until their plans are further developed. We'll keep you posted!

#### Coleco Drops ADAM Price

In a move that could be interpreted different ways, Coleco has announced a special plan which will allow dealers to lower the price of the ADAM stand-alone computer by approximately \$175.00. While Coleco has told us this move is strictly to ensure higher sales at Christmastime, there are several Wall Street analysts who wonder if this move is either a "do or die" effort, or that Coleco intends to drop out of the computer market after the first of the year and this move is to clean out inventory. While it is impossible for us to predict the true reasoning behind the move, our feeling is that this Christmas sales period will be EXTREMELY important to the ultimate success or failure of ADAM. Unfortunately, with the rocky history of ADAM and the apprehension about the computer industry in general, the price reduction could actually keep potential customers away in fear that they will be purchasing a machine which will immediately become obsolete. What does not help are statements that continue to reach print from Coleco which indicate "over 100 software programs available by the First Quarter of 1985." Considering the handful of programs available at this time from Coleco AND third party companies, it seems virtually impossible to us that this projection can be met. We've said it before and we'll say it again—we want ADAM to survive as a low-cost entry level computer for families. Whether it will or not could hinge on the next eight to ten weeks!

#### Activision Offers Text Adventures!

Two new titles are in the final stages of development by Activision for C64, Apple, and IBM PCjr which will be illustrated text adventures. *MINDSHADOW* and *THE TRACER SANCTION* will feature mystery, intrigue, and include special on-screen tutorials to familiarize the player with the ways to follow a text adventure

#### Epyx Will Distribute SCRABBLE

In a licensing agreement with the people of *MONTY PLAYS SCRABBLE*, Epyx will release a disk version of this all-time favorite for the C64. The program will allow one to three players to play on an "on screen board," as well as using the traditional board while Monty keeps score. Retail will be approximately \$35.00

#### Datasoft Scores Pac-Man License!

In a very interesting development, Datasoft has acquired three licenses which Atari formerly owned. *PAC MAN*, *DIG DUG*, and *POLE POSITION* will all find their ways to Apple, C64, IBM PC/PCjr, and Atari computers under the Datasoft banner! The Atari and C64 versions will come packaged as dual disk/cassette. It seems that Namco (the original owners of the licenses), had a proviso written in their licensing agreements with Atari that if Atari were ever sold, the licenses would revert to Namco. That's what has happened with Datasoft picking up the licenses from Namco.

Other programs planned for pre-Christmas release include *CONAN*, an adventure game which pits Conan against the unbelievable horrors within the ancient chambers of a castle. *LOST TOMB* is a survival game where the player makes a perilous journey through an ancient Egyptian tomb infested with deadly creatures and mysterious mummies. And, as we've mentioned before, *MR. DO* is definitely coming for the various computer systems on disk (see Availability Update).

#### Letter Wizard Expanded

Letter Wizard has been reissued with a built-in Spelling Checker with over 33,000 words, in addition to being able to create an unlimited number of user-defined dictionaries. Available at \$74.95, anyone with the current Letter Wizard program can trade it in for the new program by sending in the old one with a check for \$25.00.

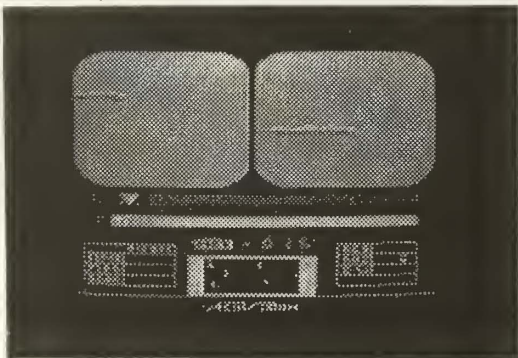
## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

### ATARI COMPUTERS

**PITFALL II** (★★★ / ★★★½) is identical to the version for the Atari 5200, which is reviewed in the *Video Game Update* section of this issue. (Solo Play; Joystick; Cartridge.) (Also available for C-64, Atari 2600 & 5200 & ColecoVision/Adam; coming soon for Apple II series & IBM PCjr.)

Recommended. MSR \$34.95

**SPACE SHUTTLE: A JOURNEY INTO SPACE** (★★★★ / ★★★) from Activision can't be considered just another game,



because it's a simulation of actual flight in the NASA Space Shuttle. There are no aliens to shoot, no flying saucers, nor any of the other things we associate with the typical space

game. This is reality, not fantasy. Originally created as a labor of love by Steve Kitchen for the Atari 2600, the program requires the player to launch a Space Shuttle, dock with an orbiting satellite, re-enter the Earth's atmosphere, and land safely. Throughout the program's design, the most painstaking care was taken to capture every detail and to make the gamer's experience as close as possible to the "real thing."

#### Three Flights

Covering this program in detail could take up the entire newsletter, so we'll leave that for your discovery. The cartridge contains three flights: Autosimulator, a demo to familiarize you with the sequence of launch, docking and landing; Simulator, which is under your control but does not use fuel units; and the full-fledged Space Shuttle mission complete with fuel. From the vibrations as your Shuttle is launched through the dual sonic booms just before the Shuttle lands, you will experience what the astronauts do in the real Shuttle. Learn to complete the mission, and you will have gained knowledge about the NASA space program. The program can't be mastered in an hour or two, but nothing really good ever comes easily. This isn't a game; it's the experience of a lifetime. (Solo Play; Joystick; Cartridge.) (Also available for C-64; Atari 2600 & 5200; coming for Apple.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

**PASTFINDER** (★★½ / ★★★) is an exploration of over 100 different terrains on strange, deserted planets in search of valuable artifacts, magic crystals, and tools of survival. You begin with a supplies screen in which you choose the tools you wish to take with you on your adventure. Your craft then appears on the planet's surface where you must navigate around three-dimensional ruins, temples, and the like, as you attempt to pick-up the artifacts and magic crystals. You can choose which areas of an overall map you wish to explore as you delve deeper into uncharted lands. Your craft is a highly maneuverable ship which can jump and move quickly from side to side.

#### Not Impressed

Overall, we were not impressed with this game. Although set up as an exploration for artifacts, it is, in our opinion, a thinly disguised space shoot-'em-up. Make your way through the ruin walls, around various obstacles, shooting the enemy drones, and collect the prize artifacts. We kept going back to the game to see if we had missed something; however, each visit left us unsatisfied. The 3-dimensional graphics are nice, and your craft spins about nicely; however, it certainly isn't enough reason to run out and purchase it. (one player; also available for Atari 5200)

Not Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

**ZENJI** (★★½ / ★★★½) from Activision is nearly identical to the version for ColecoVision, which is reviewed in the *Video Game Update* section of this issue. (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating; Cartridge.) (Also available for C-64; for Atari 5200 & ColecoVision/Adam.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

**ZONE RANGER** (★★★ / ★★★) is identical to the version reviewed in this issue for the Atari 5200

**COMPUTER BASEBALL** (N/A / ★★★) from **S.S.I.** is the newest entry in the statistical/strategy genre for armchair sportsters. You manage one of 28 teams provided, or you can enter data for new teams. The 20 teams built into the program are major league teams from the past and are described in a separate World Series Matchups manual. As you start up, you choose both the home and visiting team (in the one-player version) and the starting lineup. Before selecting starting pitchers, you can opt to enter the number of days since your pitcher last started a game and number of innings pitched in that last outing. As the game begins, you, as the manager, must choose batting strategies for your players as they come up to bat. For instance, you can order a bunt, hit and run, hit away, pinch hitter or runner, and more. As the manager of the defensive team, you can pitch around the batter, order intentional walks, hold runners, position the players in a normal configuration, guard the baselines, etc. During play, the screen encompasses a scoreboard, batter and pitcher status, and a representation of the playing field. The bottom line of the screen is used for inputs on actions to be taken and to describe the results of each play. Control of your pitching staff is important whether on a real playing field or in this simulated game. When you order a Bul Pen Change, you can place one or two pitchers in the bull pen to warm up, bring a new pitcher in the game, or have a pitcher stop warming up. As the defensive manager, you can opt to visit the mound at which time you can find out how tired your pitcher is. Just like in the real game, you only have one free visit. On the second visit to the mound, you must change pitchers. The program also allows for injuries and ejections.

#### Statistics Abound

For statistical buffs, this is a very complete game of baseball as you have the opportunity to truly control the managerial aspect of the game. With the myriad choices of statistics which you can work with (very typical of SSI programs), you can develop literally hundreds of different match-ups. From a statistical standpoint, this is definitely the best baseball game available as it is highly manipulable. (One player; two-player simultaneous; 40k disk; requires BASIC also available for Apple, C64)

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

**TRANSYLVANIA** (★★½ / ★★★½) is nearly identical to the version for Commodore 64, which is reviewed in this issue. The waiting time for new scenes to load is not as long in this version, so playing it in the graphic mode doesn't really slow you down. (Solo Play; Keyboard; Dual Disk backed with C-64 version (Also available on Apple dual disk: 48K for II/IIe backed with 128K double hi-res for IIe/IIc; also for Macintosh.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95; \$39.95 for Macintosh)

#### 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..ATARI COMPUTERS

**UP'N'DOWN** (★★★ / ★★½) is a bit of craziness adapted from the Bally Midway arcade game. It's a timed, zig-zagging road race in which you control the Baja Bugger, trying to complete the course quickly and pick up all ten flags to advance to the next road. (There are four roads on the cartridge, six on the disk; there are also additional objects to pick up on the disk.) Other vehicles approach from in front or behind on the single-lane road. Oncoming vehicles are especially dangerous on the steep inclines. You dare not crash and lose your Baja Bugger, so you make it jump up and land on top of your opponent, thus eliminating it for points. Don't jump carelessly, though—you just might crash into a clump of roadside bushes!

### Grows on You

This is one of those silly games that grows on you every time you play. We were ready to dismiss it as a near-clone of *Bump'n'* Jump after looking at a minute or two of the demo. Once we started playing, though, we were hooked! Despite some blinking of the vehicles on the road, the graphics are quite good—the tires on the Baja Bugger even seem to turn. Bouncy music plays throughout the game. The game is exasperating at times, but we couldn't resist its charm. If you're looking for a light-hearted, arcade-style game, you may get a kick out of this one. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating on disk only; Joystick or Keyboard; Cartridge or Disk.) Also available for C-64; coming for Apple, IBM PC/PCjr, Atari 2600.) Recommended. (MSR \$44.95)



**TINK'S ADVENTURE** (★★★ / ★★½) is the second in a series of Tink!Tonk! adventures for children ages 4-8. Once again we're in TinkTonk Land and Tink plans to go on an adventure. You can choose to go by boat or helicopter and you can, just for fun pilot the boat or fly the helicopter (we flew the helicopter up, up, and away—right up into the stars!). If you choose the helicopter, you must get gas. Practice your ABC order and fill the tank at the same time. You can choose to work on the last letter in a series or first letter. You can also choose hard, harder, or hardest. Another adventure is *Go Fishing* where you learn the computer keyboard by catching fish by typing letters, numbers, or symbols before they move off screen. In *Coconut Catch* you get more ABC practice as you must type the correct letter in the blank before the coconut hits the ground (a very mischievous monkey is in a palm tree throwing them at you). *Sinking Boat* is another drill in learning the computer keyboard as letters and numbers appear on the screen in the same order as on the keyboard. Type the correct letter or number in the blank to keep Tink's boat from sinking. If you find your way to the island, you can practice ABC order while you attempt to win the treasure from mean old Gork.

### Fun While Learning

The Tink!Tonk! adventures are very well thought out as they entertain while teaching and work at positive reinforcement. The graphics are very cute and the child will enjoy his or her adventure very much. One of the aspects of these programs we like a lot is when the child picks the difficulty level, they do not choose novice, expert, etc. Instead, with the hard, harder, hardest, the child feels self-accomplishment regardless of the level chosen. With the whole series of Tink!Tonk! adventures, your child can enjoy the characters they get to know from one program to the next! (one player; also available for C64) Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

**TUK GOES TO TOWN** (★★★ / ★★½) is another Tink!Tonk! adventure—this one geared for spelling, vocabulary, concentration, and memory. Tuk wants to go to town and there are many choices in the mode of transportation—everything from a car or truck to a speedboat, tugboat or train. Tuk can travel to two different places on the way to town each time you play. The Farm is a spelling and vocabulary exercise as you unscramble and spell the names of the various farm animals. The Fair is an arcade-type game just for fun. The Forest tests your concentration and memory as different shapes and letters are hidden in the forest. At the Seashore, you race sailboats as you learn spelling and vocabulary. Once in town, you can visit the toy store where you practice looking at shapes and patterns; the market where you also work on shapes and finding words; and the clothes store is just for fun as you can try on all sorts of silly hats, shirts, pants, and shoes.

### Entertaining and Educational

Once again, the games within this program are very educational and entertaining and, therefore, will hold the child's attention. The graphics are fun, bright, and crisp; while the gameplay is fun, and, at the same time, the child can learn. Tuk can't even cross the street in town until the player changes the light from red to green. We really like the concept of these adventures and look forward to the entire series. (one player; also available for C64) Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. MULTI-SYSTEM

**CUTTHROATS** (NA / ★★½) takes interactive fiction to the depths of the seas surrounding Hardscrabble Island. As an expert diver with knowledge of the four local shipwrecks, your talents are in demand for finding and gathering the sunken treasures. Only one little problem, though—the guys demanding your talents are the most untrustworthy lot imaginable. The tale begins when a small book about the shipwrecks is given to you by a man about to be murdered. While you sleep, a note is slipped beneath your door. One of the unsavory salts of the island wants to meet and talk about a "big deal." The danger of the ensuing salvage expedition is compounded by the treachery of your partners, a murderous lot to be sure. The game is full of the twistings and turnings of fate as affected by your actions, all told in the familiar Infocom style of interactive prose. As usual, this adventure offers a higher level of interaction than those from any other company, with a more complex vocabulary. And there is no single solution, making the game re-playable many times over. (Solo Play; Keyboard; Disk.) (Available for Apple II/II+ /IIe/IIc, Atari, C-64, IBM PC/PCjr, Macintosh.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95 Atari & C-64; others \$39.95)

### Championship Lode Runner Coming

Broderbund is putting the finishing touches on *Championship Lode Runner* for Apple and C64, featuring 50 complex screens which promise many hours of practice for even the best of Lode Runner players.

Broderbund will also enter the world of karate with *KARATEKA*, the story of a young karate master who must fight an evil warlord to rescue his bride-to-be. You can play this karate master on Apple and C64 computers. *CYBORG*, a science fiction game formerly available on Apple II, will become available shortly for Macintosh.

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..APPLE-COMPATIBLE

**BLAZING PADDLES** and **TAKE 1** are a beautifully documented and easy-to-use pair of graphic programs. The first is a graphic illustration program usable with joystick, mouse, light pen, graphics tablet or touchpad. The second is a graphics animation package that will have you making simple, full-color animated computer movies in minutes.

### Blazing Paddles

We've experimented with quite a few illustration programs lately. This one is similar to several others with its icon menu, but it has some handy features that others don't. The expected lines, shapes, colors, and brushstrokes are here, but there's also a shape table with sets of pre-drawn items from animals to game shapes. A unique color mixing system lets you work with more than 200 basic colors and textured hues. Five character sets for adding text to your pictures can be useful, too. And files from other programs can be loaded, so the possibilities are limitless. Your artistic results can be saved to disk and/or printed on most dot matrix printers. We found the program easy to learn and even easier to use, in part thanks to the excellent instruction manual. (48K Disk; MSR \$49.95)



### Take 1

The second program is extremely versatile, permitting you to create animated movies on your monitor screen. Another well-written manual takes you through the process of selecting actors, actions, pictures, backgrounds and building animated sequences that can finally be combined into a movie—complete with fades, fade-outs and even sound effects! A library of characters and movements make it easy to get results immediately—important reinforcement for the new user of the program. *Take 1* can accept pictures created with *Blazing Paddles*, so the two programs can work together. Or you can create from within the program, using its full-screen, hi-res picture editor. Your first, flicker-free animated movie will be a source of pride, and you'll only get better with practice. For anyone with artistic interests, this program is a must. (64K Disk; MSR \$59.95) (Both programs are compatible with Apple II/II+ /IIe/IIc.)

### More Strategy from SSI

**FIELD OF FIRE** will take you from the sands of North Africa and the beaches of Normandy to the bridge of Roer and the forest of the Ardennes during WWII in this tactical simulation which promises historical accuracy (Atari and C64). **IMPERIUM GALACTICUM** is a strategy game of space exploration and conquest for Apple, Atari, and C64. It will allow you to design your own legion of starships ranging from explorers to battleships that can ravage an entire planet.

**STAR LEAGUE BASEBALL (★★★★ / ★★★½)** has been

**GAMESTAR**



translated for Apple owners and, once again, it's a fine baseball game. As in the earlier Atari version, it opens with the flag flying and the playing of the national anthem. Choose your pitcher from a platoon of three, and it's time to begin. If you play one-player, you will have one tough game against the computer. As the pitcher, you have eight different pitches to choose from, based on the direction of the joystick. If the ball is hit, a shadow will indicate a fly ball, if there's no shadow, it's a grounder. As the batter, you can choose to swing away, take the pitch, or bunt. If he hits the ball, he automatically runs to first base; however, you must work the joystick to move him further. As you get more men on base, the joystick always controls the lead runner. By the way, you had better pay close attention as it's easy to wander off base and, if you're playing against the computer, you can be certain you'll be thrown out!

### Beautiful Game of Baseball

The graphics have been converted beautifully, with two screens, 3-dimensional feel, messages on the scoreboard, and great sound effects like the crack of the bat, and the music for the 7th inning stretch. The gameplay is consistently very good with our only complaint remaining the same as on the Atari version — fielding a ball in the outfield and throwing it into the infield is a bit on the slow side. Overall, however, it offers a fine evening of baseball play for those who wish to actually play the game, as opposed to maneuver the statistics of the granddaddy of sports. (one player; two-player alternating; joystick required; works with //c; also available for Atari computer)

Recommended (MSR \$31.95)

### BREAKTHROUGH IN THE ARDENNES (★★★★ / ★★★★★)

will appeal to fans of the tactical wargames that **Strategic Simulations** does so well. This epic program offers a highly detailed simulation of World War II's Battle of the Bulge. When played as a solo contest, the game has the player directing the German forces while the computer controls the Americans. Otherwise, two players may choose which side they wish to lead into battle. Historical reality is built into the game, especially affecting troop strength and efficiency factors, plus the weather which was so critical to the real Battle of the Bulge. The battle is covered in twelve turns, each representing one day. Players are aided by a full map-board which shows the whole battlefield. The designers place this program at an advanced level, so it's not the best choice for anyone new to this type of strategic wargaming. Advanced players who enjoy re-staging such classic battles and attempting to change their outcome will find this one absorbing and historically accurate. (Solo Play 2-Player competitive; Keyboard; Disk for Apple II/II+ /IIe/IIc/III. (Also available for Atari & C-64 computers.)

Recommended. (MSR \$59.95)

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

### ADAM-COMPATIBLE

**EXPERTYPE** is the newest tutorial program for ADAM. The program teaches touch-typing via twelve lessons. When you begin for the first time, the program will ask for some information about you (name and age) which will help determine the type of lessons ADAM creates for you. The first lesson begins automatically and if you already know the touch-typing method, you can immediately move on to one of the higher levels of lessons. Throughout your lessons,



ADAM gives you instructions as to what finger should be used for each key on the keyboard. You must copy *exactly* what appears on the screen—characters and spacing. If you make any errors, ADAM will underline your mistakes in red. You can try again and improve each time. All the while you are working within the lessons, ADAM is calculating your typing speed and will show you your problem keys later on. After you have completed five lessons, ADAM will give you a report card which indicates your typing speed and lists those keys you are having a problem with.

#### The Next Step

Once you've made your way through the instructions, you can choose to move on to the next step where you will continue to practice those characters you have a problem with—both by working just with those characters and also typing words which feature your problem characters. Once you've practiced in that area, you can move on to the "Free Style" area. In that segment, ADAM will ask you to either type something of your choice (a poem, letter, part of a story, etc), or ADAM will start a thought and ask you to type several lines to complete it. Once you're finished, ADAM will once again calculate your typing speed and store it in your personal profile.

#### Dictation Too

Once you feel pretty comfortable with the keyboard, you can ask ADAM to print out a dictation lesson which, once it's printed, you can place by the keyboard and you can then type the printed material as one more test of typing ability.

#### Easy To Use

Once again, with the use of the SmartKeys, this program is extremely easy to manipulate. We were impressed with its ability to adjust to the ability of the user, and create words and phrases based on the age group of the user. We worked through all twelve lessons and found that the keyboard was very well covered, with a gradual increase in difficulty. All in all, this is a fine typing tutorial for anyone. Obviously, if you already know how to type, you won't need this program; however, we wish we had had something like this when we were struggling through textbooks and a manual typewriter in high school!

Recommended (MSR approx. \$40.00)

#### Game Screens and Reviews

Whenever possible, we obtain game screens from the manufacturers so that our readers can see how a game or other program looks, in addition to giving descriptions and evaluations in our reviews. Many of you have requested that we use screen art for our reviews, even if it means using artwork that may not reproduce well. (This is often the case when we must work from a color slide or color print.) In a further effort to provide some idea of what programs look like, we have begun to use screens from the instruction booklets when nothing else is available. Although these are usually drawings, rather than actual screen reproductions, they do give an impression of a program's appearance. You, our readers, have told us that you would rather see some idea of a program's appearance than nothing at all. Unfortunately, we still won't be able to provide artwork for all reviews. Some manufacturers use neither artwork nor photos on packaging or in the instruction booklets.

## MANUFACTURER ADDRESS UPDATE

You asked for it, so here's an updated list of many of the various manufacturers currently producing software for the various systems.

- Access**  
925 E 900 South  
Salt Lake City, UT 84105
- Activision**  
Drawer 7286  
Mountain View, CA 94042
- Adventure Intl**  
Box 3435  
Longwood, FL 32750
- Atari**  
1196 Borregas  
Sunnyvale, CA 94088
- Avalan Hill**  
4517 Harford  
Baltimore, MD 21214
- Batteries Inc**  
3302 Harbor Blvd #C9  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
- Big 5 Software**  
PO Box 9078-185  
Van Nuys, CA 91409
- Braderbund**  
1938 Fourth St  
San Rafael, CA 94901
- CBS Software**  
One Fawcett Pl  
Greenwich, CT 06836
- Coleca**  
999 Quaker Lane South  
West Hartford, CT 06110
- Cammodore**  
1200 Wilson Dr  
West Chester, PA 19380
- Commauid**  
1470 Farnsworth, #203  
Aurora, IL
- Computer Software Assoc**  
44 Oak St  
Newton Upper Falls, MA 02164
- Creative Software**  
230 E Caribbean Dr  
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
- Datamast**  
8943 Fullbright Ave  
Chatsworth, CA
- Datasoft**  
9421 Winnetka  
Chatsworth, CA 91311
- Electra Concepts**  
PO Box 6479  
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677
- Electronic Arts**  
2755 Campus Dr  
San Mateo, CA 94403
- Epyx**  
1043 Kiel Ct  
Sunnyvale, CA 94089
- Funsoft**  
28611 Canwood  
Agoura, CA 91301
- HESWare**  
71 Park Lane  
Brisbane, CA 94005
- Imagic**  
981 University Ave  
Los Gatos, CA
- Infacam**  
55 Wheeler St  
Cambridge, MA 02138
- Interphase**  
6391-F Westminster Hwy  
Richmond BC CANADA V7C 4V4
- Learning Co**  
545 Middlefield #170  
Menlo Park, CA 94025
- Maximus Inc**  
6723 Whittier Ave  
McLean, VA 22101
- MECA**  
285 Riverside Ave  
Westport, CT 06880
- Microfam**  
2310 Skokie Valley Rd  
Highland Park, IL 60035
- Mindscape**  
3444 Dundee  
Northbrook, IL 60062
- Muse**  
347 N. Charles  
Baltimore, MD 21201
- Origin Software**  
PO Box 99  
Andover, MA 01845
- Parker Bros.**  
50 Dunham Rd  
Beverly, MA
- Penguin Software**  
830 Fourth Ave  
Geneva, IL 60134
- Professional Software**  
51 Fremont  
Needham, MA 02194
- Random House**  
201 East 50th  
New York, NY 10022
- Screenplay**  
500 East Town Office Park #212  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
- Sierra**  
Coarsegold, CA 93614
- Spinnaker**  
215 First St  
Cambridge, MA 02142
- SSI**  
883 Stierlin Rd., #A-200  
Mountain View, CA 94043
- Sublogic**  
713 Edgebrook Dr  
Champaign, IL 61820
- Sunrise**  
2829 West NW Hwy #904  
Dallas, TX 75220
- Synapse**  
5221 Central Ave., #200  
Richmond, CA 94804
- Victory Software**  
2564 Industry Ln  
Norristown, PA 19401
- WICO**  
6400 W. Gross Point Rd  
Niles, IL

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. ADAM-COMPATIBLE

**SMARTBASIC BONANZA (N/A/★★★)** from **Martin Consulting of Canada** includes fifteen programs for the ADAM on datapak. At a suggested retail of only \$34.95, this package must be considered a good buy, just for the pure volume of usable programs!

### Just for Fun

Several fall within this category. The first, *THE MANSION*, is a straight-ahead text adventure game which challenges you to find treasures and solve problems. You begin at the doorstep of an ancient mansion to which you must gain entry in order to find various treasures. The trick is to stay alive, but you have a companion who will help you through your adventure. Text adventures are always popular and this one will keep you involved for hours. *BREAKOUT* is, by now, a very familiar game which pits you against multi-colored bars at the top of the screen which are knocked out, piece by piece, by your bouncing ball. It's a simple game which remains popular to this day. *TENNIS* is another name for the original PONG which, again, is highly familiar to everyone. Due to the fact that Pong is such an early and "crude" videogame, this could have easily been omitted. *MAGIC* consists of two programs in one. The first, *MENTAL*, allows you to "ask ADAM questions" to astound your friends. There are a few programmed questions in the program which are "hidden" while you type in the answer. In other words, you give ADAM a one-letter command, then while you are typing in the answer, what is appearing on the screen is the question you've indicated you want ADAM to ask. After typing a period and hitting return, the answer you just typed in will magically appear on the screen. The second part of this program is *ANALYSIS*, in which you can do a "personal profile" of anyone in the room. ADAM will ask for various information such as age, favorite and least liked color, the person in the family the person feels they are most like, etc. Then, in what appears to be a highly personal analysis, ADAM magically responds with a description of the person. It's just for fun and is good for times when a group of people gather around your ADAM. *OTHELLO* is another familiar game which has made its way from board to electronic versions for several systems. This gives Othello fans a chance to play this strategy favorite on their ADAM. In educational games, *TRY ME* is a program consisting of two different games. The first, *GUESS WHO*, is a cute text game in which the computer asks the child to "guess" what animal the computer is thinking about. Each clue is more specific than the last and if the child misspells the answer, another chance is given for the correct spelling. If the answer is incorrect again, the correct spelling is given. The program is set up to allow you to go in and add testing words by adding clues and spelling. The second part of the game is *RACER*, in which the child "drives" a racer around the track by correctly answering mathematical problems. For each correct answer, the racer moves forward a bit more. The program is designed for two players racing against one another. *FUGUE* is really not a game at all but a Bach fugue in C minor played to you by your ADAM. It serves no purpose other than to entertain you for a few moments. The "Surprise" program does the same, only it is colorful abstract drawings which your ADAM draws for your amusement.

### Home Management

There are several useful programs which fit in this genre, including *FILER*, a simple database program which allows you to set up your own database files, edit, delete, create new files, and select certain sections of the finished files for printing. In other words, you can alphabetize selected entries or sort them by chosen fields. This type of program is great for cataloging a record collection or keeping your Christmas card list up to date. In addition to this database program, you can utilize the *LABELS* program in conjunction with it to generate mailing labels. *FINANCE* is one of the more useful programs included in this package. Areas covered include programs which figure future values of investments, monthly budgeting, annual interest, amount borrowed, deposits required for future amounts, etc. Find out how much interest you'll be paying over the five-year life of that new car loan, or determine how much money you need to set aside each month for that dream vacation. There is also a metric conversion table for over forty commonly-used measures. You can enter any number and the program will

immediately convert it for you—from miles to kilometers, quarts to liters, temperature in degrees Fahrenheit to degrees Celsius, or whatever you may need.

### Other Useful Programs

*DESIGN* allows you to work on a 16x16 grid, designing high-resolution shapes in various colors. Potentially, you could design rockets and other such items which could then be used in another program which you design. Any shapes which you design can be saved for later recall. *SOUNDER* allows you to work on the various sounds which are possible on your ADAM, again for potential use in your own programs later. In addition to making your own music you can also play music and sound already built in to the program. You can do quite a bit of manipulation within both the *DESIGN* and *SOUNDER* programs. They would be extremely useful for anyone who is attempting to design their own games for ADAM. *TYPYPER* is a pretty basic typing tutorial in which you follow the lead of the computer in both drills and a typing skill game. This is no where near as sophisticated as Coleco's *EXPERTYPE* (see review elsewhere in this issue). However, it's a good program, especially in light of the fact that it is a part of such a varied package of useful and fun-filled programs.

### For Advanced Users Only

Finally, for those who are familiar with Assembly language (a language used very often for games), there is a *Mini-Assemble* and *Disassem*. The authors of the program label it as a Mini Assembler due to the fact that it is written in BASIC and, therefore, much slower than most commercial assemblers. The programs offer the ability for future computer programmers to learn from their ADAM, becoming familiar with applications which can be useful for years to come.

All in all, there is great diversity in SmartBasic Bonanza. There's something for everybody, from complete whimsy to useful home applications. This set of programs opens your ADAM up to many more applications than have been available to you before, and at the amazingly low cost of less than \$2.50 per program! Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

## BOOK REVIEW

**THE COLECO ADAM ENTERTAINER** is a book of thirty programs of entertainment which includes brief descriptions of each game, explanations of how the program operates, and a listing of each program. A section of the book contains programming tools which are subroutines (sections of a program used to perform a particular task) that you can include in your programs. The programs contained in the book all feature relatively simple graphics and some are very basic programs familiar to all. There is the perennial children's favorite *Hangman* as well as *Blackjack*, various shape makers, circle makers, etc. You can design a calendar, banners, greeting cards, and play *World Conquest* against your ADAM.

### Good Value

There are several games and informative programs which have been available for ADAM before, which make this book fun, as well as educational. While there's nothing here which will result in "stunning" graphics, the book does allow games which go beyond the typical text programs which are about all that's currently available from any third party companies. At the price, it's a bargain! Recommended (MSR \$12.95)

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(Editor's Note: We have adopted the convention of reviewing ColecoVision/Adam programs that are in cartridge format under the heading "ColecoVision-Compatible" in the Video Game Update section. Programs that are for Adam ONLY (datapack format) are reviewed under the heading "Adam-Compatible" in the Computer Entertainer section.)

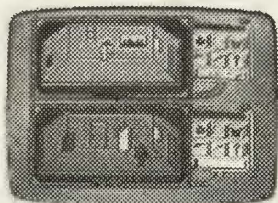
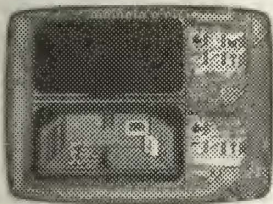
**CRITICALLY SPEAKING..**  
**COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE**

**SPY VS SPY (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★ 1/2)** is a slightly crazy, but highly innovative game based on the antics of the cartoon secret agents in Black and White who first appeared in the pages of MAD magazine in 1960. The pranksterish pair has also been featured in a series of paperback books.

Those familiar with these bumbling agents that delight in booby-trapping each other will find the game totally in character with the popular cartoons. Both spies can set traps within an embassy maze that can vary in size from six to thirty-six rooms. There is a limited time during which the spies must find and collect a Passport, Traveling Money, a Key, and a set of Secret Plans in a Top Secret Briefcase, and then locate the only exit to escape in a waiting plane. However, there is only one set of the necessary objects, so the race is on between the two spies. They won't hesitate to use every dirty trick in the book to reach their goals.

**Simulvison and Simulplay**

Thanks to "Simulvison," an innovative, horizontal split-screen display, the explorations of each spy appear on his own half of the screen. Whether your opponent is computer-controlled or in the hands of a friend, everything he does is visible at all times, with both spies moving simultaneously but independently. (If both spies enter the same room, half of the screen blanks out. With both in the same room, they can fight each other with clubs.) Each spy has to keep an eye on the other, watching for the setting of booby traps such as bombs, springs, water buckets, guns with strings tied to the triggers, and time bombs. (Remedies to neutralize all but the time bomb are hidden in the embassy.) Whenever one spy is zapped by a trap, whatever he was carrying is hidden in the room, and the other spy snickers sarcastically.



**Ideal for Two Players**

Black Spy vs. White Spy makes a great premise for a computer game, especially with the Simulvison technique. Graphics are very clear, well animated, and drawn with a good simulation of three-dimensional reality. And the pictures will make you laugh, even if you just watch the demo. Music and sound effects are also good. The game offers a wealth of opportunities for strategic play, while the humorous effects of the practical jokes add to the fun. Gamers will appreciate the choice of several difficulty levels and the ability to set the "intelligence quotient" of the computer player in the solo game. Even at its dumbest, though, the computer-controlled player is a tough competitor. As a result, we found that the two-player option gave us a better opportunity to explore the amusing trap-setting and remedy-finding aspects of the game. In fact, this is an ideal game for two players because it doesn't force one to wait around while the other takes a turn. Meeting a friend at Joke and Dagger Street provides some of the best two-player gaming we've seen lately. As a solo game against the computer, it's almost as good, but either way, **SPY VS SPY** is a truly original game. (Solo Play; 2-Player simultaneous; Pause; Joystick; Disk.) (Available soon for Apple II series & Atari computers.)

Recommended. (MSR \$29.95; Apple \$34.95)



**CRITICALLY SPEAKING..**  
**APPLE-COMPATIBLE**

**THE PRINT SHOP (★ ★ ★ ★ / N/A)** is a marvelous way to create cards, banners, letterheads, invitations, and much more on your Apple computer. Broderbund promises that it is so easy, you won't have to read the manual. Taking the challenge, that's exactly what we did and found that this is, indeed, a remarkably easy program to work with. There are many built-in, ready-to-use cards for birthday, Christmas, etc., as well as the ability for you to create your own. There are a total



of sixty different pictures and graphics such as Christmas wreaths, pumpkins, birds, birthday cakes, hearts, candles, musical notes, and much more. There are eight different type styles, called fonts, which allow you to create anything from a flowery note to a business-like card. You can choose various borders, various sizes for your graphics or you can truly become creative with "Screen Magic." A graphics tablet, which can be used with this program, can come in especially handy with this creative feature. Included with the package is a small package of brightly colored pin-feed paper, as well as matching envelopes.

The only limit to this program is your imagination! Recommended (MSR \$49.95)

The only limit to this program is your imagination!  
 Recommended (MSR \$49.95)

**Graphics:**

The following "Graphics" and "Patterns" may be selected by picture or by number. When choosing a graphic "By Number", use the numbers (1-60) listed on this card. (For information see "Choose a Graphic" in section 3 of the manual):



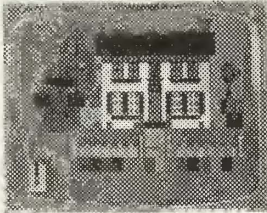
© 1984 by Broderbund Software

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

**DREAM HOUSE** (★★★/★★★) offers an interesting concept for budding young designers. The idea of this program is to let you design your own house, starting with one of four templates (colonial farm house, San Francisco Victorian, Manhattan pent-house or hideaway cottage). Using on-screen

icon menus, you may examine floor plans, move around from room to room, landscape the exterior, or furnish the interior.

"Move" and "copy" commands allow for placement of objects, and the "paint" command lets you change colors or even remove objects by painting them the same color as the background. It's even possible to animate some of the objects. The designers suggest that the program is suitable for anyone eight and up. We feel that young children may be frustrated by complexity of the program and will require parental help, at least until they're very familiar with the workings of the program. The manual is helpful to a point, but experimentation is necessary to learn all the possibilities. Because kids will want to save some of their better efforts, be sure to have a blank, formatted disk ready. (Solo Play; Joystick & Keyboard; Disk.) (Also available for Apple II series.) MSR \$39.95



**PATHWORDS** (NA/★★★½) from CBS Software is a word game for one to four players. Letters are arranged in a diamond-shaped grid on the screen, and the object is to make the longest possible words from adjacent letters on each turn. There is a time limit, and using some letters (y, k, j, k, z, q) results in bonus points. Though *PATHWORDS* can be played as a solo game against the clock, we found it much more exciting when other players are involved. Only when two or more are playing does strategy become part of the game, which makes it much more interesting. However, we've played better word games than this one on a computer, including CBS's *Webster: The Word Game*. (Solo Play; 2 to 4-player alternating; Pause; Joystick & Keyboard; Disk.) (Coming for Apple II series & IBM PC/PCjr.) Not recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

**THE MASK OF THE SUN** (★★★½/★★★½) was licensed from Ultrasoft, the company which made the original version of this game for Apple computers. It is a graphic adventure with unusual, animated artwork. This translation for Commodore 64 is necessarily slower than the original due to the limitations of the Commodore disk drive, but it's an enjoyable and fascinating game nevertheless.

### *The Archaeologist As Adventurer*

Your role in this adventure is that of archaeologist, adventurer and treasure-hunter, Mac Steele. You have been stricken by a strange malady, which was caused by the pale green gas escaping from a Pre-Columbian amulet. The amulet may be linked to the fabulous Mask of the Sun, which has yet to be discovered in the pyramid temples of central Mexico. Hoping that the Mask may offer the cure for your diseased condition, you set off on a perilous adventure to find this relic of ancient Aztec civilization. You encounter banditos, snakes, mazes of rooms with locked doors, a "living" corpse, a river of fire, and lots of surprises. Although this is primarily an illustrated text adventure, many of the pictures move, and there are even some action sequences that call for reflexes honed by arcade-style games. The language of the game is fairly sophisticated, accepting full sentences and strings of commands. We found the game progressively more fascinating the longer we played, even though we have yet to find the Mask itself. *THE MASK OF THE SUN* is loaded with suspense that's tempered with a sarcastic sense of humor. (Solo Play; Keyboard; Disk.) (Also available for Atari computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

**BREAKDANCE** (★★★/★★½) is an attempt to cash in on the current dance craze. The program contains four game sequences: three variations on a theme of "Simon Says" and one segment for choreo-

graphing your own breakdance sequences. In "Hot Feet Dance Contest," you attempt to copy another dancer as he adds break-dancing moves to his routine, one at a time. "Battle the Rocket Crew" has you defending your turf against a gang of breakers. You must eliminate them by copying their moves before they push you into the river. In "Perfections Dance Puzzle," your task is to program a break-dance routine to match that of Boogaloo Brewster. For each correct move, you are awarded a boom box (one of those very large, very loud, portable music systems). The fourth game is the only one of much interest, since it lets you create your own dances from a menu of typical breakdance moves.

### *Boring*

What a disappointment! We've been spoiled by a long run of great games from Epyx, but this is definitely not one of them. The graphics are good and colorful, but the music is dreadful, and the Simon-like games are boring. No self-respecting breakdancer would spend more than ten minutes with this nonsense. (It's interesting to note that this was *not* created by Epyx's own design team, but by an independent company, Bech-Tech.) (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating; Pause; Joystick; Disk.) Not recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

**EXPEDITION AMAZON** (★★★/★★★) is an unusual graphic



adventure set in the jungles of Peru. At the request of Jonathon Arrowhead, part-time professor of archaeology, you must recruit a four-man team to search for the Incan's lost city of Ka. (Never mind that no one but the Professor has ever heard of Ka—you're in this thing for the adventure of it all!) Your team purchases supplies at Iquitos and heads into the dark jungle. The first order of business is to map the sectors of the jungle, finding artifacts and hopefully avoiding dangers. This is accomplished by plodding along, one square at a time. Your team may be attacked by Amazons or crocodiles, caught in quicksand, or bitten by disease-carrying insects. The idea is to keep the team alive, gather lots of goodies, and return to base camp where you can sell your treasures in order to buy more equipment for the next trip into the jungle. As your team members become more experienced, they can enter the tunnels beneath the pyramids, where even more perils are encountered. Within one of these tunnel mazes is the door to the Lost City.

### *Requires Patience*

This is unlike many other graphic adventures we've played because of the amount of time spent mapping the jungle sectors. This process involves moving around, one square at a time, revealing the map hidden beneath the formerly blank screen. You never know what you'll find next, and this portion of the game can take quite a while—especially when sudden tropical rainstorms or falling mangoes can wipe out a carefully uncovered map! As with most role-playing adventures, this one requires plenty of patience and a high tolerance for frustration. We enjoyed the game, though we did get just a bit tired of all the plodding through the jungle. (Solo Play; Pause; Keyboard; Disk.) (Also available for Apple.) MSR \$34.95

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!!!

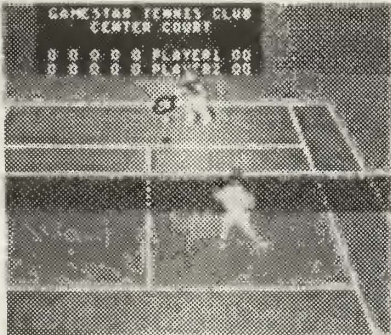


## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

**ON-COURT TENNIS** (★★★★/★★★★) should further establish Gamestar's reputation as a company that creates superbly realistic sports simulations with innovative features. It's about as different from other pong-like video tennis games as Center Court at Wimbledon is from a beginner's tournament. In this game you may become any of four fictitious tennis players with different temperaments and playing styles, all modeled on players you will recognize. You have a choice of playing surface (grass, clay, or hard court) and of game length (one set, two-of-three-set match, or three-of-five-set match). Before playing for real, you should watch a set or two played by the computer against itself. This gives you a chance to observe the characteristics of each player and get a feel for the timing of the strokes.

### Complete Racquet Control

Most video tennis games require little more than being in the right place at the right time—move your player to the ball, and the computer swings the racket and hits the ball. The approach in **ON-COURT TENNIS** is quite different because you have complete control of your player's racquet on serves, ground strokes, drop shots, lobs, volleys, and smashes. The computer moves your player to the ball, and then it's totally in your joystick hand. Timing, strategy, finesse become the key points as you decide whether to use a spin or hit a flat shot, serve to your opponent's forehand or backhand, go for straight passing shot or a cross-court smash. Believe it or not, you do all of this with one joystick, and the combination of moves is not difficult to learn. Of course, doing it at the right time is another matter, and getting the timing right does take lots of practice.



### Strategy and Finesse

The realism of this game is aided by good sound effects and three-dimensional visuals enhanced by what Gamestar calls "Player Perspective Graphics." This method of subtle scrolling in the direction of your player's moves makes you feel more a part of the action. Equally enjoyable as a game for one or two players, this simulated tennis match reveals its depth as you become more proficient. In fact, if you're playing against the computer, you'll find that the computer-controlled player varies his skill with yours. (The designers refer to this as "floating intelligence.") Beginners won't be humiliated by the computer, but advanced players trigger a more challenging computer opponent. This game offers an original approach to video tennis, incorporating all the strategy and finesse of a real game that is usually missing from simulations. Don't miss it! (Solo Play; 2-Player competitive; Joystick; Disk or Cassette.) Recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

### Smithsonian and CBS Team Up

CBS has signed an agreement with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service to co-develop software for home, classroom, and museum use.

CBS has also announced an agreement with Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets, to develop software based on the children's television series, **FRAGGLE ROCK**. The programs, to be released next year, will be geared towards children 7-12 years and will feature the furry Muppet characters seen on this HBO series.

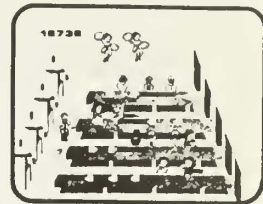
**TAPPER** (★★★★½/★★★★) was reviewed in this space two

issues ago, but we're giving you another brief analysis because we got a look at the cartridge version this time. This is an abbreviated form of the game



SODA BAR/DIT

on disk that we saw earlier. Instead of five screens (four bars plus bonus



JOCK BAR

round), the cartridge version has but three screens (two bars plus bonus round). It's not unusual for a cartridge version to offer less than a disk of the same game, but we don't understand it in this case. The adaptation for the Atari 2600, a system which has nowhere near the capabilities of the Commodore 64, contains all five screens! (See review in *Video Game Update* section of this issue.) Whether on disk or cartridge, this is a very good game with crisp graphics, nice animation, and it's lots of fun to play. However, we can't help feeling that the gamer who purchases the cartridge is being shortchanged. We can't think of a single reason why they couldn't put all five screens on the Commodore 64 cartridge. The only reason to buy this version is that you don't own a disk drive and have no intention of buying one. (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating; Joystick or Keyboard; Cartridge.) (Also available for Apple II/IIe/IIc, Atari, IBM PC/PCjr computers; Atari 2600.)

MSR \$44.95

**UP'N'DOWN** (★★★/★★★★½) is essentially the same as the



version for Atari computers, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. As in the Atari version, there are more "goodies" on the disk than on the cartridge: more objects on the roads to be picked up for points and more different roads. However, the two-player game is available on both the cartridge and the disk, with the

same joystick shared by both players. (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating; Joystick or Keyboard; Cartridge or Disk.) (Also available for Atari computers; coming soon for Apple, IBM PC/PCjr, Atari 2600.)

Recommended. (MSR \$449.95)

**BROADSIDES** (★★★/★★★★½) is another in the line of carefully crafted wargames from **Strategic Simulations Inc.** This one is an introductory level program of sailing ship warfare set in the period of the Napoleonic era, the late 18th and early 19th century. Players may choose the arcade-type game for faster action or the tactical game for more options and strategic planning. In either game, players control the great sailing ships, firing on each other with cannons at sea and engaging in sword and musket fighting at close range (the boarding stage). A number of historical American, British, French and Spanish ships are included on the disk, or players may build their own to experiment with features such as crew size and firepower. The player is captain of the ship, determining everything from the course of the ship to the range of firing. A game for thinkers, not joystick jockeys, **BROADSIDES** is a must for would-be naval heroes of the washbuckling past. (Solo Play; 2-Player competitive; Pause; Joystick and/or Keyboard; Disk.) (Also available for Apple II/IIe/IIc & Atari computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

**TRANSYLVANIA** (★★★½/★★★½) is a delightful graphic adventure from Penguin Software which is set in the land of vampires and werewolves. As you explore, it helps to remember what you have learned about these creatures from books and movies—silver bullets and garlic cloves can be very handy to have. The game starts at midnight, and the object is to find and rescue the Princess Sabrina before she is scheduled to die at dawn. You will explore dark forests, encountering dead bodies, bats, mice, and wandering creatures of the night. Some will even call you by name if you disturb their hiding place. The werewolf will dog your steps, showing up at the most inconvenient times. It's all great fun with its many humorous touches, and it's a nice change of pace from the usual medieval settings for role-playing adventures.

### Held Our Interest

**TRANSYLVANIA** is actually a text adventure with illustrative screens added. Provision for toggling back and forth between graphics and text mode is allowed, giving you the opportunity to read a whole string of commands if you should forget what you did a few moves ago. Because of the slowness of the Commodore disk drive, we also liked being able to work strictly in the text mode once we had seen the pictures. This speeds the game up considerably. Although you can save a game in progress, you do not need a separate disk—saved games are stored on the game disk. This game really held our interest, and we plan to keep playing until we can find and rescue the Princess. (Solo Play; Keyboard; Dual Disk backed with Atari version.) (Also available on Apple dual disk: 48K for II /Ile backed with 128K double hi-res for IIe/IIc; also for Macintosh.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95; \$39.95 for Macintosh)

**RIVER RAID** (★★★½/★★★½) is the sixth version of the best-seller designed originally for the Atari 2600 by Carol Shaw of Activision. The now-classic game is a vertical scroller with a combat theme. You fly a B1 Strato-Wing Assault Jet in a daring raid over a constantly changing river course. Winding through the countryside, the river canyon is crossed by occasional bridges, scattered with islands, and sometimes it narrows down to barely more than wing-tip width. In the early parts of the river, you'll encounter a few large enemy ships, some helicopters that flit back and forth between the high banks, fuel tanks and bridges. All targets can be shot for points, but you'll want to fly over some of the tanks to replenish your plane's fuel supply. As you fly farther up the river, the enemies appear in greater numbers. White jets fly across your path, and multi-colored, hot-air reconnaissance balloons bar your way. Tanks sometimes cross the bridges, and blowing up the bridge with a tank on it is worth extra points. Even farther up the river, the going gets really rough as tanks on the shore and planes crossing your path begin shooting. Players of different skill levels are accommodated by the ability to start at the first, fifth, twentieth, or fiftieth bridge on this river of no return.

### Classic Shooting Game

**RIVER RAID** is a game with a simple premise that wears amazingly well. The graphics of this adaptation are quite similar to those of the Atari computer version, which was released over a year ago, and both offer considerable enhancements over the original game for the Atari 2600. The river snakes its way through the canyon, and all the enemy ships and aircraft are quite realistic. The game offers straightforward flying and shooting action that is appealing in its classic simplicity. That's not to say that the game is easy, however, especially when you start at the fiftieth bridge! Particularly if you don't already own another version of **RIVER RAID**, this is a good one to add to your collection. It's a game that we still play often. (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating; Joystick; Disk.) (Also available for Atari computers; Atari 2600 & 5200, ColecoVision/Adam & Intellivision.) Recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

**ZENJI** (★★★½/★★★½) from Activision is nearly identical to the version for ColecoVision, which is reviewed in the *Video Game Update* section of this issue. (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating; Cartridge.) (Also available for Atari Computers; for Atari 5200 & ColecoVision/Adam.) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

## BOOK REVIEW

### Books for Commodore 64 Owners

As many Commodore 64 owners have discovered, the manuals that come with their computer and disk drive don't exactly give you "everything you always wanted to know" about the system. As a result, there is a constantly growing collection of books designed to appeal to budding programmers and other curious souls. This month we'll introduce you to three of the latest ones.

**BASIC Fun for the Commodore 64 Beginner** (Prentice-Hall, \$19.95) by Arthur Denzau, Kent Forrest, and Robert Partridge is a book for those who want to learn by doing. Over 100 programs are included in printed form and on an accompanying disk. They range from fun-yet-practical (Sprite Editor) to fun-and-serious (Valentine). The tone of the book is light-hearted, but the text and exercises do an excellent job of teaching programming technique at a level suitable for beginners of any age. The disk bound with the book contains all the programs in the book. We were amazed to find that no instructions are provided for loading the programs from the disk—awfully strange for a beginner's book. We'll give you the help that someone forgot to include. Place the book's disk in the drive and type: LOAD"PROGRAM NAME",8 and "RETURN." ("Program Name" is simply the name of any program as listed in the book, such as "WORLD CLOCK" or "FLASHER.") When "READY" and the flashing cursor reappear on the screen, type: RUN and hit "RETURN." Be sure to enter the programs for the book yourself, too—it's the best way to learn. (In addition to all the programs, this book has listings of Commodore 64 public domain software and Commodore Users' Groups.)

**Commodore 64 Sight & Sound** (Creative Computing Press, \$12.95) by John J. Anderson explores the graphic and sound capabilities of the computer. The first chapters are devoted to setting up the computer and disk drive, with special attention to getting the best possible picture on your TV or monitor. Subsequent chapters delve into the mysteries of low-res and hi-res graphics, simple animation, and the generation of sounds. The author spends a lot of time on programming graphics and sound from "Simon's BASIC," a new cartridge program from Commodore that makes programming much easier. This book is a must for anyone who has Simon's BASIC and would like to go beyond the limited documentation that comes with the cartridge.

**Inside Commodore DOS** (Datamost, \$19.95) is a manual by Richard Immers and Gerald G. Neufeld. This one definitely qualifies as an "everything you always wanted to know" type of work. The authors cover the Commodore 1541 disk drive and disk operating system in painstakingly thorough detail. Although this book might be overwhelming to a beginner, intermediate and advanced users of the Commodore 64 will appreciate its complete explanations of disk operations, listings of 46 ready-to-run BASIC disk utilities, and explorations of non-standard means of reading and writing data. Emergency methods for recovering "damaged" data are bound to come in handy, too. Also included are a detailed disk RAM map, an analysis of ROM, and mathematical conversion routines.

### Access Moves Into Apple

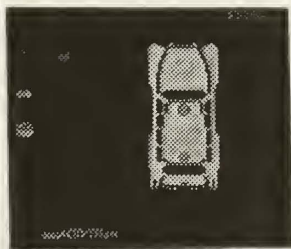
Access Software has told us they plan to convert their highly successful **BEACH HEAD** and **RAID OVER MOSCOW** to the Apple format next year. **BEACH HEAD** should be available around April while **RAID** will ship before the end of the first quarter.



**GHOSTBUSTERS** (★★★★ / ★★★★★) opens with the familiar "no ghosts" logo from the movie and—get this—a sing-along! The music of Ray Parker Jr.'s chart-topping "Ghostbusters" theme rollicks out of your TV speaker, while a bouncing ball dances across the top of the lyrics that appear on your screen. You can sing along, hitting the spacebar on your keyboard to produce an exuberant shout of "Ghostbusters!" whenever you like. The musical introduction lasts quite a while, but it's much too good to cut short. When the song ends, the game itself begins with the establishment of your Ghostbusters franchise. The bank loans you \$10,000 to start your new business, but it's up to you to make it thrive by busting ghosts in your city. If you can end the game with more money than you started (not easily done), an account will be opened for your use in subsequent games.

**Starting Your Franchise**

Your first purchase is a vehicle: compact, 1963 hearse, station wagon, or high performance car. Considerations include purchase price, number of items that can be carried, and the vehicle's top speed. (Because the high-performance car costs \$15,000, you won't be able to buy one until you've established a healthy bank account in a previous effort.) Next you must outfit the vehicle for ghostbusting. Items available for purchase include a PK (psychokinetic) Energy Detector, which warns of approaching ghosts (Slimers); an Image Intensifier to make Slimers easier to see; Marshmallow Sensor that warns of the approaching Sta-Puft Marshmallow Man; a Ghost Vacuum for sucking up wandering ghosts ("Roamers"); Ghost Traps, which are required for catching and storing Slimers; Ghost Bait to attract and stop Roamers from gathering to form the Marshmallow Man; and a Portable Laser Confinement System that stores ten Slimers in your vehicle to save travel time back to Ghostbusters Headquarters for more traps.

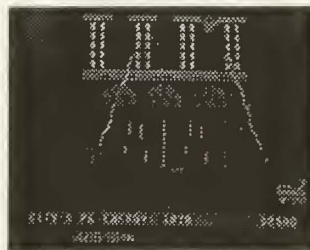


**Bust Those Ghosts!**

Serious Ghostbusting begins with an overview map of the city, where you can see all the buildings and streets, with the horrible Temple of Zuul in the center. Yellow Roamers float toward Zuul and can be frozen by touching them with your "No Ghosts" symbol. When a building flashes red, a Slimer is there and ready to be caught by your fearless team of Ghostbusters. Hop into the vehicle, suck up frozen Roamers with your Ghost Vacuum as you move, and head for the haunted building. The view switches to the front of the building, where you must set your trap and herd the Slimer into a position between streams from the two Ghostbusters' negative ionizer backpacks. If your team traps the Slimer, you'll hear a shout of "Ghostbusters!" as your guys do a little victory dance and earn their fee. (Bustin' makes them feel good!) If they miss, the Slimer knocks one of them to the pavement, and the unlucky Ghostbuster exclaims, "He slimed me!" (Musical accompaniment is constant throughout the game.)

**Marshmallow Alert!**

As your team earns more money, the pace quickens, the PK (psychokinetic) energy of the city increases, and the Gatekeeper and Keymaster come closer to joining forces at Zuul. Just when you think you've got the supernatural forces under control, a Marshmallow Alert flashes across the bottom of the screen. Mr. Sta-Puft has to be stopped quickly before he stomps a building to smithereens, because the damages will be charged to your account! If you can stop him, though, the grateful mayor of the city will award you \$2000. Once you build enough credit, it becomes possible to sneak Ghostbusters into the entrance of the Temple of Zuul, which is guarded by the Marshmallow Man. Only by getting two of your men past him can you close the portal to the spirit world. If he squashes your men, his maniacal laughter signals your failure.



**Who You Gonna Call?**

With as many games as we see every month, it takes an extraordinarily good one to get us so excited that we just have to show it to everyone we know. It had us mesmerized from the moment the computer shouted "Ghostbusters!" on the opening screen, all the way through the sing-along and the marvelously original game itself. *GHOSTBUSTERS* is the only movie-based game we've seen that captures the spirit of its inspiration totally. Anyone who loves the movie will be crazy about this game.

It was designed by one of the best in the business, David Crane, and everything about it is superb—from the crisp, colorful graphics and rhythmic musical accompaniment to the original and challenging play action. The addictive blend of action and strategy in a creative scenario makes it difficult to stop playing. Voice synthesis is icing on the cake, but it adds a lot to the total experience of the game. This is one of the best of the year for the Commodore 64, and it would make a great Christmas gift for anyone on your list who owns this system. For a gaming good time, who you gonna call? *GHOSTBUSTERS!* (Solo Play; Joystick; Pause; Disk.) (Coming soon for Apple II series & Atari computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

**Imagic Ships C64/Apple Disk**

In an attempt to capture two of the biggest home computer markets on one disk, Imagic is currently shipping *DRAGONFIRE* which features both the C64 and Apple version on one disk!

Way back, a long time ago, some pretty clever people got together and invented a service called The Source. In the early days of personal telecommunications, The Source offered not a great many services, but enough to command a hefty \$100 sign-on fee, and a \$10 per month minimum. The old days we refer to are the late 70's. Very few computers were positioned in homes across America, and they were offered the power of hooking up to a mainframe computer across the country, using a modem. What you have now is a much better, far more diversified Source — easier to access, easier to wander around. If you already have a computer, and you might be thinking about that inexpensive modem... let's have another look at The Source: 1984.

The first thing we have noticed, and it is rather new, is that for those of you who already have a modem, the cost of signing up has come down 50 percent (MSR \$49.95). This entitles you to a three ring binder, a current list of commands, and a membership card. Once you're armed with these, simply call The Source (toll-free). They will take down your credit card number (a very convenient way of billing). Within a few days, your personal ID number and password will be in your mailbox.

Rates and fees as a user are extremely reasonable. If you can avoid "Prime Time," which is Monday through Friday from 7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Eastern Time Zone, the hourly cost is \$7.75. For those on Pacific Time and Mountain Time, this is handy, as it opens the channels at 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon. If you MUST use the network during the prime hours, the rate is \$20.75. The rates are figured on how long you make each call, rounded up to the next minute. Then, at the end of the month, the minutes are counted. Also, there is a 25-cent log-on fee for each time you call them. Some of you have a 1200-baud (120 cps) modem, four times faster than the 300, and there is a \$3.00 non-prime surcharge per hour for it's use. Here, we'll have to advise some caution: If you live in a remote area, you may only have access to a 300-baud phone line, and the 1200 would be long distance, or WATS. WATS is an expensive proposition, and not recommended. Additionally, if you have 1200-baud service, consider the fact you'll receive information four times faster, but if you're unable to transmit data (type) four times faster, then it's not necessarily a "value added service."

#### Easy to Use

Source Menus are standard and very easy to follow, with "help" and "quit" available at all times. The first menu you encounter, the Entry Menu, offers 1) Using The Source, 2) TODAY, 3) Business Update, 4) The Source Main Menu, 5) What's New, and 6) Command Level. It's at the Command Level you can call-up anything directly. The Source Main Menu offers news and reference resources (including both major wire services, United Press Intl. and Associated Press), plus business and financial markets, home and leisure, shopping (if you enjoy paying top dollar for what you buy), education services, personal computing, and "mail." As a member, you can send mail to other members. Mail is done quite easily on The Source, especially by comparison to other similar services. We would like to mention here, that other similar services will notify you upon logon that you have mail waiting for you. Not so on Source. You must first master the mail option before you can send and receive mail efficiently.

## BOOK REVIEW

**JOY OF COMPUTER CHESS** published by Prentice Hall and written by David Levy is for the computer chess enthusiast, as well as the chess enthusiast who would like to program chess into their computer. There is enough information in the book to make it possible to program a chess game (programming skills are required, however). Examples of actual games are included as well as explanations into how chess computers are programmed, including ways to represent pieces, generate and evaluate moves, and perform "search strategies". Facts and techniques on how to play against the chess computer, detailed advice on what to look for when buying a chess computer, and how to use the chess computer to rate, monitor, and improve your game are among the areas the author addresses in exhaustive terms. David Levy has won every match he played against a computer for ten years so he speaks with some authority!  
(MSR \$7.95)

## Loads of Services

Other services allow you to make airline reservations, hotel accommodations, and almost anything else you could want to do. You even have access to Microsearch- which gives you the ability to read articles from books, magazines, etc. You have access to an online text editor, data base and bulletin boards.

A simple review of The Source is almost impossible, as there are so many things a person can do. This includes personal interaction with other members using a function called "Chat," where you can call on other members currently logged on to swap stories, or ask for help on that tough adventure game, dial-a-date, stock market, and so on.

There is only one close competitor, Compuserve. To compare the two is largely a political debate between what you have, vs. what the other person has. Each one is better than the other because you're more aware of the services on your own. Almost all other dial-a-database services are narrow in their range (Dow Jones Stocks, for instance).

When the family modem goes into service these days, the new modem is usually packaged with a "free" connection charge to The Source or Compuserve. Certainly the SERVICE OFFERED should NOT affect your decision on a modem. After all, you may want to look at both services when all is said and done. Perhaps the best way to describe The Source would be to say that one of the things you can do at the Command Level is type "ONLINE," which shows you WHO is on-line at any given moment. And, considering that we did most of our research in the wee hours of the morning, there were never fewer than one or two hundred members signed on. Ask for that same command on a Friday Night and you will sit there for what seems to be an endless number of minutes watching it churn out ID number, after ID number, after ID number!

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

### ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

**BEAMRIDER** (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is an adaptation of the game originally designed for Intellivision and later done for ColecoVision and the 2600. In this adaptation, the vector graphics are very similar to the Intellivision and ColecoVision versions. It has a simple premise: destroy enemy spacecraft while protecting your own ship. Your ship travels horizontally along the bottom of the screen while the enemy ships emerge as blips of light in the distance, quickly attacking you by riding down the beams toward your ship. With your "laser lariat," you must shoot them while avoiding their red laser bolts. Meanwhile, there are certain objects which are indestructible so you must get out of their path. Small yellow objects must not be shot at; instead, connect with them for an additional ship. If you shoot them, they'll turn red and destroy you on contact. After each wave of enemies is dispatched, the Enemy Command Craft hovers across the top of the screen. It's guarded by fast-moving yellow saucers, and you have only limited firepower to hit it. Then it's on to the next wave, and the next, and the next...

#### Still A Good One

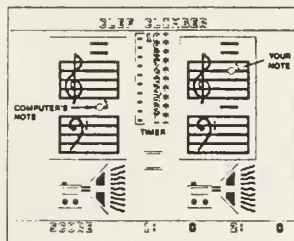
Although we always complain when Activision does not "enhance" their adaptations to take advantage of the abilities of a given game unit, Beamrider does not really suffer since the earlier versions were already so good. Although it's a space "shoot-'em-up," the random patterns and toughness of the game lift it above the basic invasion type of game. We've enjoyed it every time we've gotten another version and this one is no exception. (solo play; also available for Atari 2600, Intellivision, ColecoVision)  
Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

**PASTFINDER** (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★) is the same game as the Atari computer version which is reviewed in the Computer Entertainment section of this month's newsletter.

# THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

**BRAIN STRAINERS** (★★ / ★★★½) is a musical teaching program which includes two different types of musical matching games. The first, **FOLLOW THE LEADER**, tests your visual memory as you attempt to match a sequence of notes played by the computer. Each time a note is played, an arrow points at one of four colored triangles on the screen. You must move your joystick in the direction of the arrow to match the note. What appears to be quite simple, becomes more and more difficult as, each time you repeat the sequence of sounds correctly, the computer adds one more note to the sequence. In addition, as you move into the higher levels of difficulty, more and more notes are added into the sequence. A sequence can be as long as forty notes (try to follow that sequence!). As a two-player game, players work together to match the tune; however, only player one can select playing options and start the game. When you make a mistake, the "Oops Screen" appears, the computer buzzes, and the arrow points out your mistake.



CLEF CLIMBER™ Duet

## Challenge Your Auditory Memory

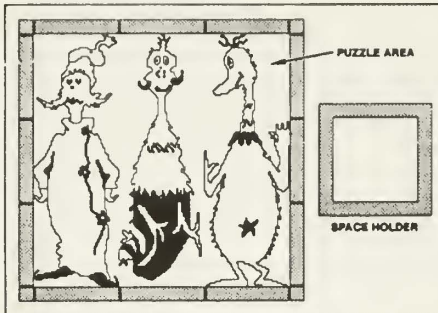
In **CLEF CLIMBER**, you can find out if you have perfect pitch! Within the several options, you can tell the computer to keep playing the note while the note you are playing keeps changing until you match it. Or, you can have the computer to alternate between playing the note to be matched and the note you are changing. The third option will really test your abilities as the computer plays the note to be matched and then stops while you are attempting to match it. As you begin the game, you can choose between a "piano" type sound or an "electronic horn."

## Graphics Nothing Special

While this really isn't a game of graphics, they certainly aren't anything special. The game does provide for some good musical awareness, however. The concentration required in **FOLLOW THE LEADER** will definitely challenge you. **CLEF CLIMBER** will help anyone become more finely attuned to musical notes as it covers the entire spectrum of flats and sharps. The area where we have a problem with the program is in the fact that boredom could set in in a relatively short period of time due to the fact that once you've played "copy-cat" with **FOLLOW THE LEADER**, and watched the computer in **CLEF CLIMBER** enough times to become very good at mimicking the computer's notes, there is no further programming for further musical growth. This is one we'd suggest that you try out before purchase (one player; two-player alternating; pause)

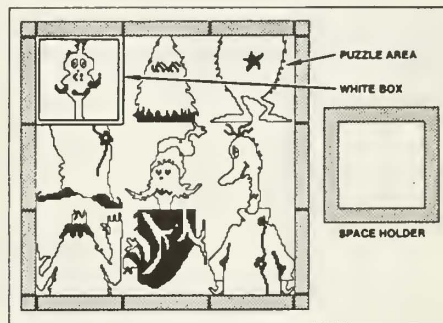
*Editor's Note: We have adopted the convention of reviewing all ColecoVision/Adam programs that are in cartridge format under the heading "ColecoVision-Compatible" in the Video Game Update section. Programs that are for Adam ONLY (data-pack format) are reviewed under the heading "Adam-Compatible" in the Computer Entertainer section.)*

## DR. SEUSS FIX-UP THE MIX-UP PUZZLER (★★★½ /



UNSCRAMBLED PUZZLE

★★★½) allows children ages 4-10 to learn problem solving, pattern recognition, and logic while totally enjoying the lovable Dr. Seuss characters. The object of the game is simple — reassemble a scrambled picture of three Seuss characters by mixing and matching heads, feet, and torsos, all the while creating some pretty silly looking characters. In higher levels, not only are there more puzzle pieces, but some are upside down and some levels require assembly in their original left-to-right order. There is a Space Holder to the right of the puzzle where you must put one section of the puzzle in order to move the rest of the parts around. You can move parts of the puzzle in and out of the Holder as you work to get your characters in place. It can actually be more fun for the child to create silly looking characters before trying to match the up correctly. However, when you do match parts together, certain body parts will actually animate, such as feet tapping, etc.



SCRAMBLED PUZZLE

## Cute As Can Be

In addition to crisp, colorful, and cute-as-a-button graphics, this is a fun game to play. The wacky characters which make up the Dr. Seuss "zoo" are perfect for this electronic puzzle which teaches, without the child even realizing it. Although the ages promoted are 4-10, we feel that the higher levels could hold the interest of an older child. In fact, we had a couple of adults working at the higher levels having a great time as they struggled to match the pictures as fast as they could. Although Coleco does not promote the game as a "timed" adventure, you could set up teams working against a stop clock for the fastest correct match. It would make a great game for a party! (one player)  
Recommended

**FORTUNE BUILDERS** (★★★ / ★★★★★) is Coleco's version of a "Monopoly-type" game and it's a winner! The game allows you to plan, build, and run your own community, while competing against either the computer or another tycoon who is attempting to do the same while undermining your efforts. You begin with a fixed amount of cash which enables you to purchase and build a large variety of hotels, condos, apartments, casinos, factories, malls, and more. The challenge lies in your ability to choose areas where your structures will draw the most traffic. In the one-player game, you have a total of five years to achieve your financial goal of \$250,000,000 while the two-player game has no time limit; however, you must reach your financial goal before your opponent.

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

### COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

#### *Begin With a Land Tract*

The game opens up with a tract of undeveloped land (scrolling horizontally) in which there is a main highway running north and south and partially constructed roads to the east and west. The calendar begins in January, so you had better get busy building additional roads! The bottom of the screen continues to tell you what month it is, and you should use this as part of your strategy. Make certain you build your seaside resort in time for the summer vacationers while your ski resort, condos, etc., are all ready for the snow bunnies! At any point in the game, you can go to the financial screen which will recap where you stand in cash, income, borrowed money, etc. The Build Screen is very important as that's where you'll make your decisions of the type of property or improvements you wish to build. In order to find the cost of construction of something you want to build, simply move the small black frame over the area on the map where you'd like to build. The cost of construction will appear under "Cost in 1000's" on the Build Screen. If you don't have enough cash to pay for a project, the computer will alert you. You can then make another selection or go to the Finance Screen to borrow money. Throughout the game, there are "News Bulletins" which appear on the bottom of the screen which can dramatically affect your financial situation. For instance, in one game we played, the legislature voted against gambling so any investments in casinos were temporarily in jeopardy (luckily, that bill was rescinded later in the game so we were able to make money with our gambling halls again).

#### *Something Different*

This game is truly something different for ColecoVision owners and we're very happy that Coleco didn't design it as strictly a two-player game. Not unlike Monopoly, you could play this thousands of times with each outcome being totally different. Although the one-player game is quite good, there's nothing like going head-to-head with another person as you build your empire and work at tearing their's apart (after one of our competitors built a lovely marina area, the challenger immediately put a factory next to it, spewing out smoke!) In the two-player version, you work with split screens. When you build property on your screen, the same property shows up on your opponent's screen. Coleco has even provided a Strategy Guide to help you out. All in all, this one gets an A for gameplay! (one-player; two-player simultaneous) Recommended

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

### ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

**PITFALL II LOST CAVERNS** (★★★ / ★★★½) is a literal

#### ACTIVISION

translation of the game created originally for the Atari 2600 by one of Activision's most talented designers, David Crane. It is a sequel to (and an improvement over) the original *Pitfall*. In his second adventure, Pitfall Harry travels to Peru with his niece, Rhonda, and Quickclaw, the cowardly mountain cat. The adventurers have become separated while searching for the Raj Diamond in an Incan cavern. Harry must find Rhonda, Quickclaw, the diamond—and as much gold as possible. There is no time limit for the quest, and Harry never loses a life. Each time he runs into one of the cave's nasty inhabitants, he is simply transported back to the last mystical, healing cross that he touched.

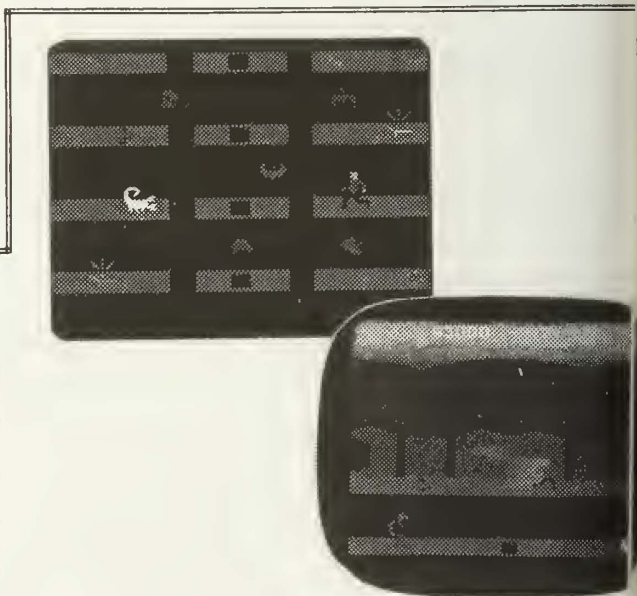
#### *Over the River and through the Cave*

Harry starts at the edge of the cavern, where the quaking Quickclaw is glimpsed briefly. Harry can't possibly reach him at this point, though, because a prehistoric cave rat will push him unceremoniously into the underground river if he tries. Harry is beset by pests in the caverns: bats, condors, albino scorpions, poisonous frogs, and electric eels. Beneath the earth, the plucky adventurer climbs lots of ladders, swims the underground rivers, and may even catch a balloon for a ride across a great chasm. Elaborate music accompanies him every step of the way, and there is a special carnival tune for his balloon flights.

**ZENJI** (★★½ / ★★★½) is a fascinating puzzle game with undertones of Eastern mysticism. The screen presents a maze-like configuration of colored pathways, and the player controls a rolling head. Elements of the maze can be turned to make new connections. The idea is to link all maze elements to the pulsating Source, which turns the entire image green. Achieving the status of Zenji, connection to the Source, must be done within a limited time. Of course there are barriers to make the task more difficult; you can lose your head by colliding with the flames of Desire or Illusion. There are special awards for touching numbered squares that appear occasionally within the maze, but the quest for points must be balanced against the time lost by straying from the primary purpose of connection to the Source.

#### *A Personal Game*

Like the psychologist's inkblots, your own personality becomes part of the method of solution in *ZENJI*. It's a more personal game than most because its solutions are a reflection of your own patterns of logic and intuition. No two people will approach this game the same way, and its appeal can be strictly logical or quite fanciful. With its multiple skill levels and myriads of puzzle images, *ZENJI* can keep you entranced for many hours. It's the best electronic puzzle game we've played, and we feel you will enjoy it as a change of pace from your other games (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating.) (Also available for Atari 5200 for Atari & C-64 computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)



#### *Identical to the Original*

*PITFALL II* on the Atari 2600 is one of the most impressive bits of programming we've ever seen for that system, and the Atari 5200 version is identical in game play. Graphics have been enhanced somewhat, with more detail in the cavern's features than the original. We rate this version as better than the ColecoVision translation that we reviewed last month, mainly due to the graphic improvements. As with most multi-system games from Activision, however, you won't want this version if you already have another of the same title. But if you have not yet experienced the fun of guiding Harry through the perils of the Incan cavern, by all means add this one to your collection. (Solo Play; Pause.) (Also available for Atari 2600 & ColecoVision/Adam; for Atari & C-64 computers, coming soon for Apple II series & IBM PCjr.) Recommended. MSR \$34.95

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

### ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

**ZONE RANGER (★★★/★★)** sends you on a mission where

you must navigate a minefield of destruction. There are deadly mines littering the cosmos which you must blast away before you run out of time. Many of the enemies actually multiply if you touch them. There are momentary means of escape via the Warp Holes and you can go for the dots by

entering the Inner Sanctum. When you return to the cosmos, head for the Skyway Patrol, who will knock off one satellite for every dot you got when you ventured into the Inner Sanctum. There are a total of sixteen satellites in each level which must be destroyed to move on. Stay out of the way of Killer Rocks and Boomerangs too!

#### It's The Same Old Stuff

Frankly, we were surprised to see a brand new game which is your basic space "shoot-'em-up!" While the graphics are quite nice with bright sparkling colors, this game is just an updated "Asteroids" as far as we're concerned. We've seen many other space games which are far better than this one. (one player; pause; also available for Atari computer)  
Not Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

**ZENJI (★★½/★★½)** from Activision is nearly identical to the version for ColecoVision, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating; Pause.) (Also available for ColecoVision/Adam; for Atari & C-64 computers.)  
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

### TOP 10 SELLERS

#### Computer Entertainment

1. Flight Simulator II (SubLogic/AP)
2. Questron (SSI/AP)
3. Archon II (EA/C64)
4. Summer Games (EPYX/C64)
5. Questron (SSI/AT)
6. Ultima III (Origin/AP)
7. 7 Cities of Gold (EA/C64)
8. Tapper (SEGA/AP)
9. Flight Simulator II (SubLogic/AT)
10. Raid Over Moscow (ACC/C64)

### TOP 10 SELLERS

#### Game Systems

1. H.E.R.O. (ACT/COL)
2. Pitfall II (ACT/5200)
3. Decathlon (ACT/5200)
4. Congo Bongo (COL/COL)
5. Montezuma's Revenge (PB/COL)
6. Decathlon (ACT/COL)
7. Dukes of Hazzard (COL/COL)
8. Frogger II (PB/COL)
9. Mr Do's Castle (PB/5200)
10. Star Wars (PB/COL)

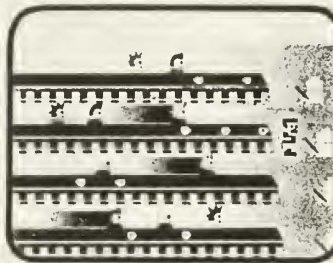
## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

### ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE

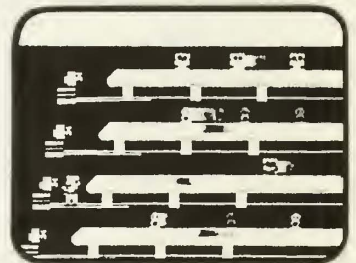
**TAPPER (★★½/★★★)** is an adaptation of the madcap arcade

**SEGA**  
THE ARCADE EXPERTS

game by Bally Midway. In the original, an overworked bartender slides sudsy beers across the bar to his thirsty customers. Probably in deference to family use, the home version has the barkeep slinging sodas. There are five screens, starting with the Old West Saloon and its four bars. Thirsty patrons enter from the left singly and in pairs, while the player-controlled bartender fills mugs from four taps on the right side of the screen. The goal is to slide a mug to each customer before he or she reaches the bartender's end of the bar. Some customers push their empties back for the bartender to catch. The player loses a bartender any time an empty mug hits the floor, a soda slides down the bar with no customer to catch it, or a customer reaches the end of the bar without a drink. When the bar has been cleared of customers, a trio of dancing girls performs a brief can-can.



PUNK BAR



SPACE BAR



SODA BANDIT

#### Soda Can Shuffle

Serving all the customers on a screen brings up the bonus round. The infamous "Soda Bandit" appears beneath a Mountain Dew soft drink poster and shakes five of the six soda cans on the bar. Then he shuffles the cans in the manner of a con-man's shell game, daring the bartender to find the one that won't explode in a shower of soda when opened. Play continues to alternate between bar scenes and bonus rounds, with each scene a little zanier and faster than the last. (The Old West Saloon is followed by the Jock, Punk, and Space Bars.) Each screen has its own musical theme, some of them just a mite off-key in spots. The game is cute and colorful, with graphics about average for this system. It plays much like the coin-op game, making you laugh while you keep yourself busy slinging mugs and fielding empties. It's a good adaptation of the arcade game that the whole family can enjoy. (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating.) (Also available for Apple II, Atari, C-64, & IBM PC/PCjr computers.)  
Recommended. (MSR approx. \$40.00)

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# AVAILABILITY UPDATE

## ATARI 2600

### FOURTH QUARTER

Circus Charlie (PB)  
Mr Do!'s Castle (PB)

### COLECOVISION

#### OCTOBER

x-Brain Strainers (COL)  
Circus Charlie (PB)  
x-Mr Do!'s Castle (PB)  
x-Zenji (ACT)

#### FOURTH QUARTER

Boulder Dash (MF)  
Cabbage Patch Playground (COL)  
Choplifter (COL)  
Crisis Mountain (MF)  
Lunar Leeper (SOL)  
x-Monkey Academy (COL)  
Number Bumper (SUN)  
Short Circuit (MF)  
Stunt Flyer (SOL)  
Tapper (COL)  
Tournament Tennis (IMGC)  
Toy Bizarre (ACT)

#### DECEMBER

Summer Games (EPYX)

#### JANUARY

Pastfinder (ACT)

## ATARI 5200

### FOURTH QUARTER

x-Pastfinder (ACT)  
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)  
x-Mr Do!'s Castle (PB)  
x-Zenji (ACT)

#### OCTOBER

x-Beamrider (ACT)  
x-Space Shuttle (ACT)  
x-Zone Ranger (ACT)

#### DECEMBER

Toy Bizarre (ACT)

## ATARI COMPUTERS

### NOVEMBER

Ankh (DM)  
B.C. Grog Revenge (SOL)  
Breakthrough in Ardennes (SSI)  
Broadsides (SSI)  
Conan (DS)  
Dr Seuss Fix Up (COL)  
Field of Fire (SSI)  
Fortune Builders (COL)  
Free Trader (AH)  
Gulf Strike (AH)  
Hitchhiker's Guide (INF)  
Imperium Galactum (SSI)  
Impossible Mission (EPYX)  
Jet Boot Black (DM)  
x-Light Waves (CBS)  
London Blitz (AH)  
Lost Tomb (DS)  
Mancopter (DS)  
Mr Do (DS)  
Mychess II (DM)  
Pitstop II (EPYX)  
Polar Pierre (DM)  
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)  
Rock N' Rhythm (SPN)  
Short Circuit (MF)  
Space Cowboy (AH)  
Suspect (INF)  
Tarzan (COL)

### FOURTH QUARTER

Barbie (EPYX)  
Computer Ambush (SSI)  
x-Computer Baseball (SSI)  
Dunzhin (SCRN)  
G.I. Joe (EPYX)  
Grammar Examiner (DES)  
Hot Wheels (EPYX)  
Kaiv (SCRN)  
x-Mr Do!'s Castle (PB)  
x-Pastfinder (ACT)  
Reforger 88 (SSI)  
Seti (TRAP)  
x-Space Shuttle (ACT)  
Spelunker (BRO)  
x-Spy Vs. Spy (FS)  
Super Football (NEXA)  
Super Music Box (PPI)  
Twisted (TRAP)  
U.S. Adventure (FS)  
Wargames (COL)  
Wylde (SCRN)  
x-Zenji (ACT)  
x-Zone Ranger (ACT)

#### DECEMBER

Breakdance (EPYX)  
Designer Pencil (ACT)  
Dig Dug (DS)  
Pac Man (DS)  
Pole Position (DS)

### JANUARY

Ghostbusters (ACT)  
Moreta, Dragonlady of Pern (EPYX)

### FIRST QUARTER

Raid Over Moscow (ACC)

## COMMODORE 64

### FOURTH QUARTER

Ankh (DM)  
Baltic 85 (SSI)  
B.C. Grog's Revenge (SOL)  
x-Breakthrough in Ardennes (SSI)  
x-Broadsides (SSI)  
Chopper Hunt (IMGC)  
Circus Charlie (PB)  
x-Computer Baseball (SSI)  
x-Computer Quarterback (SSI)  
Demon Attack (IMGC)  
Dracula (IMGC)  
x-Dragonfire (IMGC)  
Dr Seuss Fix-Up (COL)  
Dunzhin (SCRN)

Fortune Builders (COL)

Hitchhiker's Guide (INF)

x-Injured Engine (IMGC)

Jet Boot Black (DM)

Kaiv (SCRN)

Mabel's Mansion (DM)

Miner 2049er II (MF)

x-Moonsweeper (IMGC)

x-Mr Do!'s Castle (PB)

Mychess II (DM)

x-Nova Blast (IMGC)

On Court Football (ACT)

On Court Tennis (ACT)

x-Park Patrol (ACT)

Polar Pierre (DM)

Rock N'Rhythm (SPN)

Seti (TRAP)

Short Circuit (MF)

Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)

Spelunker (BRO)

x-Spy Vs. Spy (FS)

Stress Manager (BI)

Stunt Flyer (SOL)

Super Music Box (PPI)

Super Pipeline (INT)

Suspect (INF)

Tarzan (COL)

Twisted (TRAP)

U.S. Adventure (FS)

Viking Raider (INT)

Wargames (COL)

Whistler's Bros (BRO)

Wylde (SCRN)

Your Personal Net Worth (SCR)

x-Zenji (ACT)

#### NOVEMBER

Championship Lode Runner (BRO)  
Conan (DS)  
x-Designer Pencil (ACT)  
Field of Fire (SSI)  
x-Ghostbusters (ACTV)  
Heathcliff (DS)  
Imperium Galactum (SSI)  
Karateka (BRO)  
Lost Tomb (DS)  
Mancopter (DS)  
Mindshadow (ACT)  
Monty Plays Scrabble (EPYX)  
Mr Do (DS)  
x-Pastfinders (ACT)  
Tracer Sanction (ACT)  
x-Zone Ranger (ACT)

#### DECEMBER

Breakdance (EPYX)  
Dig Dug (DS)  
G.I. Joe (EPYX)  
Hot Wheels (EPYX)  
Pac Man (DS)  
Pitstop II (EPYX)  
Pole Position (DS)  
Time Machine (IMGC)

## APPLE II/III

### FOURTH QUARTER

Ankh (DM)  
Archon (EA)  
x-Baltic 85 (SSI)  
B.C. Grog's Revenge (SOL)  
Beamrider (ACT)  
Boulder Dash (MF)  
Breakdance (EPYX)  
Computer Baseball (SSI)  
Computer Quarterback (SSI)  
Crime & Punishment (IMGC)  
Cutthroat (INF)  
x-Dragonfire (IMGC)

Dunzhin (SCRN)  
Earthly Delights (DM)  
Graphics Exhibitor (KOALA)  
Hitchhiker's Guide (INF)  
Injured Engine (IMGC)  
Kaiv (DM)  
x-Kings Quest (128K)(SOL)

Mabel's Mansion (DM)  
Miner 2049er II (MF)  
Mychess II (DM)  
President's Choice (SPN)  
Robot Odyssey I (LC)  
Seti (TRAP)  
Short Circuit (MF)  
Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)  
Spy Vs. Spy (FS)  
x-Star League Baseball (GAM)  
Station 5 (MF)  
Suspect (INF)  
Twisted (TRAP)  
U.S. Adventure (FS)  
Your Personal Net Worth (SCR)  
War in Russia (SSI)  
Wylde (SCRN)

#### NOVEMBER

Championship Lode Runner (BRO)  
Conan (DS)  
Imperium Galactum (SSI)  
Karateka (BRO)  
Letter Wizard Combo (DS)  
Mindshadow (ACT)  
Tracer Sanction (ACT)

#### DECEMBER

Another Bow (IMGC)  
Barbie (EPYX)  
Designer Pencil (ACT)  
Dig Dug (DS)  
G.I. Joe (EPYX)  
H.E.R.O. (ACT)  
Hot Wheels (EPYX)  
Pac Man (DS)  
Pitfall II (ACT)  
Pitstop II (EPYX)  
Stunt Flyer (SOL)

#### FIRST QUARTER

Damiano (IMGC)  
Ghostbusters (ACT)  
Mr Do (DS)  
Pole Position (DS)  
Raid Over Moscow (ACC)  
Space Shuttle (ACT)

#### IBM PCjr

### FOURTH QUARTER

Barbie (EPYX)  
x-Baseball (IMGC)  
B.C. Grog's Revenge (SOL)  
Conan (DS)  
Decathlon (ACT)  
Earthly Delights (DM)  
G.I. Joe (EPYX)  
Hot Wheels (EPYX)  
In The Chips (CS)  
Lost Tomb (DS)  
Match Wits (CBS)  
Miner 2049er II (MF)  
Murder by the Dozen (CBS)  
x-Murder on Zinderneuf (EA)  
x-One on One (EA)  
Pipes (CS)  
x-Pitfall II (ACT)  
River Raid (ACT)  
Short Circuit (MF)  
Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)  
Stress Manager (BI)  
Stunt Flyer (SOL)  
Summer Games (EPYX)  
Trivia Mania (PS)

#### DECEMBER

Dig Dug (DS)  
Mindshadow (ACT)  
Pac Man (DS)  
Tracer Sanction (ACT)

#### FIRST QUARTER

Mr Do (DS)  
Pole Position (DS)

#### JANUARY

Designer's Pencil (ACT)

## ADAM

### FOURTH QUARTER

ADAMCalc (COL)  
Address Book Filer (COL) \*  
Best of Broderbund (COL)  
CPM 2.2 (COL)  
CPM 2.2 (COL) \*  
Dragons Lair (COL)  
Expertype (COL) \*  
Home Software Library (COL)  
Recipe Filer (COL)  
Recipe Filer (COL) \*  
Smart Filer (COL) \*  
Smart Letters/Forms (COL) \*  
Sub Roc (COL)

\* floppy disk format

## 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

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(x - indicates shipped to retailers by our press; (may not be in national distribution, however) (Editor's Note: We feel in some cases, dates given by the manufacturer, are simply not realistic. However, we feel it is our responsibility to give you the projected release dates as they are given to us, without alteration.)

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