

Computer Entertainer

the newsletter

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(Due to Quality & Quantity of Product being released, we have expanded our Top Sellers to a total of Fifteen.)

** Top Fifteen is the result of telephone polls with a selected group of retailers and distributors throughout the country

COMING...

A LOOK AT THE AMIGA

REVIEWS including...

Hardball

Law of the West

...for C64/128

Grid Wars

GATO

...for Mac

Sundog/Frozen Legacy

...for Apple

BITS & PIECES...

Video Games Are Not Dead...

...They're Alive and Well and Living in New York!

New York's TV programming has been thick with commercials for the new Nintendo Video Entertainment System, and the aisles of the stores carrying it have been thick with eager customers. Several of our readers have called, announcing their good fortune breathlessly--"I got one!" Some of our more resourceful readers have even gotten around the problem of not living in New York by calling stores we listed last month to find out which ones would take a credit-card order by phone. As a result, at least a few systems have traveled as far as California.

According to a Nintendo spokesman, early response has been very enthusiastic, with stores selling out of their first shipments quickly. Fifteen game cartridges are available along with the system package, with at least nine more to ship in 1986. Just as soon as we get ours from Nintendo, we will be doing in-depth reviews of the system and its games.

New Guys on the Block: Accolade, Inc.

Accolade, founded in December of 1984, is a new and promising manufacturer of entertainment software. Although the company's debut is recent, the two partners who started it are familiar names in the industry: Alan Miller and Bob Whitehead. They were two of the four original founders of Activision, and both also worked for Atari. The president of Accolade, Tom Frisina, was co-founder and chief executive officer of Androbot, Nolan Bushnell's personal robot venture.

Accolade's initial releases are for Apple II, Commodore 64/128, and IBM PC, but plans are underway to create products for Amiga, Atari ST, and Macintosh. Original titles from Accolade include *HARDBALL*, a true-to-life baseball game; *LAW OF THE WEST*, a graphically oriented interactive game; and *PSI-5 TRADING CO.*, a space game that depends on your ability to select and lead a crew of different characters. Accolade also plans to market titles from other companies--titles that harmonize with their philosophy of entertainment software. The first two such titles are *SUNDOG*, *FROZEN LEGACY* from FTL Software, and *THE DAM BUSTERS* from Sydney Development Corp. of Canada (reviewed in our March, 1985 issue and not available in the U.S. until now).

Author's Agent Division Formed

Brainpower Inc., publisher of Macintosh productivity software, has established an AUTHOR'S AGENT DIVISION which will help authors complete development of programs in progress, prepare them for publication, and assist the authors in finding the right publisher! For further information, contact Sherwin Steffin at Brainpower Inc., 24009 Ventura Blvd., Calabasas, CA 91302.

TELLSTAR for Macintosh

Spectrum Holobyte, publisher of GATO, will be releasing *TELLSTAR*, the electronic observatory, for Macintosh shortly. Enhancements include the simultaneous display of stellar objects and astronomical data, and incorporation of Macintosh pull-down menus, as well as information on Halley's Comet

Critically Speaking...Commodore 64/128 Compatible

THE DOLPHIN'S RUNE: A POETIC ODYSSEY (★★★1/2/★★★1/2) from *Mindscape* is a very unusual and intellectually challenging game. Created by British painter and sculptor, John O'Neill, in conjunction with the Bank Street College of Education, this game defies neat placement in a category such as "adventure" or "arcade action." In it you become a dolphin seeking to uncover and decipher the nine fragments of a poem encrypted in the "Dolphin's Runes," 133 characters that represent words and phrases in English.

Seeking the Runes

Your dolphin swims through five levels of ocean, where it may stay submerged up to 8 minutes at a time before surfacing for air. (Dolphins are mammals, not fish.) Watching for the dangers of sharks and tuna-fishers' nets, you must guide your dolphin to enter the Color Currents, where deft movement of your joystick keeps your dolphin on course and following a "phantom dolphin" through the rushing water. The first successful trip through a Color Current leads to a "Vision" which reveals the color and associated dolphin sound that identifies the Color Current leading to the first set of dolphin runes. Next you must find the correct Color Current by sound and color clues, enter it and follow the phantom dolphin to the sea bottom. Here your dolphin seeks a rune, which you must interpret correctly to reach the next vision and a clue to the second set of runes. Each successive set of runes consists of more symbols than the last, making it more difficult to interpret. When all nine stanzas of the poem are translated, one of three possible endings will appear. Two are false endings, so you may have to complete the entire game three times to get the whole poem and its clues to a secret location somewhere on the Earth.

Requires Patience

This is a very tough game that requires plenty of patience and concentration. The Color Currents can be difficult to find, and deciphering the runes can be quite a puzzle. Taking good notes is imperative, because there is no way to pick up where you left off if you must re-start the game. You start at the beginning each time, and there is no way to pause or save the game. The game requires both physical and mental dexterity, and it's suitable only for patient, serious players who relish an intellectual challenge. The undersea graphics are pretty enough, but not at all spectacular. All the emphasis is on using your wits. (Solo play; Joystick; Disk.) Available for C64/128 only.

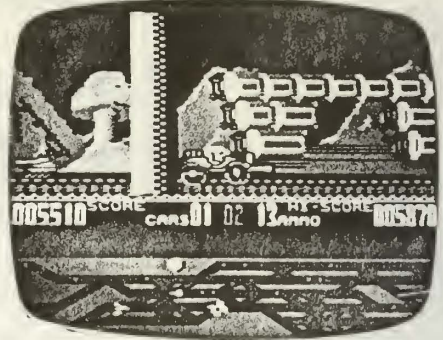
Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

KEYS TO RESPONSIBLE DRIVING (NA/★★★) from *CBS Software*, has now been adapted for Commodore 64 owners as a guide to safe driving. Included is a pre-test, nine topics, and a post-test on such subjects as maneuvering and handling, signs and regulations, city and town driving, and a special section on the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol. Using visual aids to describe situations, the player is asked to give the correct response to a given problem.

Good Tutorial

We liked this program when it became available for Apple last year, and we still feel it's an excellent adjunct to Driver's Education in the learning process for a new driver. It gives the player the opportunity to respond to many situations that will not come up (hopefully) in actual driver training, and it explains things in a much more vivid way than a textbook does. If you have someone in the family getting ready to get behind the wheel (or you need some brushing up), this is a terrific program (2 disks; reviewed on C64; also available for Apple and IBM)

Recommended (MSR \$79.95)



BLACK THUNDER (★★★/★1/2) is an arcade-style driving and shooting game by Antony Crowther of Wizard Development Co for *Avalon Hill*. The setting is a city of the future, a "Mad Max" sort of scenario in which crazies in other vehicles try to halt your progress on the roadways. The graphics scroll as your vehicle moves from left to right, showing your car in the upper two-thirds of the screen and an electronic road-map display in the lower third. The object is to make it across the city without being blown up by tanks, guided missiles, UFO's, or helicopters. You can fire at the attackers with two kinds of missiles, and you can replenish your firepower by running over ammo dumps. When the game is over, a synthesized voice tells you so and informs you of your score.

A Throwback

This game is a throwback to an earlier stage in the development of computer games. Although the graphics are quite good, and the musical accompaniment is well done, the game simply isn't up to current standards. You drive your little car from left to right through the scrolling graphics, avoiding and shooting at enemies. We've seen this idea too many times already. It wouldn't hold the interest of any but the most inexperienced of computer gamers. And the software-generated speech adds nothing to the enjoyment of the game. Who needs a computerized voice to tell them the game is over and how many points they scored? **BLACK THUNDER** strikes us as something designed by a fairly talented amateur who hasn't gotten past the stage of imitating successful games. (Solo play; Joystick or keyboard; Pause; Disk.) Available for C64/128 only. **Not recommended.** (MSR \$19.95)

Personalized Stories While You Wait

There's something new to look for in department stores this holiday season (Bloomingdale's, among others). Using Commodore 128 computers and software developed by Scarborough Systems Inc., specially trained employees will be creating adventure stories to order for children aged two to twelve. Scarborough's **BUILD BOOK** software lets the employees produce a personalized four-color, bound adventure story in minutes. Kids will love the stories, because they're the hero, and the supporting characters include family, friends, and even pets.

THE RATING SYSTEM:

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

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

NA - Not Applicable (i.e. all-text programs not rated for graphics)
Any program for a given system is compared only to other programs for the same system. In other words, all C64-compatibles are judged separately from Apple. Some programs which are virtually identical for multiple systems will be so noted.

Critically Speaking...Apple Compatible

Portion of Review Missing!

Our apologies to Avaion Hill as a paragraph of the review **UNDER FIRE** was mysteriously left out of our last issue! In fact, we didn't notice it missing until we received a call from A.H. They are proud, and justifiably so, of the **MAPMAKER** feature in the program.

The Mapmaker feature, unique to strategic games, brings additional depth to the program in that you can build your own battlefield from a disk including 50 different pieces of terrain. This is the ultimate "construction set" for strategic wargame buffs. The terrain available include roads, rivers, hills and valleys, walls and edges, buildings, and terrain including trees, grasses, and rough. Drawing the map is as simple as choosing the piece of terrain and positioning it on the map. Once you have finished your map you can print it out and/or save it to disk. Potentially, you can design dozens of maps for highly varied play. This gives the program extra life and, as a result, provides excellent value!

Editor's note: we have gotten into a healthy discussion here at our offices regarding the rating of graphics as it relates to strategic simulation programs (different reviewers at CE were applying different standards to graphic ratings on strategic simulations). We have made the decision that graphics ratings will be assigned to all such programs that contain a significant number of graphic elements and that ratings will be based on a comparison to other programs of the same type. Simulation programs that are all (or nearly all) text will be rated "NA" (not applicable) for graphics. Based on this premise, **UNDER FIRE** should receive ★★★★★ for graphics quality.

WINTER GAMES (★★★★/★★★★★) from *Epyx* follows the successful formula of the two **SUMMER GAMES** programs, and it's a must-have for fans of those games. Against a backdrop of alpine splendor, the action begins with a lone runner lighting the torch and releasing a flight of doves. Up to 8 players then choose any of the countries to represent, going on to compete in any or all of the seven events: Hot Dog Aerials (ski jumping plus acrobatics), Biathlon (cross-country skiing and rifle shooting), Figure Skating (short program), Ski Jump, Speed Skating (against a computer racer), Free Skating (your own choreography), and the grueling Tabled run. Non-scored practice sessions are possible in all events, but actual competition is judged by a panel of "international experts."

Pretty Scenery

The scenery is pretty, but not quite as spectacular in the Apple version of this game as it is in the one for Commodore. Music is as good as can be coaxed from the Apple. And there's nothing missing in the variety of contests and the wide range of skills demanded of the player. More than any other skill, this series of contests requires a finely developed sense of timing to get the best possible score from the judges. For example, keeping your skier's body and skis positioned correctly throughout the Ski Jump is a matter of tiny adjustments as he flies through the air. Maintaining rhythmic movements of the joystick is important in some events, such as Speed Skating and the Biathlon. And you often have to end movements at the right moment, too--just getting them started isn't enough. Once again, Epyx has provided a superb piece of programming with plenty of variety. Especially if you liked the **SUMMER GAMES** programs, you'll want to add **WINTER GAMES** to your collection. (1 to 8 players alternating; joystick or keyboard; 64K disk.) Reviewed on Apple II; also available for C64/128 and coming soon for Macintosh.

Recommended. (MSR approx. \$40.00)

ADVENTURE CONSTRUCTION SET (★★★★1/2/★★★★★) finally comes to the Apple II family, and every Apple adventurer will want a copy of this ingenious program by Stuart Smith for *Electronic Arts*. Actually, what you get is a whole set of programs: a full-length adventure (**RIVERS OF LIGHT**, a search for the essence of Osiris, eternal life, in the Fertile Crescent of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia), a set of six mini-adventures with tutorial (Land of Aventuria), and three different construction sets (Fantasy, Spy/Mystery, Science Fiction). In order to play any of the adventures or create your own, you must create your own set of adventure disks. (You'll need five blank disks to make use of all aspects of the program.) The duplication process is much speedier in the Apple version than in the C64 original, especially if you have two disk drives. **Explore Before Creating** While we can understand your wanting to jump right into constructing an adventure, we strongly suggest exploring the mini-adventures and at least part of the **RIVERS OF LIGHT** before you try getting creative. Especially in the mini-adventures, you can get a feel for some of the tricks and techniques that you may want to incorporate into your own games. Once you start exploring the Construction Set itself, you'll be amazed at the wealth of possibilities at your command. Your adventure can contain as many as 240 "rooms," a variety of terrain (desert, mountains, forests, rivers, plains), all kinds of portals, magic spells, text, music, and a huge variety of creatures and things. The construction program is easy to work with, yet it's so deep and full of options that it could take months to explore fully. We've seen other programs that guide you through creation of your own adventure games, but none even comes close to the depth and flexibility of **ADVENTURE CONSTRUCTION SET**. (1 to 4 players; joystick, keyboard, or mouse; 64K disks; compatible with Cricket, Mockingboard.) Reviewed on Apple II; also available for C64.
Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)

THE GREAT AMERICAN ROAD RACE (★★★★1/2/★★★★★) adapted for Apple by *Activision*, puts the player in the driver's seat for a cross-country rally. To begin with, the player looks at a map of the US where there are four main cross-country routes to choose from. You can choose Los Angeles to New York; Seattle to Miami; San Francisco to Washington; or the US tour where you will have to drive through every city on the map. A Road Condition bulletin will roll across the top of the screen and you can check road conditions in major cities connected to your current location. You'll also find a Weather Condition gauge, radar detector, timer, RPM gauge (better watch that one carefully--if you try to run too fast in low gear, you will blow your engine), and fuel gauge.

Start Your Engine

You'll begin from a dead start in the middle of several other cars. You'll need to reach your destination city before your time runs out in order to keep going. As you go, you'll have to avoid collisions, make sure you keep your gas tank full, and shift so you don't blow your engine and have to limp into the nearest gas station. If you reach your destination city in the time allotted--no easy task--you can choose the next city you wish to set your sights on.

A Driving Challenge

Once again, we found ourselves in quite a challenging car race with elements of Activision's *Enduro*, Imagic's *Truckin'*, and Epyx's *Pitstop* all rolled into one. While the graphics are not quite as good in the Apple version as the C64 version, it's still a good looking game and one that will keep any driving fan happy for hours. We especially like the varying road and weather conditions with a multitude of destinations available. You don't always have to start and stop in the same place as is typical with many racing games. (one player; joystick; also available for C64 and Atari)
Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

Critically Speaking...Commodore 64/128 Compatible

LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE DISCOVERY KIT

(★★★★★/1/2) may be the most unusual software offering

of 1985. When we saw the first results of *Activision's* Little Computer People Research Project at the CES in June of this year, we had doubts about the sanity of David Crane and his fellow researchers. Little people living inside computers and causing glitches in programs,



indeed! Then we thought about the mysterious losses of data that have occurred in our office computers, the programs that broke down and displayed gobbledy-gook on the screen. We realized that the researchers might not be so crazy after all. Then Activision sent us a "House-on-a-Disk" (Commodore 64/128 version), the research software that reputedly allows anyone to make contact with a "Little Computer Person" inside their own computer. The review assignment went to Celeste Dolan, one of our editors. Aside from a great passion for computer games, she would be considered a normal and sane adult by most people. We expected that she might view the "Little Computer People" phenomenon with a degree of healthy skepticism. Now we're not so sure about her sanity! But we'll let her tell her own story...

A Personal Case History

I had serious doubts about this business of little people living inside computers--mine or anyone else's. But an assignment is an assignment: I booted the disk, entered the required data (my name, date, time), and the vacant house-on-a-disk appeared on my screen. While I waited for the LCP (Little Computer Person) to show up, I noted that the house was furnished with all the comforts--bedroom, bath, living room with fireplace, kitchen, study with computer, and recreation room with TV, piano, and stereo. There was even a clock on the wall that kept time.

Moving Day

I didn't have to wait long. A little guy wearing a yellow shirt, bow tie, dark blue pants, and a gray baseball cap walked through the front door and examined the house from bottom to top. He poked his nose in every corner, opened drawers and cabinets, and generally inspected the place. I gathered he was pleased, because he nodded his approval several times. He soon left and reappeared moments later with suitcase in hand, followed by a bouncy little dog. He put his things away quickly and headed straight for the TV.

Initial Observations

Heeding the program manual, I made sure that my LCP had water and plenty of food for himself and his dog. Then I settled down to observe the two creatures. The dog proved to be more active than his master, but not by much. My LCP wandered around the house a lot, usually leaving the TV on even when he wasn't watching. He turned on the stereo and danced to one of the flying carpet themes from "Master of the Lamps." Then he headed for the kitchen and fixed a snack. Neat little guy--he washed up his dirty dishes and then went straight to the bathroom to brush his teeth. Next stop was the easy chair in the living room, where he picked up the phone and started chattering in an unintelligible language. (The researchers call it LPS, "Little People Speak.") I had a record delivered to his front door, something recommended as a gesture to make an LCP happy. He went upstairs to play the record, but he didn't seem to like it since he sat down in front of the TV again. Ever restless, my LCP tried out the piano with a Bach chorale. A little later he played the same piece again.

The First Communication

The music was great, but I wanted to try communicating with

him. I typed a message asking him to write me a letter, and he nodded "yes." He sat down to his typewriter and let me know that he was quite happy with his new house. He signed his letter "Parker." Now I could address my LCP by name! Encouraged by this communication, I asked Parker if he knew any other pieces on the piano. He addressed me by name and replied that he intended to learn some new songs during the next week. I was warming up the little guy, and his answer convinced me that the LCP Research Team just might be onto something. Then I asked Parker if he would like to play a game, and he gave me a choice of Card Wars, Anagrams, and Poker. I chose Poker, and he took the cards to the kitchen. (Turns out Parker likes to be close to food in case he gets hungry.) We played cards, and Parker's dog hung around, barking squeakily until it was fed. Parker would have played happily all night, but I called it quits. In fact, Parker now asks me to play games with him more often than I want to play.

Friendship Grows

Parker and I have become quite chummy. Every time I boot my house-on-a-disk, we exchange notes. He tries to communicate verbally at times, but I still don't understand a word of LPS. He has expanded his repertoire on the piano, adding a great boogie woogie to the classics he seems to prefer. He still dances a lot, and he recently learned how to Moonwalk. There are several things about Parker I still don't understand, though, such as his habit of leaving the front door open and his absolute fascination with the upstairs closet. (I have no idea what's in there.) I don't know when he sleeps, because I've found him awake and active in the middle of the night. I don't know who is on the other end of his phone conversations, but I hypothesize that it's another LCP living in my computer. Maybe he has a girlfriend. Has anyone seen a female LCP? I look forward to learning more about Parker, and I urge you to become a part of this ongoing research by getting to know your LCP in your computer. But be prepared for a few raised eyebrows when you start recounting your adventures to family and friends. Those of us on the cutting edge of new scientific discoveries are often misunderstood. (Research software tested on C64; Apple II version available soon at \$39.95.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

Coleco Abandons New ADAM Titles??

We have learned from a reliable source inside Coleco that Coleco may have abandoned plans to release **BEST OF ELECTRO CARTRIDGES**, the last announced ADAM title from Coleco. Meanwhile, that same source assures us that Coleco has shipped "very small quantities of **2010 STRATEGY** in ADAM Datapack. We're not sure where it may have been released as we have yet to be able to uncover any--either at a retail or distributor level.

It now appears that other than the small companies, and individuals writing programs for ADAM, all major players are out of the picture entirely. As a result, you should be able to continue to purchase home application and productivity programs through the mail directly from these companies (they usually advertise in the ADAM User Group newsletters), but the day of the "fancy-packaged, graphically superior" programs for ADAM is probably over.

Coleco Selling Via Mail Order

Meanwhile, if there's an older program or peripheral you want, you should move fast and call the Coleco Customer Service number. They are selling directly to the public, **WHILE SUPPLIES LAST**, of all previously released Coleco titles at suggested retail

A LOOK AT THE COMMODORE 128

A Point of View from a New Owner

by Joseph Sheppard

The Commodore 128 is here. For under \$300 you can get three computers in one with an amazing amount of features built-in including: numeric keypad, 8 programmable function keys, 12 special function keys, 128k ram expandable to 512k, two versions of Basic, Commodore 64 compatability, and CP/M Plus operating system. Turn the system on, hold down on the Commodore key, and you are in the C64 mode. You see the familiar blue on blue basic 2.0 screen that has delighted thousands since the C64 first appeared in 1982 at a suggested retail price of \$595. This is where you can run any of the thousands of programs available for the most popular home computer in the United States. The entire 128 system is fully compatible with all C64 hardware.

The C128 Mode

Hit the reset button and you are in the 128 mode. Here you have full command of all the advanced features of the system. The first thing that happens, is the disk drive spins, looking for a "boot" program to load and execute. In this mode you can run the soon to be released Jane and Perfect software series which include Word processing, Data Base, and Spreadsheet programs.



New BASIC Easy to Use

I find the new Basic 7.0 to be the easiest and most complete version of Basic I have ever used. It includes commands like, AUTO (automatic line numbering), BACKUP (copies an entire disk to a second drive), BOOT (loads and executes binary files), CATALOG (lists the disk directory), COLOR (changes screen and character colors), CONCAT (attaches one data file to another), COPY (makes a copy of a single file on a disk), DLOAD and DSAVE (loads and saves to disk), FAST (initiates the 2MHz mode which speeds operations up considerably), HEADER (formats a disk), HELP (highlights syntax errors), KEY (programs function keys), and much more 157 commands to be exact. I have successfully transferred several basic programs from the 64 mode and another computer to the 128 mode with little difficulty in order to take advantage of the enhanced features of the 128.

80-Column Display

Another feature of the 128 and CP/M modes is the built-in 80 column display. This feature is what sold me on the 128. To add this to my previous system would have cost me more than the whole 128! (The 80 column mode can only be used with RGBI or Monochrome monitors.) On to CP/M The third Computer inside

the 128 runs the CP/M 3.0 (aka CP/M Plus) operating system. CP/M stands for Control Program for Microcomputers. It was the first Disk operating system, and therefore has a huge software library including high priced professional programs such as the legendary Wordstar, and thousands of free public domain programs like the equally legendary MODEM7. Commodore offers full documentation and two utility disks for those that want to explore CP/M more in depth.

New Hardware

New hardware for the 128 include the 1571 disk drive and the 1902 dual mode monitor. The 1571 disk drive is Commodore's answer to the zillions of complaints from children that have grown up and old while waiting for their favorite video game to load on a 1541. The 1541 runs at about 320 characters per second. The new 1571 runs at 2000 cps in the 128 mode and 3500 cps in the CP/M mode. It is also Double sided, so each disk now can hold 340K as opposed to 170K on a 1541. It should be noted that it is the C128/1571 combination that makes the faster access possible, a 128 with a 1541 is slower, and a 1571 with a C64 is no faster either. At under \$300 it is well worth spending the extra money. The 1902 Monitor also lists for under \$300 and runs in both Composite and RGBI modes. It is capable of displaying 80 columns and you will need it, or one like it to use the 80 column display. I am very impressed with the 128. Its many built-in features, Commodore 64 and CP/M compatability, along with a very reasonable price should insure its success.

(Editor's Note: When Joseph reviewed his brand new C128, he did not run into the problem many of you have encountered when running C64 software on the 1571 disk drive. In checking with him, we found that he did not attempt to run some of the software which is creating the problems.

BOOK REVIEW

THE OFFICIAL BOOK FOR THE COMMODORE 128 by Mitchell Waite, Robert Lafore, and Jerry Volpe covers all the basic information regarding this new computer from descriptions of peripherals to the three modes (C128, CP/M, C64) available in the machine. The book goes into a good deal of detail on those three modes, explaining DOS and how to use it, BASIC 7.0, CP/M structure, etc. It also covers graphics on the C128, sound and music, how to set-up CP/M disks, and much more.

Anyone who has purchased or is planning to purchase the Commodore 128 will find themselves referring back to this book time after time as you work your way through all the things the C128 can do.

Recommended (MSR \$12.95 paperback)

New Okidata Printer for Commodore 64/128

Okidata, one of the top names in computer printers, recently released the Okidata 120 with built-in Commodore interface cable at a suggested retail price of \$269. We've seen the printer in action, and it produces better-looking printouts than just about anything we've seen hooked up to a C64 or C128. It's fast and loaded with features, too: seven print modes with true descenders (Utility at 120 cps, Emphasized and Enhanced at 60 cps, Super/Subscripts, Underline, Double Width, and Condensed); bit-mapped graphics and entire Commodore Graphics Character Set and Block Graphics; 9-pin, bi-directional, short-line seeking printhead; self-inking ribbon cartridge; and one-year warranty on parts, labor, and printhead. Friction and pin-feed is standard, and the printer even comes with a starter supply of paper.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

BATTALION COMMANDER (★★★/★★★★) is a real-time tactical simulation of modern armored warfare from *Strategic Simulations* where you can select the nationality of ground forces (U.S., Soviet or Chinese) for you or your enemy. In the novice mode, your objective is to destroy a Soviet tank battalion while learning about command. There are five different scenarios and four regular games to choose from: Pursuit and Exploitation where your forces have the mission of exploiting a penetration of the enemy's defensive system; Meeting Engagement Game where the forces of about equal strength fight it out in an unexpected encounter with an enemy force in a sort of military chess; Attack Game where your objective is to break through the enemy defenses to occupy a key terrain; and Defense game where you'll oppose the player in the Attack Game. Options include Nationality of Battalion, Terrain Maps, and Relative Strengths.

Good Variety of Options

This game offers a nice selection of different types of strategy in an easy-to-learn game system. For those who haven't had much experience in the tactical strategy area, the novice game will give you a good chance to get a feel for strategy games (and whether it's the type of game for you). The graphics offer a scrolling screen on battlefields covered with bridges, buildings, rivers, and woods which are easily recognizable. We enjoyed the various types of strategy available to us in this one (one player; joystick; playing time: 30-90 minutes; reviewed on Atari and also available for C64 and Apple II)

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

BORROWED TIME (★★★/★★★★1/2) is a graphics and text adventure from *Activision* designed by Interplay Productions (the group responsible for "Mindshadow"). This one plays like a 1930's detective thriller in which you become Sam Harlow, private eye and potential corpse. This is the case of your life, because solving it will save your skin. Someone--possibly a disgruntled subject of one of your recent investigations--is out to kill you. You have less than a day to sort it all out, identify and collar the potential murderer, all while avoiding the danger of constant attempts on your life. The actions of many characters in the story can be highly unpredictable, although you can often depend on Hawkeye, the blind newspaper vendor, to supply useful information.

Easy Interaction with Program

Interaction with the program is somewhat different from the usual text adventure in **BORROWED TIME**. Although you can enter all moves through the keyboard in the usual way, a number of commonly used verbs and nouns appear in a list on the right side of the screen, along with a four-point compass and the directions "up" and "down." Your joystick controls a pointer on the screen that can be used instead of typing out the words every time. (However, complex commands are also accepted by the program's parser.) Saving games and loading them can be done very simply, too, by accessing pull-down menus at the top of the screen. (Up to 10 positions can be saved directly to the master game disk.) These features make the game move more quickly and smoothly, allowing you to become more involved in the story than in the mechanics of communicating with it. And you will become involved in the story! The suspense will have you looking over your shoulder on nearly every move, as ominous comments warn you that someone is following you or lurking in the shadows. **BORROWED TIME** is a great game for those who love a mystery. (Solo play; Joystick and/or keyboard; Disk.) C64/128 version reviewed; also available for Apple II, IBM PC/PCjr (at \$39.95); for Amiga, Atari ST, Macintosh (at \$44.95).

Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

NINE PRINCES IN AMBER (★★★1/2/★★★★1/2) is graphics and text adventure from *Telarium* based on two of the "Amber" series of books by Roger Zelazny. You are one of nine princes in this game of power struggles and political intrigue which requires a high degree of interaction with the other characters in the story. As the story begins, you lie in a hospital bed, unsure of your identity and unable



Walk Shadow to Arden

You begin to notice strange things happening to the world outside the car. The countryside is scattered with large, slowly turning windmills...a sudden and violent thunder storm, strangely colored clouds rolling overhead. A vast desert surrounds you...the roadway begins to sparkle.

to remember the circumstances of your injury. The adventure really gets underway once you escape the hospital and begin encountering your eight brothers and four sisters. The possibility of death and dismemberment seems to greet you at nearly every turn, for many of your siblings are ruthless in their quest for the throne of Amber, the one true and perfect world. You must trust one, and yet form alliances that will place you on the throne. Along the way you will encounter many adventures, engage in sword fights, and Walk the Pattern to prove your royal blood and learn secrets necessary to ascend to the throne. The timeframe of the game is a curious blend of feudal past and modern present, owing to the extreme longevity of the princes and princesses of Amber.

Forty Possible Outcomes

This game has a tremendous number of variations and forty possible endings, according to the designers. The variations are due to the many possible outcomes of interactions with various characters in the story. The game relies heavily on verbs such as "negotiate," "challenge," and "propose," reflecting the importance of character interaction. As a result, **NINE PRINCES IN AMBER** has a very different feel from the typical role-playing adventure. What you choose to say to a character can change the course of the game irrevocably from that point on, and your choice of alliances can lead to the throne or to betrayal. All we can tell you is to save the game often and remain flexible in your dealings with the other characters. When you find yourself killed repeatedly in a situation, go to a point before the current situation and try approaching the characters differently, because that may take you along a whole new path. We enjoyed this game and found it intellectually stimulating. The graphics are attractive, the music pleasant, and the game itself is a real challenge. (Solo play; Keyboard; Disk.) C64/128 version reviewed; also available for Apple II and IBM PC/PCjr at \$39.95.

Recommended. (MSR \$32.95)

BOOK REVIEW

ARONS' APPLE - A FAMILY GUIDE TO USING THE APPLE IIc from *Hayden Books* is a basic handbook designed to take you from Step One (setting up your IIc) all the way through sound and graphics programming, debugging, and programming applications. Designed to familiarize you with BASIC, there is a great deal of time spent on how BASIC works with many sample programs for you to work with. The graphics portion of the book begins with a basic introduction, explaining how graphics work on the IIc. Within moments, you will find yourself working on color and plot; computer animation and working into hi-res graphics. Once you've worked your way through graphics and BASIC, you will move on to more complex programming, eventually writing your own, including how to debug the programs. Also included is an appendix as well as a quick-reference guide for writing BASIC programs, IIc error messages and special keys and key combinations.

Recommended (MSR \$16.95 paperback)

Critically Speaking...

REACH FOR THE STARS (★★★/★★★★) is a strategic wargame for science fiction buffs. Produced in Australia by *Strategic Studies Group* (Roger Keating and Ian Trout, designers), the program is distributed by *Electronic Arts* under their Affiliated Label program. Up to four players can try their hand at becoming Galactic Overlords by exploring star systems, colonizing the most promising planets, and waging interstellar warfare. The fantasy galaxy of 54 star systems is laid out in a hexagonal grid that will be familiar to avid wargamers. Game play consists of a series of turns comprising production, movement, and sometimes combat and planetary conquest phases. It is up to you to find planets worth developing and then allocate your resources to such efforts as defense, research and development, industrial expansion, and various social factors. Combat is inevitable at times when opposing starships end a movement phase in the same star system. Victory points are awarded for developing colonies, victories in battle, conquering planets, and destroying colonies. A good selection of optional features, from the possibility of novas and other natural disasters to enhanced computer-controlled players, assures that you won't tire of this game even after you've become very familiar with it.

Tutorial for Novices

This is actually the "Second Edition" of REACH FOR THE STARS, and the designers have had the opportunity to add elements that were not present in the first version of the game. Especially for novice strategy gamers, the most appealing feature is the Tutorial that gives you a guided tour through the basic features of the program. Programs of this type can be very intimidating to a beginner, but the Tutorial really eases the learning process. In fact, the designers have managed quite a feat: a satisfyingly complex program that is very fast in execution, relatively easy to learn, and yet challenging enough for advanced players. They've thought of everything--even a set of five stickers for your "save game" disks! (Solo play; 2 to 4-player competitive; Keyboard; Disk.) Reviewed on C64; also available for Apple II.

Recommended. (MSR \$45.00)

CARRIERS AT WAR (NA/★★★) is the latest program from *Electronic Arts* to be released under their new affiliation program. This one, from *Strategic Studies Group* of Australia, recreates the five crucial carrier battles which shaped the course of the Pacific War. Up to six players can assume the roles of the top United States and Japanese commanders during the war years between 1941 and 1945. There are six scenarios (one, entitled Pearl Harbor, is a tutorial) including the Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons, Santa Cruz, and the Philippine Sea. You can also, with the help of the manual, design your own scenario by designing ships and aircraft, plotting maps, and setting up combat situations. The game, played on a map of 84 x 72 hexagonal elements, represents an area 20 miles across. There are game boards included in the package representing these maps. You do not play the game in turns, rather in accelerated, real-time movement, search, and combat.

Menu-Driven

In order to make the game relatively easy to manipulate, the program is menu-driven and involves 127 air squadrons, accommodating over 4,000 aircraft, and up to 32 carriers and 215 other ships. As in virtually all strategic games, there are no graphics to speak of; however, the gameplay is intriguing and the use of the menus adds a dimension of ease and additional information not always found in this type of program. It's a winner for all the strategic fans out there (one player; up to six players; reviewed on Apple, also available for C64/128)

Recommended (MSR \$50.00)

PANZER GRENADIERS (★★★1/2/★★★★) is one of a trio of new war strategy games from *Strategic Simulations (SSI)*. This game takes you to a bleak battlefield on the Eastern Front during WWII. There you must make decisions for a regiment of the armored infantry attached to the Grossdeutschland Panzer Grenadier Division with your forces including mortar, artillery, Panzer IV, Panther and Tiger units. This is a solitaire wargame in which the computer controls the Russian enemy. You can play five historical scenarios where your missions include participating in Hitler's Operation Citadel (Summer of 1943), Taking and holding crucial bridgeheads while forcing the Russians back across the Lutchesa River in late 1942, and breaking up the Russian counterattack in Kirovograd to stabilize your defensive line during early 1944. There are three basic phases: Observation where you can look over your units and scroll around the map; Movement Phase where you move your units to another locations within certain restrictions; and Fire Phase (both when you can fire at the enemy and vice versa).

Joystick Control

As has become tradition with SSI wargames, there is a great deal of detail in play. The hi-res scrolling screen shows forty different battlefields with various terrain. The joystick control (joystick not necessary for Apple II version), makes for an easy-to-operate game. Again, typical of SSI, the documentation is quite detailed with descriptions and objectives given of the various scenarios. There are three levels of difficulty with a playing time of 1-2 hours. It's a good, solid strategic wargame for fans of the genre. (one player; joystick; reviewed on Atari but also available for C64 and Apple II)

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

NORWAY 1985 (★★★1/2/★★★★) is the fourth scenario of the Superpowers series from *Strategic Simulations* in which a war is raging across Europe in 1985. In this simulation of a fictional European war, this newest scenario finds the Soviets occupying Norway after a successful campaign. Your position as NATO commander finds you deploying infantry and mortar infantry on skis as the Russians have problems dealing with the Norwegian winters--frigid nights where the oil in the vehicles freezes up and the terrain makes continued Russian occupation difficult, to say the least. Your ski units attack the Soviets quickly with guerrilla tactics. If you choose to play the Soviet general, you must fight them by fielding your own ski troops, as well as using artillery bombardment, rocket fire, and tactical air strikes. It's a fight which will decide who has control of Norway.

Great Series

This scenario follows in the footsteps of *GERMANY 1985*, *RDW 1985* and *BALTIC 1985* all fine strategic games on their own. With a change in terrain, weather, and airbases, NORWAY 1985 takes on a life of its own. As general background in both tactics and rules, SSI has included the documentation for GERMANY 1985 to get you started. Featuring hi-res graphics, this advanced level game has a playing time of 3-4 hours. This is a terrific strategic game for all wargame lovers (one player; two player; reviewed on Apple but also available for C64)

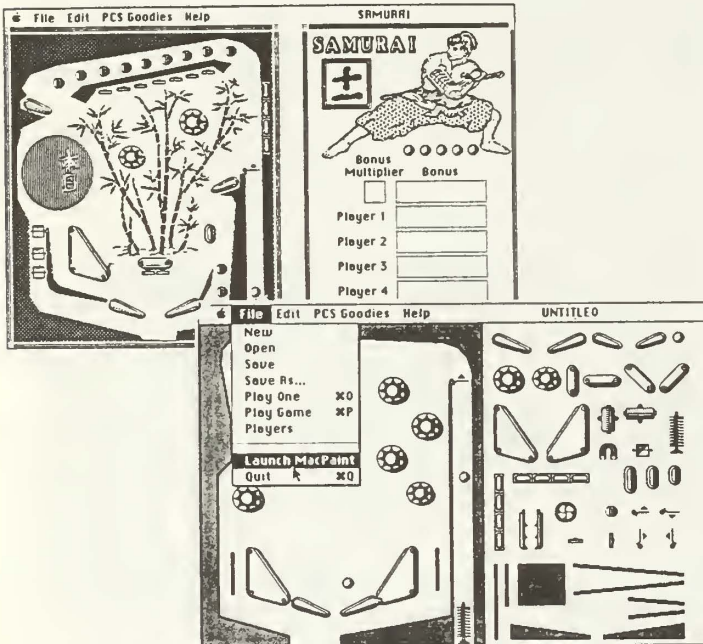
Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE....

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

Critically Speaking...Macintosh Compatible

PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET (★★★★/★★★★) is the perennial favorite from *Electronic Arts* and the Macintosh adaptation puts the game on a machine which is ideal for it due to the Mac's hi-res display, sound capabilities, and mouse. Within this version you'll find, in addition to the basic construction set where you build from scratch, additional pinball set-ups including *Samurai* and *Phantom* (five in all) are included to either play "as is" or build on to. In addition to all the bumpers, flippers, springs, etc., available for building your ultimate pinball machine, you can also change the way the ball works, modifying gravity, speed of play, and the way the game is scored. You can paint patterns on the playing field and if you really want to get creative, go into your clip art files in MacPaint and paste them into your pinball machine! As far as sound capabilities, your ability to choose among sounds is based upon whether you are using the 128K or 512K Mac. In the 512K version you have true digitized pinball machine sounds making for a great sounding game. Because of the Mac's windowing, you can cut, copy, and paste allowing you to put together subassemblies, saving them in your library for later use as building parts. Unlike the original version, you can save the "state" of the game on multiplayer games, so that you can leave and come back picking up where you left off.



The Best Got Better

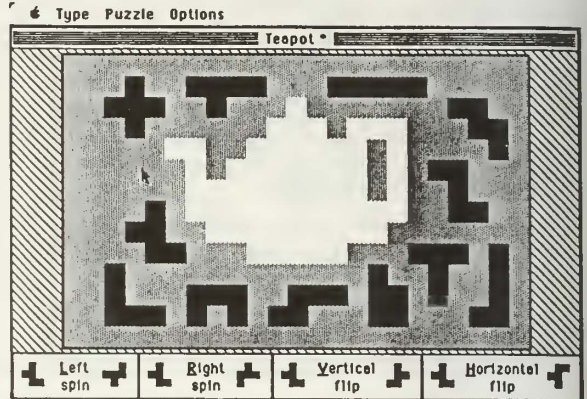
This program was the first and, therefore, the model for all the construction sets to follow and the Macintosh (and other machines like it--Atari ST and Amiga), because of its structure, allows the best rendition yet. Ease in handling, better sound and graphics capabilities make this an adaptation that is far superior to the earlier versions for other formats. For Mac owners who love constructions sets, this is a "must own!"

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

Activision Develops for New Systems

HACKER and MINDSHADOW will be converted for three systems Activision has never developed for before: Apple Macintosh, Commodore Amiga, and Atari ST! Planned for release before Christmas, the titles will be reworked to take advantage of the advanced capabilities of the three computers. We expect to hear additional titles announced for these systems around the first of the year.

MACPOLY (NA/★★★★) from *Sabaki Corporation* is a game consisting of one hundred jigsaw puzzles ranging from very simple squares to incredibly difficult, and sometimes impossible, puzzles requiring you to fit together dozens of pieces. The jigsaw pieces are polyominoes, shapes made of squares, which you can drag into place, and also spin and flip. Some puzzles are recognizable shapes



Cover the white teapot with the 12 gray pieces.

such as the pictured teapot, while others are rectangular and very simple in shape. Once (and IF) you solve a puzzle, the screen will tell you how much time it took you and how many moves were required.

Perfect for Puzzle Lovers

Puzzle lovers, from novice to expert, will find themselves engrossed for hours as they attempt design after design. When you reach some of the larger designs, with dozens of puzzle pieces you'll really be challenged to solve the puzzle with as few moves as possible. A deceptively simple looking program, it's perfect for any puzzle lover out there! (one player; runs on 128K or 512K Mac) (MSR \$29.95 - order direct from Sabaki Corp, Dept 107, PO Box 8217, Rego Park, NY 11374 and include \$3.00 for shipping)

BOOK REVIEW

MACBOOK The Indispensable Guide to Macintosh Hardware and Software by Arthur Naiman is the latest book published by *Hayden Book Company* for Macintosh owners. While this certainly is not an in-depth book on the machine, it has some strong points going for it and it certainly is more helpful than the documentation which is included with the Macintosh itself. Written for easy understanding, the book covers the gamut from miscellaneous hardware options for your Mac to some very good descriptive chapters on such things as the System Folder, saving a crashed disk, how MacPaint works, using database programs and more. One of the book's strengths is its catalog of fonts available, well as very easy-to-understand instructions on how to create font packages. You can easily find most anything quickly by referring to the detailed Table of Contents. (We found it interesting to see just how much memory is used up by the various Desk Accessories such as the Calculator and to learn which ones can be removed without creating a problem.) You'll also find the charts in the Appendix extremely useful.

Reviews of Software

While the book also evaluates around seventy-five programs, we do not suggest you purchase it with this feature in mind. The information regarding the programs was sketchy, at best, and does not really give you a feel for the software. Software reviews aside, this is a concise, easily-understandable book covering many areas which are either not covered at all in the Macintosh documentation, or covered in such a way as to make it difficult to understand. At the price, it's a bargain which should go on your Macintosh book shelf.

Recommended (MSR \$14.95 soft cover)

Critically Speaking...Macintosh Compatible

HACKER (★★★★1/2/★★★★1/2) is one of *Activision's* first titles for Macintosh, and it's adapted from the original game (already a best-seller) for C64/128. It's an intriguing bit of mystery that comes with no instructions and no clues. What you get is a disk...period. After you've loaded the program, the screen shows "LOGON PLEASE" with a blinking cursor--and then you're on your own. The game is a simulation of hacking your way into a corporate computer system, in this case the system of a bunch of "doers. It's up to you to get into their system and stay there long enough to discover what the bad guys are up to. The idea is a clever one, and the game is engrossing to play. The Macintosh version utilizes the mouse well for ease of interaction with game functions. The whole family can enjoy this one, because it appeals to all ages. (Solo play; Mouse & keyboard.) Reviewed on Macintosh; also available for Apple II, Atari XL/XE, C64/128, IBM PC/PCjr; coming soon for Amiga, Atari ST. (Prices vary by system.)
Recommended. (MSR \$44.95)

MINDSHADOW (★★★/★★★★1/2) has been a very successful program for *Activision* and now it's available for Macintosh. It's an intermediate to advanced-level graphics and text adventure with a dual goal. Having awakened on a desert island with no memory of your past, you have the obvious goal of discovering your own identity. The other set of goals is to solve the puzzles scattered throughout the game. However, it is quite possible to solve the puzzles of the island and the subsequent ones in Europe without achieving the primary goal of discovering your identity. You can get a limited amount of help from the Condor (three queries per game), but the Condor doesn't give too much away.

Different Look

Although the game itself is much the same on Macintosh as it is on other systems, the look of it is quite different. A fairly small portion of the screen is devoted to graphics because of the other things on the screen. There is a section devoted to the text of the game, of course, but there is also an area devoted to lists of several frequently used verbs and nouns, along with a four-point compass. These are designed to be used with the mouse to speed play action, and they work very well. Pull-down menus give access to the Color's help, saving games, and loading saved games. (A blank disk is not required for saving games, which avoids disk-swapping.) The picture area is a bit small, but the mouse-accessed functions on the screen are worth the losing of some picture size because of the enhanced interaction with the story. MINDSHADOW is a challenging mystery to solve in a game that works just as well on Macintosh as it does on the other computers for which it's available. (Solo play; Keyboard & mouse.) Reviewed on Macintosh and coming soon for Amiga and Atari ST; also available for Apple II, IBM PC/PCjr (at \$39.95), C64/128 (at \$29.95), and Atari XL/XE (at \$24.95).
Recommended. (MSR \$44.95)

DJAGONWORLD (★★★★1/2/★★★★★) is just as charming a game in its Macintosh incarnation as it was in the earlier ones for other systems. It combines graphics and text to tell its magical story, utilizing pull-down menus for a few frequently used commands. (The Macintosh Notepad works only when the game is played on a 512K Mac.) The story is a classically styled fantasy adventure from *Telarium*, created as a sequel to the book of the same name by Byron Preiss and Michael Reaves. The player becomes Amsel of Fandora, a major character in the book, who joins with his friend Hawkwind, monarch of Simbala, to rescue the Lady Dragon. The fiery creature, gentle at the core, has been kidnapped by the Duke of Darkness. The dragon did a favor to the people of Amsel and Hawkwind by saving their lands from the ravages of the Coldrakes, and now that favor must be repaid.

Translates Beautifully

This adventure translates beautifully to the Macintosh, and the lovely music sounds better than ever in this version. Best of all, the story is captivating and emotionally involving. It's a gentle tale that never fails to move us. (Solo play; Keyboard & mouse; 2 disks.) Reviewed on Macintosh; also available for Apple II, IBM PC/PCjr (at \$39.95), and C64/128 (at \$32.95).
Recommended. (MSR \$44.95)

...Commodore 64/128 Compatible

SILENT SERVICE (★★★★/★★★★1/2) is a simulation of World War II submarine action in the Pacific from MicroProse. (It was designed by Sid Meier, who was also responsible for *T-15 Strike Eagle*.) The game puts you in command of a U.S. sub on any of three missions: torpedo and gun practice near the American base at Midway Island, re-creation of historic submarine attacks on convoys, and the advanced "War Patrol" option which simulates search-and-destroy missions in Japanese convoy lanes of the Pacific. There are four difficulty levels, allowing for a wide range in player experience. The simulation puts all aspects of the sub under your control, including the conning tower with periscope, maps and charts, the bridge, a panel of instruments and gauges, and damage reports. It's up to you to determine how fast the sub will move, whether or not to dive or surface, when to fire torpedoes or deck guns, and a host of other command decisions. Because time can pass rather slowly in a submarine, you have the ability to speed things up considerably whenever you haven't fired a torpedo or been detected by the enemy. After you become experienced at battling the enemy, you may want to engage some of the "reality levels" which can make the game more challenging and life-like. These include limited visibility, zig-zagging convoys, dud torpedoes, the necessity to return to port for repairs, "smarter" destroyer escorts for the convoys, convoys that appear outside radar range, and the requirement that you enter the "angle on the bow" manually for torpedo shots.

Lots of Realism

The designer has packed a lot of realism into this wartime simulation. The graphics are very life-like, and the sound effects add to the illusion of reality. Great care has been taken to provide a complete experience in controlling a submarine under wartime conditions, and the manual even offers a selection of tactical maneuvers to be used in combat. The action in this game is necessarily slower than it would be in airplane combat, for example, but the ability to speed up the quiet periods between enemy encounters makes the game more enjoyable. As with the other simulations from MicroProse, this game offers beginners the opportunity to learn and advanced players the ability to test their mettle. (Solo play; Joystick and/or keyboard; Disk; Pause.) C64/128 version reviewed; also available for Apple II and Atari XL/XE.
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

Tell Us about Your Little Computer Person

Now that we've all met Parker, the Little Computer Person (LCP) living in our review editor's Commodore 64 (see review this issue), we'd love to hear about your LCP. After you've spent some time getting to know your LCP, please drop us a line and tell us about any especially interesting experiences with your LCP in his house-on-a-disk. Be sure to include both your name and the name of your LCP. Excerpts from your reports may be published in a future issue.

...Commodore 64/128 Compatible

GARRY KITCHEN'S GEMMAKER: THE COMPUTER GAME DESIGN KIT (★★★★/★★★★) is a product of *Activision* and the talents of Garry Kitchen, the man responsible for "The Designer's Pencil." We first saw GEMMAKER at CES in June and predicted in our July issue that it would be one of the biggest software programs released from any company this year. Now that we've had some time with our own copy of the program, we're even more convinced that our prediction was accurate. The sheer scope of this program is absolutely mind-boggling, particularly to anyone without programming experience. Despite its immense size, however, it is extremely well organized and quite easy to learn. Twelve samples of games and animated sequences (including adaptations of "Pitfall" and "Megamania") give you an idea of the way GEMMAKER commands work, and a tutorial section in the manual leads you through your first animation program.

Designing with GEMMAKER

Accessing any of the design tools is a simple matter of moving an arrow around the screen with your joystick and then pressing the button to execute a command. GEMMAKER'S Editor is the programming headquarters within which programming commands are selected from a scrolling Command Window containing over 100 commands. The beauty of the Editor is that you don't have to type in commands, which means lots fewer mistakes. Just point to what you want in the Command Window, and it's instantly added to your program. And you can check your progress as often as you want by pointing to "Run." But before you do much programming, you'll want to check out the other design tools. SpriteMaker is the home of the characters and objects you'll be using and animating in your own games. This section has 66 ready-to-go sprites, or you can modify them or draw brand-new ones--you're the boss. A professional sound board is at your command in SoundMaker. It already contains more than 20 sounds, or you can experiment with your own bleeps and bloops. SceneMaker is your back-lot, providing you with 16 game settings and the ability to paint your own backgrounds with ease. MusicMaker gives you the facilities of a 13-instrument synthesizer, along with 17 built-in tunes from "Happy Birthday" to "The Star-Spangled Banner." All of these design tools work smoothly together, and everything you do can be saved for posterity or for more tweaking at a later time. You can even design games to swap with your friends. (The package includes a blank disk.) A listing of your program can be output to nearly any Commodore-compatible printer.

Sense of Accomplishment

If you've ever wanted to design computer games but were put off by the necessity of mastering assembly language, here's your chance. Even without any knowledge of programming, you can have a simple but respectable-looking game up and running in a matter of a few hours. And what a sense of accomplishment you'll feel when you tell your friends that you designed it yourself! As you gain more experience with the program, you'll find that you are learning a lot about programming, and you'll be able to design more complicated creations. To that end, Garry Kitchen has included lots of tips in the "Advanced Game Design" section of the manual. This is a superbly designed, powerful program that nurtures creativity. Kids of all ages (especially grown-up ones) would love to find this program under the tree on Christmas morning. (Solo use; joystick & keyboard; Disk.) C64/128 version reviewed; also available for Apple II (at \$39.95)
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

Broderbund Offers New Graphics Library

Broderbund will ship PRINT SHOP GRAPHICS LIBRARY 3 shortly as part of their Print Shop library. This disk will offer six categories--Christmas, Business, International Symbols, Myth & Fantasy, Seasons, and Animals. It will be made available for Apple, C64, and Atari computers at a list price of \$24.95.

PERRY MASON: THE CASE OF THE MANDARIN MURDER (★★★★1/2/★★★★) is a graphics and text role-playing game from *Telarium* which lets you step into the shoes of one of the most famous criminal lawyers in all of fiction. Erle Stanley Gardner's 85 books and the television series based on those stories have made Perry Mason's courtroom battles with Hamilton Burger, District Attorney, familiar to nearly everyone. In this story, you are the master attorney with the seemingly hopeless case. Your client, Laura Kapp, has been arrested for the murder of her estranged husband, restaurateur Victor Kapp. Victor was found dead in his penthouse with a bullet in his back. Laura was only a few feet away, dazed and delirious with the murder weapon mere inches from her hand. Earlier the same day, she had been released from a mental institution, but she was coming home to a husband who wanted to divorce her, and she knew it. It looks pretty bad for Laura, but at least she has Perry Mason as her attorney.

Unique Courtroom Scenes

Your job is to investigate the case with the help of your secretary Della Street, and detective Paul Drake, then prepare for trial when you're at your best. Throughout the game, you will be tested on your powers of observation, your deductive reasoning skills, and most of all, your ability to interact with the other characters in the story. In court, your goal is to get your client acquitted, discover the real murderer, and make him or her break down and confess on the stand. The courtroom scenes are unique among role-playing games, allowing you nearly any action available to a real trial attorney, including the introduction of evidence, cross-examination of witnesses, objections to the D.A.'s line of questioning, private consultations with the judge, and even courtroom theatrics to dramatize crucial moments in your defense strategy. (The first time one of our objections was sustained was quite a thrill!) The "Lawyer's Handbook" that comes with the program gives you plenty of information about courtroom procedure and a complete list of words understood by the program's parser, along with suggestions regarding appropriate phrasing of questions. From the theme music of the Perry Mason TV show and colorful graphics to the nearly limitless possibilities of the courtroom scenes, the program is a real winner. Those who remember the TV series will get a big kick out of playing Perry Mason's role themselves, and even younger players will find the game's highly interactive style to be quite a challenge. Our verdict: one of the best mystery adventures of the year. (Solo play; Keyboard; Disk.) C64/128 version reviewed; also available for Apple II and IBM PC/PCjr (at \$39.95).

Recommended. (MSR \$32.95)

SSI Readies New Simulation

SSI, a company which regularly releases strategic simulation programs for many personal computers, is readying another one. U.S.A.A.F. (UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCE) is a detailed simulation of daylight bombing of German industry from 1943-1945. It's billed as an advanced wargame for 1-2 players featuring twenty-four aircraft types--20 fighters and 4 bombers. Retail will be \$59.95 and will be available for Atari, C64, and Apple II computers.



The symmetry of this exquisitely furnished living room is ruined by an overturned, goldplated statue and the chalk outline of a dead body--gruesome reminders of why you are here.
EXAMINE STATUE
The statue, entitled "Daphne", is of a woman who is transformed into a tree. Golden leaves lie upon the floor.

Critically Speaking...Apple Compatible

THE WORKS! (NA/◆◆◆1/2) is an aptly named collection of useful home applications on a single disk. Designed by Fernando Herrera of *First Star Software* the package is ideal for those who are relatively inexperienced with their computers and may be confused or intimidated by the large number of software packages on the market. The 13 programs are divided into four functional groups: Tools, Organizers, Arts, and Learning.

Tools: Letter Writer

The number-one tool for most computer owners is a word processing program, and **THE WORKS!** includes one called **LETTER WRITER**. Considering the approach of the entire package and the intended user, we expected the word processor to be easy to learn and use, and it is. What we did not expect, especially with 12 other programs sharing the disk, was a good range of options beyond the basic ability to enter text and delete characters. We were pleasantly surprised to find that **LETTER WRITER** gives the user the ability to move, copy, or delete entire blocks of text, perform arch and replace operations, set variable margins for printing, and send special control characters to the printer for functions such as underlining, boldface type, etc. **LETTER WRITER** also has the ability to merge information into its text from other programs within the package by means of windows. (Programs usable as windows in **LETTER WRITER** include all "Tools" and all organizers.)

More Tools

PLANS & INVESTMENTS includes a series of related screens on loans, savings, investments, and rates. The program does all the figuring on questions of loan payments, amounts to be saved for future goals, investment annuities, and other matters involving interest rates. **CALCULATOR** adds, subtracts, multiplies, and divides, of course, but it also works with powers, square roots, and trigonometric functions. **WEIGHTS & MEASURES** handles conversions in six categories: linear, square, cubic, volume, weight, and temperature. **MATH FORMULAS** can solve simultaneous equations with two or three unknowns, figure quadratic equations, and calculate the sides of a triangle. (Maybe now you can help the kids with their math homework!)

Organizers

These four programs are special applications of database management, without using the technical terms that can intimidate a novice user. **FAMILY FINANCES** lets the user enter transactions as they occur, by category and date, and produce a variety of printed reports for budgeting or tax preparation. **CALENDAR PAD** helps the user keep track of appointments and important dates, even color-coding them by category if desired. **ADDRESS BOOK** records names, phone numbers and addresses, of course, but it also allows for various kinds of searches and the printing of mailing labels from all or part of the file. **STOCK PORTFOLIO** maintains a record of investments, calculates percentages of profit or loss, and provides annual yields.

Arts and Learning

GRAPHICS PAINTER and **MUSIC COMPOSER** are just for fun, letting family members experiment with computer-aided artwork or composing and playing music. **TYPING TEACHER** is a must for anyone who would like to use a computer more efficiently, and **BIRTH RACES** provides timed drills in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers and decimals. In addition to the 13 programs, **THE WORKS!** includes a set of utilities for formatting disks, copying individual files or whole disks, and deleting files.

Excellent Value

This package is one of the best software values we've seen. Every program is easy enough for the novice, thanks to "help" screens for every application. Yet what is truly amazing about **THE WORKS!** is the completeness of the programs included. Although it is certainly

possible to find separate programs covering each of the applications with more features, such a collection would cost many, many times the price of this package. Many families have purchased computers and used them for little more than playing games. With **THE WORKS!** they can easily explore the useful things their computer can do at a very reasonable price. (Solo use; Keyboard; 64K disk; Printer and second disk drive optional but recommended.) Reviewed on Apple II; coming soon for C64/128. **Recommended.** (MSR \$49.95)

TEMPLE OF APSHAI TRILOGY (★★★★★1/2) is a compilation of three classics from *EPYX* on one disk: **TEMPLE OF APSHAI**, **THE UPPER REACHES OF APSHAI**, and **THE CURSE OF RA**. The original versions of these games were among the earliest role-playing adventures for home computers, and they helped establish Epyx (then known as Automated Simulations) as a major developer of entertainment software. The current versions offer improvements in graphics, faster play action, and the convenience of three related programs on a single disk.

Warrior of Apschai

These are action-adventures, and you become a warrior exploring underground mazes once inhabited by the priests of Apschai, the Insect God. You can let the program assign you a warrior character, or you can enter a favorite from another game. Strike a few bargains with the innkeeper for weapons, shields, armor, and healing salves, and then you're ready to explore Apschai's 568 rooms and 12 levels. The three games are full of mazes and magic, traps and treasures, mirth and monsters. (Wait 'til you encounter the killer tomatoes in the vegetable gardens of the Upper Reaches of Apschai!) This trio of games offers many hours of exploration, strategy, and adventuring fun. If you don't already own the original programs, be sure to add this classic group to your adventure library. (Solo play; Keyboard; 64K disk.) Reviewed on Apple II; also available for Atari XL/XE, C64/128; coming soon for IBM PC/XT/PCjr, Macintosh.

Recommended. (MSR approx. \$40.00)

Macintosh Compatible

AMAZON (★★★★★1/2) is a graphics and text adventure set in the jungles of South America. Written by Michael Crichton for *Telarium* (a division of Spinnaker Software), the game is often amusing, frequently harrowing, and occasionally frustrating. The player is a field agent for NSRT (National Satellite Resources Technology), and the goal is to find the Lost City of Chak and its rare emeralds, which are needed for the development of top-secret materials for national defense. The player ventures into the jungle in the company of a wisecracking parrot named Paco. The bird is the source of much advice, not all of it worth heeding, but Paco can provide a welcome bit of comic relief when things get tense. And things do indeed get tense, what with cannibals lurking and animal inhabitants of the jungle ready to pounce. Contact with NSRT headquarters is maintained with a portable computer, but their only real help is in being able to pinpoint the field agent's location at all times. **AMAZON** has no magic, no mystical spells--just you and your wits against whatever the jungle has to offer.

Story Is Well Told

The Macintosh version of this game is virtually identical to those for other systems, released earlier. You do have access to the Macintosh Notepad, which is very handy for keeping track of those notes all adventure gamers make as they play. And pull-down menus are utilized for a few common commands, such as "look," and for saving games in progress. The story is well told by Crichton, and the modern setting is a nice change of pace from the typical medieval atmosphere of so many role-playing games. (Solo play; Keyboard & mouse; 2 disks.) Reviewed on Macintosh; also available for Apple II, IBM PC/PCjr (at \$39.95), and C64/128 (at \$32.95).

Recommended (MSR \$44.94)

Critically Speaking...

KORONIS RIFT (★★★★/★★★★) is from *Lucasfilm Games* and *Epyx* offering gamers another chance to become immersed in the kind of fantasy world the Lucasfilm team does so well. In this game, you become a sort of 23rd-century junkman, a technoscavenger who happens onto the planet Koronis and its storied rifts, the weapons testing grounds of the Ancients. For a technoscavenger, this cache of abandoned technological systems is the find of a lifetime.



Exploring a Rift

You instruct Psytek, your Science Droid, to ready the Scavenger MK IV Modular Planetary Surface Rover (and its Repo-Tech Robot) for a trip through the first rift. The MK IV is fully instrumented and carries the latest laser weapons and shields, which you'll need to defend yourself against the Guardian saucers that protect the hulks, those abandoned war machines of the Ancients. Your Rover moves easily over the hills of the first rift, hugging the gray landscape of Koronis. A hulk appears, and it's easy to loot--no Guardians around. But their saucers soon appear, trying to persuade you to leave. They fire on you. They play hide-and-seek, peeking at you from behind mountains. Their movements seem unpredictable until you have lots of experience dodging and firing on them.

Examining the Loot

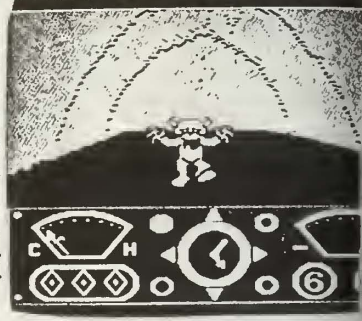
After looting a few more hulks, you call your Scoutcraft for a tractor-beam ride back to safety. Psytek will help you analyze or dismantle the booty from the hulks, and you may even discover some systems of the Ancients that you'd like to try out in your Rover on the next foray through the rifts. In fact, learning about and using what you find is what makes this game much more complex than it seems at first. As you make your way through the 19 rifts that lead to Rift 20 where the Guardian saucer base must be destroyed, the relics of the Ancients become a necessary part of your winning strategy. Ultimately, this strategic component of KORONIS RIFT is what makes repeated playing sessions rewarding. There are many subtle nuances that await discovery, keeping the game fresh and challenging. And the content of the game is beautifully supported by detailed graphics. The fractally generated, 3D landscape of the planet Koronis is a realistic environment, and the interior of the Scoutcraft with its marvelous Psytek robot is equally believable. Sound effects help create an illusion of reality, too. This is a superb game with great depth. (Solo play; Joystick; Pause; Disk.) Atari XL/XE and C64/128 versions reviewed; coming soon for Apple II.

Recommended. (MSR approx. \$40.00)

Game Design Contest

If you have a great idea for a computer game and own an Apple II or Commodore 64 or 128, Activision has a contest for you. You will need a copy of *Garry Kitchen's GameMaker: The Computer Game Design Kit* (reviewed in this issue) to create the game of your dreams. Following the rules of the contest as detailed in the *GameMaker* package, send your disk to Activision where it will be evaluated by game experts on creativity, originality, gameplay, graphics, music, and effects. First place gets you \$5000, an expense-paid trip to Activision headquarters--and your game will be published by Activision. Second and third prizes of \$2500 and \$1000 will also be awarded.

THE EIDOLON (★★★★/★★★★1/2) is an oddity in the quartet of *Lucasfilm Games* from *Epyx* because it's a fantasy set in the past instead of the future. According to the story, you've wandered into the mansion of Dr. Agon, a 19th century scientist who disappeared without a trace. His research into the mystical powers of the mind led him to build a strange contraption, "The Eidolon," which carried him into an extraordinary world of labyrinthine passages and bizarre creatures. You read about his explorations in the journal he left behind, and your curiosity impels you to take a spin in the wondrous machine.



Exploring the Caverns

For seven minutes, as long as The Eidolon's energy reserve lasts, you wander through arching caverns of gray stone. (You are returned to the laboratory when energy gives out.) Fireballs hang suspended overhead, fearsome creatures await around corners, and you promptly become lost. After repeated trips in The Eidolon, you begin to learn your way around and discover that fireballs can be captured, creatures can be avoided or sometimes destroyed by firing the correct fireball from The Eidolon, and that there is a dragon down there. The first few times you see him, the dragon appears to be nothing more than a cold statue, but he awakes when you've captured the right jewel to melt the barrier that surrounds him. (Jewels appear when you hurl red fireballs at guardians.) Once you've accomplished the feat, melting the barrier doesn't seem like such a great idea. The dragon vents his fury on you and The Eidolon, virtually assuring a quick trip back to the lab. When you learn the secret of defeating the dragon, you and the Eidolon are transported to the next level of the mystical caverns. Each level has its own dragon with different characteristics, plus a new cast of fantastic creatures. There are seven levels, or perhaps more, and we suspect there's some kind of surprise beyond the seventh level--maybe Dr. Agon?

Fractal Graphics

Once they developed the first fractal graphics in a computer game ("Rescue on Fractalus!"), the Lucasfilm design team couldn't resist using the technique again. In THE EIDOLON, the fractal graphics of the caverns create a wonderfully realistic sense of moving within a three-dimensional environment. Unlike previous first-person adventure games, these graphics are not merely slab walls rendered with the perspective of diminishing lines. These cavern walls are rounded and have texture, making them almost seem touchable. The excellent graphics support a game that blends adventure, action, and strategy for multi-level appeal. Success depends on staying alert for a variety of clues, especially sound and color, to help unravel the mysteries of Dr. Agon's caverns. The first Lucasfilm game set in the past looks as if it has a bright future with computer gamers. (Solo play; Joystick; Pause; Disk.) Atari XL/XE (64 required) and C64/128 versions reviewed; coming soon for Apple II. **Recommended.** (MSR approx. \$40.00)

A Note About Datasoft

Due to the fact that Datasoft apparently is still in litigation with Gillette (see last month's issue), we have, at least temporarily, pulled all Datasoft product out of our Availability Update. We do not know when the litigation will be complete and, therefore, predicting the ultimate release of the Datasoft programs is very much up in the air.

Critically Speaking...Atari XL/XE

LODE RUNNER'S RESCUE (★★★★/★★★★) is from *Synapse* which is now associated with Broderbund, thus explaining the appearance of a Broderbund-trademarked character in a game from another company. While recovering stolen treasure, Lode Runner was captured by the guards of the Bungeling Empire, and his daughter, Alexandra, attempts the rescue in this game. The player must guide Alexandra through a series of three-dimensional mazes to reach her father. Each of the 46 mazes is patrolled by one or more Bungeling guards, who try to keep Alexandra from recovering the keys scattered throughout the labyrinth. She carries various weapons, relying solely on her ability to outwit and out-manuever the guards. The mazes are laid out in diagonal perspective and contain a variety of features such as rivers, waterfalls, elevators, trapdoors, mushrooms that make Alexandra slow temporarily, a magic cat for extra lives, and hidden maze sections where she must feel her way around. Alexandra can run, jump, and swim to capture all the keys and expose the exit to the next level.

Create Your Own Screens

The diagonal layout and maze features of different heights give this game a good, three-dimensional look. Moving Alexandra through each maze takes a little practice because of the diagonal arrangement, but the difficulty level escalates gradually enough to allow for practice. The game is fun to play and a little less frustrating than some. At least it doesn't force you to start over again at the first level when all lives are lost, but lets you re-start at the last level achieved. We think that gamers will get the most enjoyment from creating their own screens with the Game Editor. Starting with any of the regular game screens, it's a very easy matter to change a maze into your own creation, saving it so you can play it later. You have complete control over all maze features, as well as the ability to direct the movements of the guards. (There are some very slight differences in the Atari and C64 Game Editors, primarily in the changing of colors.) **LODE RUNNER'S RESCUE** would be enjoyable without the Game Editor, but the ability to make your own screens really enhances its value. (Solo play; Joystick; Disk.) Available only for Atari XL/XE (48K) and C64/128 with 1541 Disk Drive.

Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

Critically Speaking...Apple Compatible

ULTIMA IV: QUEST OF THE AVATAR (★★★★/★★★★) is the latest and largest in the masterful series of role-playing adventures from Lord British and *Origin Systems*. Although references to the previous Ultimas exist in this game, it isn't necessary to have played them to enjoy this one. There are common threads among the games, yet this one departs from the others in a number of ways. First, the entrance to this one is a well-orchestrated and gentle immersion into the world of the adventure. Rather than being occupied with the mechanics of aligning attributes and names to one or more adventuring characters, you need only tell the program the name by which you will be known on the quest, and then you simply enter the land of Britannia after a mood-setting introductory phase. You move from an idyllic setting where you learn the history of Britannia, acquire the symbol of Avatar (an ankh), and enter the gates of a Renaissance Fair. Here a gypsy casts cards, and you are tested on your beliefs. Once these are established, you must remain true to your path to remain on your Path of the Avatar.

in Britannia

Following the Path, you enter Britannia in a time of peace after the Dark Ages of the Triad of Evil (Mondain, Minax, and Exodus of the last three Ultimas). As in the previous games, you travel over land and sea, spending much time in the cities and townes. Here you can find weapons, armor, food, a night's rest, perhaps herbs (reagents

needed to concoct magic spells), and people. More than ever in this game, interaction with the characters you meet is crucial to your success. You may ask those you meet about their names, jobs, health, or other matters that may be suggested by their replies. And you may ask some to join you, finally collecting an adventuring party of as many as eight characters who will journey with you. Some will ask questions of you, too. Heed that your answers are consonant with your beliefs, lest a dishonest answer reflect badly upon you. In keeping with the spiritual emphasis of the game, you may seek enlightenment by meditating at the shrines, using the proper mantra learned from one of the townspeople.

Plenty of Combat

With all this talk of spirituality, don't think that Lord British has created a wimpy adventure. There are battles aplenty, lots of evil creatures, loads of dank dungeons, and a complicated batch of magic spells to be brewed. The combat sequences are more realistic than before, due to the animation of the characters and the screen-filling graphics that zoom in on the action. There's violence, but it's tempered by seeking after inner peace. This is the meaning of the Path of Avatar--reaching for an Age of Light after an Age of Darkness. Not only is this **ULTIMA** larger in scope than the others, but it also has more heart and soul. We find ourselves repeating what we've said upon release of the previous games: this is the best **ULTIMA** yet. (Solo play; Keyboard; 2 Disks; Compatible with Mockingboard.) Reviewed on Apple II; coming for Atari XL/XE, C64/128, IBM PC/PCjr.

Recommended. (MSR \$64.00)

BRIMSTONE (NA/★★★★1/2) is a tale of Sir Gawain, knight of the Round Table, and his trip in a dream vision to the underworld of Ulro on All Hallow's Eve. The text adventure is an Electronic Novel from *Synapse* and *Broderbund* that is full of medieval imagery and wonderfully spooky creatures. The story begins on the pages of the book, a tale of the unfortunate Jeremy Diddler who was jailed for stealing the Albion Manuscript. This manuscript details the dream experiences of Sir Gawain, and the disks take over in placing the reader into the role of the gallant knight in his dream. The two stories become intertwined as characters from one appear in the other, leading to fantastic situations and improbable events. But anything is possible in a dream!

Escaping the Underworld

As Gawain the Bold, the player wanders the dreamscape and enters a castle, only to become involved in a challenge to escape from the underworld of Ulro with five mystical words. If he fails, he is condemned to Brimstone for all time. He meets up with some wonderful characters along the way. Our favorite was the underdemon Fum, a bat-monkey-man with gray, furry feet who really knows how to kick back and enjoy a trip through the Void. The comic touches keep you from taking the whole thing too seriously, yet the game is very addictive. Like the other *Synapse* and *Broderbund* Electronic Novels, time marches on and certain characters do what they will in real time, whether you choose an action or not. The game is somewhat easier than many text adventures because there are many hints embedded in the prose, if only you pay close enough attention to catch them. As a result, this is a good choice for novice adventurers. However, even experienced fantasy gamers will appreciate the good story and irreverent sense of humor. (Solo play; Keyboard; 2 Disks.) Reviewed on Apple II; also available for IBM PC/PCjr; for Atari XL/XE with 2 drives, C64/128 (at \$39.95); Coming for Macintosh.

Recommended. (MSR \$44.95)

ATARI COMPUTERS

OCTOBER

AcroJet (Mic)
 x-Crimson Crown (Pen)
 x-Eidolon (Epy)
 Frank & Ernest's Adventure (Pen)
 x-Koronis Rift (Epy)
 Music Studio (Act)
 Oo-Topos (Pen)
 x-Silent Service (Mic)

NOVEMBER

Conflict in Vietnam (Mic)
 Movie Maker (EA)
 Spy vs Spy Island Caper (FS)
 World's Greatest Football (Epy)

JANUARY

Gunship (Mic)
THIRD QUARTER
 x-Battalion Commander (SSI)
 x-Panzer Grenadier (SSI)

FOURTH QUARTER

Breaker (Syn)
 Crossword Magic (Min)
 Deadly Summer (Syn)
 House of Changes (Syn)
 Ronin (Syn)

FIRST QUARTER

Beachhead II (Acc)
 Gememaker (Act)
 Raid Over Moscow (Acc)

ATARI ST

OCTOBER

A Mind Forever Voyaging (Inf)
 x-Forbidden Quest (Pry)
 x-Gateway (Pry)
 Kings Quest II (Sie)
 x-Stercross (Inf)

NOVEMBER

Borrowed Time (Act)

JANUARY

Gato (Sie)
FOURTH QUARTER
 Hacker (Act)
 Mindshadow (Act)

COMMODORE 64

OCTOBER

AcroJet (Mic)
 Alter Ego (Male)(Act)
 x-Crimson Crown (Pen)
 x-Eidolon (Epy)
 Elevator Action (DS)
 x-Fast Tracks (Act)
 Forbidden Quest (Pry)
 Frank & Ernest's Adventure (Pen)
 x-Gememaker (Act)
 Goofy's Word Factory (Sie)
 Jet (Sub)
 x-Koronis Rift (Epy)
 x-Little Computer People (Act)
 x-Lords of Midnight (Min)
 Masters of Ledgerdemain (Sun)
 x-Nine Princes in Amber (Tel)
 x-P Mason: Case/Mandarin Murder (Tel)
 Oo-Topos (Pen)
 Quake Minus One (Min)
 x-Shadowfire (Min)
 x-Silent Service (Mic)
 Star Trek:Kobayashi Alternative (SS)
 The Works (FS)

NOVEMBER

Bard's Tale (EA)
 Borrowed Time (Act)
 x-Cave of Time (Ban)
 Conflict in Vietnam (Mio)
 x-Escape (Ban)
 x-4th Protocol (Ban)
 Kung Fu Master (DE)
 Moebius (Ori)
 World's Greatest Football (Epy)

DECEMBER

Alter Ego (female)(Act)

JANUARY

Gunship (Mic)
THIRD QUARTER
 x-Battalion Commander (SSI)
 x-Black Thunder (AK)
 x-Dolphin's Rune (Min)
 x-Gryphon (AK)
 x-Norway 1985 (SSI)
 x-Panzer Grenadier (SSI)
 x-Reach for the Stars (EA)

FOURTH QUARTER

Beyond Forbidden Forest (Cos)
 Breaker (Syn)
 Deadly Summer (Syn)
 Escape from Richelieu (Sun)
 Flight Simulator Scenery
 Disk-Eastern Region (Sub)
 Great Intl Paper Airplane
 Construction Kit (SS)
 House of Changes (Syn)
 Maxwell Memor (AK)
 Ronin (Syn)
 Ultima 4 (Ori)
 Wrath of Quintana Roo (Sun)

FIRST QUARTER 1986

AutoDuel (Ori)
 Commando (DE)
 Gateway (Pry)

COMMODORE 128

OCTOBER

Black Cauldron (Sie)
 Kings Quest II (Sie)

FOURTH QUARTER

PerfectCalc (Com)
 PerfectFiller (Com)
 PerfectWriter (Com)

FIRST QUARTER

Gato (Sie)

AMIGA

NOVEMBER

A Mind Forever Voyaging (Inf)
 Arohon (EA)
 Arctic Fox (EA)
 Borrowed Time (Act)
 Catalog Product from Infocom
 Deluxe Video Const. Set (EA)
 Marble Madness (EA)
 One on One (EA)
 Print Shop (Bro)
 Return to Atlantis (EA)
 ? Cities of Gold (EA)
 Skyfox (EA)
FOURTH QUARTER
 Hacker (Act)
 Kelley Project (Min)
 Keyboard Cadet (Min)
 Mindshadow (Act)
 Radar Raiders (Sub)
FIRST QUARTER
 Deja Vu (Min)
 Sargon III (May)

APPLE II

OCTOBER

AcroJet (Mic)
 Alter Ego (Male)(Act)
 A Mind Forever Voyaging (Inf)
 Black Cauldron (128K)(Sie)
 x-Cave of Time (Ban)
 Countdown to Shutdown (Act)
 Escape (Ban)
 Forbidden Quest (Pry)
 Frank & Ernest's Adventure (Pen)
 GI Joe (Epy)
 Kings Quest II (Sie)
 Lode Runner's Rescue (Syn)
 x-The Mist (Min)
 Nine Princes in Amber (Tel)
 Oo-Topos (Pen)
 P Mason: Case/Mandarin Murder (Tel)
 Print Shop Companion (Bro)

x-Silent Service (Mio)
 Star Trek:Kobayashi Alternative (SS)

NOVEMBER

AutoDuel (Ori)
 Borrowed Time (Act)
 Gememaker (Act)
 Kung Fu Master (DE)
 Ogre (Ori)
 Shadowfire (Min)
 x-View to Kill (Min)
 World's Greatest Football (Epy)

DECEMBER

Alter Ego (Female)(Act)

JANUARY

Gunship (Mic)
THIRD QUARTER
 x-Battalion Commander (SSI)
 x-Beachhead (Acc)
 x-Beachhead II (Acc)
 x-Crimson Crown (Pen)
 x-Essex (Syn)
 x-Norway 1985 (SSI)
 x-Panzer Grenadier (SSI)
 x-Reach for the Stars (EA)
 x-Temple of Apehai Trilogy (Epy)
 x-Ultima 4 (Ori)
 x-Winter Games (Epy)
 x-Wizardry Scenario 4 (Sir)

FOURTH QUARTER

Alternate Reality 2 (DS)
 Breakers (Syn)
 x-Brimstone (Syn)
 Deadly Summer (Syn)
 Escape from Richelieu (Sun)
 Fantevision (Bro)
 Flight Simulator Scenery
 Disk (Western Region)(Sub)
 Forbidden Castle (Min)
 Fourth Protocol (Ban)
 Great Intl Paper Airplane
 Construction Kit (SS)

House of Changes (Syn)
 King's Quest II (Sie)
 Little Computer People (Act)
 Masters of Ledgerdemain (Sun)
 Mickey's Three in One (Sie)
 Moebius (Ori)
 Music Shop (Bro)
 Racter (Min)
 Raid Over Moscow (Acc)
 Ronin (Syn)
 Spy vs Spy Island Caper (FS)
 Voodoo Island (Min)

FIRST QUARTER

Commando (DE)
 Gateway (Pry)

MACINTOSH

OCTOBER

x-A Mind Forever Voyaging (Inf)
 Ancient Art of War (Bro)
 Balance of Power (Min)
 x-Brimstone (Syn)
 Enchanted Scepter (Sil)
 x-Essex (Syn)
 Forbidden Castle (Min)
 Frank & Ernest's Adventure (Pen)
 Gemstone Warrior (SSI)
 King's Quest (Sie)
 Letterhead (Syn)
 x-Mindwheel (Syn)
 The Mist (Min)
 Oo-Topos (Pen)
 x-Print Shop (Bro)

NOVEMBER

Borrowed Time (Act)
 View to Kill (Min)
 Voodoo Island (Min)
 Winter Games (Epy)
FOURTH QUARTER
 Black Cauldron (Sie)
 Calculator Construction Set (EA)
 Crimson Crown (Pen)

Gemstone Warrior (SSI)
 x-Hacker (Act)
 I Demiano (Ban)
 x-Mindshadow (Act)
 Racter (Min)
 Rendezvous with Rama (Tel)
 Shadowkeep (Tel)
 Teletext (Spec)
 Temple of Apehai Trilogy (Epy)
 Ultima 4 (Ori)

IBM PCjr

OCTOBER

x-A Mind Forever Voyaging (Inf)
 Black Cauldron (Sie)
 x-The Mist (Min)
 Music Studio (Act)
 x-Nine Princes in Amber (Tel)
 x-P Mason:Case/Mandarin Murder (T)
 x-Star Trek:Kobayashi Alternative (T)
 x-View to a Kill (Min)

NOVEMBER

Borrowed Time (Act)
THIRD QUARTER
 x-Brimstone (Syn)
FOURTH QUARTER
 Alter Ego (Male)(Act)
 Breakers (Syn)
 Deadly Summer (Syn)
 Great Intl Paper Airplane
 Construction Kit (SS)
 House of Changes (Syn)
 Ronin (Syn)
 Temple of Apehai Trilogy (Epy)
 Ultima 4 (Ori)

JANUARY

Decision in the Desert (Mic)

ADAM

FOURTH QUARTER

x-2010 Strategy (Col)

COMPANY CODES:

ACC - Access	INF - Infocom
ACT - Activation	INT - Interphase
AG - Avant Garde	LC - Learning Co
AH - Avalon Hill	MAR - Martin Con
AT - Atari	MIC - Microprose
BAN - Bantam	MIN - Mindscape
BAU - Baudville	ORI - Origin
BI - Batteries Inc.	PEN - Penguin
BRO - Broderbund	PRY - Priority
CBS - CBS Software	SCR - Scarborough
COM - Commodore	SIE - Sierra
COS - Cosmi	SIL - Silicon Sitr
CS - Creative	SPN - Spinnaker
DES - DesignWare	SS - Simon & Schu
DM - DataMost	SSI - Strategic Sim
DS - DataSoft	SIR - SirTech
EA - Electronic Arts	SUB - SubLogic
EPY - Epyx	SUN - Sunless
FP - Fisher-Price	SYN - Synapse
FS - First Star	TEL - Telarium
FUT - FutureVision	
GAM - Gamestar	
GRO - Grolier	
IMG - Imagic	

Subscriber Buying Service

Program	Cost	Sys/Format	Quantity	Total
Aaron's Apple (Paperback)	13.10			
Adventure Construction Set (Ap;Co)	36.40			
Amazon (Mac-32.90;Ap;I--28.80;Co--24.90)				
Battalion Commander (At;Co;Ap)	28.80			
Black Thunder (Co)	14.80			
Borrowed Time (Ap*,I*-28.80; Co*-26.10)				
Brimstone (Ap; I--32.90;At w/2drive;Co--28.80)				
Carriers at War (Ap;Co)	36.40			
Commodore 128 Computer (ship: 5.00)	279.00			
1571 Disk Drive (shdp: 5.00)	249.00			
Dolphin's Rune (C64)	22.30			
Dragonworld (Mac-32.90;AP,I-28.80;Co-24.90)				
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Critically Speaking...Atari 2600

COSMIC COMMUTER (★★ 1/2/★★ 1/2) from *Activision* has you driving an Astrobus during rush hour in the galaxy. You start the game by gently landing your Rocket Module so that the Astrobus module can separate and begin the commute. You move your Astrobus left or right as the screen scrolls horizontally, trying to avoid (or shoot) the heavy traffic of meteors, fireballs, and mines in the space lanes of your orbital route. It's also necessary to keep an eye on your fuel level; fuel pods can be contacted when the tank gets low. Anytime after you've picked up one to eight commuters, you can head back to the end of the line to deliver your passengers to Grand Central Space Station. You'll then move to the next commuter route where the traffic hazards are a little more difficult to avoid.

Fairly Cute Idea

This game is based on a fairly cute idea, but it ends up being little more than a highly simplified "Defender"-style dodge-and-shoot effort. There is nothing special about the graphics, either. **COSMIC COMMUTER** is more likely to appeal to young players than older ones, but even the kids may become bored with it quickly. Collectors, of course, will want to have it, but it is not one of Activision's best efforts for the Atari 2600. (Solo play)

Not recommended.

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Mindscape Plans New Programs

New programs for Macintosh and Commodore 64/128 are being planned by Mindscape for release before Christmas.

For Macintosh, **BALANCE OF POWER** asks the questions, "how can nations coexist without starting nuclear war?" Players will assume the role of either the President of the United States or the General Secretary of the Soviet Union for a fictional eight-year period in a one or two-player game. Your goal is to enhance your country's prestige and avoid nuclear war. You set the tone and mood of world events, soothing rivalries or heating things up to the brink. If you play well, the world survives. Information on the 62 nations represented in the game are included to help you make decisions.

Commodore owners will have the choice of three adventure games. **QUAKE MINUS ONE** is set in the deep waters of the Atlantic Ocean where a terrorist group has sabotaged an undersea power station. Unless the 4 renegade robots are destroyed or captured within 10 hours, they'll trigger an earthquake which will ultimately paralyze the Western world. **SHADOWFIRE** is a space adventure in which six superhero characters must beam aboard an

Technical Support Going to Cost \$\$??

When you buy a piece of software, you expect the company that bought it from to answer questions on how it runs. But, you don't expect this service to be free, right (especially on expensive productivity and/or business programs)? The day is fast approaching when you will have to pay to ask software publishers technical questions about their programs. Two major software companies, MicroPro and Multimate, have announced "premium service" technical support. For a yearly fee of up to \$250, or as-you-go at \$2.50 per minute of telephone time, the companies offer easy-access (with an 800 number) to the technical staff. Both companies say the reason for the fee-based technical support system is that they get too many calls to handle properly for free. Now, if these programs are as user-friendly as they're cracked to be, how come there are so many thousands of question from users?? Also, if you pay \$200 ++ for a program, doesn't that add up to something?? What we support is non-800 number (which are VERY expensive to support), perhaps with pre-set hours. If the technical staff doesn't spend the entire day on user's questions where the owner of a program can call--on his or her dime--and get the support needed.

alien spacecraft, locate and rescue a kidnapped alien, and apprehend the alien's leader and capture or destroy the alien (Shadowfire will also be adapted for Apple II.) **LOST MIDNIGHT** promises a challenge to illustrated text adventure. There's no text entry and characters must be moved by dragging them across the forbidding terrain of the Land of Midnight in search of the Doomark the Witchking. By night, the computer responds to the player's actions. Through a "special technique," Mindscape promises more than 32,000 (!) different landscapes which can appear in the play.

SYDNEY Abandons Entertainment Market

Sydney Development Corp who has designed such programs as **BEST OF B.C.**, **DAMBUSTERS**, **WIZMATH** and **WIZTY**, and others, has decided to leave the home entertainment market.

The company will continue to develop in the business software market for large mainframe area where they have had success for several years.