

Computer Entertainer

INCLUDES

THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

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SPECIAL PREVIEW
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TOP 10 SELLERS

Computer Entertainment

1. Flight Simulator II (SubLogic/AP)
2. Summer Games (EPYX/C64)
3. Julius Erving (EA/C64)
4. Ultima III (Origin/AP)
5. HESGames (HES/C64)
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7. Lode Runner (BRO/AT)
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TOP 10 SELLERS

Game Systems

1. Pitfall II (ACT/2600)
2. Decathlon (ACT/COL)
3. Gateway to Apshai (EPYX/COL)
4. Decathlon (ACT/2600)
5. Pitfall II (ACT/5200)
6. H.E.R.O. (ACT/COL)
7. Gyruus (PB/COL)
8. WarGames (COL/COL)
9. Star Wars (PB/COL)
10. Mountain King (SUN/COL)

0's are compiled from a panel of retail outlets, chain stores, etc.

COMING NEXT MONTH

REVIEWS
including
Ask of the Sun
Team House
Roadsides
for C64
Int Shop
Like I
Amazing Paddles
for Apple
SmartBASIC Bonanza
for ADAM
and our usual surprises!

Bits and Pieces

MicroLearn Bows Out of ADAM!

We have just learned that MicroLearn has decided against development of titles for the ADAM DataPak. Although no official reason was given, it appears that they felt uncomfortable with the installed base ★ of the computer vs. the cost of development.

★ We have had many inquiries regarding the installed base of ADAM. Several months ago another publication printed a figure of 40,000 units sold. Upon checking with Coleco, we were told they do not release ANY figures and would not confirm any figure. We will continue to "nose around" to see if we can come up with a legitimate figure; however, most third party software companies will not produce software for a system until there are approximately 1,000,000 units sold.

Last Starfighter Dumped?

We have been speaking with an inside source at Atari who has told us that Tramiel has cancelled LAST STARFIGHTER as an upcoming release. As far as the 7800, Atarisoft, Lucasfilm, and other software, Atari remains strangely quiet. They are rapidly running out of time to release and distribute ANYTHING before Christmas. Our feelings are that if items such as the 7800 do not surface before Christmas, it is extremely unlikely that they will ever be released. Again, we must reiterate that there is NO official statement to this date.

MCA Sues Atari/Warner Communications

In an unrelated development, MCA has sued both the new Atari Corp., as well as Warner Communications, the prior owners over alleged royalty monies owed for E. T. and LAST STARFIGHTER as well as the upcoming movie, DUNE. (According to some sources, licensing had been set up for DUNE for game versions in 1985.)

Dragons Lair Finally Scheduled!

Coleco has confirmed to us that they have scheduled DRAGON'S LAIR (DataPak ONLY) for release in the fourth quarter. This has been one of the most highly anticipated new titles from Coleco in some time. Coleco also surprised us with two titles based on the sequel to the movie, 2001. 2010 STRATEGY (datapak) and 2010 ACTION (cartridge) should be available early in 1985.

Major Trend Developing

More and more books are being developed into computer software. What began as just an occasional translation few months ago, has opened into more and more titles being released and announced all the time. This month we see the release of ROBOTS OF DAWN (review inside); the Spinnaker Trillium series of book translations will begin to ship shortly; Imagic has a couple of titles on the front burner; and Infocore has just announced a translation of HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY (story inside) for release this year. With all this activity, you'll have to bone up on your reading so you can truly enjoy the games when they come out! An interesting note: Trillium's SHADOWKEEP game was designed first, and Alan Dean Foster was commissioned to write the book based on the game.!

Apple Delays Flat Screen

The flat LED screen designed for use with the Apple //c has been delayed until sometime in 1985. It appears that there have been technical problems as well as a lower demand level than originally anticipated by Apple. Until the flat screen is available, the //c will not be very portable!

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

ATARI COMPUTERS

IMAGIC 1-2-3 is a 3-in-one program which has to be broken down in order to review it correctly.



WING WAR (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) takes you into the world of prehistoric fantasy as you control a winged dragon attempting to

hunt and destroy enemies to change them into crystals and score points. You begin in an underground cave within the dragon's lair and, from there, you must search out the crystals both underground and above ground in the clouds and around volcanoes. Destroy Gargok, the guardian of the treasure cave, and win firepower and defensive strength for later generations. You must press the joystick button to flap the dragon's wings and gain altitude as you search out the enemies and eggs which are throughout the various areas of this world. To help defend yourself against the enemies, you begin the game with 32 fireballs which can be used to kill the enemy—then they leave crystals behind them which you can pick up.

Very pretty

This is a beautiful game, with strange and gorgeous scenery. With eery caverns and odd islands in the sky, the landscape is quite different than many other games. The game play is quite challenging as you learn how to maneuver the dragon. You will find it will take some practice to learn how now to "overshoot" an egg as your dragon floats through the scenes. With a large number of screens and random locations of the crystals and eggs, you won't be bored easily.

Recommended

QUICK STEP (★ ★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ ★) is an adaptation of the frenetic game originally made available on the Atari 2600, and Imagic has added a great deal graphically to this version. For those not familiar with the premise, it's a fast-paced test of your reflexes as you hop madly about a scrolling screen full of various food. As the kangaroo, you must attempt to change the color to green as the computer-controlled (or second player) squirrel hops madly about changing the color to blue. White food is magic and its appearance is signaled with a sound. When you claim magic, you will glow and if you catch your opponent while glowing, it will be unable to move for a short time (a definitive advantage). Meanwhile, avoid the roving insect (this isn't a 4-star restaurant)—if he lands on a square you are on, your opponent scores points.

It's Wild!

The graphics have been improved dramatically with the addition of the various foods (the 2600 version had colored bars) such as pie, ice cream, etc. and the gameplay continues to be among the best in this genre. Playing against the computer is nearly impossible—the squirrel is terrific. When playing the two-player version, it is a great deal of fun. However, it's a wild game of reflexes regardless of the mode you play it in. We had trouble tearing away from this one!

Recommended

LASER GATES (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★) is the weakest of the three, mainly because it is such a familiar theme by now. It's a horizontally scrolling search-and-destroy mission as you control a space ship through caverns. You must destroy pinwheel asteroids, hungry cruchers, and missiles which attack you while blasting through grey walls, and maneuvering through the opening and closing of Laser Gates.

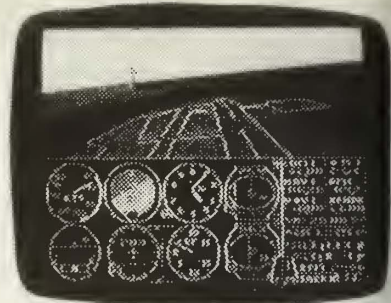
Pretty Familiar Stuff

The graphics are okay, but nothing terrific and the gameplay is just too similar to many other games which have come before it to recommend it. It is, by far, the weakest of the three games offered on this disk.

Not Recommended

Overall, a Good Buy

With two strong games out of three, and each offering varied play, Imagic 1-2-3 is a very good buy, especially at a retail of \$29.95 (disk)!



FLIGHT SIMULATOR II (★ ★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ ★), from SubLogic, after several delays, is now available for Atari computers, and it was worth the wait! Now owners of ALL Atari computers (that's right—it will work on everyone made, from the 400—with expansion to 48K—all the way through all the XL versions) can enjoy simulated flying as they've never been able to before. Once again, you begin by flying out of Meigs Field in Chicago (you can watch a practice flight first, if you like) and you can then choose over 80 airports in four scenery areas: New York, Chicago, Seattle, and Los Angeles. A 90-page Operating Manual will take you through all the technical aspects of what you can accomplish, including completely user-adjustable weather conditions flight during day, dusk, or night. We found the documentation extremely easy-to-read and follow. In addition, a flight reference card is included to help you through the controls, as well as a 92-page booklet on Flight Physics and Aircraft Control. Once you master the various airport areas (that will take you quite a while), you can test your flying skills with the "World War I Ace" aerial battle game which is also included.

Next Stop: Flight School

After reviewing all three versions, we feel our next stop is Flight School! It is truly amazing all the intricacies that SubLogic has packed into this program. It takes many, many hours just to find all the variables which you can control (we still crash alot!). The graphics are, once again, truly stunning and will really give you the feeling of flight. With full flight instrumentation, navigational facilities, course plotting, and so much more, it's easy to see why this program has, in its other versions, been constantly at the top of the national computer program bestseller lists everywhere (including our own). We applaud SubLogic for their work in making this program adaptable to all Atari computers so no one need be left out of this very special flying experience. By the way, the 64K version is built right into the same disk as the 48K version. If your Atari computer is at least 64K, the program will automatically detect that on simulator startup, and the proper version will be loaded. The 64K version has these additional features: ADF; real effects; wingtip generation; bomb sight; war report; COM radar instrument panel lights ON/OFF switch; and course plotter. (4 1/2 disk: solo play; joystick or keyboard)(also available for Apple; Commodore 64)

Recommended (MSR \$49.95)

Pac-Man Goes to Washington

Pac-Man has gobbled his way to the Smithsonian Institute, along with Pong and Dragon's Lair. Each represents a revolutionary step in the development of electronic games—anyone want to guess what will be added alongside of them sometime in the future?

EXPLANATION OF RATING SYSTEM:

★ ★ ★ ★ —EXCELLENT

★ ★ ★ —GOOD First set of stars—Quality of Graphics

★ ★ —FAIR Second set of stars—Quality of Play Action

★ —POOR

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

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

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI COMPUTERS

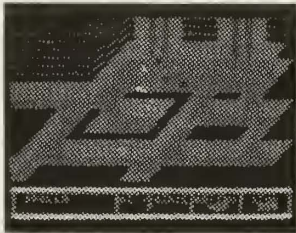
THE REALM OF IMPOSSIBILITY (★★★/★★½) is

described on the packaging as a "deluxe edition of the classic game *Zombies*," a game which we reviewed nearly a year ago. The main differences we found were the addition of six more dungeons and a much more clever game title. This newer

version shares with the original a combination of some elements of medieval adventure gaming, such as dungeons and spells, with extremely fast action. This time the evil cleric, Wistrik, has thirteen three-dimensional dungeons, some of which are locked. The player's on-screen character has but one life and a limited quantity of hit points to survive the rigors of zombies, snakes, spiders, and deadly orbs of evil. The character's sole protection at the beginning of the game is his supply of talismans, which can be scattered in the path of onrushing meanies to stop them temporarily. Later in the game, the character can acquire several types of spells to fend off disaster.

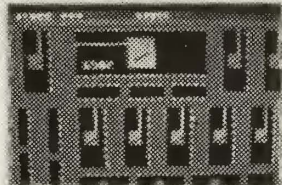
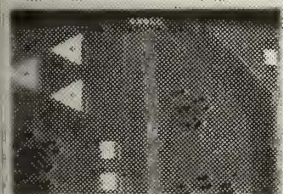
Better as a Two-Player Game

THE REALM OF IMPOSSIBILITY is a very fast-moving game that's much less interesting as a solo contest against the computer than it is as a two-player cooperative game. We became bored with the solo version, but two players can have a good time sharing magic spells, reviving each other, and plotting to get past the bad guys. The background graphics of the dungeons are quite good, with their three-quarter perspective, but the characters are little more than stick-figures. It can even be difficult to distinguish your on-screen character from the zombies in especially intense moments. Our evaluation of the "deluxe edition" of *Zombies* is the same as it was the original nearly a year ago. Despite the addition of more dungeons, we still can't recommend the single-player version of the game. Some may find the cooperative game for two interesting. (Solo Play; 2-Player cooperative; Joystick; Pause; Disk.) (MSR \$40.00)



DR. DO'S CASTLE (★★★/★★★½) is the same game as the version for the Atari 5200, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. (one player; two player alternating; cartridge) (Recommended (MSR \$39.95))

LAK (★★½/★★) is essentially the same as the Apple version of this game, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Sound effects are somewhat better in this version, but the game itself, aside from providing a two-player option, plays about like the one for Apple. You'll find it tough to avoid the flak batteries' shots, but we bet you'll grow bored with the game, as we did. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Joystick; Pause; 48K disk.) (Also available for Apple II and Commodore 64 computers; coming soon for IBM PCjr.)



not recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

Arrays Ships HOME ACCOUNTANT EXPANDED

A completely rewritten version of Home Accountant has begun shipping for the Apple IIc and IIe. It has been specifically redeveloped for the IIc and now offers 80-column capability, ProDOS format, use of the mouse, on screen display of reports, and an appointments/memos calendar with bill paying reminder. Suggested retail price: \$74.95.

ARCHON II: ADEPT (★★★/★★★★) from Electronic Arts and Free Fall Associates is a follow-up to the original Archon that offers the same general formula of strategy combined with action, but with a lot more magical spells. The opposing forces in the strategy portion of the game occupy a board that no longer resembles a chess layout, and the forces are now Order and Chaos, rather than Light and Dark. The board consists of four regions, representing the classic elements of Earth, Water, Air, and Fire. Occupying the six power points on the board is one major goal of the game, while increasing magical power is the other. (Casting spells is lots of fun, but it costs energy, too.)

Strategy, Action and Magic

There are more icons representing a marvelous range of monsters (demons and elementals) than in the original game, and they are maneuvered by using an "Adept" (the Mistress of Chaos or the Master of Order). When two icons occupy the same space on the main board, the scene changes to the battleground.

Depending on which icons are fighting, the battle can take on many different patterns, and the outcome can be affected by the type of battleground (Air, Earth, Water or Fire) and its relation to each icon. Altogether, this game offers the combination of strategy and all-out war that made Archon such a hit, but the addition of the overriding magical elements will make this sequel even more attractive to the thinking game player. (Solo Play; 2-Player Competitive; Joystick; Pause; 48K Disk.) (Also available for Commodore 64.) (Recommended. (MSR \$40.00))



New Verbatim Contest

Venture capitalists take notice! Dubbed "Kids, Money & Computers," Verbatim's new Fall contest challenges kids to conceive and design creative, money-making uses for computers. Entries will be accepted in Junior (14 years and younger) and Senior (15 - 18 years old) categories from October 1 through December 1.

The winners will be awarded the title of "Computer Biz' Kid" and a complete Commodore 64 computer system, which includes the computer, 1702 monitor, 1541 disk drive, and MPS 801 dot matrix printer plus a Verbatim Computer Starter Kit — a package worth about \$1000!

Here's How To Enter

Contestants receive a kit that will guide them in planning a successful business venture. The kit includes a 16-page contest handbook with 30 computer-oriented business ideas, an application, an entry form, and "I'm a Verbatim Biz' Kid" button. You can get the kit in Junior Achievement chapter offices across the country or by writing: "Kids, Money & Computers," 4920 El Camino Real, Los Altos, CA 94022.

Good Luck!

Play Ball

Strategic Simulations (SSI) is about to release two new sports games. The first, *COMPUTER BASEBALL*, allows you and an opponent (or you vs. the computer) to manage any team in the world. The data of 26 major league teams comes on the game disk, or statistics can be entered for other teams. The game simulates major league baseball, incorporating numerous statistical parameters to determine outcome. Available for Apple, Atari, and C64 at a retail of \$39.95.

For those who love football, *COMPUTER QUARTERBACK* lets you work with 36 offensive and 24 defensive plays as you play alone or two-player. The computer will constantly analyze your playing style to determine its most effective offense/defense, and you can draft your own million dollar team. Available for Apple and C64 at a retail of \$39.95

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

TRIVIA FEVER (NA / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is a trivia game for two to nine people (or teams) which can be played with or without a computer. Play begins by selecting a "Master of the Game," who acts as a sort of moderator and controller of the keyboard but does not answer any questions. There are seven categories: science and technology, geography, nature and animals, sports, films and entertainment, famous people, and history. Each player will field questions in five of the categories, which may be selected by the player or randomly by the computer. Before the actual game begins, players must decide on the time limit for answering questions (5 to 60 seconds) and the number of points (1 to 24 points) that must be earned in each category to reach the "Category Completion Question." (Correct answers to trivia questions earn one, two or three points, depending on the difficulty level selected. The difficulty level can be chosen by the player or the Master before each new question is generated.)

Musical Salutes

Once the actual game begins, everything is under the control of the Master of the Game. He or she determines whether a player or team has called out an answer in time. The Master can also disqualify a question that happens to reappear during a game. When the game is rolling along, players will get a kick out of the musical salutes to correct answers, along with the computer's occasionally smart-alec comments about right and wrong answers. As soon as one player or team answers their last Category Completion Question correctly, the program announces the "Game Winning Question" with a great deal of fanfare. Answering that one correctly causes the screen to go crazy while a bit of the *1812 Overture* is played. A complete recap of everyone's score, along with proportions of correct answers at each of the three difficulty levels, is the final bit of information before the game program bids everyone good-night.

Wide Range of Questions

TRIVIA FEVER offers an extremely wide range of questions that should challenge even the brightest trivia buffs. However, it is possible to handicap the best players so that they can compete more equally with beginners. In case you'd like more questions, Professional Software plans nine additional volumes of questions in the original seven categories, plus special packages: "Super Sports," "Entertainment Extra," and "What's in a Word." The basic package certainly makes a great party game, and it can even be played without your computer. (There is a book of the questions and answers, a spinner for selecting categories, and a pad of scoresheets to be used without a computer.) However, the whole thing is easier and more fun with the computer. Incidentally, we found that the disk drive runs constantly on the second side of the disk during game play. At first we thought something must be wrong, but this turns out to be normal with this program. (For one Master of the Game plus 1 to 8 players or teams; Keyboard; Double-sided Disk.) (Also available for Apple II series and IBM PC/PCjr) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

FLAK (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★) is essentially the same as the Apple version of this game, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Sound, particularly the opening musical selection, is better here than in the Apple version. However, the game offers little more than dodge-and-shoot action, rapidly leading to player boredom. (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating; Joystick or Keyboard control; Pause; Disk.) (Also available for Apple II and Atari computers; coming soon for IBM PCjr.) Not recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

Illustrated Guides to Computers

Prentice Hall has announced the premiere of the KEN USTON ILLUSTRATED GUIDES, a series of computer books that "guarantee computer literacy within minutes." There are seven volumes set to ship (\$9.95 each): ADAM, Apple IIe, Commodore 64, Compaq, IBM PC, Kaypro, and Macintosh.

PRESIDENT ELECT (NA / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is a timely program from **Strategic Simulations** that lets you run any presidential election campaign from 1960 to 1984 for the nine-week period between Labor Day and Election Day. The election campaign you set up may have two or three candidates, and the computer will manage none to all of the candidates for you. Using the actual, historical candidates or any others that you choose, it's up to you to manage your candidate's trip schedule, allocate campaign funds to national, regional, and state advertising budgets, and determine campaign stops. (If you choose a non-historical candidate—yourself, perhaps?—you must answer twenty questions which let the candidate be rated on relevant issues.) During the week-to-week course of the campaign, debates can be set up, and outside economic and foreign events can effect the campaign at any time.

Realistic Simulation

During the course of the campaign, weekly reports keep player candidates informed of current standings in the polls and level of campaign spending allocated among the states. This "Intelligence Phase" helps the players to hone and readjust their strategies in light of what the others are doing. There is also a map displayed each week, showing the current relative strength of the candidate in each state. After the nine weeks of planning, scheming, and campaigning are completed, the votes are counted on election night. Gluttons for punishment can have this done in real time or it can be speeded up to last about fifteen seconds. Anywhere along the way, the game in progress can be saved to disk. (A blank disk can be initialized from within the program and then used to store the data.) Whether you run the entire campaign in one sitting or spread it over several strategy sessions, you'll learn a great deal about the electoral process. This is the most realistic simulation of a presidential election that we've seen, and it would be ideal for classroom use. (Solo Play; 2- to 3-Player competitive; Keyboard; Disk.) (Also available for Apple II/II PLUS/IIe/IIc/III Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

QUESTRON (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ ★) is not part of the *Ultima* trilogy of adventure games, although there are graphic and strategic similarities to those popular games by Lord British. The similarities are not coincidental, nor do they constitute a stolen concept: an "obvious knock-off," as we've seen reported elsewhere. It is stated quite clearly on the box and accompanying game booklet: "Game concept and style used under license from Richard Garriott." For those who don't know Mr. Garriott, he designs games under the pseudonym of Lord British. (We hate to see anyone wrongfully accused of stealing someone's creative work!)

Joystick Control

Those who have played and enjoyed any or all of the *Ultima* games will definitely like *QUESTRON*. It is a graphic adventure with a single character, a man trying to fulfill a legend that says a humble serf will rise to destroy the evil one, Mantor. The play has no control over this character's initial attributes, but they will soon change in the course of play. Unlike the *Ultima* games, control of the character is handled with a joystick. A list of commands appears on the screen at nearly all times, and choices are made by highlighting a command and pressing the joystick button. The serf character is moved through the lands of Questron and the Land of Evil, the two continents in the game, by simply pushing the joystick in the desired direction. This tends to give the game a more immediate feeling than many adventures that are controlled through the keyboard.

Over 100 Nasty Creatures

The terrain of this game covers a lot of ground, full of towers, cathedrals, castles, three-dimensional dungeons, and a truly amazing number (over 100) of nasty creatures. You can talk to many of the townspeople to gather information or trade for goods. (Avoid talking to prisoners in jails—this action inevitably brings all the town guards down on your serf's head.) In several towns, your serf can stop and play blackjack or roulette to increase (or perhaps decrease) his supply of gold. As your character explores the countryside further, he becomes stronger and will encounter magical objects and other mysteries of Questron. It's a game that will consume many hours of playing (40 to 80 hours, according to the designers) before

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

you're able to best Mantor. Fortunately, up to four different characters (games) can be saved to the game disk for later play. Especially if you've already solved *Ultima III: Exodus* and can't wait for *Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar*, *QUESTRON* will fill the gap nicely. The graphics are a bit less detailed than those of the later *Ultima* games, but play action is superb. (Solo Play; Joystick or Keyboard control; Double-sided Disk.) (Also available as two-disk game for Apple and Atari computers at MSR \$49.95.) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

RAILS WEST (NA / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is a primarily text program from **Strategic Simulations** that is both educational and entertaining. If you've always wanted to be a railroad baron, this is your chance. Really much more than a game, this program takes you back to the age of the building of the great transcontinental railroads, from 1870 to 1900. The finances of up to eight railroad companies can be controlled in the game, with the computer managing zero to four of them. One to eight human players (or teams) can participate in either of two game scenarios. The "short" game lasts three to four hours, while the long game can run anywhere from eight to twenty-five hours, according to the designers. This is not a game to be taken lightly, nor is it one to start in that last half-hour before bedtime! (It is possible to save a partial game to disk. Be sure to have a formatted blank ready.)

Learn about Big Business

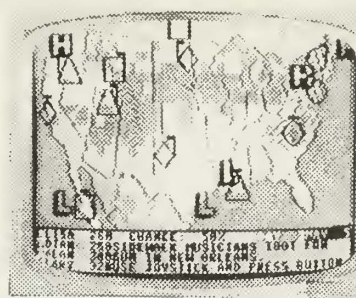
As much as you'll learn about the historical period of the late 1800s and the transcontinental railroads, you'll learn even more about speculation and financing in business ventures, especially if you take advantage of the printer option on the various reports within the game. After even one game, we guarantee you will have acquired greater knowledge of stocks, bonds, securities, and loans. Succeeding in this game is a combination of amassing a personal fortune and controlling the most viable transcontinental railroad. There are many strategies possible, and several are covered in depth by the player's manual: speculating, building, and wrecking. Trying each of these methods will teach you a lot about the way big businesses operate, even today. The concept of this game is intriguing, its treatment is comprehensive, and its value as an educational tool is excellent. Whether used in the home or the classroom, *RAILS WEST* would be a wonderful investment in fun and learning. (Solo Play; 2- to 8-Player competitive; Keyboard; Disk.) (Also available for Apple II/II PLUS/IIe/IIc/III and Atari computers.)

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

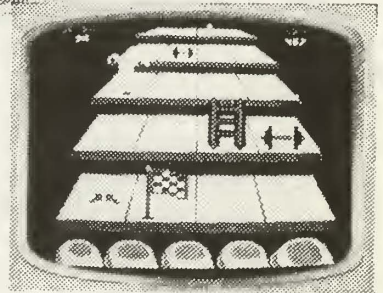
FLEET FEET (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is a Children's Television Workshop game for CBS Software. It's fun-filled entertainment with a purpose that is designed for one or two players, aged ten or older. Players choose from an array of sixteen pairs of Feet, including stilts, moon boots, track shoes, socks, and

winged shoes, among others. The object of the game is to move any pair of Feet from your team along a three-dimensional, moving track that's littered with "Things," such as magnets, alarm clocks, brick walls, musical notes, lucky clovers, and more. The learning aspect of the game involves discovering the relationship between each pair of Feet and each Thing. You'll soon find out that lucky clovers will move you ahead with any of the Feet, magnets interfere with ice skates, and you can stub a toe on a rock with some Feet. But that's just the beginning, whether you're racing alone against the computer, against a friend, or in a two-player team. You can program the race just the way you want it, choosing Feet, Things, length of the race, and speed of the track. It's a slightly silly game of strategy, problem-solving and planning ahead that will delight most youngsters—even parents will enjoy playing along. The graphics are amusing and very well drawn, and the original music is terrific. *FLEET FEET* is a great family game. (Solo Play; 2-Player cooperative or competitive; Joystick or Keyboard control; Pause; Disk.)

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)



Weather Tamers



Fleet Feet

WEATHER TAMERS (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★) is a Children's Television Workshop game for CBS Software. It is recommended by the designers for ages ten and up and will accommodate up to four players or teams. The object of the game is to create weather patterns to order for your "clients," who are willing to pay if you can create the weather they want, when and where they want it. Even if you can't quite create their desired weather to order, you may still earn a partial fee for predicting the outcome of your efforts.

Create and Predict the Weather

The basic screen of *WEATHER TAMERS* shows a weather map of the U.S. and parts of Canada and Mexico. Information provided includes relative temperatures, high and low pressure areas, and humidity in the form of clouds, rain or snow. Players determine the skill level of play, enter their names, and receive their assignments from one to three clients each. The first stage of play is to collect data on temperature, humidity, pressure, and wind. For this, you have a weather satellite at your command. Then you must determine what changes to make—moving high or low pressure areas, altering temperature, barometric pressure, or humidity—to create the weather your clients want two days from now. When all players have taken their turns, each must enter a prediction as to whether or not the alterations will produce the desired effects. On the "Day of Reckoning," everyone learns the results of their tampering. Those who created what their clients wanted will get a higher fee from the next client.

Do Something about the Weather

Who among us hasn't complained about the weather? Well, now you can do something about it—at least within the confines of a game! *WEATHER TAMERS* offers a fairly realistic look at the multiple influences on weather patterns, giving players the opportunity to experiment with different elements to see how they interact. (Keep in mind, though, that this is a game—weather systems in the program do not always behave as they would in reality.) After players learn to create simple things like rain, sun, or clouds, they can move on to the challenge of hurricanes, sleet, and fog. The game is fun and fascinating at the same time. It facilitates an understanding of how the weather works in a lively way that's also fun. It is ideal for families or for the classroom, where kids can work together on teams and use the program as a springboard to discussions of how real weather patterns work. (Solo Play; 2- to 4-Player alternating; Joystick; Disk.)

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

FIRE ANT (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★) is a maze game that requires more than simply staying ahead of pursuers. The premise of the game is that you are the last remaining soldier from an entire army of ants



that was overrun by scorpions. They have taken your queen captive and are holding her at the end of an eight-chamber maze. Parts of the chambers have been sealed by the scorpions, and you must break through to save your captive queen. You enter the first chamber, where maneuverability is limited by both sealed gates and scurrying scorpions—of course their touch is deadly! There are objects scattered about, and you must determine which objects will cause the sealed passages to open. You have little defense against the scorpions but your quick reflexes. Occasionally you may find an object which will render them harmless for a few moments, but you can't count on much of that kind of help.

A Sense of Exploration and Discovery

The first chamber has three sealed passages, and you find the right objects to open them after a few tries. The second chamber is trickier, and it seems that staying alive for a certain amount of time has something to do with your success at making it through to the third chamber. The third chamber has so many sealed passages that you're not sure where to start! And the objects seem so far away and well-guarded. You begin to notice that the scorpions speed up when they turn red, and you try to learn what you did to make them change color. We couldn't quite make it out of the third chamber, but we noticed that we kept learning things about the game as we progressed. Although quick thinking and fast reactions with your joystick are as necessary in *FIRE ANT* as they are in any maze game, there is much more of a sense of exploration and discovery in this game than is typical with maze games. You have to react physically, but you have to think, too. Although the graphics are no better than average, play action is intriguing. If you like maze games but have grown tired of *Pac-Man* and its many clones, you may enjoy *FIRE ANT*. It's a maze game with just a touch of adventure game thrown in. It will engage your mind along with your joystick hand. (Solo Play; Joystick; Pause; Disk.) MSR \$22.95

ZETA-7 (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★) is a good game from Victory Software for those who like saving the world from alien invasions. In this one, your mission is to protect Zeta-Class Defense Sphere #7 with your solar-powered positron accelerator. Both Zeta-7 and your pod are under heavy attack from some very evasive enemy spacecraft firing high-energy plasma. This is all-out war, as you fire to destroy the enemy craft and their red blasts before they destroy you and Zeta-7. The enemy ships come in a multitude of shapes, all of them difficult to track and eliminate. Your shots are aimed with a rangefinder-like device, and they seem to arch into space before hitting their mark—that is, when they do hit their mark. The enemy ships have some of the trickiest moves we've seen lately, and they are real experts at slipping away from a seemingly well-aimed blast. Every time we played, we got credit for more enemy hits, but we never did manage to save Zeta-7. The sphere just kept blowing up at the end of the game, and we were told that, though we had escaped with our lives, "a promotion is unlikely." (Thanks a lot, guys—we tried!)

Erratic Enemy Ships

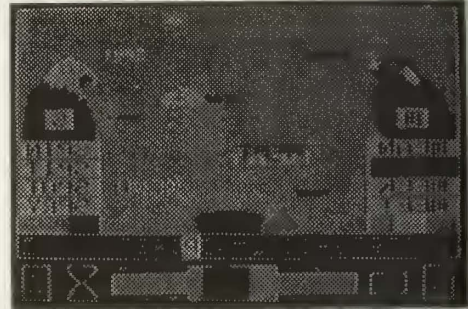
We had a lot of fun with this one. The graphics are very pretty: colorful planets, asteroids, satellites, stars and such against the blackness of space. Musical touches are well done, too. The game is a straight-out shoot-em-up that takes place within a path of space that's divided into sectors. Horizontal movement is actually circular, so you rotate your pod through the sectors. Vertical movement is limited to the confines of the TV screen, but the enemy ships certainly keep you busy within those boundaries! The single element that really makes the game interesting is the erratic and unpredictable movement of a nice variety of enemy ships. There is no way to figure out what any of them may do next. Because they keep you guessing, they force you to move and shoot constantly. Fans of outer-space shooting games will enjoy this one. (Solo Play; Joystick; Pause; Disk.) Recommended. (MSR \$22.95)

WORD FLYER, an educational game for ages 4-8, has been converted for the Commodore 64. With a 250,000 word dictionary, the program teaches



reading skills by matching words and letter combinations with the zooming words and letters coming on to the playing field. With your joystick, you move up

and down to pick out a slot (the "Flyer"). Move the Flyer out of the playing field and watch for matching letters to the Flyer you have. You begin with one letter at a time, moving up through two, three, and four letters. The lower levels teach the alphabet, while upper levels teach more complex patterns, word recognition, spelling, and pre-reading skills. As you fill up the score bar at the bottom of the screen, you move to the next, more difficult set of letters. The game also begins to speed up, with more and more Zooming Words flying at you, along with many "trick" combinations. Every time you make a match, your bird, perched at the side of the screen, chirps. If you miss, you'll hear a "boink." You have control over which letter of the alphabet you wish the words to begin with, so you can drill your child in areas they are weak



Good for Word Drills

Although, as we reported in our earlier review for the Atari computer version, the "surprise" is set too high for most youngsters (after the fifth level) and, therefore, they could become frustrated. This is a very good vocabulary drilling program. The graphics are very colorful and there is enough action, including pretty floating clouds, to potentially hold the child's interest level. There's no question that there is strong educational value in the program. (Disk; solo play; two-player alternating; joystick required) (Also available for Atari Computer) Recommended (MSR \$40.00)

Broderbund Delivers Spelunker

Broderbund begins shipment on an Atari and C64 disk version of the popular SPELUNKER, originally released for the Atari in 1983 by MicroGraphicImage. This combination maze/strategy game has been reworked with the help of the original designer and promises to have greater graphic detail and better gameplay than the original. Suggested retail will be \$29.95

Earthly Delights a New Adventure

Datamost Software is getting ready to enter the adventure field with a potentially exciting game, EARTHLY DELIGHTS. Planned for the Apple and IBM families of computers, it features advanced language-recognition allowing entry of full English sentences. The plot has you playing the hero who encounters a mysterious burglar and discovers that your painting has been stolen. From there, you decide what happens next. The entire plot depends on you! You play yourself, an ordinary person, caught up in extraordinary circumstances. Watch for a review soon!

In The Works at MicroLearn

MicroLearn has several junior and senior high school level education programs in the works in the style of their U.S. Constitution and S.A.T. programs (tutorial and test modes). With the withdrawal from the ADAM datapak (see article on front page), IBM, Apple, and Commodore 64 are the planned systems. The programs will include Algebra, Geometry, Physics, and Phrase-Mates (English).

CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

ROBOTS OF DAWN (NA/★★★★) is an all-text adventure based on the book of the same name by the prolific writer of science fact and fiction, Isaac Asimov. Epyx seems to have started a trend that began with *Dragonriders of Pern*, based on the Anne McCaffrey fantasy novel. It wouldn't be a trend if Epyx were the only company doing games based on books, but several other companies are now preparing such games, including Imagic (*Damiano*), Infocom (*A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe*), Trillium by Spinkler (*Amazon, Dragonworld, Fahrenheit 451, Rendezvous with Rama, Shadowkeep*). We have only one problem with all of this, folks. We have enough trouble keeping up with all the software reviews that we do every month. Now we have to read the books to do the best possible job on the game reviews! (By the way, do read Asimov's book. It has been nominated for a Hugo Award, and you'll understand why after you've read it. As the book reviewers are so fond of saying, it's a real page-turner.)

Classic Murder Mystery

ROBOTS OF DAWN is a classic murder mystery set in the futuristic world of the planet Aurora, the World of the Dawn. Aurora was colonized by Earthpeople back at the beginnings of interstellar travel, and it is a very peaceful spot in the universe because all the humans are protected by robots. The planet has practically no crime, so the murder of Dr. Han Fastolfe, inventor of the only humanoid robots in the universe, was quite a shock to the Aurorans. They have called in the noted detective from Earth, Elijah Baley, to solve the case. They don't think even he can do it, but he is the best man for the job.

Ace Detective from Earth

You take the role of Elijah Baley, ace detective, and set off for Aurora. You're uneasy about the assignment for a number of reasons, one of which is that you'll have to deal with open spaces on Aurora, the "Outside." (Like all Earthmen, you're accustomed to living in cramped, walled cities. You're agoraphobic, causing you to become panicked when exposed to the Outside for anything but the shortest of periods.) Fortunately, your friend, R. Daneel Olivaw, will be on Aurora. Daneel is Dr. Fastolfe's creation, a humanoid robot who has helped you on previous cases. As the game begins, you're alone in the living room of Dr. Fastolfe's estate. You'll want to find out about the trimensional wren in that room, because it can help you communicate telegraphically with the suspects in the case. Unfortunately, most of the suspects don't really want to talk to you. They don't like Earthmen and think that they are carriers of disease. As you search the estate for physical clues, you'll undoubtedly run into Daneel. He will be very helpful in explaining the functions of the many unusual objects you'll discover on Aurora, and he will follow you anywhere but into the personals. (That's Auroran for bathroom—you would know that if you had read the book!)

Most gamers will search out as many physical clues as possible in the early part of the game. You'll soon discover, however, that you must communicate with the suspects to really learn anything. (Daneel should be considered a suspect, although it's hard to imagine a robot disobeying the First Law of Robotics, which forbids a robot's harming a human.) Unlike some text adventures, this one allows you to ask complete questions in normal English. Not everything will work, of course, but you can ask such things as "Gladia, did you have a motive?" Carrying on conversations with other characters is sometimes fun, more often frustrating, but it's a unique feature of this game. You'll soon learn that you must use some clever trickery to get some of the Aurorans to answer your questions at all. If you don't figure a way to get them to talk to you, though, you'll never come up with the answer to the questions posed by the Chairman of the World Legislature when he shows up. To keep him from sending you back to Earth in disgrace, you must be able to tell him who had the motive, means and opportunity to kill Dr. Fastolfe.

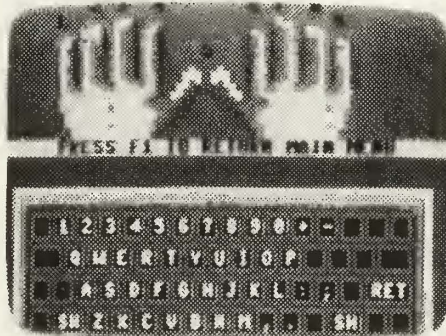
Taxes Powers of Reasoning and Deduction

ROBOTS OF DAWN is an excellent game that will really tax your powers of reasoning and deduction. It is more sophisticated than the adventures with the usual verb-noun parser, although it is obviously incapable of dealing with a full range of written English.

(The game that can deal with that much language complexity has not yet been designed.) The world of Aurora is unfamiliar—both to Elijah Baley and to you. There are restrictions on what you can say and do, just as there are on Baley in the book. But you'll have a good time exploring the use of such things as the airfoil, the psychic probe, the trimensional viewer, and the hyperwave screen. The game has a sense of humor, too, which can be fun in the tense moments.

You'll want to have a spare, formatted disk ready to save your game in progress. Otherwise, you'll find yourself playing a variation with different circumstances the next time you load the game disk. Incidentally, you don't have to read the book to enjoy the game, but it does help you to understand the characters, their motivations, and the settings better. The book will not help you to determine who the murderer is, at least partially because Dr. Fastolfe is not murdered in the book. The murdered character in the novel is Jander, Dr. Fastolfe's first humanoid robot, so it's actually a case of roboticide. In the game, you must solve a real murder—and it's a tough case to crack! (Solo Play; Keyboard; Disk.) (Planned for Apple and Atari computers.) Recommended. (MSR approx. \$35.00)

9 TO 5 TYPING (★★★★½/★★★★) is Epyx's attempt to create



a typing tutorial and game that will appeal to females, since so many typing games involve themes that are more popular with males. The first of a series of exercises illustrates most of the keys which should be struck with each finger. (Only letter keys, shift, return, and the most frequently used

punctuation keys—period, comma, colon and semicolon—are covered in this program. You're on your own when it comes to the number keys and other punctuation or function keys.) Practice in using "home row" and other keys, words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs is provided with a series of exercises that reward accuracy more than speed. The accompanying game scenarios include keeping Dora Lee from being caught by the pursuing Mr. Hart, Judy taking potshots at Mr. Hart, and Dora Lee roping Mr. Hart. The movie sequences can be omitted, if you prefer a more straightforward approach to practicing your typing. And it's possible to create your own typing exercises, too. (Be sure to have a blank, formatted diskette on hand.)

Enjoyable But Limited

We found this to be an enjoyable program for typing practice, as long as you understand its limitations. Most people will want to become as proficient with the number keys as they are with the letter and basic punctuation keys, whether they will be using their skills primarily at a typewriter or at a computer. However, the program works well enough for basic keyboard practice. The graphics are cute and add a bit of sugar coating to the basic keyboard drills. Theme music from the movie is used between exercises, not during the practice sessions when it could be distracting. We found one item in the instruction booklet interesting. The program keeps track of your words-per-minute (WPM) score, and the designers inform us that scores are accurate only up to 55 WPM, "due to limitations of the Commodore 64 computer." We'll have to think about that one! (Solo Play; Keyboard; Pause; Disk.) (Also planned for Apple II, Atari and IBM PC.) MSR approx. \$35.00

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

RAID OVER MOSCOW (★★★★/★★★★) is another win-

ACCESS
Software Incorporated

ner by Bruce Carver, the designer of *Beach-Head*. In fact, Carver has surpassed himself with this multi-screen contest that exercises a wide range of action-game skills and offers stunning, three-dimensional graphics.

The premise of the game is distressingly plausible: the world is on the brink of nuclear war following the dismantling of the U.S. nuclear arsenal in accordance with the SALT IV agreement. With U.S. defenses in a weakened state, the Soviets believe that a sudden nuclear attack on U.S. and Canadian cities can give them the world domination they seek. The player's near-suicidal mission involves flying stealth bombers from the U.S. Defense Space Station to knock out Soviet launch sites and then the Moscow Defense Center itself.

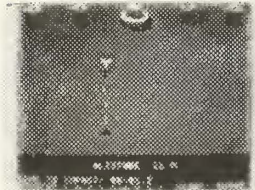
Scramble at the Space Station

Play begins with an overview of the globe from Strategic Air Command (SAC) Headquarters. The screen identifies the launch site and target of the first Soviet missiles and provides a countdown of time to impact. The next screen shows the Space Station where fighter pilots scramble to their bombers one at a time. Getting the bombers out of the Space Station is the first major test of the player's skill. As the whine of jet engines fills the enclosed space, each bomber must be raised off the launch deck, then rotated and thrust delicately to slip through the hangar doors. The player works under conditions of very realistic semi-weightlessness in the Space Station, and it takes a great deal of practice to keep from crashing the bombers into walls or the launch deck.



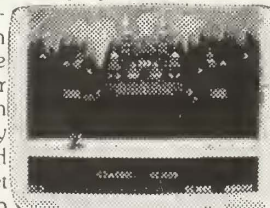
Attacking the Launch Sites

After one or more aircraft are flown out of the Space Station, one bomber is guided into Soviet airspace toward the first launch site. The attack run is a low-flying sortie, left to right across the screen, that is complicated by Soviet tanks, heat-seeking missiles, helicopters, and obstacles on the ground. Upon reaching the Soviet missile site, the player's bomber faces an array of four launch silos and one main control silo that are spread horizontally across the screen. Moving left or right, diving or climbing, the player must shoot rockets into the window of each silo to destroy it. Each silo has its own defense system that fires on the player's bomber, and enemy aircraft also try to shoot the player's craft down. Once the launch site is destroyed, SAC's global overview screen returns for the next Soviet missile launch, and all the player's remaining bombers are returned to the Space Station. The cycle of missile launch, scrambling bombers from the Space Station, the low-flying run through Soviet airspace, and the attack on the missile silos is repeated until the three perimeter launch sites (Leningrad, Minsk, and Saratov) are destroyed.



The Soviet Defense Center

With the perimeter launch sites gone, the player begins the Moscow attack by controlling a U.S. Commando who is positioned in a trench in front of the Soviet Defense Center. The Commando's weapon is a rocket launcher cradled on his shoulder, and the player can change the trajectory of the rockets by maneuvering the joystick forward and backward to change the angle of the rocket launcher. The Commando must keep moving in his trench, because enemy soldiers on the walls keep firing at him, and Soviet tanks patrol the open area between the trench and the Command Center. Soldiers fall realistically to the pavement when hit, but they're replaced after a short time. The player must clear the area of tanks and soldiers, and a certain door of the Defense Center must be hit before the Commando can enter the core of the Center, the Reactor Room.



Man Vs. Robot

The final confrontation in the Reactor Room is man vs. robot. A maintenance robot moves around, injecting coolant into the cells to keep the reactor stable. It is invulnerable to frontal attack, but it can be gradually damaged and finally destroyed by hitting it from behind with a disc grenade. The player-commando has a limited supply of these discs, which carom off the reactor's rear wall when thrown. (An interesting "laser beam guidance system" helps the player aim the shots.) The robot can sense the human's presence, which activates its automatic defense firing mechanism, so the player is faced with a target that moves and shoots. Depending on the skill level chosen, two to five robots must be disabled in turn before the cooling process breaks down, leading to self-destruction of the reactor. Just to keep things interesting, the last robot neglects its cooling duties. Critical mass approaches as the player tries to eliminate the final robot. It becomes a race against time to see if the Defense Center explodes before or after the player-commando escapes to his waiting plane. If he doesn't escape, the instruction booklet informs us that they will "notify your family."

Authentic War-Game Action

Move over, *Beach-Head*. As soon as game players try their joysticks on *RAID OVER MOSCOW*, Access Software will have another best-selling game on all the charts. For the player who likes real war-game action, not just an animated board game, *RAID OVER MOSCOW* surpasses even its excellent predecessor. The realism of the three-dimensional graphics combined with superb sound effects give this game a "you are there" kind of authenticity. And the range of skills tested in the different scenes create all the variety a game player could want. The challenge of the entire sequence is so great that few players will survive all the screens, and experience the entire game without many hours of practice. Fortunately for impatient gamers, the designer has provided a demo mode that cycles through all the screens. The player can take control at any point during the demo.

RAID OVER MOSCOW treads on an emotional taboo and dwells in the realm of the ultimate nightmare: nuclear confrontation. We all dread the possibility of a real World War III. This game gives the player the chance to intervene in a fantasy war, saving the world from imminent destruction. It's a powerful theme that is handled beautifully. (Solo Play; Joystick; Pause; Disk.) (Coming soon for Atari computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

ARCHON II: ADEPT (★★★★/★★★★) is nearly identical to the version for Atari computers, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. (Solo Play; 2-Player Competitive; Joystick; Pause; Disk.) (Also available for Atari computers.)



ELECTRONIC ARTS

Recommended. (MSR \$40.00)

Gardening By Computer

Sierra Software is working on a home gardening program which will take you through all the aspects of gardening---from proper lawn care, to what to plant for various geographic areas of the country.

Flight Simulation Being Readied

We also have heard that Sierra is working on their own version of a Flight Simulation program which should be ready around the first of 1985.

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

CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. ADAM-COMPATIBLE

SMARTLOGO takes ADAM users into the world of the programmable computer language, Logo. Some parts of Logo are similar to English and, therefore easy to learn.

Logo is most often used in graphics with the cursor being a turtle. SmartLOGO is the Logo language which was created especially for the ADAM. For those of you who don't know what Logo is all about, the initial vocabulary words are called Logo

primitives. Those words are different types of computer functions; adding, subtracting numbers, drawing graphics called "turtle graphics," and manipulating words and lists of words. A Logo program is actually a collection of procedures which are either primitives (pre-defined by SmartLOGO) or procedures which you design. The program begins with step-through procedures, where you can watch and learn how each command effects the movement of the turtle. It begins with the simplest of shapes (squares, circles, stars) and moves through multi-polygrams with several turtles. The demos illustrate SmartLOGO's graphic, music, word and list features. There are files which are programs as well as a typing tutor for beginners, and a shape editor aid. You can then move on to the "tools section" which help you construct your own procedures. You have graphics tools, math tools, and programming tools. With these, you could potentially program your own games! There are 60 turtle shapes available—from simple squares, triangles, and stars to dogs, trucks, rockets, even flowers! The 16 computer colors are available. You can also generate music and sound effects with Logo. With ADAM's four sound channels, you can create melodies while creating sound effects such as horns, drums, wind, etc on the noise channel.

We Tried It—We Liked It!

Our philosophy of "plug in and play" with ADAM was put to the test again with SmartLOGO. We sat down, loaded the tape, and did not open the manual. We wanted to see how easy it was to step through the program with just the prompts on the screen. We were not disappointed. The on-screen prompts stepped us through the various demos available. We could advance at our own speed as we would "flip the pages" once we felt we understood what was going on on the screen. As we slowly built from one turtle-turning and drawing a straight line-to the full spectrum of 10 turtles making multi-colored, multi-shaped designs, we never lacked open the manual. At that point, we felt we had a good, basic feel for the program and headed for the manual to learn all the other nuances available, as well as learning how to input our own Logo programs. The manual, as well as the on-screen prompts are extremely "user-friendly." In other words, the beginner can make his or her way through the program without being totally frustrated at "somehow being left behind in the first chapter." If you give the computer a command it doesn't understand, it will respond, "I don't know how to..." We learned that very quickly when we typed in "star." We went to the manual, learned that we could easily address the SmartLOGO Editor where we could teach Logo a new word. Simply put in the commands to have the turtle create a star (very easy, as it is shown in a demo) and from that point on "Star" is the command.

Good For Beginners

Because the reviewers at *Computer Entertainer* are familiar with Logo, we brought in a computer novice to work with this program. Because Logo is a language basically for beginners and children, we felt it was important to have a beginner work with it and this review is the result of interviewing the person, as well as watching the individual work with the program for several hours. He enjoyed himself immensely and got a kick out of creating many multi-colored designs on the screen. He then moved on to bigger and better things as the last time we looked in on him, several days later, he was working on blasting off in his rocket and trying to find just the right sound. (Does anyone know how to get him out of our review room??) We feel the program is a very good one for beginners and there is a good deal of depth to the program.

For ADAM owners who are used to paying under \$30.00 for their programs, this one will come as a shock; however, as you begin to move into more involved programs which offer more than games or simple home database, you will have to pay more for the involved programming and thorough documentation. Recommended (MSR approx. \$70.00)

New ADAM Programs in Canada

Coleco/Canada is marketing programs in Canada in the ADAM DataPack. These include B.C. GROG'S REVENGE (see review in this issue of ColecoVision version), WIZTYPE, WIZMATH, an accounting program, as well as a stock program. We also understand that, to this date, Coleco/USA has not made any moves regarding the marketing of the programs in the U.S. which, frankly, we don't understand. With ADAM owners begging for new product, and Coleco trying to establish the ADAM as a viable home computer (and we all know software is the key), shouldn't they be doing everything possible to provide additional software? Perhaps we're jumping the gun and they are about to bring it to the American market. We certainly hope so!

Our Readers Keep Writing!

We're pleased when we hear from you and you let us know that you're peppering the software companies with your concerns!

One example is reader Jeff Silva, another ADAM owner, who has been waging a letter writing campaign to the software companies regarding the current state of ADAM software. He was kind enough to pass along the answers he's received so far so we can pass it on to you.

...Micropose Software gave him a resounding NO; ditto from Penguin Software and Quicksilva Software. Meanwhile, SubLogic indicated they *might* do conversions IF they hear from enough ADAM owners.

Anyone who is concerned about software for their ADAM (or any other system) should sit down right away and write to the companies.

Back to Jeff's letter. He asked us a very good question, "what is the big deal about Sunrise offering their games on datapak when they are already out on ROM (faster loading and more durable)?"

Well, Jeff, normally it wouldn't be a big deal; however, ANYTHING in datapak at this point is a big deal—just to show support for the ADAM system. And, the datapak is less expensive than the ROM cart so if the ADAM owner doesn't already own the game on ROM, they have a less expensive way to purchase the same piece of software.

By the way, although we do not have a formal question and answer column or Reader column, we invite any and all comments, questions, gripes, etc. If you encounter a situation which is an individual problem, we will try and answer you directly by letter. If, however, you address something we feel is of interest to other readers, we will definitely publish your letter, question, or whatever you have to say! So—feel free to write—we love to hear from you!

ADAM Disk Drive Begins Shipments

The ADAM Disk Drive has begun to ship in small quantities, as well as the 64k expander. Although Coleco does not set retail prices, the approximate prices should be around \$300 for the disk drive and \$200 for the 64k expander.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ADAM-COMPATIBLE

SAVINGS & LOAN is a home utility program which allows the user to calculate and analyze loans, amortization tables, and savings. The first program, Loan Calculator, is used to figure out potential loan information. You can enter any three of four values, in any order. In other words, if you are interested in calculating a potential mortgage, you can enter in the total amount, number of years for pay-back, and interest, and the program will give you the monthly payment. You can change one of the factors and the calculator will refigure the loan with the new figures. At the bottom of the screen it will list up to three different sets of information. If you wish to print out Amortization tables, you can do so. You then have a listing of the loan, month by month, with the principal and interest paid in each month. At the bottom of the page a Remaining Balance and Equity to Date will be listed.

Savings Calculator

In the other portion of the program you can determine the final value of your investment based on amount of deposit, interest, years, and frequency of deposit. You must enter all four values in order for the program to calculate the potential growth of your savings. It breaks the information down into yearly, semi-annually, quarterly, monthly, weekly, daily, and continuous interest.

Good for Basic Loan Information

This is a very simple program to operate and does not offer any real "bells and whistles" such as calculating balloon payments, variable interest rates, etc. It does give a good guide to basic loan information so you don't have to call the bank constantly when you're trying to figure out which term length you should go with on a new car purchase, etc. We also used the loan program to figure out how many months it would take to pay off a charge card (something that's impossible to do without some major calculation due to the interest added every month on the unpaid balance). The savings program is a good way to project savings for a college education, retirement, etc. and, for the price, it's a good utility program that's simple for the entire family to use. (MSR \$24.95)

TREK (N/A / ★ ★ 1/2) is an inter-galactic planning strategy game which is played on a grid in which your ship is represented by an "E" on both a Scanner and Galactic Map on your screen. The Scanner, located in the upper left of your screen, represents the 64 sectors of the quadrant you are in. Within each quadrant are stars, along with the possibility of your enemy, the Klingon invaders, and a starbase. In the upper right hand corner there is a Galactic Map which displays the 64 quadrants of your galaxy. As you move your ship from quadrant to quadrant (by typing in "Warp" and indicating the direction you wish to travel), your sensors "explore" the surrounding eight quadrants, as well as the quadrant you've just entered. The Galactic Map will display which quadrants contain your enemy, as well as how many are in that quadrant. There are a total of two starbases located within your galaxy which must be reached in order to re-energize, resupply your ship with torpedoes, and repair any damage. The object of the game is to destroy the Klingons before your time and/or energy run out. You have 35 years to accomplish your mission and you can choose among several ranks which determines how many Klingons you must fight. You will be asked for a galaxy number and you have hundreds of galaxies to choose from.

Entering a Quadrant

Upon entering a quadrant in which there are Klingons, you must choose how to destroy them. You can direct a torpedo at them if you can aim directly at them. Any surviving Klingons in your quadrant will shoot back. Phasers are energy weapons which can be used when there are more than one Klingon in a given quadrant. Energy is evenly divided among the enemies and you may have to use up a great deal of your stored energy to kill them. The phasers are not very effective if the Klingons are far away. Especially in the higher levels, it will take a great deal of strategy to reach all the quadrants necessary to kill the Klingons and kill them with your limited amount of energy and torpedoes. Meanwhile, your ship can be damaged for a variety of reasons. There is a damage report displayed in the lower right corner of your screen. If your Scanners or Galactic Map are damaged, you'll be in a good deal of trouble as you'll be "flying blind."

A Different Kind of Space Game

This game will appeal to the strategy-minded players out there as it certainly cannot be classified as action in any way. We did not particularly enjoy the game at the beginning but found the more we stayed with it, the more we became "hooked" on trying to find a way to wipe out the Klingon invasion before running out of time or energy. With the hundreds of different galaxies available, as well as several levels of difficulty to choose from, we discovered that we did not easily tire of the game. For those who like strategy (and if you want to feed your ADAM), this one should be considered! (MSR \$24.95)

15 Programs in One

Martin Consulting, based in Canada, has managed to put together 15 programs on one ADAM DataPak at a list price of \$34.95! Among the programs included are a mini-assembler, disassembler, home finances, educational games, sound generator, magic programs, typing tutor, adventure game, filing system, 2 skill games, and more! We just got our review copy in so watch for a review in the November issue!

Infocom At It Again

Infocom, the undisputed leader of interactive fiction, is getting ready to release two new titles.

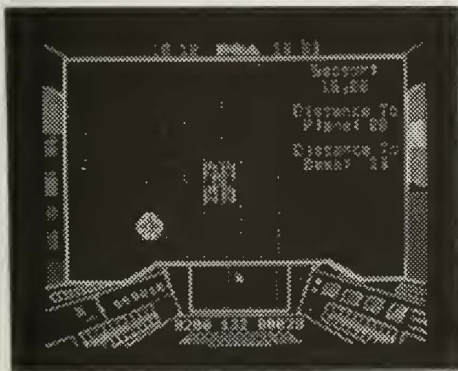
The first, **SUSPECT**, is written by David Lebling, co-author of the classic **Zork**, and propels you into the role of a newspaper reporter invited to an elegant masquerade ball. You're a friend of the hostess, wealthy socialite Veronica Ashcroft-Wellman, and your editor has asked you to record the event for the Sunday Living section of the newspaper. You attend the elegant masquerade ball, only to have a murder halt the festivities and fingers begin pointing at you. You have but a few hours to convince the police of your innocence and if you want a good story for your paper, you have to figure out who committed the crime and why. As is typical with Infocom packaging, this one comes with several elements including booklets on inside information on the estates of Montgomery County, including your hostess, as well as a copy of your party invitation, receipt for your costume rental, and a mysterious business card. Geared as an advanced level game, **SUSPECT** will be available for virtually all home computers at a retail of \$44.95 (\$39.95 for Atari, C64, and Color Computer).

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

The second work of interactive fiction is **HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY**, a translation of the extremely funny science fiction book of the same name. Douglas Adams, author of the book, also worked on the program, along with Steve Meretzky, author of the best-sellers **PLANETFALL** and **SORCERER**. This game puts you into the role of Arthur Dent, a hapless Earthling who wakes up one morning to find your house in the path of bulldozers clearing the way for a new highway. Unknown to you there are larger destruct plans for the entire planet. Your friend Ford Prefect who (also unknown to you) is from the star Betelgeuse, has a means of escape in the form of an Electronic Thumb. With the Electronic Thumb, you and Ford can hitchhike a ride on any passing spaceship. Once aboard the Vagon flagship the first stop on your interplanetary adventures, you'll find the characters and locations of the Hitchhiker's Guide appearing in a variety of misadventures which have been expressly written for this game. Once again the packaging includes all sorts of zany ingredients including a pair of peril-sensitive sunglasses which warn you of dangers you'll encounter in your travels throughout the universe along with copies of the destruct orders for your house. You're also given a piece of fluff and a microscopic space fleet as well as the Megadodo Publications sales brochure for the latest model of the Hitchhiker's Guide. And, just in case, there's a Don't Panic Button. The object of the game, according to Steve Meretzky, is to "stay alive, don't panic, and have a good time." Availability will, once again, be for most computers, at a retail of \$39.95.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..APPLE-COMPATIBLE

KYFOX (★★★★/★★★★) pits Sky-Pilot, flying the Skyfox Mach 4 Federation fighter plane against the enemy, whose motherships are attacking Federation asteroid bases with aircraft and tanks. There are a total of fifteen scenarios, with the first 7 being training missions, some with enemy tanks only, some with enemy planes only, some with both. These missions contain no enemy motherships and the enemy cannot destroy your home base. The remaining 8 scenarios are invasions where you must protect your home base or lose your computer and whatever fighters you still have there. Your view is from the cockpit of your fighter aircraft, armed with laser cannons and heat-seeking missiles. The handling abilities of your aircraft, along with the agility aspect of your opponents increase a great deal as you choose higher levels of skill. Following the training missions, you can try any one of fifteen scenarios, combating tanks, planes, or both to advance in rank from Cadet to Ace. As you begin each scenario, you enter the launch tube with the speed of the launch determined by your rank. There are several multiple Mothership invasions, each with a known shape and pressure. You can study enemy movement patterns in each of the scenarios by entering the base but not launching your aircraft. You can watch the enemy movement on the tactical map to understand their strategies.



Several Features

Your cockpit includes fuel and speed indicators, as well as a radar scanner display. You can bring up the computer tactical map whenever you want close-up information. In addition, you can place your aircraft on automatic pilot and your on-board computer will locate the nearest enemy targets and send you to their location. You can also move into warp speed to cover territory quickly. Depending on the scenario you choose, you may begin on the ground fighting the enemy tanks and then take-off through the clouds to fight enemy aircraft. This is much more than a "shoot-em-up" as tactics and strategy play an integral part of the game. There is tremendous depth to the game due to the many scenarios available. The graphics are arcade-quality, with bright, crisply defined colors, geometric precision, and a life-like sense of piloting your aircraft. Designed by 19-year-old Ray Tobey, it's a stunning animated game with enough strategy to keep computer gamers happy for hours. (solo play; joystick or keyboard)
Recommended (MSR \$40.00)

BOULDER DASH (★★★★/★★★★), with the lovable Rockford tapping his foot, comes to your Apple // and, once again, it's a beauty. In this version, you have a total of sixteen caves to collect as many sparkling jewels as possible before time runs out. Rockford must dig frantically, but carefully, avoiding the toppling boulders while collecting diamonds and moving on to the next cave. Many caves are extremely tough, with many requiring extremely varied strategy. You'll battle deadly fireflies, colorful butterflies, and ominous Amoeba, dependant on the caves you venture into. If you're crushed by a boulder, you must re-start that cave, re-collecting diamonds in that cave over again. The physics of the boulders are critical, and through trial and error, you'll learn how to avoid being crushed. As in the other versions available, there are four short interactive puzzles which you can play after completing certain caves. If you complete a playable intermission successfully, you gain a bonus Rockford.

Still Addictive!

Every time a new version of this one comes into our testing facility, we're hooked again. The graphics are stunning and, for the first time in a game for Apple, the designers have managed authentic two-way scrolling. It works extremely well with the gameplay outstanding. Every version we've seen has been truly an excellent conversion and we find ourselves saying "just one more cave." With all the varied caves available (some you can choose), boredom will not set in on this one! (solo player; two-player alternating; joystick required; pause)(also available for Atari and C64 computers; coming for ColecoVision)
Recommended (MSR \$40.00)

THE PERFECT SCORE: COMPUTER PREPARATION



MINDSCAPE INC

FOR THE SAT is a comprehensive package for the college-bound high school student preparing to take either the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) or the SAT. The package includes five, double-sided study disks which cover the all verbal and mathematics categories of the SAT, plus one double-sided disk that contains a tim-

ed, practice version of a full SAT and the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE). In addition, the manual in the form of a three-ring notebook gives additional background on general test-taking techniques and specific pointers for each category of the SAT.

Designed for Ease of Use

The program is designed for ease of use, even if the student is not especially familiar with computers. Each of the double-sided study disks covers one category: antonyms, analogies, sentence completion, reading comprehension, and mathematics. There are 100 questions per disk, divided into 10-question sections which can be used in either a Learning Mode (tutorial) or practice Testing Mode. Feedback is provided every step of the way in the Learning Mode, and there are hints after two incorrect answers to any question. A built-in clock keeps track of the time taken for each set of questions in both modes, and there are optional sound effects. Scorecards at the end of each question set may be printed out. One feature that is especially good is the ability to boot any other disk in the program from the one the student currently has in the drive. Altogether, *THE PERFECT SCORE* is an excellent program for the college-bound student. It is also an outstanding value, since similar programs from other software publishers typically cost about \$100.00. (Solo use; Keyboard; Pause; 6 double-sided disks compatible with Apple II+ //IIe/IIc.)
Recommended. (MSR \$69.95)

Computer Cassettes Disappearing

The cassette format for Atari and Commodore 64 is virtually dying as more and more owners switch to the faster and more reliable disk drives for their computers. We have noted that more and more manufacturers have discontinued manufacture of titles in cassette format and, in most cases, not releasing new product on the cassette format. The computer cassette appears to be destined to become the 8-track of the computer industry!

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

ADVENTURE MASTER (NA / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is programmed for anyone fourteen or older who loves adventure gaming and would like to try creating an original adventure game. The disks contain three adventures, one already completed ("Clever Catacombs") and two partial games for the user of the program to finish ("Becca in Outlaw Cave" and "Wild Trails"). The three games can be played, of course, and a password is provided so that you can see how they were designed with *ADVENTURE MASTER*. However, the star attraction of this program is the ability to create your very own adventure games from start to finish. Working with the detailed manual and the program's menu selections, it's surprisingly easy to develop a simple text adventure with several rooms, passageways, secret exits, objects to be found and used in various combinations, magic words, scoring, and even a picture or two in color.

Writing Your Adventure

The manual suggests starting your game with a little advance planning in the form of a map. Passageways between rooms are the first step, and you can even require a player to meet certain conditions or have a special object to use some of them. Descriptions of the rooms are entered, along with any objects you may wish to place there. You can even cause a player to be transported magically from one room to another by entering a certain word or phrase, perhaps letting the magic happen only if he or she has possession of a specific object at the time. The use of graphics in your adventure is optional, but it does add a nice touch to the finished game. Multi-colored pictures are drawn with the joystick, not the easiest method of getting a detailed drawing on the screen, but it does work. (The smaller the joystick, the easier it is to use as a drawing tool.) Unfortunately, the program does not work with a graphics tablet, but many users will bypass graphics entirely and concentrate on story lines. Once your adventure is at least partially completed, it can be tested for playability and then edited and polished until you're satisfied with it.

Programming Knowledge Not Required

Imaginative game players should have a great time creating their own adventures with this program. Although it does force you to plan and think logically, it requires no programming knowledge. Throughout the manual, there are examples and pointers that make your task easier. The manual clearly states which operations are required and which are optional, so you can spend more time creating the plot and progression of your adventure, and less time worrying about the mechanics of using the program. This one is a must for anyone who has ever thought they could create a great adventure, if only they knew how to go about programming it. By the way, be sure to have a few blank, formatted disks ready for your creative output. (Solo use; Keyboard and Joystick; 2 Disks.) (Also available for Apple II+ /IIe/IIc, Atari, IBM PC/PCjr computers.)

Recommended. (MSR \$44.95)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

MACINTOSH COMPATIBLE

FROGGER (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★) seems like the umpteenth translation of the venerable arcade game by Sega. Just when you thought that *Frogger II: Threedee!* would be in the limelight, Sierra gives us yet another version of the original classic. In case you're not aware of the story line—where have you been the last few years?—here's a brief outline. You are a frog who wishes to get back home. In order



SIERRA™

to accomplish this, you must first traverse a busy highway full of traffic moving in both directions. Once you get across the five lanes safely, you'll have a chance to rest on the bank, except in higher levels when a snake shares the bank. Once you've caught your breath (don't take too long a break, or your timed bonus won't be as good) it's time to cross the river. This involves hopping on logs, the backs of turtles (be wary of the ones that dive), the backs of crocodiles (stay away from open jaws), and finally into your home bay. In higher levels, there may be otters in the water which can knock you off the end of a log, snakes on logs and on the banks, and a female frog on a log that's good for a bonus if you get her home safely. Another bonus is a fly that may be in your home bay. Hop on him and get two hundred quick points.

Lacks Music

This version of *FROGGER* for the Mac has a few noteworthy problems. For one, the mouse can be quite awkward to use as a controller. To get the frog to hop, you push the mouse in the desired direction and click the button. (There is an on-screen guidance arrow that shows which way the frog will go on the jump.) When you're in a desperate situation, it's very easy to get confused, therefore inadvertently hopping in front of a truck! (It should be noted that it is possible to use the keyboard for control, but that does not improve play action.) Another problem, though a minor one, is the lack of music. The only sound is when you jump or get killed. Graphics are fairly detailed, but there are better graphics in some other versions of this game. If you are a big fan of *FROGGER*, and would like a game for your lonely Mac, then you may get some enjoyment from this game. But we would advise exercising a little patience until something better comes along. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Mouse or Keyboard Control; Disk.) (Also available from Sierra for Apple, Atari, Commodore 64 and IBM PC computers; on cartridge from Parker Bros. for Atari and Commodore 64 computers, plus Atari 2600 and 5200, ColecoVision, and Intellivision.)

Not recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

APPLE-COMPATIBLE

ARCHON (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ ★) finally comes to the Apple com-



ELECTRONIC ARTS™

puter in this translation of the now-classic strategy game that pits the forces of Light and Dark against each other. It's much like a chess game come alive, but peopled with icons of fantastic creatures such as goblins, knights, golems, unicorns and dragons, among others. The strategic elements of planning moves on a board are similar to chess, but "taking" an opposing square means a battle to the death in the combat arena. The outcome of battle is affected by the color of the board's square (light side forces are stronger on light squares, dark side forces on dark ones) and the relative strengths of the opponents. Magical spells even come into play, with the Wizard or Sorceress using such tricks as teleporting or imprisoning an icon—even healing an injured player or reviving a dead one. This game is more lively fun than chess ever was, whether you play against a computer opponent or a human one. (Solo Play; 2-Player competitive; Joystick and Keyboard; Pause; 48K Disk compatible with Apple II/II+ /IIe/IIc.) (Also available for Atari and Commodore 64 computers.) Recommended. (MSR \$40.00)

FLAK (★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★) won't win any awards for originality because



it's a straightforward, fly-up-the-screen shooting contest. According to the accompanying scenario, it is the year 209 and the world is threatened by a mysterious force known as Computer Control. If you are to save the world from this freedom-hating entity, you must fly a hypersonic fighter over a landscape littered with Computer Control's intelligent flak batteries. As you speed up or slow down, moving right or left to avoid the flak, the batteries will attempt to keep you from reaching the CPU, a 65 chip. They'll shoot at every possible angle, even shooting at you from behind or trying to catch your craft in a crossfire. The player has a choice of six difficulty levels at the beginning of the game.

Very Ordinary Game

FLAK is a very ordinary game with rather plain graphics and plinky-plunk sound effects, although the sound is considerably improved if you have a Mockingboard in your Apple. (See review under Atari computers for picture of game screen. The Apple version is quite similar.) While we cannot deny the game's challenge due to flak batteries firing from every direction, we tire of the game very quickly. There just isn't enough variety in flying straight to the screen and shooting away while you dodge to the left and right. (Solo Play; Joystick or Keyboard control; Pause; 48K disk; Compatible with Apple II/II+ /IIe/IIc.) (Also available for Atari and Commodore 64 computers; coming soon for IBM PCjr.) Not recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

SNEAK PREVIEW

B.C. II: GROG'S REVENGE (★★★★/★★★★) is the long-awaited sequel to the delightful *B.C.'s Quest for Tires*. Now that Thor, the comic strip hero, has completed his humorous Quest for Tires and saved Cute Chick from the dinosaur, he embarks on a more difficult task: discovering the Meaning of Life. Like its predecessor, this game was designed by Sydney Development Corporation of Canada and is distributed in the U.S. by Sierra.



SIERRA™

Clams and the Meaning of Life

Thor of the stone wheel and silly grin spends this game gathering clams on the rock-ledge paths of a mountain maze. The Meaning of Life is hidden somewhere in that maze, and he aims to find it—with your help, of course. He wheels around a mountainous hairpin curve at the start of the game. From that point, it's your job to keep him from falling off ledges into oblivion or crashing into the side of the mountain with a splat. The path is narrow, so it requires some fancy maneuvering to collect clams while avoiding rocks, potholes, and the ferocious, wheel-eating Tiredactyls. All this clam-gathering is not idle play for points, though. Thor has to pay a toll of 100 clams to cross the bridge to the next level. There are also caves on each level which are full of even more clams and dangerous stalagmites. When Thor enters one of the caves, he turns on his headlight to see in the dark. You must keep Thor moving back and forth, watching what the headlight reveals, to collect clams and avoid the stalagmites.

GROG!!

Unfortunately for Thor, he's not the only one collecting clams on the mountainside. Grog gathers them, too, and Grog has a very nasty disposition. If Grog appears on the same screen with Thor at any time, the game is over in an instant as Grog stands there and bellows "GROG!!" Thor's only defense against this unfriendly fellow is to stay out of his way, which he can do by your keeping a watchful eye on the Preview Screen that appears below the playing screen area. (This is a map that lets you know more about the level of the mountain that Thor is exploring than can be learned from the limited portion shown on the actual playing screen.)

While *B.C.'s Quest for Tires* is a horizontally scrolling game that is a matter of overcoming hazards and obstacles, its sequel requires exploration of unknown territory. There are paths that wind around the mountains, dead-end crevasses, and cave passages that lead underground from path to path. There are six different levels, and it's possible to "warp" from one level to the next if you can solve the riddles in the instruction booklet. Otherwise, you'll just have to get Thor to collect enough clams to pay the toll, which turns out to be easier than figuring out some of those riddles!

More Depth to the Sequel

All the humor of the first game is present in this one: Thor's stringy hair waving in the breeze as he rides his stone tire around the mountain, Thor's dismayed expressions when he bumps into a rock or loses his wheel over a mountain ledge, the bellowing bully Grog as he appears to end the game for poor Thor. The animation of the cartoon characters is outstanding and combines well with the comical elements. But what we liked best about this sequel is the fact that it has much more depth than the original game. *GROG'S REVENGE* demands plenty of eye-hand coordination skills from the player, but it also provides an intellectual challenge that the first game didn't have. Not only must Thor collect clams and avoid obstacles, but he must also find his way to toll bridges by learning where all the paths and caves lead. Another indication of greater depth in this game is the fact that we haven't yet learned the "Meaning of Life" that Thor seeks. We did make it all the way through *B.C.'s Quest for Tires* in the course

of reviewing it.) *GROG'S REVENGE* has an ideal combination of attributes: great graphics, humor, and both physical and mental challenges. This looks like another winner for Sierra and Sydney. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating.) (A version with more levels is available on data-pack for Adam in Canada.) Recommended. (MSR approx. \$35.00)

CONGO BONGO (★★★/★★½) is an adaptation of the Sega arcade climbing game that features all three reens of the original coin-op. The three-quarter perspective used in the graphic treatment gives the game a three-dimensional appearance. (It's interesting to note that Sega's own home adaptations for several other systems have only two of the three screens.)



Dodging Coconuts

Safari Sam is the player's on-screen alter ego, and his goal is to reach the ape, Bongo, on each of the three screens. First Sam must avoid the coconuts that Bongo tosses from the top of Waterfall Pass. Sam crosses streams and climbs steps carved in rock to reach a plateau inhabited by scampering monkeys. At higher skill levels, they can make real pests of themselves, but they create few problems at first. When Sam reaches Bongo, he moves on to the second screen at Rhino Ridge. The charging rhinos are much faster than Sam is, so he must be on the alert to jump over them or hide in a convenient mole hole. If Sam outwits the rhinos to reach Bongo again, it's on to the Lazy Lagoon. Here Sam hops across the lagoon, using lily pads, islands, fish, and the backs of diving hippos. When he reaches the far shore of the lagoon, he has to get past more charging rhinos before he can climb the last few steps to wreak his revenge on the sleeping Bongo.

Best Translation of the Coin-Op

We must admit to being less than enchanted with *CONGO BONGO* in all its incarnations, from coin-op original to the home versions, first by Sega and now by Coleco. The three-dimensional look of the game is very appealing, but we find the gameplay itself to be shallow and unsatisfying. However, of all the home versions available, Coleco's is unquestionably the best. Coleco has retained all three of the screens, kept the three-dimensional look, and programmed the game to play very much like the coin-op. So, if you're a fan of the arcade game, you may want to add this cartridge to your collection. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause.) (Also available from Sega for Atari 2600 and 5200, Intellivision; for Apple, Atari, Commodore 64 and IBM computers.)

Bushnell Update

Our readers always like to keep up with Nolan Bushnell (founder of Atari), so we thought we'd let you know what he's up to these days. In addition to his ongoing commitment to Androbots (home robots), he is still hard at work with his company, SENTE. We spoke with an individual at Sente who assured us they are still hard at work developing "phenominal, state-of-the-art" videogames. It should be noted here, however, that those games are being developed for the Arcades ONLY (but, who knows...many arcade games have been licensed for home use).

New Company Formed

Bushnell has also formed a new company which, at least for the present, does NOT make electronic games. Axlon Games has been established to "design and market a variety of home entertainment products." The first product to emerge from this new company is a line of eight different trivia question-and-answer card sets, designed to be compatible with the Trivial Pursuit board game, or they may be played by themselves. Anyone want to count how many trivia games will be out this Christmas??

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

TELLY TURTLE isn't a game at all, but rather a pre-LOGO learning experience for children ages five to fifteen. (Some youngsters may think it's a game, and there's no reason to insist otherwise.) The program is based on the use of Turtle Graphics and graphic symbol commands. It takes the child through a step-by-step introduction to computer programming, using only the hand controller and a selection of simple graphic symbols on the screen. The "turtle" is actually an open circle with a blunt pointer on one side, and the object for the child is to make the turtle draw various shapes on the screen. Through a series of graduated lessons called "turtle topics," the child learns to make Telly the Turtle draw squares, circles—or whatever. As the lessons progress, the child begins to write simple programs that direct Telly's moves. The ability to think logically and solve problems is thus encouraged.

Good for Young Children

This is a well designed program that is especially valuable for younger children with limited reading and typing skills. Older children will probably prefer going straight to *SmartLOGO* if there's an ADAM in the family. For the little ones (parental guidance suggested) and for those with only the ColecoVision unit, this program is an easy introduction to the foundations of LOGO and programming in general. (Solo Play)

Recommended.

MR. DO'S CASTLE (★★★/★★★★1/2) has the same



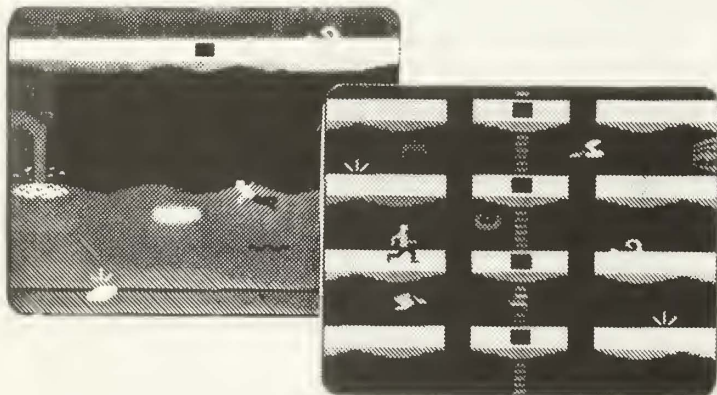
premise in the various versions (see review under Atari 5200) and the Coleco version is extremely similar in gameplay. We did find, however, we had the ability to move Mr. Do with just a bit more preciseness in the Coleco version (we did use the identical Wico joystick on both the Coleco and Atari computer versions when testing them). The graphics of the castle are different in that it fills the entire television screen, as opposed to the 5200 and Atari computer versions which are vertical (similar to the layout on the arcade version). The graphics were not quite as crisp in this one, although we did not find that a problem. All in all, we enjoyed this version very much. It's an enjoyable climbing game for anyone who enjoys a good climbing challenge. (one player; pause)

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

PITFALL II LOST CAVERNS (★★1/2/★★★1/2) is a literal



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



Over the River and through the Cave

The game begins at the edge of the cavern, where the player catches a glimpse of the cowardly Quickclaw. The cat trembles in fear, but Harry can't possibly reach him at this point. (Just try, and a prehistoric cave rat will push Harry unceremoniously into the underground river.) Harry is beset by pests from the beginning—bats, condors, albino scorpions, poisonous frogs, and electric eels. There's a short run above the cavern where he'll meet the first three creatures in rapid succession. However, Harry spends most of his time in the cave, and there are limitless numbers of all the nasties down there. Beneath the earth, our plucky adventurer climbs lots of ladders, swims the underground rivers, and may even catch a balloon for a ride across a great chasm. Elaborate music accompanies him every step of the way, and there is a special carnival tune for his balloon flights. (The music can be turned off if desired.)

Identical to the Original

PITFALL II on the Atari 2600 is one of the most impressive feats of programming we've ever seen for that system, and we were looking forward to an enhanced version of the game for ColecoVision. Unfortunately, there are no refinements in the ColecoVision translation. The graphics are identical to the 2600 original. The music is identical. The gameplay is identical. This creates a problem for us in reviewing the game: although we loved the 2600 version, and the ColecoVision translation plays just as well, we are disappointed that the translation offers no improvements over the original. We don't mind the equivalent gameplay, but we do object to the lack of graphic enhancement. *PITFALL II* is downright astounding on the modest little 2600, but it certainly doesn't push the limits of the ColecoVision. If you don't already own the 2600 version of this game, by all means consider adding it to your collection, because it's still a very good game. The shame is that could have been a great game for the ColecoVision with a little more effort. That extra effort would have earned our rating of "recommended" for this game. (Solo Play; Pause.) (Also available for Atari 2600 and 5200 and for Atari computers.) MSR \$34.95

Coming Next Month...

We know you watch the front page carefully for reviews published in the next month's issue. Then, when we don't deliver a review, we hear from you asking what happened?? Again, the titles listed are based on commitments from manufacturers on review copies which they indicate they will have to us within the next week or so. Unfortunately, in some cases, the programs don't reach due to a last minute glitch found in the program at the manufacturing level, packaging or documentation problems, or any number of other things which can go wrong. We do our best to list only those programs which we feel VERY confident about receiving; however, it doesn't always work out perfectly.

In that light, we know we promised a review of *SmartLOGO* for ADAM a couple of months ago which is finally just appearing in this issue. At the time, Coleco was going through a change in their review policies which set the distribution of the program back. We received it right before going to press last month and felt, due to the depth of the program, we could not do justice to it, or you, by rushing a review to make the September issue.

You're probably looking for a review of *Super Zaxxon* this month, based on our promise last month. The review copies of the program were delayed a few days at Coleco and, therefore, will not reach us in time to give you a fair review. Be assured that we will review it, as well as EVERY piece of software for ALL home systems just as soon as we receive them and have time to review them properly.

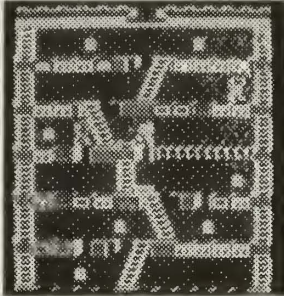
One last thing—if a game is made for the dedicated systems (2600, 5200, ColecoVision, etc.), we WILL review it too, as long as we can get a copy of the program. The release of products for the game systems has become almost nonexistent from the manufacturers. Don't worry—we will NOT hold back on our reviews.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

MR. DO'S CASTLE (★★★/★★★★½) brings one of our favorite characters back to the home screen. This arcade translation finds Mr. Do wielding a hammer

through his castle where he must climb up and down ladders, down hallways, collecting keys, cherries, etc.—all with his hammer. His enemies this time are the Unicorns which will follow him relentlessly. He can bonk them in the first couple of levels if they are standing on a block or, on any level, he can drop blocks on them, or slow them down by hammering them through openings in the floor. Unfortunately, once you eliminate all but one Unicorn, they change color to Blue and double in number! Another problem is when you hit the red unicorns on the head too many times— they'll turn into green unicorns which are much feistier than the red ones. If you clear the castle hallways of all the cherry blocks by hammering them, you'll move on to the next level. If you hammer the 3 keys, the door at the top of the castle opens and, if you can make it to the top without getting caught by a Unicorn, Bonus Letter unicorns come onto the scene and you can bonk them for bonus letters. For each one you eliminate, you'll earn the corresponding letter in the word, "EXTRA". Spell EXTRA and you win an extra Mr. Do and advance to the next scene. There are eight scenes with sixteen difficulty levels.



Very Challenging

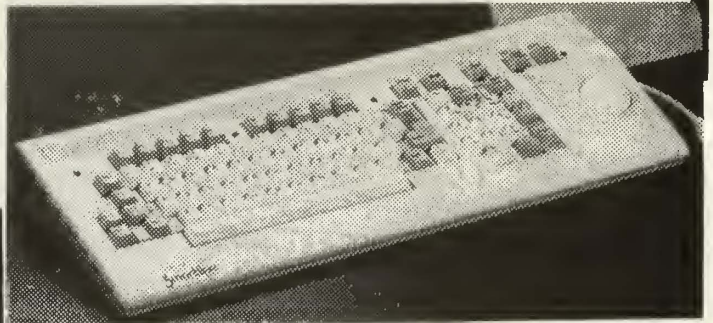
This sequel to the popular MR. DO is much more challenging than its predecessor as there are many more variables to contend with. It will take some time to learn the best pattern to make it through the seven floors on each level. The graphics are reminiscent of the arcade version and they are good and crisp. This climbing game is loads of fun and will keep any climbing fan busy for many hours! Because it is a climbing game, as opposed to the original Mr. Do which was a tunneling game, it may attract different gamers and lovers of the original Mr. Do will not necessarily love the sequel. (one player; pause)
Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

Notes on the Availability Update

We've had a number of our readers ask questions about how e Availability Update is compiled. We gather the information from e software companies themselves, and we do not alter it in any ay, regardless of how unlikely the delivery dates appear to be. You have also noted and commented on the fact that we break es down by both month and quarter. When we first began the availability Update, all companies gave us release dates by month; however, as many have found (in some cases, the hard way) that ose dates have been difficult to live up to, some companies have oved to a quarterly release schedule. If a software program is ven to us as a release in a particular month, we reflect that in e Update. If, however, the company only gives us a release date quarter, that is what we print!

Parker Bros. Software Hard to Find

In many parts of the country, finding software made by Parker Bros. has become difficult, if not impossible. There have been eports that Target Stores is considering dropping the line due to s relatively high price compared to software by other-companies. There is no question that the continuance of software in the artridge form is the most expensive format, and it may just be a matter of time before Parker Bros. must stop manufacturing the ROM arts. If they do, there will be virtually NO third party software ompanies releasing product for the Atari 2600 or 5200 (Activision and Sega are still making some games for the 5200).



Wico Introduced Programmable Keyboard/Trackball Peripheral

Wico has just introduced a new computer peripheral system—the Smartboard. It is fully user programmable with just a few keystrokes, can emulate a mouse, is expandable and upgradeable, and is available for the IBM PC and the Apple II family of computers. The intelligence of the Smartboard is based on a 4K ROM program that contains both QWERTY and DVORAK layout (the two most popular keyboard layouts) and cursor controls for the trackball. 2K of RAM allocates 512 bytes to the function keys, 128 bytes to the trackball, 256 bytes to the programmable keyboard layouts, 256 bytes for the type ahead buffer, and 512 bytes for program flags and FIFO buffers. The remaining RAM may be user patched or occupied by upgrades or revisions. Any single function key can be programmed to contain as many as 126 characters of information including all alphabet characters, control characters, spaces and returns, etc.

All user programming is stored in the SmartBoard with a three penlight cell battery backup system. Factory programming may be restored instantly by pressing the PRGM and Reset key. The Key Swap feature permits an instant exchange among parts of keys to aid in mouse emulation or for clustering frequently used control keys together. A serial expansion port is included to enable additional controller devices to be connected to or through the SmartBoard, or to allow several users to access the same host computer. The SmartBoard will retail for \$399.95 (available in November) and will plug directly into an IBM PC. The Apple version will require an adaptor which will retail for \$50.00

BOOK REVIEW

EASY INTERFACING PROJECTS FOR THE VIC20 published by Prentice-Hall is a rather technical guide to several interfacing projects for the VIC20. Each project comes with a listing of BASIC programs to run with the projects. Some of the projects you can build which are included in this handbook include a speech synthesizer, telephone modem, mechanical actuators, printer interfaces, light sensor suitable for a burglar alarm, and more. It begins with fundamentals of the VIC-20 such as a detailed description of the 6502 microprocessor and also tells you how to program a ROM chip if you wish to use your VIC for a dedicated purpose (such as a burglar alarm monitor).

This book is geared solely to the serious VIC-20 user who has a good grasp of computer knowledge and wishes to program and customize his VIC to specific uses.
(MSR \$10.95)

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ATARI COMPUTERS

NOVEMBER

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

FOURTH QUARTER

Barbie (EPYX)
 Computer Ambush (SSI)
 Computer Baseball (SSI)
 Dunzhin (SCRN)
 G.I. Joe (EPYX)
 Grammar Examiner (DES)
 Hot Wheels (EPYX)
 Kav (SCRN)
 Master Home Planner (PPI)
 Mr Do (DS)
 Mr Do's Castle (PB)
 Notable Phantom (DES)
 Pastfinder (ACT)
 Reforger 88 (SSI)
 Seti (TRAP)
 Space Shuttle (ACT)
 Spelunker (BRO)
 Spy Vs. Spy (FS)
 Super Football (NEXA)
 Super Music Box (PPI)
 Twisted (TRAP)
 U.S. Adventure (FS)
 Wargames (COL)
 Wylde (SCRN)
 Zenji (ACT)
 Zone Ranger (ACT)
DECEMBER
 Breakdance (EPYX)
 Designer Pencil (ACT)
 Toy Bizarre (ACT)

JANUARY

Moreta: Dragonlady of Pern (EPYX)

COMMODORE 64

OCTOBER

x-Break Street (CS)
 Chopper Hunt (IMGC)
 Demon Attack (IMGC)
 Dracula (IMGC)
 x-Frogger II Threedeeep (PB)
 Ghostbusters (ACTV)
 Injured Engine (IMGC)
 Swords & Serpents (IMGC)
 B.C. Grog's Revenge (SOL)
 x-Cutthroat (INF)
 Dr. Seuss Fix-Up (COL)
 Fortune Builders (COL)
 Lite Sprite (TS)
 x-Montezuma's Revenge (PB)
 Mr Do (DS)
 x-President Elect (SSI)
 x-Robots of Dawn (EPYX)
 Rock N' Rhythm (SPN)
 Spelunker (BRO)
 Stress Manager (BI)
 Stunt Flyer (SOL)
 Super Pipeline (INT)
 Tarzan (COL)
 x-Trivia Mania (PS)
 Viking Raider (INT)
 Wargames (COL)
 x-Weather Tamers (CBS)
 Your Personal Net Worth (SCR)

FOURTH QUARTER

Ankh (DM)
 Baltic 85 (SSI)
 Breakthrough in Ardennes (SSI)
 Broadsides (SSI)
 Circus Charlie (PB)
 Computer Baseball (SSI)
 Computer Quarterback (SSI)
 Designer Pencil (ACT)

Dragonfire (IMGC)
 Dunzhin (SCRN)
 Grammar Examiner (DES)
 Hitchhiker's Guide (INF)
 Jet Boot Black (DM)
 Kav (SCRN)
 Lost Tomb (DS)
 Mabel's Mansion (DM)
 Master Home Planner (PPI)
 Miner 2049er II (MF)
 Moonsweeper (IMGC)
 Mr Do's Castle (PB)
 Mychess II (DM)
 Notable Phantom (DES)
 Nova Blast (IMGC)
 On Court Football (ACT)
 On Court Tennis (ACT)
 Park Patrol (ACT)
 Polar Pierre (DM)
 Seti (TRAP)
 Short Circuit (MF)
 Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)
 Spy Vs. Spy (FS)
 Super Music Box (PPI)
 Suspect (INF)
 Twisted (TRAP)
 U.S. Adventure (FS)
 Whistler's Bros (BRO)
 Wylde (SCRN)
 Zenji (ACT)

DECEMBER

Breakdance (EPYX)
 G.I. Joe (EPYX)
 Hot Wheels (EPYX)
 Pitstop II (EPYX)
 Time Machine (IMGC)

APPLE II/IIe

OCTOBER

x-President Elect (SSI)

FOURTH QUARTER

Ankh (DM)
 Another Bow (IMGC)
 Archon (EA)
 Baltic 85 (SSI)
 B.C. Grog's Revenge (SOL)
 Beamrider (ACT)
 Boulder Dash (MF)
 Breakdance (EPYX)
 Breakthrough in Ardennes (SSI)
 Broadsides (SSI)
 Computer Baseball (SSI)
 Computer Quarterback (SSI)
 Crime & Punishment (IMGC)
 Cutthroat (INF)
 Dragonfire (IMGC)
 Dunzhin (SCRN)
 Earthly Delights (DM)
 Grammar Examiner (DES)
 Graphics Exhibitor (KOALA)
 Hitchhiker's Guide (INF)
 Injured Engine (IMGC)
 Juno First (DS)
 Kav (DM)
 Kings Quest (128K) (SOL)
 Lost Tomb (DS)
 Mabel's Mansion (DM)
 Miner 2049er II (MF)
 Mr Do (DS)
 Mychess II (DM)
 Notable Phantom (DES)
 President's Choice (SPN)
 x-Reforger 88 (SSI)
 Robot Odyssey I (LC)
 Seti (TRAP)
 Short Circuit (MF)
 Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)
 Spy Vs. Spy (FS)
 Star League Baseball (GAM)
 States & Traits (DES)
 Station 5 (MF)
 Suspect (INF)
 x-Trivia Arcade (SCRN)
 x-Trivia Mania (PS)
 Twisted (TRAP)
 U.S. Adventure (FS)
 Your Personal Net Worth (SCR)
 War in Russia (SSI)
 Wylde (SCRN)

NOVEMBER

Pitfall II (ACT)

DECEMBER

Another Bow (IMGC)
 Barbie (EPYX)
 Damiano (IMGC)
 Designer Pencil (ACT)

AVAILABILITY UPDATE

G.I. Joe (EPYX)
 H.E.R.O. (ACT)
 Hot Wheels (EPYX)
 Pitstop II (EPYX)
 Space Shuttle (ACT)
 Stunt Flyer (SOL)

IBM PCjr

FOURTH QUARTER

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

ADAM

FOURTH QUARTER

ADAMCalc (COL)
 Address Book Filer (COL) ★
 Best of Broderbund (COL)
 CPM 2.2 (COL)
 CPM 2.2 (COL) ★
 Dragons Lair (COL)
 x-Expertype (COL)
 Expertype (COL) ★
 Home Software Library (COL)
 Recipe Filer (COL)
 Recipe Filer (COL) ★
 x-Savings & Loan (VIC)
 Smart Filer (COL) ★
 Smart Letters Forms (COL) ★
 Sub Roc (COL)
 x-Trek (VIC)

★ floppy disk format

ATARI 2600

FOURTH QUARTER

Circus Charlie (PB)
 x-Frogger II Threedeeep (PB)
 x-Montezuma's Revenge (PB)
 Mr Do's Castle (PB)

COLECOVISION

OCTOBER

Brain Strainers (COL)
 Circus Charlie (PB)
 x-Congo Bongo (COL)
 x-Dr. Seuss Fix Up (COL)
 x-Fortune Builders (COL)
 x-Frogger II Threedeeep (PB)
 x-Montezuma's Revenge (PB)
 x-Mountain King (SUN)
 Mr Do's Castle (PB)
 x-Pitfall II (ACT)
 Zenji (ACT)

FOURTH QUARTER

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

DECEMBER

Summer Games (EPYX)

ATARI 5200

FOURTH QUARTER

x-Montezuma's Revenge (PB)
 Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)
 Tutankham (PB)
 x-Frogger II Threedeeep (PB)
 Mr Do's Castle (PB)
 x-Pitfall II (ACT)
 Zenji (ACT)
OCTOBER
 Pastfinder (ACT)
 Space Shuttle (ACT)
 Zone Ranger (ACT)
DECEMBER
 Toy Bizarre (ACT)

COMPANY NAME CODES:

ACTV Activision
 AH - Avalon Hill
 ART - Artwork
 AT - Atari
 BI - Batteries Included
 BRO - Broderbund
 CBS - CBS Electronics
 COL - Coleco
 COMM - Commodore
 CS - Creative Software
 DES - DesignWare
 DM - DataMost
 DS - DataSoft
 EA - Electronic Arts
 ELE - Electra Concepts
 EPYX - Epyx
 FS - First Star
 II - Intellivision Inc
 IMGC - Imagic
 INAC - Interactive
 INF - Infocom
 INT - Interphase
 LC - Learning Co
 MF - Microfun
 MICP - Microprose
 MMG - MMG Micro Software
 PB - Parker Bros
 PDI - Program Design Inc
 PS - Professional Software
 SCR - Scarborough
 SCRN - Screenplay
 SOL - Sierra
 SPN - Spinnaker
 SSI - Strategic Simulations
 ST - SirTech
 STRSIM - Strategic Simulations
 SUB - SubLogic
 SUN - Sunrise
 SYN - Synapse
 TRAP - Trapeze
 TRO - Tronix
 TS - TechSketch
 TYM - Tymac
 XON - Xonox
 VIC - Victory Software

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(x - indicates shipped by our retailers by our press. (may not be in no distribution, however. (Editor's Note: We feel in some cases, dates given by the manufacturer are simply not realistic. However, we feel it is our responsibility to give you the most accurate release dates available, without alteration.)