THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

INCLUDES

Computer Entertainer

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A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman

THE TOP SELLERS OF 1983

1. *MINER 2049ER (MF/COL)*
2. *MS PAC-MAN (AT/2600)*
3. *RIVER RAID (ACTV/2600)*
4. *SWORDS & SERPENTS (IMGC/INT)*
5. *WAR ROOM (ODY/COL)*
6. *Q*BERT (PB/COL)*
7. *DONKEY KONG JR (COL/COL)*
8. *ENDURO (ACTV/2600)*
9. *POLE POSITION (AT/5200)*
10. *MS PAC-MAN (AT/5200)*
11. *CENTIPEDE (AT/5200)*
12. *CENTIPEDE (AT/2600)*
13. *QUEST FOR TIRES (SOL/COL)*
14. *LOOPING (COL/COL)*
15. *TIME PILOT (COL/COL)*
16. *DONKEY KONG (AT/COMP)*
17. *SUPER ACTN BASEBALL (COL/COL)*
18. *PITFALL (ACTV/2600)*
19. *CENTIPEDE (ATARI/COL)*
20. *NOVA BLAST (IMGC/COL)*

IN THIS ISSUE...

Coleco Voice!!!
Exclusive Imagic News
Exclusive Parker Bros News
Software Updates for 1984

OVER 30 REVIEWS INCLUDING

Nova Blast
Frontline
Super Cobra
Tutankham
for ColecoVision

Joust
Ms Pac-Man
for Atari Computer

Robotron 2084
Murder By The Dozen
Dino Eggs
for Apple

Mountain King
Pengo
Blueprint
for Atari 5200

AND, THAT'S JUST FOR STARTERS!!

COMING NEXT MONTH...

ADAM Software Update
1984 Coleco news
CBS News
Complete Summary of C.E.S.
Many, many reviews including
Atarisoft for Intellivision
Dragonriders of Pern
and, of course, lots more that we're already working on!

VIDEO TAKE-OUT TOP 10 SELLERS

1. *WAR ROOM (ODY/COL)*
2. *POPEYE (PB/COL)*
3. *CENTIPEDE (AT/COL)*
4. *QUEST FOR TIRES (SOL/COL)*
5. *NOVA BLAST (IMGC/COL)*
6. *JOUST (AT/5200)*
7. *SPACE SHUTTLE (ACTV/2600)*
8. *ASTROCHASE (PB/5200)*
9. *PITSTOP (EPYX/COL)*
10. *MOUNTAIN KING (CBS/2600)*

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

As we enter the new year, we felt it's time to go back through this past year to reflect the exciting, and constantly changing world of the home game and computer market.

JANUARY

As Winter C.E.S. was about to commence in Las Vegas, we previewed many of the top secret plans by the various manufacturers, including the introduction of Q*Bert by Parker Bros.; the unveiling of Atari's new computer, the 1200XL; and the long awaited introduction of Mattel's Intellivision II. We also awarded the Awards of Excellence for 1982 with PITFALL winning the Number One Best Selling Videogame. Best Graphics went to Zaxxon for ColecoVision, Wico won the Best New Accessory category, and Mattel won it for "Comeback of the Year" for the Intellivoice and voice games (maybe we should rescend it this year??). Games by Apollo filed Chapter 11. In spite of the December "crash" of Warner stock (parent company of Atari), everyone was feeling pretty good about games and companies were still jumping in with both feet. Companies such as Telesys, Venturevision, Data Age had visions of many new introductions while Vectrex planned six new games for its fledging system. Major releases included River Raid (Activision), Dragonfire (Imagic), Turbo and Driving Module (Coleco), Star Raiders (Atari for 5200).

FEBRUARY

We held up our newsletter for big news from Coleco—the first news of the introduction of the never-released Expansion Module 3 (Super Game Module). We featured our first article about the deluge of games and the need to check out the quality of games *before purchasing* as the dearth of inferior games was starting to hit retailers from several manufactuers. Due to popular demand, The Computer Entertainer debuted in this issue with news of the Intellivision ECS and Aquarius, Spectravideo computer, and news from several software manufacturers. In-depth coverage of the C.E.S. included a preview of Activision titles for the 2600; Imagic games for Intellivision; Atari software plans; Mattel software plans; Coleco announcements including the planned Super Action Controllers with Baseball; and more.

MARCH

In a "tongue-in-cheek" article, we explained what can go wrong with the planned release of software, entitled "A Day In The Life Of A New Game Cartridge". Atari previewed its computer keyboard entitled "My First Computer" for the 2600 (later cancelled). Imagic began the release of a large library of Intellivision-compatible games which would later prove to be one of the major forces behind their reorganization. Our phones rang off the hooks as people wanted more information about the Coleco Super Game Module. Video Game Update sent out detailed questionnaires to several readers. Major releases included Donkey Kong Jr. (Coleco for Coleco), Ms. Pac-Man and Centipede (Atari for 2600), Tron Solar Sailor (Mattel), Swords and Serpents (Imagic).

APRIL

U.S. Games leaves the business. We learned that Coleco is secretly working on a "Pause" feature for future games. We published a complete game and computer comparison chart to help readers with their purchasing plans, including a guide to RAM and ROM. Atari and Coleco settled their ongoing lawsuit over Coleco's release of its Expansion Module 1. We reviewed the Atari 1200XL computer and had grave concerns about its place in the market. The first inkling of a Coleco computer comes to light with our projection of availability before Christmas and an introduction at the Summer C.E.S. We previewed two new companies—Amiga and Xonox. We revealed the top secret Atari Falcon Project which is now known as Ataritel. Our first interview was featured this month with Enduro designer, Larry Miller. We went into full swing on computer reviews. Major releases included Enduro (Activision).

MAY

We ran a recap of every company and "rated" them based on what they had announced in January vs. what they had accomplished. Among those faring poorly were Vectrex, CommaVid, Fox, and Odyssey. Coleco ships the most titles yet for its ColecoVision this month. Miner 2049er plans surface from several companies for the various systems. We report a rumbling regarding Atari games for ColecoVision. As unbelievable as it seemed at the time, our prediction rang true as Atarisoft began shipping their ColecoVision titles in December. Data Age goes Chapter 11. The first word leaked out regarding an impending license agreement which would allow Coleco to develop WarGames for ColecoVision (planned for release later this month). The results of our Question-

Year In Review. Continued on Page 148

KRULL (★★★/★★★★) is based on the movie of the same name, and the situations in the game follow the plot of the movie quite closely. The player takes the role of Prince Colwyn as he finds the Black Fortress, rescues the Princess Lyssa, and kills the Beast. The game begins with the wedding of Colwyn and Lyssa, which is interrupted by the appearance of the Slayers. The Prince uses his sword to stab the onrushing Slayers, but they still manage to abduct Lyssa and take her to the Black Fortress. Next, Colwyn crosses the Iron Desert on a Fire Mare, picking up Glaives to fight the Beast. Since the location of the Black Fortress is secret and moved each sunrise, the player's character must seek the Widow of the Web to learn the current location of the Fortress. Entering the Widow's web, the player has a limited time to reach the cocoon and learn where the Fortress is, and the Crystal Spider must be avoided. Colwyn rides the Fire Mare to the Black Fortress, where Lyssa is imprisoned behind the pacing Beast. Using a Glaive to break away bits of the prison wall, Colwyn must avoid the Beast. When Lyssa is free, she moves down to Colwyn and gives him a fireball to kill the Beast.

Graphics Are Nicely Done

This is definitely a better effort than the last Atari game based on a movie, *E.T.!* Graphics are nicely done, particularly the Widow of the Web screen. The skills required are familiar ones, but they're well organized into a story that makes sense. The game is fairly involved, but it should appeal to those who liked the movie since it follows the plot so well. However, if you didn't see or didn't like the movie, we doubt that the game will appeal to you. (Solo Play) (MSR $29.95)

SORCEROR'S APPRENTICE (★★★½/★★★) is one of the Atari Kid's Library selections, and it's based on a scene from the Disney movie, *Fantasia*. The child controls Mickey Mouse as Sorceror's Apprentice in an attempt to keep the enchanted brooms from filling up the cavern with water. The game can be played on either of two screens, or the child can alternate between the two. The first scene shows the Mountains, where Mickey must catch falling stars in his Sorceror's magic hat to keep them from becoming brooms with water-filled buckets. He can also shoot fireballs from his magic wand. Each fireball that hits a meteor turns into an empty bucket that can bail out water in the cavern below. If Mickey descends to the cavern, he can stop the marching brooms directly by running into them. Throughout the game, there are various musical clues to let the child know what is happening on the screen that he/she is not playing. Four game speeds are available, from very slow for young children to quite fast for the older kids. The game should appeal to most youngsters under the age of ten because of its varied action and very good graphical representation of the Mickey Mouse character. (Solo Play)
Recommended. (MSR $29.95)



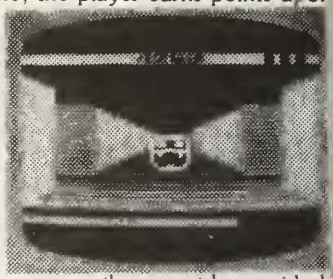
SUBTERRANEA (★★★/★★) is a two-stage contest in which the player's ship, the Cave Ranger, first shoots at Aerobots released by the evil Hexuplex at the bottom of the screen. When all the Aerobots are destroyed, a crystal appears, which should be claimed to open a shaft in the cavern floor. The tunnel phase involves shooting at flying foes and avoiding contact with tunnel walls or skulls. Clearing the tunnel results in the appearance of an Electro-Gate. The player has three chances to pass through the gate without touching it or being hit by a flash pulse. After clearing the bottom tunnel of each series, the player's ship is returned to the cavern of the Hexuplex at the next difficulty level.

Nothing Original

The graphics in SUBTERRANEA are pretty, and the flying creatures of the tunnels are nicely varied. However, there is little more to the game than flying and shooting. While there is plenty of challenge, especially at the more advanced skill levels, there is nothing original about this game. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating)
Not recommended. (MSR $31.95)

CBS Software

TUNNEL RUNNER (★★★½/★★★½) gives the player a chance to learn how a rat feels when it's running a maze in a psychology experiment. In this first-person maze game, the player earns points upon entering each new room for the first time. Finding your way takes practice, but there is a compass to guide you. There is also a map which can be called up if you become lost during your timed explorations. Of course, this wouldn't be a normal maze game if there were no enemy creatures lurking behind corners! Maze Zots are hungry creatures that love to dine on Tunnel Runners, so they must be avoided. Fortunately, their presence is always announced by a distinctive sound. In order to escape the run, the player must find the key hidden there and use it to open one of the escape doors. Escape doors lead to the next run, and bonus points are awarded, based on the time taken to escape the run.



The use of the CBS "RAM Plus" chip allowed the designers to create a believable three-dimensional environment in this game, and the effect of being in the tunnels is a nice change from the usual maze perspective. TUNNEL RUNNER is a great game for those who enjoy making their minds work at a game instead of just shooting at everything in sight! The standard game presents the same maze configurations every time you play, but the "Torture Tunnels" variation offers the added challenge of randomly generated mazes. This is a game that will keep you playing for hours. (Solo Play)
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

CHUCK NORRIS SUPERKICKS (★★½/★★★½) and **ARTILLERY DUEL (★★/★★)** is the second double-ender from **Xonox.** SUPERKICKS is the first to use martial arts as a theme for a video game, and the designers have done a very good job of portraying typical karate kicks, punches and blocks. The player takes the role of Chuck Norris as he tries to save a famous leader held captive in an Oriental monastery. On a timed journey through seven screens, earning karate belts along the way, Norris must battle various groups of warriors in each different setting. Each warrior has a characteristic way of fighting, and the player must learn to deal with the differing styles of combat. The warriors also throw *shuriken,* which are described erroneously in the instruction booklet as "Chinese stars." (Shuriken are Japanese in origin.) We found the game fascinating to play because of its variety of action. Though the overall graphics are quite plain, the renditions of Norris and the Warriors are quite good.

ARTILLERY DUEL is a slow-paced game for two players only. Each controls an artillery gun emplacement, attempting to destroy the other's gun before his own is demolished. The player is allowed 30 seconds to set barrel angle and powder level so that the opponent's gun can be hit, taking into account the wind speed and direction. This is a game of planning and deliberation, not fast action, that will only appeal to some players. Graphics are extremely plain and rather blocky. (If you see this one in your local game store, don't be misled by the screens on the box: they are artist's renditions, *not* actual game screens.) While the SUPERKICKS game is quite good, we don't recommend ARTILLERY DUEL. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating.)
MSR $29.95

EXPLANATION OF RATING SYSTEM:
★★★★—*EXCELLENT*
★★★—*GOOD* *First set of stars—Quality of Graphics*
★★—*FAIR* *Second set of stars—Quality of Play Action*
★—*POOR*
N/A—Not Applicable (i.e. Adventure games are not rated for graphics)

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

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE

TESTING A COLOR BAR GENERATOR

The task of reviewing what the "technicians" of the world regard as "service" or "test equipment" is a challenge. After all, how does one go about FINDING a color bar generator for comparison purposes *and* justify you shelling out $20.00 to see nothing but colors, lines, and dots? It's not even a game! Well, the popular "pattern generators" for the professional television market costs about $1500-$2000. At best, you'll be able to generate what are called "color bars". For years, owners of Apple computers have been able to test their color monitors with a program that comes packaged with the Apple Disk Operating System Even *that* costs a few hundred dollars for the disk drive and basic program.

All You Need is a VCS

Now VideoSoft of Santa Clara, California has come up with the answer. HOW the Color Bar Generator works isn't important. Upon insertion into your 2600 VCS, you will be able to perform 14 separate functions, maneuvering forward with the "game select" switch, or backward with the "reset" button. Now, let's give it a go! Item -1 is a totally GREEN screen, followed in succession with a blue and then red screen. These are the obvious primary colors in your games. You are also able to generate the NTSC standard color pattern. This gives you the ability to align YOUR set with the national STANDARD. Once you have completed the set-up, you will be able to adjust those colors which can be crucial in some games where you have blue meanies, green meanies, etc. and you just can't get the adjustment right. This cartridge will help you make the adjustments in seconds. If you've had a problem before because someone misaligned the color knob or the "tint" control...you have the perfect solution.

Testing, Testing

Our first test was to make sure the colors were correct on our testing monitor. The first screen was green as stated in the pre-manual documentation. The next screen was blue, not red as indicated in the directions. After some trial-and-error, we found that the manual had interchanged these two. We're sure by the time the manual is printed, this point will have been corrected. A simple look at the standard color bars is the single best thing you can do for your TV set. By "tweeking" the tint control on your TV, the bottom colors will eventually line up to the very dark green block, followed by white, blue, and black blocks on the bottom of the color bar. On the top is a grey bar followed by yellow, cyan, magenta, red, blue, and black. ONCE THESE COLORS ARE SET IN CORRECT ORDER, all you need to do is adjust the color control on your TV set for intensity!

Adjust Your Big Screen TV

Other features such as CROSS HATCH PATTERN, DOT PATTERN, HORIZONTAL LINES, VERTICAL LINES and CENTER CROSS are very helpful to check out your TV(S) for linerity and alignment of convergence. In other words, straight lines are straight, boxes are boxes, etc. These features are especially helpful in aligning big screen TVs where the alignment is critical for a sharp picture. There are many other useful reasons for our readers with 2600s or 2600-adaptors for any system to buy this cartridge (Then, as an added bonus, you can check out the networks and local TV to see if THEY are on the ball). Planned availability is February, 1984 only direct from VideoSoft, 1700 Wyatt Dr., Suite 10, Santa Clara, CA 95051.

Recommended (MSR $19.95)

Note: only adjust controls withhin reach of fingers (such as color, tint, vertical hold, horizontal hold, btightness, contrast). DO NOT ATTEMPT any adjustment with a screwdriver or open your TV set.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO???

In an effort to let you know when companies "shelve" product, we have an updated list for various systems.

Dropped from the Atari VCS-compatibles is EWOK ADVENTURE (PB) and all Imagic games, with the possibility of several M Network games being dropped (and the name of the company changing). Dropped for Intellivision are all CBS, Parker Bros., and Imagic software. Synapse has dropped NEW YORK CITY and QUASIMODO for Atari computers and they've shelved MORGUL for the C64.

IMAGIC ALIVE AND WELL, THANK YOU!

Contrary to several articles in various magazines, Imagic is quite alive with strong plans for 1984. After receiving a review copy of the graphically stunning ColecoVision version of NOVA BLAST (review elsewhere in this issue), we sought out Bruce Davis, President of Imagic, who spent some time with us telling us their confidential plans for the C.E.S. As we had reported several months ago, and then many other articles in newspapers and magazines, they *did* go through several problems and layoffs as a result of the "softened" market. They have brought the company back down to a smaller size and are having their manufacturing done by contract (avoiding the costly overhead of their own factory); however, their creative staff consists of 25 designers.

No More 2600 Titles Planned

First, Imagic plans no more VCS titles under the Imagic name. In other words, they may design games for other companies, ala the Parker Bros. agreement (see Parker Bros. article) when the situation is "right". Intellivision owners will also lose the benefit of Imagic producing titles for them as Imagic felt a strong sting from the heavy emphasis they put on Intellivision titles last year.

Coleco Owners Rejoice!

In our exclusive interview with Bruce Davis, we learned of five very exciting games for ColecoVision which will be unveiled at the show, including NOVA BLAST! The others include "greatly enhanced" versions of DRAGONFIRE, FATHOM, and MOONSWEEPER. One entirely new title which we saw and reported on in June in an unfinished state (and looked terrific) is WING WAR. We're told that all five titles are ready for first quarter of '84 release.

TI99/4A Conversions

Planned and ready to ship for the TI99/4A are DEMON ATTACK, MICROSURGEON, MOONSWEEPER, FATHOM, and WING WAR. Imagic feels very strongly about the TI system with its large "installed base" and the additional TI's which found themselves under Christmas trees in December. If they are successful with the above titles, we will undoubtedly see many more conversions for this system.

Sports Comes to the PCjr!!

Mr. Davis really caught us off guard when he promised two very "elaborate" sports games for the upcoming PCjr. Watch for FOOTBALL and BASEBALL! And, in addition to DEMON ATTACK, they will also convert MICROSURGEON to the PCjr. Imagic promises dazzling new graphics on both games.

Atari Computer Conversions

Meanwhile, Imagic is working on conversions of two recent 2600 games, LASER GATES and QUICK STEP for release in the first or second quarter. Based on this information which Mr. Davis gave us (and all the secret designing which is always going on), we feel pretty confident that Imagic is regrouping and coming with some potentially blockbuster games. We always like to see the good companies work their problems out. We recall when Imagic first looked as though it might go totally under, a couple of people we speak with at competing, high quality, game manufacturers voiced their sadness at the problems Imagic was encountering. No one wants to see a good company fold. We wish Imagic the best of luck as they greet 1984 with exciting new product!

MICROFUN TO SHOW SCRAPER CAPER

The first version of the highly anticipated SCRAPER CAPER should show up at C.E.S., in the Atari computer version. Conversions to Apple, IBM PC, and ColecoVision are planned later in the year. THE HEIST, written by Mike Livesay (designer of Scraper Caper), is the other new entertainment program coming for Apple, IBM PC and PCjr, Atari computers, C64, and ADAM.

Home Management Programs

The main thrust of new programs will be geared towards home management, beginning with PERSONAL BANKER, initially available for Apple (74.95) and planned for later conversion to Atari, C64, IBM PC and PCjr, and ADAM. In the word processing area, MicroLearn's entry will be HOME WRITER, initially available in C64 and later for Apple, IBM PC, and Atari computers. Their currently available SAT series (review elsewhere in this issue) are planned for ADAM comversion later in the year.

Year In Review continued from Front Page

naire were published with some very interesting results. We all learned a little more about quality control from an interesting lady at Coleco. Major releases included Galaxian (Atari for 2600), Pepper II (Coleco), Looping (Coleco), Jumpman (Epyx for Atari Computer), and Miner 2049er (Big Five for Atari Computer).

JUNE

Video Game Update and Computer Entertainer debuted its "new look", which was filled with early C.E.S. news about Imagic, Activision, and more. Odyssey puts the Odyssey3 on indefinite "hold". First word on Nolan Bushnell's new agreement with Atari. We gave many of the details of the Top Secret Coleco computer, ADAM, which was to be introduced at the C.E.S. during the month of June. MCA announced the formation of Studio Games and their joint venture with Atari to develop movie titles such as Jaws, Smokey and the Bandit, etc. (there has been no further word on this company!). We brought our readers an interesting interview with FATHOM designer, Rob Fulop . Major releases included Jungle Hunt (Atari for 2600), M*A*S*H (Fox), Space Dungeon and Kangaroo (Atari for 5200), Burgertime (Mattel), Frogger (Parker Bros. for Intel), Pipes (Creative for VIC-20)

JULY

Packed with news from C.E.S. including in-depth preview of ADAM, Activision games for Intellivision, and Vectrex 3-D Imager. Atari won the license for additional Mario Bros. games; Intellivision III scratched; we publish the first comparision of the various versions of Q*Bert; we report that something fishy is up with Coleco's Super Game Module being bumped into "sometime in 1984"; we report on interactive laser discs and the possibility they have for the future; Nolan Bushnell introduced robots; B.C. comic book character planned for home computers; ; new Atari joysticks; Unitronics computer preview (whatever happened to that??); Imagic announced plans for computer games. We became aware of compatibility problems with the Atari 1200XL with several software packages on the market. Major releases included The Boss joystick (Wico), Frogger (Parker Bros for 5200 which was the first 3rd party game for the 5200), Safecraker (Imagic for Intellivision), Dig Dug and Donkey Kong (Atari for 4/800).

AUGUST

As more and more articles are written about the game business being "over", Video Game Update addresses some of the problems as we see them. We visit Randy Glover, designer of Jumpman. First reports of dealers cautious attitude over upcoming ADAM. Telesys leaves the domestic market. First major comparison chart of the new Atari XL computer line. Major releases included Decathlon (Activision), Q*Bert (Parker Bros for 2600), Kangaroo and Pole Position (Atari for 2600), Pole Position and Ms. Pac-Man (Atari for 5200), Jumpman Jr (Epyx for Atari computers), Blue Max (Synapse for Atari computers).

SEPTEMBER

Early indications of an increased price on ADAM come to light (see article in this issue). This was the month that ADAM was to begin shipments. Major upheavels at Mattel make it impossible to determine what games they will really release and which ones will end up on "indefinite" hold. We learned Atari plans release of Milipede and TAS in 1984 and word was getting stronger that Atari would, indeed, release titles for competing systems such as Coleco. Gulf and Western sold off Sega; however, they have continued to produce games. First reports of VIC-20's death started surfacing. Odyssey announced the formation of Probe 2000 Software for the development of games for ColecoVision, among others. We began reviews for the Apple computer. Major releases included Battlezone (Atari for 2600), Q*Bert (Parker Bros. for Intellivision), Super Action Controllers with Baseball and Mr. Do (Coleco), TrackBall (Atari for 5200), Kaboom and River Raid (Activision for Atari computer), Dark Crystal (Sierra for Atari computer), Sammy Lightfoot (Sierra for Apple), Lode Runner (Broderbund for Apple).

OCTOBER

ADAM still hasn't shipped—we're receiving dozens of calls every day from people hoping we know where they could find them. Activision announces plans for 5200 software. In an exclusive interview with Senior Vice President Fred Simon of Atarisoft, we get all the details of the third party software planned by them for such systems as Coleco, Intellivision, Apple, TI 99/4A, etc. Imagic suffers severe layoffs with its future left very cloudy. Coleco holds talks with laser disc companies after licensing the arcade smash, DRAGON'S LAIR. Could a laser disc add-on be in their future?? Our interview features Carol Shaw, River Raid designer. Sega releases Star Trek for four systems. Major releases included Burgertime (M Network for 2600—initial shipments were defective and the pipeline has not been filled back up yet!), Popeye (Parker Bros for 2600), Q*Bert (Parker Bros. for Coleco—the first third party game for Coleco), Beamrider (Activision for Intellivision), Q*Bert (Parker Bros. for Atari computer), A.E. (Broderbund for Atari computer), Star League Baseball (Gamestar for Atari computer).

NOVEMBER

News of Starpath's leaving the software business; Parker Bros. delays 007 game once again; CBS delays WINGS; rumblings of Atari's possible intention of leaving computer business. Odyssey called it "quits", while their Probe 2000 division barely had time to get off the ground with only one title (War Room). Texas Instruments announces their exit from the home computer business. We receive a fascinating visit from Steve Kitchen, designer of Activision's SPACE SHUTTLE. The first ADAM computers ship but are extremely hard to find. Major releases included Rocky (Coleco), Space Shuttle (Activision for 2600), War Room (Probe 2000 for ColecoVision), Popeye (Parker Bros. for ColecoVision), Joust, Dig Dug, Moon Patrol, and Baseball (Atari for 5200), Pinball and Motocross (Mattel), Wico joystick for 5200, B.C.'s Quest for Tires (Sierra for Atari computer), Popeye (Parker Bros. for Atari computers)

DECEMBER

With the announcement of the IBM PCjr, several software manufacturers indicate they will product product for the new computer, due to ship in January. We have our concerns about the product, especially the keyboard. Meanwhile, the ADAM is begining to show up in many areas; however, reports of defective data paks, printers, etc. have everyone a bit concerned. Coleco still has not made the product available to reviewers for in-depth analysis. Reports of a serious C64 defective rate and the possibility of a new Commodore computer. Reports from Mattel still sketchy but rumors are more and more persistant that Mattel will exit the electronics business while many third party companies reportedly will not produce software for Intellivision anymore. Atari computers and Coleco ADAM announce an increase in the price of their computers, much to the chagrin of dealers and consumers alike. Apple is working on a top secret home computer, code-named the ELF. The Apple McIntosh should debut right around the end of January. Fox quits the game business. Video Game Update and Computer Entertainer close out the year with over 325 reviews for the year. The Logical Gamer has to close its newletter operation and The Video Game Update agrees to honor their subscription agreements. We begin talking with the manufacturers in exclusive interviews regarding their plans for the January C.E.S. and overall 1984 plans for inclusion in our January and February issues. Major releases include Centipede (Atarisoft for ColecoVision), Popeye (Parker Bros. for 5200), River Raid (Activision for 5200), Pitstop (Epyx for Atari computers).

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF PITFALL HARRY

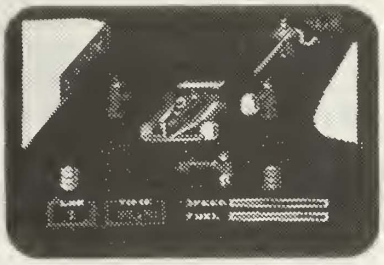
Pitfall Harry will resurface in a brand new 2600 adventure, PITFALL II: LOST CAVERNS. With a "back-to-back" chip, this one promises better graphics and gameplay than its hit predecessor. Other new Activision titles which will debut at the show include HERO, the story of a gritty hero who saves miners trapped in a volcanic mountain; PRIVATE EYES, a tongue-in-cheek mystery adventure designed by Bob Whitehead; ZENJI, (a word that is an Eastern form of meditation in which the practitioner contemplates Koan—a paradox or riddle) designed by Matt Hubbard; and one "sneak" for the 2600.

Translations Abound

Meanwhile, several translations of the more popular Activision titles are planned for the following systems: C64. Atari computers, ColecoVision, 5200, and the MSX operating system. The titles earmarked for conversion (some are out already) include RIVER RAID, PITFALL, MEGAMANIA, and BEAMRIDER. We were given no new titles for Intellivision.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

PITSTOP (★★½/★★★) finally allows ColecoVision owners a second game for their Driving Module and it's ironic that it had to come from a third party manufacturer! This one is very similar to the Atari computer version in which you can challenge one of five race tracks of the world. You can choose your course, number of laps, and type of race. There is a radar map which tells you, at a glance, where you are on the track in relation to your pit. You must gauge your fuel and tire wear and enter the pit and have your crew go to work. As in the real thing, the race is won or lost in the pit as you maneuver your men to change tires and fill 'er up. (Don't take the time to change all the tires unless you have to—just the ones which are ready to blow) Once the pit crew is done, the flagman will wave you back on the course and back to the race.

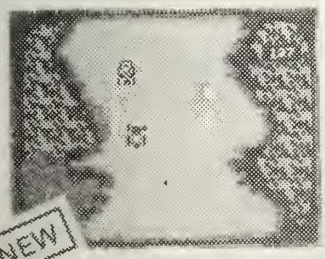


Driving Module Enhances Game

After playing both the computer version and this one, the main difference is the Driving Module. It adds a great deal to the race. (In the pit, you will use your joystick or gas pedal to move the cursor around to move your crew.) Our main complaint about this game remains the same—the graphics on the race course are very boring (e.g. no scenery changes); however, changing racing circuits is a plus. The graphics in the pit are very good. If you've been anxious for a new game to play with your Driving Module, you may want to pick this one up. In any event, we would recommend that you take a look at it prior to purchase to make sure it will hold your interest. (Solo Play; 2,3, or 4-player alternating; Joystick or Driving Module)
(MSR $40.00)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..INTELLIVISION-COMPATIBLE

BUMP'N'JUMP (★★½/★★½) is based on the Data East road racing arcade game. The player has a bird's-eye view of the course, and the object is to keep his/her car on the road while bumping other cars, causing them to crash, or jumping over them. The player must be aware of that well-known law of physics (for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction), because over-zealous bumping can cause the player's own car to crash, too! There are waterways to be jumped, and several different roadways travled during any one of the four seasons. The other vehicles encountered vary from heavy tractors to lightweight cycles, and each has its own characteristics of speed and movement. There's even a dump truck that occasionally drops debris in the road—and it explodes on contact! Graphics are colorful, but not up to Mattel's usual high standards. In fact, there are some places in the course that are plagued with flashing and flickering effects that make it difficult to follow the action well. The constant musical accompaniment will be a plus for some players, but it's bound to annoy others. Game play is fun for a while, so long as bumping other cars off a road is your idea of a good time. If you're crazy about the arcade game, you may want to check this one out. Otherwise, we think you'll tire of it quickly. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating.)
Not recommended.



VECTREX GOES 3-D

Vectrex tells us they will show three 3-D games for the 3-D Imager which is *just* beginning to hit the marketplace. Among those to be shown include 3-D ROLLER COASTER, 3-D MINE STORM, and 3-D POLE POSITION. Additional software for the Light Pen will include MAIL PLANE and ANIMACTION. Two other new titles are PITCHER'S DUEL (formerly titled BATTER UP), and TOUR DE FRANCE, a bike race.

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE: THE POWER OF HE-MAN (★★★★/★★★★½) is a very good multi-screen action game starring the comic book characters, He-Man and Skeletor. (A bonus comic booklet is included with the cartridge.) The player takes the role of He-Man, as he leaps into his Wind Raider to cover 30 miles of flight to reach the edge of Skeletor's wilderness realm. Fuel is limited, and there are flying fireballs to be shot at or bombed. (At higher skill levels, the fireballs must be hit more than once to be destroyed.) After He-Man reaches Skeletor at the right edge of the first screen, he must catch Skeletor three times in three different scenes of ground attack: mountains, forest and Castle Grayskull. Within a limited time, He-Man must make his way through the lightning balls and power bolts hurled by Skeletor, using his shield to fend off the projectiles. When He-Man reaches Skeletor in each of these scenes, there is a short duel, and then He-Man chases Skeletor into the next scene. If He-Man catches Skeletor three times, he leaps back into his Wind Raider to begin again at the next level of difficulty.

Lots of Action

This is one of Mattel's best efforts in some time. Graphics are beautiful, with particularly good rendition of the two characters. These are *not* the typical Mattel humanoids! This is a fast-moving game with lots of action that should appeal to fans of the He-Man comics and those who like shooting games in general. We especially liked the combination of different skills needed in the various screens, and the varied defenses of guns, bombs and shields. (Solo Play)
Recommended.

RIVER RAID (★★★½/★★★½) is an adaptation of the classic shooting game first designed for the Atari 2600 by Carol Shaw. This version for Intellivision offers a great combination of beautiful, brightly colored graphics and exciting game play. The player pilots a very maneuverable plane on a search-and-destroy mission up a river through enemy territory. With a limited supply of fuel, the object is to destroy as many enemy ships, helicopters, bridges, fuel depots and planes as possible. Since the player's plane flies very low, all these enemy objects can be crashed into if the player isn't careful. While the player's plane can fly over the river banks, the trees must be avoided. The only safe—and necessary—items to fly directly over are the fuel depots, since the plane's fuel must be replenished periodically. RIVER RAID is a great action game for players of all ages. While it plays very much like the original version for the Atari 2600, graphics are considerably improved in this adaptation. We really like the way the river snakes its way through the countryside. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating.)
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)



ADVENTURE WITH ATARI

Atari has just announced an interesting concept with their new "Atari Adventure" family entertainment centers to be located around the United States (the first scheduled to open shortly at Northwest Plaza Shopping Center in St Louis, MO).

Included in the center will be a "high tech" video game room, a hands-on computer learning center, and a special display area of the latest video game technology. The learning center will feature the Atari XL computer line in a classroom setting where anyone can purchase time segments at a computer work station to do homework, use a word processor, play games, or any number of other applications. The learning center will be staffed by a full-time instructor, and will provide regular classes for those wanting to become computer literate.

Touch Tomorrow

The technology display area will be designed to give patrons a hands-on opportunity to "touch tomorrow" as they view the latest technology advancements, including game prototypes and other experimental electronic equipment. It reminds us of our visits to Disneyland and the Epcot Center in Florida and we're anxious to visit a center ourselves!

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

FRONTLINE (★★ / ★★) is based on the military-themed, vertically scrolling arcade game by Taito in which the player becomes a soldier in hand-to-hand and tank combat. Starting on the road as a foot soldier, the player must avoid land mines and kill enemy soldiers by shooting at them or throwing hand grenades. (Two of the action buttons on the Super Action Controller are used to rotate the soldier's weapon clockwise or counterclockwise for aiming.) Once past the brush, enemy tanks appear, and the player's soldier jumps into a conveniently abandoned tank. With luck and skill, the tank can be kept from destruction as the player crosses a desert and then a bridge over a river. If the player's tank is destroyed by the enemy, the poor foot soldier has to make it alone through the enemy's tank forces. The final objective is the enemy fort, which is well fortified and protected by bunkers and barbed wire barriers. The fort can be demolished only by the unprotected foot soldier, provided he can lob a grenade into it.

Blocky Graphics

Undeniably, FRONT LINE is a game with a violent theme—soldiers killing other soldiers—that some will find objectionable. While we're not crazy about explicit violence in video games, our biggest disappointments in this game are the blocky, uninteresting graphics and less than thrilling play action. Devoted fans of the coin-op game are not likely to approve of this version because the graphics lose so much in translation. As a shoot-em-up game, we found it boring after very few plays. While more challenging at the higher skill levels, the game is nothing more than a contest of aim-and-shoot against a series of uninspiring backgrounds. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause; Super Action Controller Only.)
Not recommended. (MSR approx. $30.00)

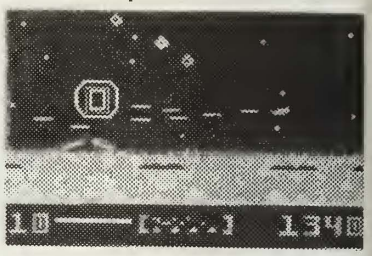
SUPER COBRA (★★★½/ ★★★½) is a horizontally scrolling flying game in which the player is a helicopter pilot who must fly his/her chopper over and through a city to reach the enemy base. Each segment of the journey is slightly different, with varying combinations of enemy weaponry. At times the action gets really hectic as the enemy deploys missiles, meteors, tanks and flying saucers. (One firing button releases bombs at ground targets, while the other fires bullets straight ahead.) It's also important to destroy enemy fuel tanks, since that is the only means of replenishing the chopper's fuel supply. The course can become very difficult to navigate, even without the interference of enemy weapons, since it becomes maze-like, narrowing down to a zig-zagging passageway in spots. One feature we really liked was the ability to continue at the point where you lost your last helicopter, even though the score resets to zero. Action is fast and challenging, particularly at the higher skill levels, and the graphics are crisp and colorful. Our only complaint is that we got hand cramps after long playing sessions, but that's not the fault of the designers! (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating.)
Recommended. (MSR approx. $45.00)

TUTANKHAM (★★★★ / ★★★★) is one of the best arcade conversions yet for the ColecoVision, and it's based on the popular coin-op by Konami. The player is an archaeologist exploring the mazes of King Tut's tomb, seeking treasures and avoiding supernatural creatures. The game scrolls horizontally as the archaeologist explores the nooks of the maze. Everywhere he turns there are nests of nasty creatures—snakes, griffins, and many others. With his limited supply of ammunition, he must shoot the creatures to continue his quest, or he can zap everything on the screen at once with one of his limited number of laser flashes. There are magic portals that allow him to teleport from one side of the chamber to the other, and he can enter the next section of the tomb once he locates the key.

Stunning Graphics

When you pop this one in the cartridge slot of your ColecoVision, prepare to be dazzled by its stunning graphics. The detail in the tombs and the characters is incredible. This game looks like the arcade game, plays like the arcade game, and it's a real winner! The action becomes intense after a very short period of playing, and you won't want to put it away. TUTANKHAM has "hit" written all over it. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating.)
Recommended. (MSR approx. $45.00)

NOVA BLAST (★★★★ / ★★★½) is a visually dazzling, arcade-style space game with plenty of action for shoot-em-up fans. The player controls the Nova 1 fighter, a sleek little ship that flies over the four capsuled cities on the surface of a faraway planet. Waves of Flying Fighters in space and Water Walkers on the surface do their best to destroy the Nova 1 and the planet's cities. The Fighters are attacked with laser fire, the Walkers with bombs, all while the player attempts to avoid their fire. A radar scanner at the bottom of the screen alerts the player to the sites in immediate danger, and indicators warn of damage to Nova 1. The Shield Energy Indicator keeps the player informed of energy reserves that can be drawn on to replace a city's protective capsule. Bonuses are awarded at the end of each wave for any cities that have survived the attack.



Dazzlingly Beautiful

Imagic's first game for ColecoVision is an object lesson in the level of graphic excellence attainable on this system. This is the most dazzlingly beautiful game we've seen yet on ColecoVision. The domed cities rest under semi-transparent shields, while multi-colored planets and stars twinkle against an inky-black sky. Sound effects are good, too, with realistic explosions and warning klaxons when enemy squadrons begin their attack. Play action is fast-paced, especially at the highest skill level. Each wave of Flying Fighters is more erratic and less predictable than the last, creating plenty of challenge in this horizontally scrolling shoot-out. Incidentally, we tried this game with several controllers, and it works especially well with the Super Action Controller. If you love space games with fast action, this is your game! (Solo Play)
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

DEFENDER (★★★ / ★★★½)from *ATARISOFT* brings this classic to ColecoVision. You'll find all the elements of the original—from enemy spacecraft to mutants. Your joystick will control your spaceship while the fire buttons will activate the missiles and smart bombs. By pressing the 0 button, you enter hyperspace. The game scrolls horizontally with a radar scanner along the top. While the graphics are simple, they are well drawn and the action is fast and furious. Now ColecoVision owners have the chance to play this classic arcade game on their system. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause)
Recommended (MSR $34.95)

VOICE FOR COLECOVISION!!!!

Interphase, a "technology-based" company which produced SEWER SAM and BLOCKADE RUNNER for Intellivision (see reviews in October, 1983 issue), has told us of some pretty exciting plans for 1984. In an exclusive interview, we learned of their plans to introduce "voice" for ColecoVision *without* a voice synthesis module!!. Their first ventures in this area will be a Coleco version of SEWER SAM and, in a licensing agreement with Sirius, SQUISH 'EM. Both games feature the character of Sam. In a non-voice game for ColecoVision, they will introduce AQUATTACK, a four-scene adventure game (could this be the *first* adventure game for Coleco owners?). We understand the games are nearly complete and should be able to pass on release information to you next month.

Revolutionary C64 Technology

Interphase has found an interesting way to work around the problem of the easily pirated diskettes and the expensive-to-produce cartridges. They will introduce games that are a combination of both items—the cartridge is the intelligent part and will run the diskette which will have 50-80K of memory capability. The first game in this format will be VIKING RAIDER, an adventure game featuring 125 screens. They hope to show a nearly finished C64 game entitled VERTRAILIAN, a vertically scrolling strategy/space game. Also planned for the C64 is a cartridge conversion of BLOCKADE RUNNER. Interphase is another company which is exploring the software arena for the PCjr. We'll be anxious to "hear" the Coleco games and report back to you!

LOADS OF SOFTWARE FROM SIERRA ON-LINE

Sierra On-Line will focus on three areas of home software—Entertainment, Education, and Productivity. Three new entertainment programs will debut. The first, untitled, will be unveiled for IBM PC and promises a third generation adventure game with animation, enhanced graphics, sound, and simulated 3D screens. THE PRISONER, coming for Apple, is based on the TV show which starred Patrick McGoohan. In a surrealistic environment of misleading clues and propaganda, the player must survive by wits alone and escape without divulging the information his captors desire. SNOKIE, planned for Atari computers, features a penquin travelling through snow packs, ice floes and over snowy terrain while avoiding ice, freezing water and large snowballs.

Many Conversions

Several conversions of current Sierra titles are planned for various systems in the first half of the year (as we receive more detailed release dates, we will list them in the Availability Update). For the IBM PCjr JAWBREAKER, ULTIMA II, MR. COOL, OIL'S WELL, CROSSFIRE, FROGGER, and WIZARD OF ID TYPE are on the boards. For ColecoVision, look for SAMMY LIGHTFOOT, APPLE CIDER SPIDER, THRESHOLD, OIL'S WELL, and LUNAR LEEPER.



The Prisoner



Gefling Adventure



An Unnamed Adventure



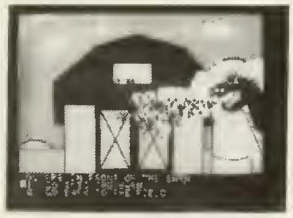
Trolls Tale

Home Education

In this area four new programs are planned including STORYMAKER (C64 and Apple) which enables children to create stories and save them on disks; WIZARD OF ID-TYPE (C64), an entertaining "learn-to-type" program; ALF ARITHMETIC and ALF ALPHABET (Atari) which teaches young children math and spelling; and FUZZYWOMP, four games in one for the Apple.



Alfs Arithmetic



Dragons Keep



Alfs Alphabet

Home Productivity

HOMEWORD SPELLER, FINANCE, FILER, and TAX are all in the planning stages as integrated packages to be used in conjunction with HOMEWORD (reviewed in December 1983 issue). By the way, HOMEWORD for Apple has just jumped from $49.95 to $69.95, without warning. It's a shame as the $49.95 price point made it an ideal word processing package for home, while the new price puts it in competition with several other packages already out there.

FIRST STAR PLANS BOULDER DASH

First Star Software will be showing BOULDER DASH, a 16-screen game of strategy and logic which introduces the character of "Rockford". It's planned initially for Atari computers and C64, with a later version for the PCjr.

Warner Software Acquires Interest

The new software division of Warner Communications has acquired a non-controlling interest in First Star which will help First Star in marketing, distribution, etc. while putting Warner Software right into the middle of the software business with an ongoing software company. It has been pretty well known that Warner Software has been looking around to get involved with various software companies and, in all liklihood, more announcements with other software houses will follow.

LOTS AND LOTS OF DATAMOST

With the theory of "more is better", Datamost will be showing several titles for various home computers. Included are: GOIN' APE (16K-Atari); POLAR PIERRE (16K Atari and C64); JET-BOOT JACK (16K-Atari); MY CHESS II (Apple); ZIRCON (Atari and C64); NEON (Apple); ANKH, a computer puzzle for the Apple and C64; EARTHLY DELIGHTS (IBM PC); MABEL'S MANSION (Apple); STALKER (Apple); and SPACE ARK, promised to be highly animated (designed by their Art Director for the Apple). All releases should reach dealer's shelves during the first three months of 1984.

Among the first books they plan for the IBM PCjr is "Kids and the IBM PCjr," with several other books on the drawing board.

SYNAPSE HAS THREE NEW TITLES

Two new games for the Atari computer will be shown: ENCOUNTER and RAINBOW WALKER. For the C64, SLAM BALL, a pinball game in which the player is inside the game itself, will be shown (possible conversion to the Atari computer format later in the year). Meanwhile, the C64 conversion of ZAXXON is coming along nicely with an additional level planned with a new fortress.

VERY WARY OF ADAM

In spite of the splash with which ADAM was announced last summer, we found it very eye-opening that in our confidential discussions with the third party software firms, they indicated virtually no plans to supply software for ADAM. We asked every company we spoke to about their plans to develop software or do translations of existing software for either the ADAM and/or the IBM PCjr. While over 90% indicated they are already at work on translations and new programs for the PCjr, which is not even out yet, all but one company we spoke with told us they have no plans at present to produce software for the ADAM data pak! We were given many reasons for this attitude but most indicated a concern over the reports of the problems; the fact that there is only 26K of available RAM after loading the BASIC pak; and the problems of translating to the system. Meanwhile, everyone appears to be excited about the PCjr, this in spite of the fact the keyboard has received so many negative comments. It appears that, at least for the next few months, ADAM owners may be at the mercy of Coleco for new software for their computer.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI COMPUTERS

JOUST (★ ★ ★ ½/ ★ ★ ★ ★) is adapted from the Williams coin-op, a strange contest with a medieval flavor. Knights with lances on horseback enjoyed the sport of jousting many years ago, and the object was to unseat one's opponent. In JOUST, the players are knights on ostriches, and their computer opponents are the Buzzard Riders: Bounders, Hunters and Shadow Lords. Maneuvering around a group of ledges, the knights on ostrich-back are guided by joystick (direction) and firing button (to flap the bird's wings and keep it flying). When the player's knight meets the opponent, the object is to have the lance higher than the Buzzard Rider's lance. The unseated rider becomes an egg, which should be picked up for points and to avoid having it hatch a nastier opponent. Other dangers include Pterodactyls that try to eat the ostrich and lava pits that are revealed after the second wave. There's even a Troll in the lava pits that reaches up to grab the ostrich if it strays too close! Besides the standard jousting waves, there are special Survival, Egg and Pterodactyl Waves, plus Team and Gladiator Waves (2-player games only).

Most Unusual Game

JOUST is a most unusual game, from its fantasy theme of knights on birdback to the use of the joystick firing button to keep the birds flying. The designers have done a superb job of translating the arcade hit, retaining all the key elements of game play. Graphics are nicely detailed, and we especially liked the sound effects, such as the pitter-patter of little bird feet and the squeal of brakes when the birds change direction on the ledges. JOUST takes the player into a strange and wonderful realm of fantasy, and it's downright addictive! The 2-player variation is a real bonus because there are so few games that two people can play cooperatively or competitively. (Solo Play; 2-Player Simultaneous; Pause; Joystick.) (Cartridge)
Recommended. (MSR $49.95)

MS PAC-MAN (★ ★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ ★) 1983's "Woman of the Year", has come home to Atari computers and it's a fine rendition. Everyone knows this one by now—Pac-Man with a bow as she works her way around a maze filled with dots, ghosts, and power pills. There are four different maze patterns which must be negotiated, beginning with a bright pink maze. The graphics and gameplay are both excellent and, as in the 5200 version, three intermissions are featured. If you've got a crush on Ms Pac-Man, then this game is a must for your collection! (Solo Play; Two-Player Alternating; Pause)
Recommended (MSR $49.95)

SILICON WARRIOR (★ ★ ★ ½/ ★ ★ ★ ½) is a semi-abstract contest between the player, a Warrior representing one of the Earth's enclaves of high technology, and the Syborgs, a super-human race that has invented the Tenth-Generation Computer. The victor in this battle for supremacy in the Silicon Valley in the year 2084 is the Warrior who first links five programmed chips in a row on a five-by-five grid. Both Warriors and Syborgs move among chips by teleporting from adjacent positions, claiming them when they land. There are seven variations, providing for various combinations of programming the chips, the appearance of black holes, laser firing, and shields. One to four humans can participate, controlling their Warriors, against zero to four computer opponents (Syborgs). Five battles must be won by one player to end the game.



Reminiscent of Othello

SILICON WARRIOR, despite its background story of futuristic battling for technological supremacy, is reminiscent of classic board games of strategy, such as Othello. The setting is three-dimensional, with the grid of computer chips appearing to recede into the distance. We had a lot of fun trying all the variations, and the multi-player options were really wild! This is an unusual game with an appealing combination of strategy and fast action. (Solo Play; 2 to 4-player Simultaneous; Pause; Joystick.) (Cartridge)
Recommended. (MSR $40.00)

STARFIRE (★ ★ / ★ ★ ½) and **FIRE ONE (★ ★ ½/ ★ ★ ½)** are "arcade classics" (translation: old games) from Exidy, adapted by Epyx. The first is a very basic, outer-space shooting game, obviously the forerunner of such games as *Star Raiders*. *The second is a submarine warfare game in which the player controls a submarine protecting its fleet against enemy ships. Graphics are pretty basic and simple in both games, and there's nothing outstanding about game play. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick.) (Disk, Cassette) Not recommended.*

D-BUG (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ ★) from *Electronic Arts* is billed as a child's learning game; however, it offers a great learning experience to kids and adults alike who want to learn about the inner workings of their computer! You begin by playing an innocent game of "Gotcha" where you try and capture butterflies (you can change shapes and music by going into the computer yourself). At some point in the middle of the game, a bug symptom will show up on the screen and you'll have to go down into the D-Bug computer to find and fix the bug (in lower levels, you'll get clues regarding the problem). There can be problems with the RAM memory, ROM, loose chips, boot errors—virtually everything that could actually go wrong! Once you find the problem, you have to go to the "store", purchase the replacement part and return to install it.

Learn Your Computer!

This game is a very enjoyable way to learn about the terminology and basic workings of computers. While it certainly won't prepare you for dismantling the computer in your home, it will give you an entertaining insight as to what makes your computer "tick".
Recommended (MSR $40.00)

PARKER BROS. PLANS ANOTHER AMBITIOUS YEAR

In an exclusive interview of '84 plans, we learned Parker Bros. has more ambitious plans again this year in both the dedicated game area and computers. First, as is the case with several other game manufacturers, Parker Bros. has decided to abandon the Intellivision software market. So, those of you looking for Tutankham, Super Cobra, etc., for your Intellivision can look no further as these titles will *NOT* release. Parker Bros. also indicated they are phasing out their titles for the VIC-20 also as they feel that system has been relegated to people's closets in favor of more sophisticated home computers. The emphasis will be for the VCS, 5200, ColecoVision, Atari computers, C64, IBM PC and PCjr.

Changes

For our readers who want to know "what's happened to...", here's an update on various games. The board games (e.g. RISK, CHESS, and MONOPOLY) are still in development and have been bumped to the second half of '84. Meanwhile, JAMES BOND 007 has "gone back to the drawing board" as they want to expand the interest beyond that of the originally planned tie-in with the recent Bond film, Octupussy. Parker Bros. plans scenes from several Bond films. Don't look for that title until at least the second quarter of the year.

GYRUSS Licensed

The big new title at C.E.S. is the popular arcade game, GYRUSS, to be shown for multiple systems. Release is scheduled for the second quarter. And, in a development arrangement with Imagic, Parker Bros. is planning a second quarter release of STAR WARS (again, multiple systems), based on the big Atari arcade game. The Imagic designers are working on the various system versions now.

Future Plans

Parker Bros. is working in four different areas of entertainment software for 1984—Arcade Action; Educational (Parker Bros. is terming this "discovery" software including computer aerobics, biofeedback, build your own racecar, etc); Adventure Programming, which will be interreactive with player(s) making decisions (in this area, Parker Bros. is looking into the laser technology); and, Classic Strategy, which includes their board games—in more sophisticated versions.

At this point, Parker Bros. has no plans to produce for the ADAM computer (via the datapak system).

Many readers have asked that, once again, we publish a list of the various manufacturer's addresses. So, as a year-end service, here's an up-to-date list of those companies who produce for the dedicated game systems and computer systems.

ACTIVISON
Drawer 7286
Mountain View, CA 94042

ATARI
1265 Borregas Ave
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

AVALON HILL
4517 Harford
Baltimore, MD 21214

AVANT GARDE
P.O. Box 30160
Eugene, OR 97403

BIG 5 SOFTWARE
P.O. Box 9078-185 Van Nuys, CA 91409

BRODERBUND SOFTWARE
1938 Fourth St
San Rafael, CA 94901

CBS ELECTRONICS
601 Doremus Ave
Newark, NJ 07105

COLECO
999 Quaker Ln So
West Hartford, CT 06110

COMMAVID
1470 Farnsworth, #203
Aurora, IL

CREATIVE SOFTWARE
230 East Caribbean Dr Sunnyvale, CA 94086

DATAMOST
8943 Fullbright Ave
Chatsworth, CA

DATASOFT
9421 Winnetka
Chatsworth, CA 91311

ELECTRONIC ARTS
2755 Campus Dr
San Mateo, CA 94403

FIRST STAR SOFTWARE
22 East 41st St
New York, NY 10017

EPYX SOFTWARE
1043 Kiel Court
Sunnyvale, CA 94089

HES
71 Park Lane
Brisbane, CA 94005

IMAGIC
981 University Ave
Los Gatos, CA

INFOCOM
55 Wheeler St
Cambridge, MA 02138

INTELLIVISION
150 Rosecrans
Hawthorne, CA

MMG MICRO SOFTWARE
P.O. Box 131 Marlboro, NJ 07746

INTERPLAY SYSTEMS
6391-F Westminster Hwy
Richmond B.C. Canada

L&M SOFTWARE
8599 Framewood Dr Newburg, IN 47630

MICROFUN
2310 Skokie Valley Rd Highland Park, IL 60035

MUSE SOFTWARE
347 N. Charles
Baltimore, MD 21201

MYTHICAN
P.O. Box 1347
Cupertino, CA 95015

NEW IMAGE
345 N. Lafayette
So. Lyon, MI 48178

99ER SOFTWARE
1500 Valley River Dr #250
Eugene, OR 97401

PARKER BROS.
50 Dunham Rd
Beverly, MA

PDI SOFTWARE
95 E. Putnam
Greenwich, CT

ROKLAN
3335 N. Arlington Hgts Rd.
Arlington Hgts, IL 60004

ROMOX
501 Vandell Way
Campbell, CA 95008

SEGA
5555 Melrose
Hollywood, ca 90038

SIERRA ON-LINE
Coarsegold, CA 93614

SIRIUS SOFTWARE
10364 Rockingham Dr
Sacramento, CA 95827

SPINNAKER
215 1st St
Cambridge, MA 02142

SUBLOGIC
713 Edgebrook Dr
Champaign, IL 61820

SUNCOM
650 Anthony
Northbrook, IL 60062

SUNRISE SOFTWARE
2829 West NW Hwy, #904
Dallas, TX 75220

SYDNEY SOFTWARE
315 Laurel
San Diego, CA 92101

SYNAPSE SOFTWARE
5221 Central Ave, #200
Richmond, CA 94804

SPECTRAVIDEO
39 W 37th St
New York, NY 10018

THORN EMI
1370 Ave of Americas
New York, NY 10019

TIGERVISION
909 E. Orchard, #C
Mundelein, IL

TRONIX
8295 So. La Cienega Blvd
Inglewood, CA 90301

UMI
3503-C Temple
Pomona, CA 91768

VECTREX
233 Wilshire Blvd
Santa Monica, CA

WICO
6400 West Gross Point Rd
Niles, IL

XONOX
11311 5th St South
Hopkins, MN 55343

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI COMPUTERS

FINAL FLIGHT (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★) from *MMG MICRO SOFTWARE* is a flight and landing simulator which allows you to experience the piloting of a small plane. The manual indicates you should completely read and understand the instructions to avoid frustration and it's advice well-heeded. This is not an "ordinary" game, but something which will only really appeal to those who love flying and wish to simulate landings. You have several choices in your landing conditions—from clear to foggy and instruments with view, no view of runway, and view of runway but no instruments. There is very detailed instrumentation on the screen which will show you such things as altimeter, pitch, vertical speed, flight path indicator, and more. You must become very familiar with the instrumentation and what it means to be successful in your landing.

Not For Everyone

Because this is really a "learning" game for serious flying fans, it cannot be recommended across the board for players. This is not an action game, nor a shoot-'em-up; however, it is something that budding pilots will enjoy for hours. (24K disk or tape; also available for Commodore 64)
(MSR $29.95)

PHOENIX LAIR (★ ½ / ★ ★) is an arcade-style game consisting of ten increasingly difficult boards, playable at any of ten speeds. The object of the game is to fly the Phoenix around the board, manuevering to avoid obstacles, and destroying eggs which are scattered around the board. Direction of flight is controlled by the joystick while the height (wing flapping) is controlled by the fire button (ala "Joust"). Points are awarded based on eggs captured and amount of time it takes to complete a board. After collecting at least six eggs, the player has the option of entering the Joust board where he participates in a head-to-head joust against the Pharis Hailex, principal knight of the Kingdom of Pharis. Following the joust board, the player enters the next level which is more difficult. While collecting eggs, you must avoid the spiders, and, in the higher levels, two Pharis villians who can cause you an early demise.

Inferior Graphics

The graphics on Phoenix Lair are rather blocky and reminiscent of something you would see on the VCS, as opposed to the Atari computer. Play action is good with the sound of flapping wings realistic. However, after playing Joust, we found this game similar enough and offering nothing unusual enough to set it apart. (40K Disk; coming for Comm 64; Solo Play)
Not Recommended (MRS $29.95)

SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD FROM ELECTRONIC ARTS

Electronic Arts, the people behind M.U.L.E. and PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET, are planning their first single-player game, SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD, in March. It is a simulation of the 16th Century where the player embarks on discovering new worlds. The beginner's game has the New World in it. After that, the player can opt for random continents where you can colonize, set up an administration, convert the natives to Catholicism, etc.

RELAX WITH SYNAPSE

RELAX, a stress reduction system for use with your home computer, will release later this spring from Synapse. Using biofeedback, RELAX will allow you to monitor your stress levels by representing muscle tension graphically on your computer monitor. The workbook included is designed to help you understand your reactions to stress and provide suggestions for managing and reversing those reactions. You'll also be able to program in subliminal messages that will reinforce your relaxation response. Initially, the program will be available in cassette, disk, and cartridge form for the Atari computers, VIC-20, C64, Apple, and IBM PC. Synapse has indicated they plan an Atari VCS version for later in the year.

'84 TIGERVISION PLANS

Tigervision has told us of plans for four new games that will be shown at C.E.S. Planned for multiple systems (2600, TI994/A, C64, Atari computers, and IBM PCjr), they include CHANGES in which you guide a caterpiller through a maze infested with monster insects; SUPER CRUSH, has you driving in a demolition race car; SKY LANCER is a game in which you are abandoned in space with only a laser gun to defend yourself; and ESPIAL, has you as a space attack pilot flying over a gigantic Starship. By the way, RIVER PATROL is now planned to only be available for the 2600.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING APPLE-COMPATIBLE

ROBOTRON: 2084 (★★★½/★★★★) from Atarisoft is a recreation of the popular arcade game for Apple and IBM PC owners. You head off to rescue every ability you can muster as you attempt to rescue every human possible in the remnants of a lost civilization. Ground Roving Unit Network Terminator Robotrons (GRUNTs) are mindless murderers and come marching at you with increasing numbers. Hulk Robotrons throw their weight around. You can't kill them, but with all your strength, you might be able to move them. Brain Robotrons are so smart they can reprogram humans into sinsiter Progs. And, they fling cruise missiles in your direction. There are other evil machines out to get you, including Quarks, Tank Robotrons, and more. You must fight all these adversaries with your anti-robot laser in increasingly difficult and harrying rounds.

Frenzied Play

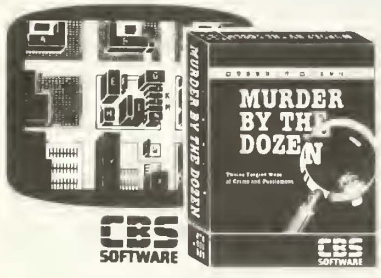
This is one of the more frantic games we've played, with lightening-fast reaction a must. When you lose a life and a new man appears, you have milliseconds to orient yourself and begin shooting. The Robotrons close in on you so quickly, it's amazing! The higher levels will only be reached after a great deal of playing (or, if you've already mastered it in the arcades). This is one of those games which is especially fun to play at home for all the quarters you save! The graphics are quite good. Your Man is quite identifiable as he races around the screen attempting to save all mankind. Atari has come up with an excellent translation and is a must for any Robotron fan! (1 player; Joystick, Paddle, or Keyboard; Pause)
Recommended (MSR $34.95)

CENTIPEDE (★★★½/★★★½) is one of the most familiar titles available for several systems, and now Atarisoft has now made it available for Apple and IBM PC owners so they, too, can play in the Enchanted Mushroom Patch! With magic shooting wands, you must turn Centipede sections into harmless muchrooms, all the while avoiding or shooting down spiders, fleas, and the poisonous Scorpion. As the waves progress, the Centipede becomes faster and meaner, separating into more and more independently moving heads.

Classic Fun

Centipede has long been one of the most popular titles available for 2600 and 5200 owners. As Atarisoft stretches into other systems, it is now possible for various computer owners to enjoy this classic. Although ideal play is with a trackball, a joystick works quite well, with terrific gameplay. The animation is excellent and detailed, although we were surprised to see the colors do not change as you kill the Centipede and move to the next level. Overall, this is a real winner. (Solo Play; Two-Player Alternating; Joystick, Keyboard, or Trackball)
Recommended (MSR $34.95)

MURDER BY THE DOZEN (N/A/★★★) includes 12 complete murder cases, each with victim, case profile, physical evidence, a variety of locations, and lots of suspects! When you begin, you can pick any of 12 different cases, each of which is outlined in the Detective Manual. The program is self-explanatory and does not require you to spend a great deal of time pouring over the directions. Once you choose which murder you want to solve, the phone rings in Homicide (it really sounds like a phone!) and a case history is given. Make notes on the Mystery Master Worksheet provided to help you sort out clues and details you will need later. As the case proceeds, detectives begin to accrue time on their game clocks. When multiple players are involved, the detective with the least amount of elapsed time on the game clock at the end of each turn will be the next to go. At the beginning of each turn, the detective is given 7 choices of things to do, including interviews (clue numbers are given in the interview which you must look up in a Clue Book); examining physical evidence (again clues will be given to look up in the Clue Book); or go to another location on the game map. After entering the location you wish to travel to (either to interview a potential witness, view the scene of the crime, etc), appropriate travel time is added to your game clock. Once reaching the new location, you will, once again, be given the 7 choices. The object of the investigation is to discover who committed the crime and to gather enough evidence to convict the criminal in court. Throughout the investigation, you are given the opportunity to solve the crime. Should you decide to solve the case, you'll have to explain your solution to your fellow sleuths and then check the official solution in the Solutions Book.You must be sure all points asked for in the Case History have been covered before checking the book. Look up the offical solution in the Book using the Solution Decoder.



Play the Cases in Order

It is recommended that you play the cases in order as certain elements are included in later cases that are not found in earlier ones, such as time delays for access to certain information. It will help you to familiarize yourself with the procedure to be followed on the early cases so you can deal with the subtleties of the later cases. The later cases also involve finding pieces of evidence which must be returned to the lab for analysis.

Good Sleuthing

There's lots of good sleuthing to be had in this one. Although one player can play this, it really should be played with multiple players for the most fun. The Clue Book has 700 clues used for the various murders so you will have hours of sleuthing ahead of you. Great for parties! (1-4 players)
Recommended (MSR $34.95)

MATCH WITS (N/A/★★★) is an electronic version of the TV program, Concentration. In this one, there are six pre-programmed categories to work with (sports, words, cities, famous people, multiplication, and animals). In addition, there are instructions to create your own categories. In both variations, there are randomly-generated hidden picture puzzles which must be solved to win the contest. The object of the game is to uncover and match answers to uncover portions of the board and then solve the picture puzzle.



A Bit Slow

We found the pace a bit slow, which is fairly typical of this type of "game"; however, it is a good excercise of recall. We recommend this only to those who are true fans of Concentration. (48K disk)
(MSR $34.95)

EPYX TO SHOW NEW GAMES AT CES

Action/Strategy

Five titles fall into this category. The first, SUMMER GAMES, is another in the Olympic-themed games coming from several companies. Events such as running, diving, swimming, rowing, etc. will be featured. WORLD'S GREATEST BASEBALL GAME is Epyx's baseball game which features individual statistics, decision-making, etc. LUNAR OUTPOST is a three-dimensional, second generation space battle. PUZZLEMANIA presents a series of video puzzles for the player to solve which, in turn, are part of a larger puzzle. This game was designed by author Ken Uston.

Learning Fun

In this category, FUN WITH WORDS is an action oriented word game that teaches children how to spell.

Strategy

Coming in this category are ROBOTS is based on Isaac Asimov's Robots book series, and DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN which is divided into two segments: a strategy and action sequence. In the strategy sequence, utilizing keyboard and text, the player must mobilize his political forces and set up the defense of the planet Pern. In the action segment, the player controls the flying dragon which defends the planet. Dragonriders is based on the top selling science fiction series by Anne McCaffrey. Sequels are planned. Initially, it will be available for both Atari computers and Commodore 64 (disk only).

DINO EGGS (★★★★/★★½) from *MicroFun* thrusts Time Master Tim back into the prehistoric age via time warp where he inadvertently infects the dinosaurs with 21st Century measles. Tim dedicates his life to saving the entire dinosaur population. Carry as many Dino Eggs as possible through the Time Warp. If the eggs hatch, Tim must trap the babies and also transport them via the time warp to the 21st century. Dino eggs are also hidden under boulders which must be rolled down the mountainside. Of course, the adult dinosaurs are not happy to see their eggs being taken, and will try to stop Tim. Look out for Dino Mom. As soon as she puts her foot down, everything in its path is crushed! A fire is useful in scaring the adults off with pieces of wood scattered about the landscape which Tim must collect and put on the fire. Tim must also avoid all the primitive life forms such as squirming proto-snakes which will contaminate him. After contact with one of these life forms, Tim must quickly reach his time warp before his biological clock runs out and he turns into the body of a proto-spider. If Tim finds the Power Flower and eats it, he can carry more than his maximum 3 eggs to the time warp. When Tim "warps out", he delivers whatever eggs, babies, and wood he is carrying to the future and "warps in" somewhere on the same game screen (cliffside)

Pretty Graphics

The graphic detail is quite good, including the detail of the baby dinosaurs. Gameplay is typical of a climbing-type game, where Tim must move about collecting items and avoiding the creatures who will contaminate him. Although the scenario is interesting, there is nothing unusual enough in the gameplay to highly recommend this one. If possible, try this one before purchase. (One Player; Joystick or Keyboard; Pause) (Also available for C64; coming for ColecoVision)
(MSR $40.00)

CAVERN CREATURES (★★★★/★★★) requires that you wind your way down through caves, shooting out obstacles with your three-way laser beam, to ultimately reach the Underground City. It's no easy task, however, as you must wend through narrow corridors, avoiding the walls and deadly cave snakes, and killing the hoards of creatures inhabiting the caves. If you lose a life, you can reposition your next explorer with a crosshair which appears on the screen. Reposition to a more advantageous spot, press the firebutton, and continue on your journey. You must also watch your energy reserves, revitalizing those reserves by shooting the obstacles marked "E".

DATAMOST

Colorful Graphics

As we've encountered with most Datamost games, the graphics are very colorful and animated. There are many different types of creatures of various sizes and shapes which you will encounter on your voyage down to the Underground City. This is a good "shoot 'em up" with the nice twist of being able to reposition your next explorer after losing a life. Strategy will play an important part in this aspect of the game. All in all, this is an enjoyable game which will challenge your shooting ability, as well as a steady hand as you manuever the caves. (Solo Play; Joystick)
Recommended (MSR $29.95)

THE AMAZING ADVENTURE OF SUPER BUNNY (★★★★/★★★) requires that you guide Reggie Rabbit across the screen, hopping onto elevators, to the magic carrots. You must avoid wolves, snakes, owls, vultures, etc., which are inhabiting many of the elevators. Jump on an empty elevator, and time your jump to the next elevator, etc. until you reach the other side where you must must grab the magic carrot so you can turn into "Super Bunny". The gremlin holding the carrot will try and trick you by moving into 3 different positions. Jumping the elevators is very tricky. You've got to do it just right or you'll lose one of your lives. The number of points you receive for hopping from one elevator to another is partially determined by how close you are to the elevator floor.The closer you get the more points you receive. Reggie's ears get bigger when you reach levels 3 and 5 so you must *really* watch your aim! Once you reach the other side and become Super Bunny, you must make the return trip on the elevators. This time, with your magic powers (lasting for an increasingly shorter time) you pounce ON the animals, with a POW! ZAP! CRASH! as you beat them up. When all the animals disappear, you progress to the next level. If you don't beat up all the animals while you have magic power, you turn back into Reggie Rabbit, and you'll have to go back across the elevators for another magic carrot.

Harder Than You Think!

We thought this would be a snap, but we found the timing absolutely critical to get across the elevators. No misstep is allowed at all! It's a deceptively simple game in that it simply requires you to hop the elevators. But it can frustrate you for many hours. The animated graphics are breathtaking in the title screen, with cape waving. Animation in the game itself is also excellent, with colorfully animated animals on the various elevators. The bunny is terrific as both Reggie and when he turns into Super Bunny. With a comic book included and the fun graphics, this is an excellent game for the family. (Solo Play; Joystick or Paddle)
Recommended (MSR $29.95)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..TI 99/4A

SHAMUS (★★★½/★★★★) comes from **Atarisoft** under a license from Synapse. In one of the all-time computer game favorites, the player takes the role of the Shamus (detective) to explore the levels of the Shadow's Lair, eventually reaching and destroying the Shadow himself. In this action/adventure game, each of the four levels contains many different rooms full of the Shadow's henchmen and various prizes. The Shamus can fire his Ion-Shivs (Ionic-Short High Intensity Vaporizers) to destroy the henchmen that stalk his every move, but his weapons only stun the Shadow, who makes an occasional appearance. Access to other levels in the Lair is achieved only by finding the correct key and matching it to its keyhole.

ATARI

A Classic

SHAMUS is yet another in the sudden avalanche of excellent new games for the T.I. 99/4A. It's a classic, and Atari has done a great job of translating it for this system. Graphics are quite good, with nice, bright colors. Gameplay is endlessly fascinating, since there are so many rooms to explore. As with many adventure games, some players will want to make maps. This is facilitated by a readout at the bottom of the screen telling the player which level and room is currently displayed on the screen. The big attraction with SHAMUS is the combination of strategy and fast action. Not only does SHAMUS exercise the mind, but it also tests the reflexes. This one is a must for your library! (Solo Play; Joystick; Pause.) (Cartridge)
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

PAC-MAN (★★★★/★★★★) is the original dot-chomper's delight, and now owners of the T.I. 99/4A can play this version from **Atarisoft.** In this classic maze game, the player controls Pac-Man as he scurries around the maze, gobbling dots and avoiding goblins, while nibbling the energy dots to make the goblins vulnerable, or munching on the bonus fruit prizes. This version is superb, from the brilliantly colored, crisp graphics and cute music to the great play action at nine levels of difficulty. Even the much maligned T.I. joystick works quite well on this game. This is an excellent translation of a great game—not to be missed. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause; Joystick.) (Cartridge)
Recommended. (MSR $44.95)

MINER 2049ER (★★★★/★★★½) is yet another version of one of the hottest games of 1983. This one for the T.I. 99/4A features eight of the original ten screens and gives the gamer plenty of challenge. The player takes the role of Bounty Bob, claiming the stations of a mine in the year 2049. Each screen presents new challenges in the form of mutant organisms, slides, vats of radioactive waste, transporters, moving platforms, and even a cannon from which Bounty Bob must shoot himself to various levels within the last station! Graphics in this version are excellent, with lots of bright colors. Though two of the original screens are missing, the remaining eight should be more than enough to keep even the most skilled players busy for many, many hours. This is a very good climbing game. (Solo Play; Joystick.) (Cartridge)
Recommended. (MSR $29.95)

TIGERVISION®

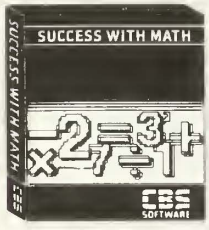
Back issues are available for most issues THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE (none left of Vol 1, #1,2, and 3). Send $2.00 for each back issue you wish. Buy any four for $6.00 and any six for $9.00. Make certain you have a complete set! Remember, we reviewed over 325 games in 1983 alone!!

COMPUTER: TUTOR

SAT ENGLISH I and **SAT MATH I from MicroLearn,** a division of Microlab, are companion programs designed for the high school student preparing for the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test). They can also be used as general review for anyone wanting to study these subjects at a college preparatory level. Both programs are organized similarly: various sections of each subject are covered separately, and the student has the choice of covering each topic in tutorial or test mode. While both modes generally provide the same questions, the tutorial mode gives explanations of each possible answer. Not only does the student get immediate feedback on both correct and incorrect answers, but he/she also learns *why* the answer was correct or not. In the test mode, there is no feedback until all questions in a section (usually about 20) have been answered. At this point, the student receives a score in terms of percentage of correct answers.

Topics covered in the SAT ENGLISH I program are sentence completion, analogies, antonyms, grammar and usage, and reading comprehension. SAT MATH I contains sections on math skills, algebra, geometry, and varied skills, plus pretest and posttest. Both programs would be an excellent investment for the high school student preparing to take the SAT's. The student can gain knowledge and self-confidence while lessening the inevitable anxieties associated with taking any major exam. (Text only; Keyboard.) (48K Disk for Apple.)
Recommended. (MSR $30.00 each)

SUCCESS WITH MATH is a series of four programs for grade levels 1-12. ***Addition and Subtraction*** covers grade levels 1 to 4, providing basic computation practice including carrying and borrowing. The student chooses the difficulty level and number of problems he/she wants to solve. As in the other three programs, help and encouragement are given by the program every step of the way, and the student is even addressed by name. ***Multiplication and Division*** is for grade levels 2 to 8. Multiplicands are always three digits, and the student chooses one to three digits for the multiplier. Divisors may contain one to three digits. ***Linear Equations*** (grade levels 7 to 11) provides detailed drills in solving randomly generated equations of the form AX + B = C. The student gets lots of practice in performing basic arithmetic operations on both sides of the equation. ***Quadratic Equations*** (grade levels 9 to 12) generates equations in the form $AX^2 + + BX + C = 0$ at two difficulty levels. The screen is divided into three areas: original equation, work area and message/instruction area. Extensive practice in factoring is an integral part of this program.

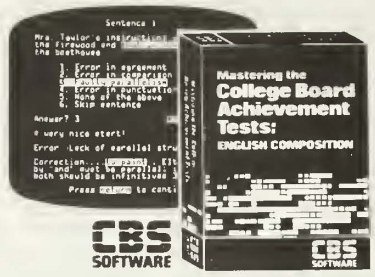


This set of programs does a beautiful job of covering basic mathematic concepts at all grade levels. At home, the student can work at his or her own pace, and the computer is a personal tutor every step of the way. We wish these kinds of programs had been available when *we* were kids! (Text only; Keyboard.) (Disk for Apple; Disk or Cassette for Atari, Commodore 64.)
Recommended. (MSR $24.95 Disk, $19.95 Cassette)

LOTS OF PDI EDUCATION

PDI has an ambitious introduction of 14 new titles and several conversions to the C64 of their more popular titles. New titles include SAMMY AND THE LIGHTHOUSE, a sequel to the popular Sammy the Sea Serpent; MONTANA READING PROGRAM; FRANGLAIS, a lesson in French; BEGINNING ALGEBRA; ROBIN'S HALLOWEEN, an interactive story for children; PICTURE BLOCKS, for ages 4-10; TEDDY'S MAGIC BALLOON, another interactive story; and STORY BUILDER/WORD MASTER, designed to teach grammer and spelling qkills. For the entire family, SHAFT RAIDER is an "out-of-this-word game"; GAME MACHINE includes Racing, a simulated horse race, Bowling, Leap Frog, for puzzle fans, Musical Letters, and Gotcha, an arcade game; PIZZA MAN/HI RISE SHOPPER teaches tots through simulated "real life" situations; GIANT TOOTH is a series of 3 games in one package designed to give 4-8 year old kids practice in classifying sets of geometric objects.

MASTERING THE COLLEGE BOARD ACHIEVEMENT TESTS: ENGLISH COMPOSITION



MASTERING THE COLLEGE BOARD ACHIEVEMENT TESTS: ENGLISH COMPOSITION is designed to provide comprehensive drill and practice in answering the types of questions asked on the English Composition Achievement Test (ECAT) used for college admission or advanced placement in college English. Each of the five disks contains a data bank of questions on specific topics, and the questions are presented in random groups of 16 at a time. "Underlined Choices" simply asks the student to choose which underlined part of a sentence contains an error, if any. After a choice is made, the program always shows the correct answer with an explanation. "Labeling" requires the student to determine the specific type of error present in each sentence, if any. This two-disk exercise covers errors of diction, wordiness, grammar, cliche or mixed metaphor, agreement, comparison, parallelism and punctuation. "Variation" highlights part of each sentence and asks the student to choose the best possible rewrite *if* the original is incorrect. "Editing" offers a correct sentence with instructions to change it in a particular manner. The student must choose the best rewrite incorporating the change requested. After each group of 16 questions, the student is graded and given a detailed error analysis, all of which may be saved if the student has a printer.

Designed with Great Care

This is a marvelous program for anyone wanting a comprehensive review of English composition. It has been designed with great care, and the humorous touches make it very user-friendly. We liked the fact that every answer elicits a computer comment on the student's progress. Some we ran into were "Nobody gets everything right," "You should teach the class," "I'll get you on the next one," and "You make my circuits tingle!" This one is a must for college-bound students. (Text only; Keyboard.) (5 48K Disks for Apple or IBM PC.)
Recommended. (MSR $175.00)

SELF-IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS FROM CBS

Several programs are planned for the Apple II/IIe and IBM PC/PC, with the first two being PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, which covers functions of a manager, management styles; and PEOPLE MANAGEMENT, which includes leadership styles, motivation, team development, and communications patterns.

Keyboard Overlay to be Introduced



The EasyKey keyboard overlay will be introduced and is designed to facilitate the use of complex programs by serving as the program menu and interface. The first two programs to feature this overlay are COAST-TO-COAST AMERICA and DINOSAUR DIG for ages 6 and up. Initially, these will be available for Apple II+ and IIe, C64, and IBM PC/PCjr.

NEW IBM PCjr KEYBOARD?

Rumblings are already coming out of IBM regarding the possibility of another keyboard, perhaps as an optional upgrade. The keyboard shown with the PCjr only features 62 keys, whereas the rumored keyboard may feature 83 keys. Meanwhile, there is already at least one other company planning an add-on, full-function keyboard for the PCjr to retail around $250.00.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

BERZERK (★ ★ ★½/ ★ ★ ★½) is the best adaptation yet of the Stern arcade game, and it even includes the taunting robot voice without the need of a separate voice synthesizer. The game itself pits the player as humanoid with gun against maze rooms full of robots, most of which shoot at the humanoid. All contact with robots and electrified maze walls will fry the humanoid instantly, to the accompaniment of smart-alec comments such as "Got the humanoid, got the intruder." In addition to the robots, Otto the bouncing ball enters the maze when the humanoid lingers too long. Unfortunately, he is not vulnerable to the humanoid's gun and must be avoided. As the humanoid escapes Otto to the next maze, the player is berated: "Chicken! Fight like a robot!"

Faithful to the Coin-Op

Both graphics and game play are extremely faithful to the original coin-op, right down to the voice of the robot. Fans of the arcade game will be pleased to find that the Atari 5200 controllers work very well in this game, making it a worthwhile purchase for anyone who likes the original. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause.)
Recommended. (MSR $39.95)

PENGO (★ ★ ★½/ ★ ★ ★½) is the latest arcade translation from Atari and it's another good one! Here you'll race Pengo, a loveable penquin, around a frozen playfield, rearranging ice blocks in an attempt to line up three diamond blocks. All the while, the deadly Sno-Bees pursue you with their deadly sting. As you manuever around the ice field, you can kick ice blocks across the field, both to rearrange the playfield and to crush the Sno-Bees. You may also crush ice blocks which are trapped against the wall or another block. At the beginning of each round, the ice blocks which contain Sno-Bee eggs will flash for a few seconds. If you can destroy them quickly, you'll gain additional bonus points. Kill all the Sno-Bees and progress to the next level. As you progress, the Sno-Bees get smarter. The last remaining Sno-Bee is the most dangerous as it moves faster and faster, destroying ice blocks with lightening speed.

Addictive

This is the first home videogame where you rearrange the playfield. The skating effect is excellent with the ice blocks sailing across the screen. This is a very whimsical game in which the character of Pengo is as cute as can be. The gameplay becomes more and more addictive as we found ourselves saying "just one more round." Atari has managed another outstanding translation which will be fun for the entire family. (Solo Play; Two-Player Alternating)
Recommended (MSR $39.95)

SORRY, ATARI... AND YOU, TOO!

We ran into a reviewing situation in November that cannot go unnoticed. Atari's 5200 BASEBALL was promised to be in our hands for the November review. It was merely 2 days before we went to press that we frantically received our eprom (working version) of the game. Since there was no instruction manual included, we contacted Atari who indicated none was available yet, but we would be able to work without it. With that direction, we mistakenly thought the game was simple to play, without nuances which would require the manual. As a result, in spite of the fact that we spent several hours with the game, we did not "discover" the many fascinating aspects of it.

After receiving many letters from readers (where we were taken to task over errors in our review), we went out and PURCHASED a copy of the game and our readers are right! As opposed to re-reviewing the game, following are excerpts from one concerned reader who we thank for taking the time to write!

Dear VGU:

I'm writing in regard to your unfair and inaccurate review of Atari's 5200 REALSPORTS BASEBALL. Your comment that "other than the voice, there are no special tricks" is probably the biggest understatement in the whole review. There are probably more tricks and innovations in this baseball game than any other on the market. For instance, you can switch control from one base runner to another, even while they are running. There are three independently programmable skill levels for each time (novice, advanced, intermediate). Not all field plays are directed by computer. While the computer will direct or assist to which base the ball will be thrown, you can do it yourself and becomes essential if you want to enjoy and get good at the game. This game may have the fanciest stealing of any baseball computer or videogame available. You can actually start a runner running while the pitcher is throwing the ball to the batter (hit and run). You can also switch control from one runner to another. Also, there is tag up for a fly ball. Of course, this game takes a lot of practice to master some of the skills. It is much more than a "straight forward", no frills contest...

Name Withheld by request

As a result of the error in this review, we have decided that, in the future, we will *NOT* review any game without having instructions, even if it causes a delay in the review. Although we played the game for a few hours, the instructions were critical to the correct playing of the game. After merely a few more hours of play, with the benefit of full instructions, we agree that REALSPORTS BASEBALL is, indeed, the best sports game available for dedicated game systems. Just some of the features included in this game are stealing, squeeze plays, ability to start up one runner and then changing control to another player, nine different pitches, ability to override the computer in moving your fielders and setting up your defense, and much more. This game of baseball will take you many, many hours to master and more hours to simply enjoy a fine afternoon at the park!

RETURN OF THE JEDI DEATH STAR BATTLE (★ ★ ★½/ ★ ★½) puts the player in control of the Milennium Falcon in a race to destroy the Death Star before the Empire completes its construction. In the two-stage battle, the Falcon must shoot down fast-moving Tie Interceptors, avoid or shoot down the Imperial Shuttle, and avoid the Death Ray. Once enough Interceptors have been destroyed, random openings begin to appear in the Death Star's energy shield. After guiding the Falcon through an opening, the player is treated to a bright display on the trip through hyperspace to the Death Star. Here there are more Interceptors, but the most dangerous enemy is the randomly appearing Death Ray. The Milennium Falcon must fire its lasers to gradually chip away pieces of the Death Star until final aim can be taken at the pulsating energy core. Then the Death Star will explode, spewing fireballs which must be avoided by outrunning them.

Great Visual and Sound Effects

DEATH STAR BATTLE has lots of great visual and sound effects. The three-dimensional look of the first screen is especially good. However, the game itself boils down to one portion of standard spaceship-to-spaceship warfare and another of outer-space *Breakout*-style play action. They didn't even give us the *Star Wars* musical theme! As with the earlier version of this game for the Atari 2600, we really wanted to like it, but it's lot of flash and very little substance. (Solo Play; Pause Control.)
Not recommended. (MSR approx. $45.00)

SEGA C.E.S. PLANS

In an exclusive December interview, Sega has told us they plan to show versions of STAR TREK, CONGO BONGO, and BUCK ROGERS for Apple and the IBM PC computers. In addition, they have the rights to an IBM PC version of ZAXXON, and a planned conversion for the PCjr. They also promised us an "exciting announcement of a June software release". More next month!

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING?

We believe that gamers don't deserve the misleading advertising tactics used by some game manufacturers and/or their advertising agencies. We applaud those manufacturers that provide a game screen and description on the outside of the game package. However, we believe the practice of using a prettied-up, artist's drawing of a game screen is deceptive, unless it is *clearly* labelled as an "artist's rendition." TV advertising is not always as honest as we think it should be, either. For example, commercials for a multi-format game from a now-defunct company aired several months ago. These ads showed a game screen from a computer version that was never released. The only version of the game available for sale was the Atari 2600 version, and it didn't look *anything* like the game screen in the commercial! Very recently we saw a commercial for a newly-released, multi-format game that used an animated artist's rendering of the game action. Of course it looked fantastic, but *no* version of that game even comes close to the beautiful graphics shown in the ad! If a consumer buys the game expecting it to look like the commercial, he's in for a real disappointment. We think that games should be represented honestly. To do otherwise merely causes the consumer to be suspicious of the game manufacturers.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

WIZARD OF WOR (★★★/★★★★) is based on the Bally/Midway maze game, and it's loaded with action and suspense. The player becomes a Worrior in the dungeon mazes of the Wizard's mystical kingdom of Wor. The nasty Worlings that inhabit the mazes come in several varieties: Burwors, Garwors, Thorwors, the Worluk and, of course, the Wizard himself. Some of the Worlings are invisible at times, and some have the ability to teleport themselves around the dungeons. Fortunately, the player can keep track of all the Worlings on the radar screen. As the game progresses, the mazes have different configurations. The 13th one, The Pit, has no walls at all!

CBS Electronics

Action Escalates Quickly

If you think all maze contests are happy, pleasant little games, give this one a try! The action escalates quickly, and the dangers are many. The accompanying music even adds to the frantic feeling of the challenge. Graphics are very colorful, with blinding flashes of light whenever something momentous happens, such as shooting the Worluk. The medieval feeling of the game is enhanced by the appearance of the Worriors and Worlings—they look as if they just stepped off a coat of arms. This is a fast-paced action game that works better than most maze contests with the Atari 5200 joysticks. (However, our scores improved dramatically when we switched to a Wico Analog Joystick for the 5200.) The 2-player version is terrific because it allows for cooperative or competitive play. WIZARD OF WOR is one of the best maze games yet for this system. (Solo Play; 2-Player Simultaneous; Pause.)
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

MOUNTAIN KING (★★★★/★★★★) is identical to the version for Atari computers reviewed in our June, 1983 issue. This is an impressive fantasy/adventure/climbing game in which the player as Explorer takes a timed journey through a diamond mine containing the Temple Chamber of a forgotten civilization. The Explorer must seize the Crown within the Chamber and escape with it to the top of the mountain to be crowned "Mountain King." Dancing and leaping among ladders and ledges, the Explorer must gather enough diamond points to make the Flame Spirit available. Along the way there are hidden treasure chests, revealed only by the pale blue beam of the Explorer's flashlight. (This is one of the best visual effects in the game.) Once the Flame Spirit becomes available, it must be located by paying attention to the volume of the music (Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King"), for the Spirit is invisible unless caught in the flashlight's beam. Once the Explorer catches the Flame Spirit, he must offer it to the Skull Spirit to gain entrance to the Temple Chamber containing the Crown. Once the Crown is grabbed, it's a mad dash to the top of the mountain, while the music plays frantically and the gray bats try to steal the crown. (There's another pest, too—the giant green spider that loves to wrap up the Explorer in a neat, webbed package.) Reaching the mountaintop with the Crown isn't easy, but it results in bonus points and continued play at the next difficulty level.

Totally Captivating

MOUNTAIN KING is one of those rare games that is totally captivating. The graphics are gorgeous, the music delightful, and the combination of fantasy/adventure with climbing challenge makes for a truly original game. (Solo Play; Pause.)
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

BLUEPRINT (★★★★/★★★★½) is based on the Bally/Midway coin-op in which "Our Hero" attempts to save Daisy Damsel from the clutches of Ollie Ogre. It's a two-stage contest which begins in a neighborhood of 10 houses. Eight of the houses contain pieces of the Hero's Contraption. They must be found and placed in their proper positions on a blueprint at the bottom of the screen. While the Hero moves through the maze of streets, Ollie chases Daisy across the top of the screen. The Hero has a limited time to find all the pieces, and he's constantly running into snags such as bombs in some of the houses, Sneaky Pete who tries to start up the Contraption before it's finished, the explosive Fuzzy Wuzzy, and occasional flower pots knocked off the ledge at the top of the screen. Fuzzy Wuzzy and the flower pots must be avoided, but bombs and Sneaky Pete can be disposed off in the bomb pit. Once the Contraption is built, Our Hero starts it up and fires basketballs at Ollie. Hitting Ollie will save Daisy and send Our Hero to the next neighborhood.

Fans of the Coin-Op Will Be Pleased

BLUEPRINT is an excellent adaptation of the coin-op. It's a very colorful, cute game that will definitely appeal to children, although we know some adults who are crazy about the coin-op version. Fans of the coin-op should be very pleased with this version, because all the essentials are present. There is good variety in the game play, and the graphics are beautifully detailed. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause.)
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

K-RAZY SHOOT-OUT (★★½/★★½) is a maze shooting game that's very reminiscent of *Berzerk*. The player is a Space Commander trapped in the Control Sectors of the Alien Droids. The Droids in each maze Sector must be shot with the Space Commander's laser pistol to eliminate them. Points are also earned for Droids shot by other Droids, or for Droids eliminated by running into electrified maze barriers or each other. Leaving a Sector without destroying all the Droids causes the Space Commander to play up to two Sectors without scoring any points. Each Sector has a time limit, with bonus points awarded for fast work. K-RAZY SHOOT-OUT is a straightforward shooting game with plenty of challenge, but it's very similar to *Berzerk*. Since we feel that Berzerk looks and plays better, with the addition of the voice of the robots, we recommend it over this game. (Solo Play; Pause; Joystick or Trak-Ball.)
(MSR $34.95)

GORF (★★★½/★★★) is an adaptation of the Bally/Midway coin-op that should be familiar to most gamers. This version contains four of the five arcade screens, lacking only the *Galaxians* encounter that's available separately to Atari 5200 owners anyway. Mission 1, Astro Battles, pits the player's Interstellar Space Fighter against the advancing columns of Gorfian Droids in a variant of the *Space Invaders* theme. In Mission 2, Anti-Particle Laser Ships attack, surrounded by a formation of three Kamikaze Invaders and a Flying Gorf. In Space Warp, a web releases Flying Gorfs attacking in a spiral pattern. In the final Mission, the target is the internal power reactor of the Gorfian Flagship. First the ship's force field must be breached, and then it takes a perfect shot to explode the ship.

A "Golden Oldie" Video Game

GORF is very familiar to most video gamers, who are likely to have formed a definite opinion of the game already. This version is very well done and follows the original faithfully. If you like GORF and have an Atari 5200, you'll want to add this one to your collection. If you've somehow managed to miss the game in its earlier forms, you may want to take a look before buying. Because GORF is something of a "golden oldie" among video games, it doesn't have that spark of originality anymore, but it is a classic. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause.)
(MSR $37.95)

AVALON HILL WILL INTRODUCE MORE STRATEGY

Avalon Hill has plans for five new strategy/war games for the Atari, C64, Apple, and IBM PC. Among the titles to be unveiled at the show are DREADNOUGHTS, in which you can recreate actual early WWII battles (intially available on Apple); PANZERJAGD, armored warfare on the Eastern Front in WWII; GULF WAR, the next war in the Middle East; LONDON BLITZ, a enhanced C64 version of the VCS game; and JUPITAR MISSION 1999, a four disk game for Atari computers which is an interactive space fantasy novel. It will feature 11 games in one where you have to assist the government in determining where radio signals are coming from. TIME TRAVELLER (Apple) is an adventure/history game planned for a summer release.

New Sports Titles

Two Sports Illustrated games are planned—COMPUTER TITLE BOUT, a two-sided disk for the Atari computer which is a boxing game with a twist. Included on the disk is data on past and present boxers so you can program your own bout! Also planned is TOURNAMENT GOLF (Apple), another 2-sided disk which features 2 courses for 1-4 players.

New Educational Line

The new educational line, Intelligence Quest Software, will debut with ABC CATERPILLAR, a spelling game for 3-6 year-olds and DIVEX, a multiplication/division game for 3-6 graders.

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE 1983

All awards are the sole discretion of THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE and are based on creativity, imagination, sales, and our reader's imput.

#1 SELLER OF 1983: **MINER 2049ER** for ColecoVision by MicroFun

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR: **BILL HOGUE** for MINER 2049ER (BIG 5)—Atari computers and 5200

MOST INNOVATIVE GAME: **SPACE SHUTTLE** (for Atari VCS) by Steve Kitchen for Activision

GAME OF THE YEAR—ATARI 2600: **RIVER RAID** by Carol Shaw for Activision

GAME OF THE YEAR—ATARI 5200: **SPACE DUNGEON** by Atari

GAME OF THE YEAR—INTELLIVISION: **SWORDS & SERPENTS** by Imagic

GAME OF THE YEAR—COLECOVISION: **QUEST FOR TIRES** by Sierra On-Line

GAME OF THE YEAR—ATARI COMPUTER: **ZEPPELIN** by Synapse

GAME OF THE YEAR—APPLE: **LODERUNNER** by Broderbund

GAME OF THE YEAR—TI 99/4A: **BURGERTIME** by Texas Instruments

BEST EDUCATIONAL GAME: **KID VID** for Atari VCS by Coleco
KOALAPAD with MicroIllustrator for multiple computer systems by Koala Industries

BEST SPORTS GAME: **REALSPORTS BASEBALL** for Atari 5200 by Atari
STAR LEAGUE BASEBALL for Atari computers by Gamestar

BEST ADVENTURE/STRATEGY GAME: **LONDON BLITZ** for Atari VCS by Avalon Hill
INFIDEL for multiple computer systems by Infocom

BEST ARCADE ADAPTATION: **Q*BERT** for VCS, 5200, Intellivision, and ColecoVision by Parker Bros.
DONKEY KONG for Atari computers by Atari

BEST NEW ACCESSORY: **WICO ANALOG JOYSTICK with KEYPAD** for Atari 5200

ATARI PLANS A COMPUTER SHOWCASE

Atari's booth at the C.E.S. will feature a showcase of their 600 and 800XL computers, along with a light pen and touch tablet which will be available sometime in the first quarter. Also featured will be a 1064 Memory Module for the 600XL which will expand that computer from 16K to 64K! Home management software, developed in conjunction with Synapse, will include SYN FILE, a computer filing system, SYN TREND, a two part graphics and statistics program, and SYN CALC, a spreadsheet. All are 48K disk and will retail for $99.95 each. A children's educational program, CAPTAIN HOOKS REVENGE will be shown (32K disk). Two new music programs will be shown—MUSIC I and MUSIC II, programs which teach the basics to computer owners with no prior knowledge of music. Retailing for $39.95 each, they are on 24K disk. In a promotion for current owners of the 1050 Disk Drive, Atari will replace, free of charge, your DOS 2 system with DOS 3, if you purchased your drive prior to mid-December. For those who qualify, write to: 1050 Free DOS 3 Promotion, Atari Customer Relations, 1312 Crossman Rd., P.O. Box 61657, Sunnyvale, CA 94088.

Entertainment Software

As we predicted in our September issue, Atari will, indeed show finished product on MILIPEDE (to be available for the 2600, 5200, and computers), and TAZ (5200 and computers) Two other new titles include LEGACY, which Atari promises will entail an "interesting storyline" (computer and 5200) and (!) CHOPLIFTER for the computer.

Atarisoft Conversions Aplenty

Meanwhile, many more Atari hits are planned for first quarter release for C64, VIC-20, IBM PC, Apple, and TI99/4A. Those titles include JOUST, BATTLEZONE, MS PAC-MAN, MOON PATROL, POLE POSITION, GALAXIAN, and JUNGLE HUNT. By the way, we were given no new titles for either Intellivision or ColecoVision for the first part of 1984!

MOVED??? Don't forget to let us know so you don't miss one important issue. For the fastest change, either send us your mailing label, or copy the numbers on the top of it and we'll do the rest

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..VIC-20

DEFENDER (★★★★/★★★★) from Atarisoft enables VIC-20 owners to play this classic in a dazzling translation! All the elements have been included in this version—from hyperspace to the radar screen, and the various enemy craft including swarmers, mutants, baiters, and more. Pilot your ship as close to the planet as possible to protect your humanoids. Thrust, destroy the mutants, reverse direction and shoot again.

Gorgeous Rendition

VIC-20 owners normally must settle for versions which do not begin to parallel the originals but Atari has truly put magic into this one! The gameplay is as responsive and quick as any version. Graphics are stunning—from the thrust fire coming from your ship, to the various enemy ships. The lines are crisp and clear, unlike many games on the VIC-20. Anyone who enjoys space and shoot-'em-ups, *must* add this one to their library! (One Player; Two-Player Alternating; Joystick; Pause)
Recommended (MSR $44.95)

CENTIPEDE (★★★/★★★½) is now available for VIC-20 owners. Once again we enter the Enchanted Mushroom Patch filled with attacking Centipedes, Jumping Spiders, Fleas, and Scorpions. Blast away at the Centipede and other attacking bugs.

Good Rendition

Centipede lovers will be pleased to know this is a good rendition, with all the enemy bugs bouncing about the screen. Centipede is best played with a trackball, but can be played well with a joystick. Gameplay is very good. Graphics are a bit blocky, but all the bugs and mushrooms are quite recognizable. All in all, this is a good rendition of Centipede and worthy of anyone's VIC-20 library. (Solo Play; Two-Player Alternating; Joystick or Trackball; Pause)
Recommended (MSR $44.95)

PAC-MAN (★★½/★★) is one of the most popular arcade games ever; however, VIC-20 owners do not get a very good version. By now, everyone knows the object of the game as Pac-Man must eat the dots, avoid the ghosts, but eat them after swallowing a power pill.

System Limits Game Too Much

Although the graphics are crisp (unlike the earlier 2600 version), the maze is much smaller. This may be the trade-off the programmers were faced with on this conversion. Regardless, the result is that Pac-Man begins just below the area where the ghosts come out. You must, therefore, manuever him over a Power Pill quickly as the ghosts are in rapid pursuit. There are other maze games out there for the VIC-20 which offer more challenge so, although this one carries the magic name "Pac-Man", take a long look at it before purchase. (Solo Play; Two-Player Alternating; Joystick or Keyboard; Pause)
Not Recommended (MSR $44.95)

COMMODORE WITH BUILT-IN SOFTWARE?

Commodore is not talking, but the rumors are getting stronger and stronger regarding a new computer—one which may debut at C.E.S. and feature built-in software for writing, spreadsheet, and graph-making tasks. It should run in the $500 range. Our fears expressed in our December issue may prove out as it appears that most software which runs on the C64 will not run on this new computer, a potentially deadly mistake. We'll bring you more details next month.

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AVAILABILITY UPDATE

ATARI 2600

DECEMBER
x-Congo Bongo (SEGA)
x-Cookie Monster Munch (AT)
Front Line (COL)
Glacier Patrol (SUN)
x-Mario Bros. (AT)
x-Masters of the Universe (MNTK)
Snowplow (SUN)
x-Sorcerer's Apprentice (AT)
x-Tunnel Runner (CBS)

JANUARY
Kick Man (CBS)
River Patrol (TGV)
Targ (CBS)
Treasure of Tarmin (MNTK)

FEBRUARY
Oscar's Trash Race (AT)
Out of Control (AH)
Shuttle Orbitor (AH)
Wings (CBS)

INTELLIVISION

DECEMBER
x-Centipede (AT)
x-Joystick w/Keypad (WICO)
x-Master of Universe (MAT)
x-Pac-Man (AT)
x-River Raid (ACTV)

COLECOVISION

DECEMBER
x-Centipede (AT)
x- Defender (AT)
Campaign 84 (SUN)
Destructor (COL) ★ ★ ★ ★
x-Frontline (COL) ★ ★
Gust Buster (SUN)
Joyboard (AM)
Joy Sensor (SUN)
Mountain King (CBS)
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)
x-Pac-Man (AT)
Rolloverture (SUN)
Super Action Football (COL) ★ ★
Super Donkey Kong (COL) ★
Super Donkey Kong Jr (COL) ★
Super Smurf (COL) ★
Super Sub Roc (COL) ★
Super Time Pilot (COL) ★
Super Zaxxon (COL) ★
Wargames (COL)

JANUARY
Apple Cider Spider (SOL)
Astrochase (PB)
Buck Rogers (COL)
Dukes of Hazzard (COL) ★ ★ ★ ★
Lunar Leeper (SOL)
Oil's Well (SOL)
Threshold (SOL)

FEBRUARY
Dino Eggs (MF)
Scraper Caper (MIF)
Super Cobra (PB)
Tutankham (PB)
Wings (CBS)

★ indicates data-pak for use in ADAM ONLY
★ ★ for use with Super Action Controllers
★ ★ ★ for use with Roller Controller
★ ★ ★ ★ for use with Expansion Module 2

ATARI 5200

DECEMBER
Berzerk (Voice) (AT)
Bristles (FS)
x-Congo Bongo (SEGA)
Flip and Flop (FS)
Jawbreaker (SOL)
Mario Bros. (AT)
x-Megamania (ACTV)
Madden Football (CBS)
Omega Race (CBS)
x-Pengo (AT)

JANUARY
Deathstar Battle (PB)
Robotron (AT)
Super Cobra (PB)
Xevious (AT)

FIRST QUARTER
Domino Man (CBS)
Road Runner (AT)
Satan's Hollow (CBS)
Scraper Caper (BIG5)
Sport Goofy (AT)
Tutankham (PB)
Wings (CBS)

VECTREX

DECEMBER
x-3-D Imager

FIRST QUARTER
Dark Tower
Pitcher's Duel
3-D Mine Storm
3-D Pole Position
3-D Roller Coaster

ATARI COMPUTERS

DECEMBER
x-Dragonriders of Pern (EPYX)
x-Encounter
Gunfight/Seawolf (EPYX)
Journey to the Planets (ROK)
Mr. TNT (HES)
x-Ms. Pac-Man
Quasimodo (SYN)
Rack Em Up (ROK)
Rockball (ROK)
x-Rootin' Tootin' (HES)
Space Journey (ROK)
x-Starfire/Fire 1 (EPYX)

JANUARY
Aerobics (SPN)
Aztec (DM)
Bilestoad (DM)
Dimension X (DM)
Football (AT)
x-Joust (AT)
Megamania (ACTV)
Robotron (AT)
Snokie (SOL)
Xevious (AT)

FEBRUARY
Boulder Dash (FS)
Campaign 84 (SUN)
Donkey Kong Jr (AT)
Gust Buster (SON)
Mario Bros (AT)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)
Rolloverture (SUN)
Scraper Caper (BIG5)
Tutankham (PB)

VIC-20

DECEMBER
x-Centipede (AT)
Donkey Kong (AT)
x-PacMan (AT)
Robotron (AT)
Sammy Lightfoot (SOL)
Stargate (AT)

COMMODORE 64

DECEMBER
Bank St Writer (BRO)
Battle of Normandy (STRSIM)
Bilestoad (DM)
x-Bristles (D/Cass)(FS)
Castle Hassle (ROK)
Cosmic Tunnels (DM)
Death in Caribbean (MIF)
Diamond Mine (ROK)
Dino Eggs (MF)
Donkey Kong (AT)
Dragonrider of Pern (EPYX)
x-Flip and Flop (D/Cass)(FS)
Floyd of the Jungle (MICP)
Gateway to Apshai (EPYX)
Hellcat Ace (MICP)
Journey to the Planets (ROK)
x-Matchboxes (BRO)
Monster Smash (DM)
Mr. TNT (HES)
x-Necromancer (SYN)
Nightraiders (DM)
x-Operation Whirlwind (BRO)
PacMan (AT)
Paintbrush (HES)
x-Pharoah's Curse (SYN)
x-Picnic Paranoia (SYN)
Rack Em Up (ROK)
Rockball (ROK)
Roundabout (DM)
Scraper Caper (MIF)
x-Starfire/Fire 1 (EPYX)
Stargate (AT)

JANUARY
Aerobics (SPN)
Aquatron (SOL)
Homeword (SOL)
Quest for Tires (SOL)

FEBRUARY
Astrochase (FS) Boulder Dash(FS)
Campaign 84 (SUN)
Drelbs (SYN)
Gust Buster (SUN)
Oil Barons (EPYX)
Quest for Quintana (SUN)
Rolloverture (SUN)
Sentinel (SYN)
Zaxxon (SYN)
Zeppelin (SYN)

TI 99/4A

DECEMBER
Buck Rogers (TI)
Congo Bongo (TI)
Protector (AT)
x-Shamus (AT)
David's Midnight Magic (TI)
Dig Dug (AT)
M*A*S*H (TI)
Moonmine (TI)
Sneggit (TI)

APPLE II/IIE

DECEMBER
x-O'Riley's Mine (DS)

JANUARY
Space Ark (DM)

FEBRUARY
Dreadnoughts (AH)

IBM PCjr

JANUARY
Demon Attack (IMGC)
Facemaker (SPN)
Fraction Fever (SPN)
Kindercomp (SPN)

COMPANY NAME CODES

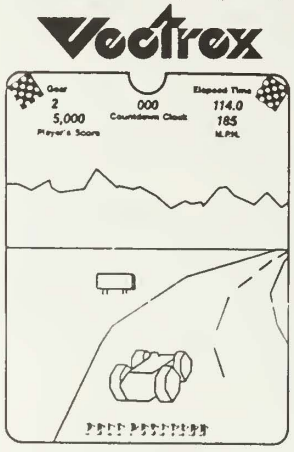
ACTV - Activision
AH - Avalon Hill
AM - Amiga
ART - Artwork
AT - Atari
BRO - Broderbund
CBS - CBS Electronics
COL - Coleco
COMM- Commodore
CS - Creative Software
CVD - CommaVid
CM - Computer Magic
DM - DataMost
DS - DataSoft
EA - Electronic Arts
EPYX - Epyx
FIR - First Star
FUN - Funware
IMGC - Imagic
INF - Infocom
MAT - Mattel
MB - Milton Bradley
MIC - Microfun
MICP - Microprose
MMG - MMG Micro Software
MNTK - M Network
PB - Parker Bros.
PDI - Program Design Inc
ROK - Roklan
ROM - Romox
SIR - Sirius
SOL - Sierra On-Line
SPE - Spectravideo
SPN - Spinnaker
STP - Starpath
STRSIM - Strategic Simulations
SUB - SubLogic
SUN - Sunrise
SYN - Synapse
TG - TG Products
TGV - Tigervision
TRO - Tronix
VEC - Vectrex
XON - Xonox

(x = indicates shipped to retailers by our press date (may not be in national distribution, however.)

(Editor's Note: We feel, in some cases, the dates given us by the manufacturers are simply not realistic. However, we feel it is our responsibility to give you the projected dates as they are given to us, without any alteration.)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..VECTREX

POLE POSITION *(★ ★ ½/★ ★)* is based on the popular arca game of the same name. You be in the qualifying round which must completed in under 120 seconds enter the race. You have an unlimit number of cars; however, you lo valuable time every time you another car or an obstacle on the roa When you reach the actual race, y have 60 seconds to complete each la Time remaining on the clock af completion of a lap will be carried ov to the next lap. Game play continu until you are unable to complete a l in the allowable time or when y have successfully completed all fo laps. Your joystick steers your c while the first and second button a as first and second gear. The third ar fourth button both act as your gas press to accelerate and release to slow down.



Pretty Ordinary

Once again, a racing game has been brought to another syste without any new innovations or viewpoints. Graphically, we ha seen several other Vectrex games which look a good deal bette The game play is very basic; if you've played any racing game c any system, you can pick this one up and play it without much pra tice at all. Frankly, if you already own Hyperchase, you have th best driving game for the system. (Solo Play; Two-Player alternatin

Not Recommended

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