THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

INCLUDES

Computer Entertainer

A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman

WANNA PLAY A FEW THOUSAND GAMES? GO TO CES

IN THIS ISSUE...

DETAILS ON...
Voice for the 520D without
  a Synthesizer!
Coleco's ADAM
Atari's new Computer line
Intellivision III! Scratched!
Fate of Super Game Module
Double-Enders
RAM Plus Power Chip
Interactive Games
Speech Module for the 64
More Dragons from Imagic
Q*Bert Looks Great!
BC Comic Character Comes Home
Roller Coaster ride in 3-D
Imagic Develops TI Games
Mario Bros. Comes to Atari
Accessories Galore
Choplifter Comes for 5200!
C.E.S. At a Glance

REVIEWS OF MANY NEW GAMES
  including...
Miner 2049er for ColecoVision
Frogger for 52DO
White Water and Safecracker
  for Intellivision
Dig Dug, Donkey Kong and
  Frogger for Atari computers
London Blitz, Death Trap, and
          for the 26DO

....And lots more!

VIDEO TAKE-OUT'S TOP 10

1. **ENDURO (ACTV-2600)**
2. **CENTIPEDE (AT-2600)**
3. **DIG DUG (AT-COMPUTER)**
4. **DONKEY KONG (AT-COMPUTER)**
5. **TENNIS (AT-5200)**
6. **GALAXIAN (AT-2600)**
7. **MOUNTAIN KING (CBS-AT COMPUTER)**
8. **BLACKJACK   (COL)**
9. **TUTANKHAM (PB-2600)**
10. **LOOPING (COL)**

Video Game Update Staff Photographer, Celeste Dolan, captures C.E.S.

NEW Computer Entertainer

DEATH TRAP (★★½/★★★) is a space survival game for one player by the **Avalon Hill Game Company.** You play a recent graduate from space cadet training whose mission is to deliver a secret message to the leader of the Glaxiau Empire. The mission is interrupted as you enter a black hole to cross the galaxy and immediately encounter a gigantic space ship—IT! IT is the reason for so many missing ships, and your only hope is to knock out IT's power generators without being destroyed by IT's intelligent plasma fireballs or squeezed between IT's defense shields! IT responds to damage from every one of your torpedo blasts by generating blocks in its moving shields which make it more difficult for you to destroy the power generators. Initially you must attack two generators, and a third will appear after these are destroyed. Eliminating the third results in your being awarded a medal!

REQUIRES PATIENCE

DEATH TRAP's graphics are average for the system, offering only what is necessary to picture the game elements in a straightforward manner. The game requires great patience to play, because it takes *many* hits to each power generator to destroy it. The plasma fireballs make regular pests of themselves while you fire away at the generators. Especially at the higher skill levels, they are able to follow whatever evasive moves you make. IT'S defensive response to your direct hits—generating impenetrable blocks in its shields—is an unusual touch in a video game, and it leads to some interesting strategic possibilities. The game requires an unusual combination of methodical approach, stamina and lightning-quick reflexes to gain the winner's medal at the end. (The fact that the game has a definite end and can be won is unusual in itself.) It will not appeal to the gamer who likes shoot-em-ups to be just plain fast (no thinking, please), but it will be intriguing to some. Since this is a game you'll either like very much or not at all, experience it for yourself before purchasing it, if possible.
(MSR $30.00)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ACCESSORIES

THE BOSS is the latest controller from this respected

WICO

manufacturer,and it's designed to work with the Atari 2600 and 4/8/1200,Commodore 64 and VIC-20 computers, and other compatible systems. Crafted in gray and black high-impact plastic, this joystick is lighter,with a smaller base than previous Wico models.The ergonomically designed handle has finger indentations that make the stick extremely comfortable to hold, and it's topped with a large, squarely shaped firing button that falls under the thumb.(Unlike previous Wico joysticks, there's no second firing button on the base.) THE BOSS has leaf switch construction, but not the steel shaft used in other Wico sticks. Of course we gave THE BOSS a workout on some of our favorite games, and it performed well. The comfortable hand grip was especially welcome on games requiring very quick moves of the stick, since it has absolutely no tendency to slip in the hand.

EASY TO USE

We did not find the smaller, lighter base any easier to hand-hold than the earlier, heftier Wico models. (Children,with their smaller hands, may find this one easier to manage,though.) Even with its four non-skid rubber feet, the base was not quite as steady for table-top use as the heavier Wicos we use regularly, but it's more solid than many joysticks we've tested.Many joysticks of various designs are currently available, but we believe there is a definite place for THE BOSS. At its $19.95suggested list price, it is competitive with the majority of sticks on the market,but it has a feeling of solid quality that beliesits low price—and it's backed by a one-year warranty. This is a joystick the kids are not likely to break within weeks after getting it, and it's a comfortable one for adults to use, as well.
Recommended.

LONDON BLITZ (★★★½/★★★★) from the **Avalon Hill Game Company** takes you back to World War II when London was bombed nightly by the Germans. Most bombs exploded on contact, but some sat for varying periods of time before detonating. The various types of unexploded bombs (UXBs) were regularly found and defused by the British Army Royal Engineers. In this game with multiple screens, you start as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Engineers. If you're very skillful (and very lucky), you can rise through the ranks to Captain by keeping your sector of London cleared of the UXBs. You can choose to start at a higher rank than Lance Corporal, but we wouldn't suggest it until you've had a lot of experience, because the bombs become more difficult at the higher ranks.

DISARM THE BOMBS!

The first screen is a vertically scrolling overhead maze/-map of your sector, and the UXBs appear as flashing white dots. Once you've spotted a bomb, you move to the second screen, which puts you *in* the maze. (Depending on your memory and sense of direction, you may have to return one or more times to the map before you can actually find the bomb in the maze.) Once you reach the bomb, it must be disarmed before its timer runs out, and disarming the UXB is a not-so-simple matter of matching a three-digit combination. (The higher your rank, the fewer guesses you're allowed.) Not only that—there are three different kinds of bombs, each with its own characteristics! If you can figure the combination, you go back to the street where more bombs have fallen in the meantime. Needless to say, the game is over if the bomb explodes while you're attempting to disarm it! The longer you can survive, the more bombs appear, and the more difficult it becomes to keep your sector clear.

OUTSTANDING GAME

LONDON BLITZ is an outstanding game! The graphics are generally good, but the second game screen is terrific. It is a first-person, three-dimensional maze of a quality not seen before on an unenhanced Atari 2600. (Try this screen on a friend who is not familiar with the game. We bet your friend will guess that you're showing him a computer game.) While graphics are important, what really hooked us was playing the game. We were totally intrigued and involved without so much as a hint of boredom, even after two hours of playing. The designer, William Sheppard, has packed a tremendous amount of playability into this cartridge. The game concept is original, the execution superb. If you like games that make you think, you'll love this one.
Recommended. (MSR $30.00)

STARPATH ADDS TITLES

Starpath plans five new titles for its Supercharger (Atari 2600),including **RABBIT TRANSIT**, a multi-screen game; **SWEAT**, a multi-load decathlon; **PARTY MIX**, a set of team games for two to four players; **SWORD OF SAROS**, a maze-adventure game; and **SURVIVAL ISLAND**, which pits you against the ocean and perils of a wilderness island. They have also signed a licensing agreement with Sierra On-Line whereby they will offer a Supercharger version of **FROGGER**
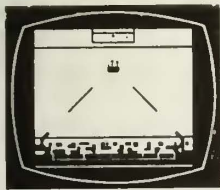
STARPATH GOES COLECO

Some of Starpath's most popular games are on the boards for ColecoVision (without the Supercharger). They include **PHASER PATROL, DRAGONSTOMPER**, and **ESCAPE FROM THE MINDMASTER.**

ADDITIONAL ACTIVISION TITLES

In addition to the games covered in our June issue, Activision plans two more games for Intellivision system and one for the VCS. For the Intellivision, coming later this summer are **WORM WHOMPER** and **BEAMRIDER**. For the VCS, look for **SPACE SHUTTLE**, an 8K game designed by Steve Kitchen (just one of *three* Kitchen brothers on the Activision design team.) We had a sneak look at SPACE SHUTTLE and were impressed with the graphics and first-person perspective from the cockpit of a spaceship looking out into the space landscape! By the way, **DECATHALON,** mentioned last month, is scheduled as an 8K game retailing at $34.95.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE

THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING (★★★/★★½) is the same game as FINAL ORBIT by Sirius for Atari computers, which was reviewed in our June issue. In this version, the Earth is attacked by Kamikaze Satellites and Trillian fighters which rob your Space Destroyer and the Earth of energy each time one of them exp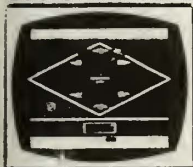lodes on the planet. Advancing enemies appear on a Radar Scanner above your cockpit view of space. When the enemies are close enough, the twin arms of your automatic tracking system home in on their vertical movement, so you need worry only about their horizontal movement. A game status bar at the bottom of the screen lets you know when energy levels are perilously low. At this point you must follow a Returning Trillian Fighter to its base and then destroy the base to regain your energy.

FIRST-PERSON SPACE GAME

Graphics in this game are good, though fairly simple. The gameplays somewhat like other first-person space games, though you're abit more Earth-bound than in some we've played. (You fly constantly above a scrolling checkerboard pattern of the Earth's surface.)Picking off the enemies, especially with the aid of the tracking system, is fairly easy with practice, but following a fighter back to base turned out to be frustratingly difficult. Overall, we couldn't find enough variation in the game to keep us really interested. Try this one, if possible, before you decide to buy it. (MSR $27.95)

SPACEMASTER X-7 (★★★/★★★) is an unusual space game for one player in which you fly an Assault Ship and attempt to destroy the Hyperion Military Base in the center of the screen. The enemy base has many defenses, including a constantly moving, diamond-shaped force field and several varieties of weapons. Some of the Hyperion defenders are mindless projectiles, easily dodged or shot down, while others contain sophisticated tracking systems, allowing them to pounce on your Assault Ship when you least expect it. The object is to fire away at the base, depleting its energy until it is destroyed. The slow way is to shoot from outside the force field, timing your shots to pass through the moving gaps in the field. It's faster—and more dangerous—to sneak your ship through a gap and fire at close range. At higher difficulty levels, this becomes very tough to accomplish because the Hyperion Base begins constructing Shields, and they continue to grow as long as the base's energy level shows a positive reading on the Energy Meter at the bottom of the screen. A bonus ship is earned for each base destroyed.

EVER-CHANGING CHALLENGES

SPACEMASTER X-7's graphics are simple, yet colorful and effective, and it's not easy to play the game well. The early levels are basic enough for beginners, but the game soon presents a series of ever-changing challenges, demanding both strategy and speed. Just when you're ready to pat yourself on the back for being such a hot-shot, you may find yourself losing three ships in a row and fighting for your life! We enjoyed this one because it's not just another "me-too" game.
Recommended. (MSR $27.95)

ATARI WINS LICENSE FOR MARIO BROS. GAME

In a major licensing coup, Atari has won the exclusive rights to the third game in the Donkey Kong series from Nintendo. You can look for a computer version early next year, with 2600 and 5200 versions later in '84.
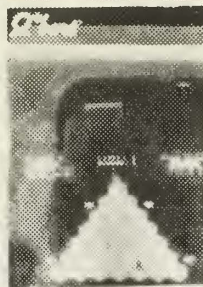
*Q*Bert for Atari computers*

*Q*Bert for Atari 2600*

WE COMPARE Q*BERT

As promised last month, we spent quite a bit of time with the anxiously awaited **Q*BERT** from Parker Bros. Although not all versions are completed yet, we were given the opportunity to at least partially play and compare graphics on the various systems.

THEY ALL LOOK GOOD

First, it is important to note that Parker Bros. has done a terrific job in translating the game to the various formats, in light of the various system limitations. First, the 2600 version is multi-screened with play action similar to the arcade version. The flying discs are tiny thin rectangles and the blocks do have a 3-D look about them. The blocks do change color when Q*Bert hops on them and there are the "bonking" noises.

INTELLIVISION VERSION

The Intellivision version is much closer to the arcade version, graphically, than the 2600. The whirling discs look better, the "baddies" look better and the colors are very bright. When Q*Bert falls to his demise, you do see the balloon over his head.

5200 AND ATARI COMPUTER

The Atari computer and Atari 5200 versions are virtually identical and both look good. The whirling discs are better yet and the little characters look great. The program on these versions are not finished yet, so we could only see about 20 percent of the play.

COLECOVISION

Although this version is not completely programmed, the play action appeared to be very good and the graphics are bright and colorful—very close to the coin-op.

VIC-20 AND COMMODORE 64

Although the graphics, as is always typical of the VIC-20 leave a lot to be desired, the play action is surprisingly good. The flying discs look like little triangles, and there is the typical problem of the little black square around any moving character. On the other hand, the version for the Commodore 64 has the best graphics of all the systems offered! There's a rounder look to Q*Bert and the play action (this version is also not finished) looks close to the arcade at this point.

The feeling we came away with is that if you love to play Q*BERT in the arcades, you will be able to find a version for home that you can enjoy for hours!

ATTENTION ASPIRING GAME DESIGNERS!

We've found the answer for all you aspiring game designers! These Game Development Systems are not for everyone as you will need to know Assembly Language, and have access to an Apple computer—and they are costly. If you qualify, read on.

The FROB-26 SYSTEM (retail $495) allows development of 4K software for Atari 2600. Add the FROB-52 ADAPTER SYSTEM (retail $195) to the FROB-26 and you can develop 4K games for the 5200. The FROB-52 8KBYTE SYSTEM (retail $990) allows you to develop 8K software for the 5200 and 4K software for the 2600. And for the serious designer, the FROB-COLECO DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM allows the design of 32K games for the ColecoVision. This brand new program is $1995. If you are interested in any of the above programs, we would strongly suggest you visit your local specialty computer store and talk with a computer expert before making the investment.

FROGGER (★★★★/★★★★★) hops across the TV screen once again in this version for the Atari 5200. (See this month's *Computer Entertainer* for Atari computer version.) Licensed from Sega, the object of this game for one or two players is to guide your frog from the grass across a busy highway and onto a sidewalk, then across a river by means of floating logs, turtles and alligators, and finally into the frog's home bay. You have a limited amount of time to navigate the course, and Frogger must avoid not only moving traffic on the highway, but also snakes on the sidewalk, the snapping jaws of alligators in the river, and turtles when they're diving underwater. Hopping Frogger into the water, riding off the edge of the screen, or colliding with a vehicle, snake or alligator causes him to go "splat" and be replaced by a skull-and-crossbones symbol. Bonus points can be earned by hopping your frog exactly onto the pink "lady" frog and taking her to home bay. The player has a choice of slow or fast games, and the fast one is very close to the original coin-op in game play.

TWO CONTROL OPTIONS

FROGGER has been translated beautifully to the Atari 5200 format by Parker Brothers. The graphics are lively and colorful, and the familiar theme music sounds great on this system. The fast version provides game play every bit as challenging as the coin-op, while the slow version gives small children (and fumble-fingered adults!) a chance to succeed. (Note: the "pause" feature has not been programmed into this adaptation, so you can't study strategic moves at your leisure.) Since the controllers for this system have become such an issue of contention, it's interesting that two options are available. If you choose joystick control, only the direction of the frog's hop is determined by joystick placement; pushing the firing button makes it hop in the direction set. We preferred the keypad option in which four buttons control forward, backward, left and right hops. (Keypad overlays are included which expose only the four buttons needed.) Keypad control is more direct and much faster, allowing for higher scores than the more awkward joystick option. FROGGER is a charming and delightful game that has become a classic, and this version is an excellent one.
Recommended.

IMAGIC LOVES DRAGONS

One of the most graphically stunning games we saw is **WING WARS** for ColecoVision. Although far from completed, the game is mythilogical in concept and we were told there will be 85 screens in the cavern alone!! The adventure has the player beginning in an underground cavern with his dragon. You must escape to the outerworld, where you must search for crystals on many islands which have a marvelous 3-dimensional quality. Throughout the adventure, you must avoid Griffin, the Lion. This game is being designed by Alan Smith, creator of Dragonfire.

GAMES FOR ALL FORMATS

Imagic will be presenting games for virtually all the systems including the Atari 2600 and 5200, ColecoVision, Intellivision, VIC 20, and Atari 400 through 1200XL computers. You can expect multiple formats on **FATHOM and MOONSWEEPER**, and an Intellivision version of the arcade game, **BEEZOR. On the 2600 front, QUICK STEP**, is a fast-paced, funfilled high-speed chase in which you attempt to capture the maximum number of positions on a continuously descending play field. We played this one for awhile with its designer, Dave Johnson, and found ourselves having a riot of a time with it. Another 2600 title is **LASER GATE**, a treasure hunt in descending caverns.

KEN USTON BLACKJACK/POKER (★★★/★★½) offers

two classic casino games for 1 to 4 players. Both open with sprightly music and a screen showing a suave dealer who reminded us of Clark Gable as Rhett Butler. The object of Blackjack is to get a hand that is closer to 21 than the dealer's without going "bust" (over 21). (This version also pays to Five-Card Charlie, 5 cards totaling under 21, an obscure convention seldom encountered in the U.S.) Each player begins by deciding on a purse from which to bet (maximum $99,999); bets between $1 and $499 are allowed. Fairly standard Blackjack rules are followed: dealer stands on 17, hands are dealt from a four-deck boot, and the player(s) may take a hit, stand, double down after the first two cards, split pairs, or make insurance bets. Punching the "help" button elicits advice such as "Ken Uston says HIT" (or stand, double or split). The advice generally corresponds with Uston's own published Blackjack strategies. (He has achieved some notoriety as an expert, card-counting Blackjack player who earned a great deal of money playing in Las Vegas and Atlantic City casinos.) Neophyte Blackjack players may enjoy this cartridge for learning and practicing the game, but more experienced players will find it slow, and the music between hands becomes very annoying. Advanced players also may not like the fact that you cannot double-down after splitting a pair, an option that is available in the Atari 2600 CASINO cartridge. Another missing option is splitting a second time when you are dealt a matching card on one of your split cards.

FIVE-CARD STUD

While the Blackjack game is fairly good, at least for beginners, the Five-Card Stud Poker portion is less interesting. (No other Poker variations are included.) One to four players play against the dealer, who does not bet. If you want to play against the other players, get out the cards and chips, because you can't do it with this cartridge. Most standard rules for Five-Card Stud are observed, and the ante (opening bet) must be between $1 and $100. Everyone, including the dealer, receives one card face-down, then one face-up, from a single deck. Each player then makes a decision to stay in or fold, and those who stay must bet ($1 to twice your ante). (It is not possible to "check," an option available in the Intellivision version of Poker.) This is repeated, one card at a time, until all remaining players have five cards. Any player with a hand that beats the dealer's is paid off according to "house odds." Poker players with any experience will be bored silly by this game, but it can be useful for the beginner. In this respect, the game would have been improved by on-screen labels of winning hands for those who don't readily recognize them. As in the Blackjack game, we found the music unnecessary and annoying. Unless you're a rank beginner, the whole cartridge is no big deal.
Not Recommended.

RIDE THE ROLLER COASTER!

Vectrex has announced four 3-D cartridges which will be made available in conjunction with their upcoming 3-D Imager. The titles include **MINE STORM, NARROW ESCAPE**, and **CRAZY COASTER**, a first-person 3-D ride on a roller coaster. It has not been decided which game will be packaged with the Imager. One quick note regarding the 3-D Imager—it was not in finished form at C.E.S., thus we must withhold judgement, as the prototype we tried was bulky, uncomfortable, and it vibrated. (We were told the vibration will definitely go away in the finished version.)

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE SUPER GAME MODULE??

In a move destined to make thousands of ColecoVision owners "Mad as ....", Coleco has *very quietly* bumped the Super Game Module 3 into "sometime in 1984"! Inititally, we had been told the Module had been dropped altogether, so this news was almost a relief!

PRESSURE TO PURCHASE ADAM??

With this move, *IF* you want to play the Supergames as soon as they are available, you will have to purchase the ADAM keyboard. At a cost hovering around $400 for ADAM and a list of $125 for the Module, we would have to strongly recommend waiting for the Super Game Module. We would hope that the Super Module doesn't disappear altogether before it releases as we are quite certain that one of the major factors for the delay in the Game Module is Coleco putting all its production power into ADAM.

WAFER SYSTEM FAULTY??

If our information is correct regarding Coleco's problems with the wafer system as late as one month ago, could it be Coleco was "forced" into the Data-Pak system? Coleco has made a big point of the additional RAM capability in the Data-Paks which is their published reason for going to that system over the wafer in ADAM. If the wafer isn't reliable, let us ponder two questions. First, we saw the wafer system up and running at two other companies at the show. Even if, in the long run, the wafers don't prove out with the other systems, we assume the Data-Pak can be substituted for the wafer in the Super Game Module. However, will that raise the ultimate price of the Super Game Module?

SOFTWARE PLANS CHANGE TOO (OF COURSE)

In the topsy-turvy world of Coleco software releases, chalk up some more disappearances. The one that has us most disturbed is the disappearance of **DESTRUCTION DERBY**, which was to be the next scheduled game for the Turbo Module. Those of you with the Driving Module should be getting a little perturbed by now without the release, *or announcement* of any new software for that Module! Meanwhile, **TUNNELS AND TROLLS** disappears again, without a trace of when it might surface. If you want a good laugh, take a look at the back of the ColecoVision box and count how many of those games are either out or coming *soon!*

INTELLIVISION III SCRATCHED!

Mattel, feeling the pinch from all the advanced systems around them, has decided to scrap plans for introduction of the Intellivision III. We agree with the decision in light of both the systems currently available and the promised home computers coming. Much of the graphics capability promised for that new system will be available on Intellivision II with the use of the upcoming ECS (Entertainment Computer System), which has been on tap all along.

3-D FROM AMIGA

Amiga also plans the introduction of a 3-D VCS cartridge, called the "Power Play". The first release, Power Play 1, will feature an all 3-D format, including **3-D GHOST ATTACK, 3-D HAVOC**, and **3-D GENESIS**. Two additional Power Play cartridges are under development for later in the year and the planned retail on all the Power Play games will be between $30 and $40.

JOYBOARD COMING

The Joyboard, a "stand-on" controller for the Atari 2600, will be available within the next 4 to 6 weeks. Packaged with it will be **MOGUL MANIAC**, a skiing cartridge which "puts you on the ski slopes". Planned to retail at $49.95, the unit plugs into your game console. A joystick port has been provided on the joystick itself in case you wish to play any of your existing games with the joyboard. (It does provide an interesting variation to such games as CENTIPEDE.). Planned shortly after the introduction of the Joyboard is the release of **OFF YOUR ROCKER**, which is a combination of Twister and Simon.

BUSHNELL INTROS ROBOTS FOR HOME

As we hinted in our last issue, Mr. Bushnell *DID* surface at C.E.S. with an entire line of robots! In addition to some pretty fancy robots to help run the house, we got a kick out of **ANDROMAN**, billed as the world's first real-life 3-D videogame robot! Designed for use with the 2600, ANDROMAN is a 12-inch high robot controlled by joystick via a remote infrared signal. It comes with a game cartridge, transmitter, game playing field, set of game pieces imprinted with coded information, and instruction manual.

ANDROMAN PLAYS ON 3-D LANDSCAPE

With your remote transmitter, you'll navigate ANDROMAN through a 3-D obstacle-filled landscape where his contact with coded game pieces triggers a further series of interactions. Androman will speak to you occasionally, uttering warnings of danger. Completion of on-screen gameplay is rewarded quickly with additional time maneuvering Androman. After mastering the live action game contained in your starter kit, additional game cartridges and accessories will be made available for new challenges.

Planned introduction will not be until 1984 with no prices set as yet.

Androman on 3-D Landscape

INTERACTIVE MYSTERY GAMES

We recently had the opportunity to enjoy Vidmax's Mystery Disc **MURDER ANYONE**, an Interactive Laser Disc. Although many of you probably do not own Laser machines, interactive video games will be something you're going to hear more and more about as they allow several players the opportunity to *THINK* and be truly involved in the game.

USE YOUR POWERS OF DEDUCTION

For those who are not familiar with the Mystery Disc concept, it adapts very well to the laser disc due to the capabilities of the disc in storing vast amounts of information which, literally, can be called up frame by frame. The "play" is executed by an acting ensemble. Filled with clues, false leads, and the like, the Mystery Disc includes recaps of clues such as closeups of torn notes, positioning of furniture, and much more. It will take all of your deductive power to come up with the murderer, motive, and method, and when you think you have the answer, you can jump in and solve the murder (in the scenario we played, the Butler did it!). There are a total of sixteen scenarios on the Mystery Disc to give you many hours of deductive fun.

SECOND DISC SCHEDULED

With the overwhelming success of the first Mystery Disc, Vidmax has told us that they are in the final stages of a second Mystery Disc. **MANY ROADS TO MURDER** is scheduled for a September release (retail $39.95). We feel that interactive games will prove out to be a big success, both for laser discs, and computer discs which also have the ability of mass storage (even ADAM'S data-paks could adapt well to this form of entertainment!)

PARKER BROS. MEETS OCTOPUSSY

The long awaited **JAMES BOND 007** is nearing completion and will be based on the new Bond film, Octopussy. The premise of the game involves Bond being discovered aboard Octopussy's train while on assignment to recover the gems. A chase ensues as Bond leaps from boxcar to boxcar, dodging the knives and bullets hurled at him by his pursuers while he attempts to get to the undercarriage to replenish his bullets and get to the gems.

Under development for the fall are two games designed for children ages five to nine featuring the characters from McDonaldland.

FURTHER PLANS AND PHILOSOPHY

Our meeting with Parker Bros. was enlightening as theyexplained their philosophy about the release of new product. They will produce a game for a system if it looks good. *However,* if the game does not translate well to a particular system, they will not make the game! Their thrust will be hot licenses and properties, with several in development for Christmas. We did note that they are aggresively entering the computer software market and have the intent to become one of the most important software suppliers within the next year. Strategy and adventure games will be a major area of concentration as they feel they have only begun to hit "the tip of the iceberg."

MONOPOLY AND RISK

RISK is currently being worked on for the home computers and **MONOPOLY** is *DEFINITELY* on the boards; however, they indicated they are taking their time to make the computer version *RIGHT*. Their intention on all strategy games is not merely to translate, but to enhance! A slightly different version of **CHESS** is also under development. The game will have the ability to teach Chess to you, giving tips on strategy. It can improve your chess abilities by allowing you to take back moves, or you can sit and watch the computer play! Additional games of this genre are planned.

ASTRO CHASE LICENSED

Finally, Parker Bros. has entered a licensing agreement with First Star on **ASTRO CHASE**. (See our review of Atari computer version in our May issue.) Parker Bros. plans to release the game for the Atari 400 through 1200 computers in cartridge form with the possibility of a Coleco version.

MATTEL WILL BUMP 'N' JUMP THIS SUMMER

Another big license comes to Mattel with the arcade hit **BUMP 'N' JUMP** for both the Intellivision and Atari 2600 systems. Other new titles coming in the second half include the second DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, **TREASURE OF TARMIN; MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE** featuring HE-MAN, hero of Eternia; **KOOL-AID MAN** and **ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE**, games for kids, and **ALL-STAR BASEBALL**, a one-player version of the long-time Mattel favorite.

ENHANCED GAMES

With the scrapping of Intellivision III (see story on Page 1), Mattel has gone back and redesigned some new games for "enhanced graphics". Among the titles which fall into this category are **THIN ICE; PINBALL** (once again on the schedule); **MOTOCROSS; WORLD SERIES BASEBALL**, for the upcoming computer keyboard; and **GAME FACTORY**, which allows you to create your own video games by selecting the characters and the action. You will also be able to plug any regular Mattel cartridge into the system to borrow your favorite Intellivision characters.

DOUBLE-ENDERS FOR THE VCS

XONOX is planning "DOUBLE-ENDERS", cartridges which have 8K games at either end for the Atari 2600. The first of these games will be **SPIKE'S PEAK/GHOST MANOR, HERCULES VS. THE TITANS/CHUCK NORRIS-SUPERKICKS,** and **SIR LANCELOT/ROBIN HOOD.** The Double-Enders will come with a small dust cover to cover the end not in use.

SPIKE'S PEAK is a climbing game with three screens. **GHOST'S MANOR** is a mystery game in which you find yourself in a graveyard outside Ghost Manor where a friend is trapped. Find the key, lantern and tools in the graveyard and once you have the key, you can enter the manor and four additional screens of a harrowing search in the dark. **HERCULES VS. THE TITANS** allows you to play the role of Hercules while Mt. Olympus is under siege. **CHUCK NORRIS-SUPERKICKS** has you fighting your way through a labyrinthine forest with all the karate skills you can muster. In **SIR LANCELOT**, you assume the role of that hero as you are engaged in a quest for the possession of the Blue Sword. In **ROBIN HOOD**, you must rescue Maid Marian from the Sheriff of Nottingham who has her locked in his castle.

SINGLE-ENDERS TOO

Xonox will also be introducing single cartridges, the first being **THUNDARR THE BARBARIAN**, an 8K game for both the VCS and ColecoVision. You assume the role of this superhero as you search for the Sun Sword which would enable you to free the Princess Ariel, who is imprisoned in a castle tower on an INVISIBLE SCREEN. While you play on one screen, events that affect you take place on another screen which you will alternately control.

B.C. COMES HOME

SYDNEY SOFTWARE is entering the computer and game field with titles which will be made available for the Atari 2600, Coleco, Atari computers, VIC-20, and Commodore 64. The first game, **QUEST FOR TIRES,** features Johnny Hart's B.C. and Wizard of Id cartoon characters. The game stars Thor as he zips through the world of B.C. on his prehistoric unicycle. Thor's challenge is to rescue his girlfriend from the terrifying pterodactyl. Only the strong survive in **EVOLUTION:** where the mission is to battle through the evolutionary scale, first as an amoeba, on to the tadpole sequence where frogs fight fish. As a human, you fight the forces of evil. **SPOOK MAZE** is a maze game featuring the Wizard of Id character, Spook. In **WIZARD'S ADVENTURE,** the Wiz races from era to era, from Stone age to World War II, where he must defuse the millennium bomb—the ultimate device. If it goes off it would destroy that era and alter the course of history.

In early development from Sydney: **ZOTI** anteaters vs. ants; **GROGI** the "ultimate" consumption game; and **BUNG JUGGLERI**, a four part game starring Bung from the Wizard of Id.

Although not in finished form at the summer Conumer Electronics Show, we did see enough of **QUEST FOR TIRES** (ColecoVision version) to really pique our interest, and we'll be anxious to pass along more detailed gameplay and graphic information as it is available.


C.E.S. AT A GLANCE

...Many copy-cat games shown for both the game and computer systems. Expect several titles to never reach your dealer's shelves.l

...Atari responded to Coleco ADAM introduction with a package which will include the new 600XL, printer *and* disk drive—at a retail of under $550.

..Everyone talked about TI's warnings against any unlicensed third party software for the TI 99/4A. That leads to some doubt about some of the third party announcements such as the planned Atari software for the system (see separate Atari story in THE COMPUTER ENTERTAINER)

..Computer generated music made a splash with such games as Electronic Arts' **WORMS**, Roklan's **LIFESPAN** (which opens with computer-art music which can be reworked with your joystick), and Creative Software's **MOONDUST** which uses music in response to screen action.

.Synapse had a *gorgeous* new game for the Atari 4/8/1200 entitled **BLUE MAX**, which gives the same 3-D effect as ZAXXON.
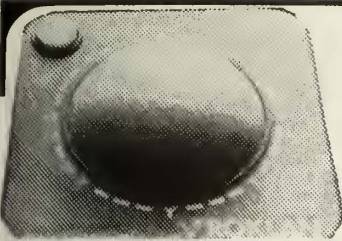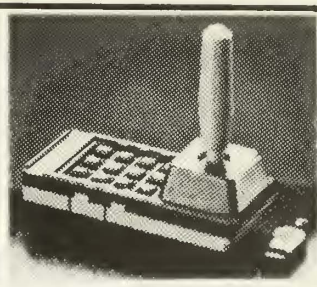
Un-Roller Controller
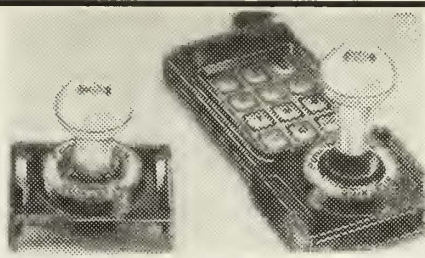
Quik-Stik

Triga-Elite

Wico Controller for Coleco/Intellivision

THE UN-ROLLER CONTROLLER

ROKLAN is introducing its **UN-ROLLER CONTROLLER,** for use with Atari 2600, computers, VIC-20, and Commodore 64. It will retail for $49.95 for a PAIR!

ADAPTORS FROM DISCWASHER

DISCWASHER, designer of the Pointmaster joystick, has three new products promised for summer availability. The **POINTMASTER QUIK-STIK I** controller adaptor is compatible with the Intellivsion I and **QUIK-STIK II** is compatible with Intellivision II. Both sticks will snap on and off the Intellivision controller, turning it into a joystick (retail $9.95 a pair). Also coming is a keypad adaptor which allows use of the POINT-MASTER with ColecoVision, and a Texas Instruments adaptor.

MORE JOYSTICKS

NEWPORT CONTROLS is releasing the **PROSTICK II** (for Atari 2600 and computers, VIC-20, and Commodore 64) which features a solid steel, short-throw control shaft with an arcade-style ball on top. Two "soft-touch" buttons are at the top end of the base for left and right handed players. The joystick also features a "Gateplate" which allows you to switch from 4-way positioning to 8-way positioning. It has a 5-year limited warranty and will retail for $24.95.

ACCU CO. is introducing a low-cost trackball called **AC-CUBALL.** Planned to retail for $34.95, it will be compatible with Atari 2600 and computers, VIC-20, and Commodore 64.

ELECTRA CONCEPTS, designers of TRIGA-COMMAND, are introducing a new joystick called **TRIGA-ELITE,** which features trigger sensitivity and adjustable handle action. It also has a built-in, separately operated continuous firing control bar, enabling the player to "squeeze-off" bursts of rapid fire.

Power Stick for Coleco/Intellivision

AMIGA LINE GROWS

In addition to the Power Sticks we reviewed last month, Amiga plans the release of their POWER STICK line for ColecoVision, Intellivision (which will feature their small joystick as a replacement for the Mattel disc), and TI 99/4A. The keypad for Coleco and Intellivision features the joystick at the bottom and the keypad section is tilted up at a 30 degree angle. All of the new Power Sticks will retail at about $20.00 each. Release is set for late summer.

WICO: COLECO & INTELLIVISION

WICO will be introducing new controllers for Intellivision (MSR 19.95 each) ColecoVision (MSR 24.95 each) and the Atari 5200. A Trackball with "Y" cord will be made available for the Atari 5200 with two independent fire buttons and will retail at $59.95. The Atari 5200 joystick will have a switch to allow for a centering and non-centering option. The unit we looked at did *NOT* have a keypad attached and we were told that the keypad would be a separate item!
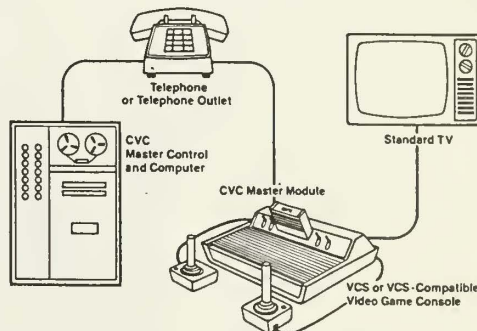
KRAFT is introducing their **SWITCH-HITTER** line of joysticks enabling left and right handed players to use the joysticks without modification. Retailing at $19.95 each, they will be available for Atari computers and 2600, VIC-20, and Commodore 64.

GAMELINE DEBUTS

A new service is getting ready to debut which could provide an interesting alternative to purchasing games. Via telephone modem hook-up, You will be able to play Atari 2600-compatible games which will be offered on the service.

To initially "hook-up", you will purchase a Master Module, either from Gameline or through retailers. Retailing around $60, the Module consists of a telephone modem, two memory devices, and an automatic telephone dialer. One memory module will store the game while you're playing it, while the other module will store your name, personal ID number, contest scores, and telephone access numbers. The Master Module will hook directly into your personal 2600 unit and when you want to play, you'll dial a number and the game will be downloaded into your Memory Module (enabling the phone line to clear within moments). Each game session (multiple plays of one game) will be priced at $1.00 or about 10 to 15 cents a play. Gameline has built in a code system whereby parents can limit their child's "credit limit" on a weekly basis.

Control Video Corporation (CVC) GameLine System

Telephone or Telephone Outlet

CVC Master Control and Computer

Standard TV

CVC Master Module

VCS or VCS-Compatible Video Game Console

CONTESTS AND PREVIEWS PLANNED

Gameline plans to run national contests where you can be ranked with other Gameline players around the country. In addition, they are talking with several software companies regarding the "test-marketing" of unreleased games, giving the Gameline player the opportunity to play games that are not yet available at retail. It could prove a cost efficient way for software companies to test games before going into heavy production and marketing costs.

LATE SUMMER DELIVERY

Gameline plans to begin shipment of the Master Module later this summer, first via through retailers. Inititally they will offer on-line games from such companies as Telesys, CommaVid, Imagic, Spectravision, Tigervision, and Fox and companies who have ceased production—Data Age, Apollo, and U.S. Games. They are in negotiation with several other software companies at this time.

EXPLANATION OF RATING SYSTEM:
★★★★—EXCELLENT
★★★—GOOD
★★—FAIR   First set of stars—Quality of graphics
★—POOR   Second set of stars—Quality of play action

Any game for a given system is compared only to other games for that system. In other words, all Atari and Atari-compatible games are judged separate from Intellivision and Intellivision-compatible games, etc. The same system is used for computer software reviews.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING...INTELLIVISION-COMPATIBLE

WHITE WATER! (★★★½/★★★½) is a single-player game casting you as a raftsman on a river full of treacherous rapids. There are two basic games with several variations for each: shoot the rapids for a timed race to the flags on the river bank, or navigate the river to collect treasures in the forest. Every game begins in the forest—race your man to the raft on the beach, jump him into the raft with his two buddies and shove off! The first two variations (slow or fast river speed) are simply timed runs down the winding waterway. Follow the rapids and avoid the time-robbing obstacles—shoals, runaway barrels, eddying whirlpools, rocks and, of course, the river banks. The second two variations are much more difficult, because every collision with a rock throws one of your men into the water. Sometimes it's possible to rescue him, but more often he's a goner!

BEWARE OF TOMAHAWKS

The next two variations involve the "Riches Ritual." Your men are still vulnerable to collisions with rocks in the river in these timed contests (slow or fast river speed). The object is to stop your raft at every beach, if possible, and send one of your men into the forest to participate in a ritual game with the native waiting there. There is a valuable golden urn to collect, but first your man must take turns with the native at capturing scattered flags, one or two at a time. When the last flag is picked up, it's a race for the urn! If your man takes more than two flags in a turn, or grabs the urn before all flags are claimed, the Big Kahuna (who has been watching from his pedestal) will throw tomahawks at your man. Should he escape the tomahawks and return safely to his raft, you'll find the river has become a raging torrent. (The river returns to normal if you play another Riches Ritual fairly.) Once three urns are claimed, a treasure chest is added. After you capture this chest and return to the raft with it, you receive a score based on elapsed time.

FORTUNE SEEKER'S FAVORITE

The final variation is not timed, but you still lose a man every time your raft hits a rock. Money bags are added to the other treasures, and the object is to amass as much loot as possible before losing all three of your men to the river or the Big Kahuna's tomahawks. The river moves slowly at first, but the current becomes faster, with more barrels and whirlpools, after each Riches Ritual.

FLOATING SENSATION

Especially in the river sequences, this game has the typically brilliant, colorful graphics we've come to expect from Imagic designers. The forest scenes are not quite as impressive, but they are well done. The concept is original, and the ability to play several different games on one cartridge will keep this one interesting for the player. This game's greatest strength becomes evident only after you've played a few rounds, though: the designer has captured the *feel* of trying to control a raft on a moving river! There is a real floating sensation in the controls, and it takes some practice to learn the knack of using, rather than fighting, the river currents. Just as you think you have it figured out, you're likely to become caught up in a spinning whirlpool. No matter how many games you have in your Intellivision library, you don't have another quite like this one!
Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

BRODERBUND PLANS THE "HITS" FOR VCS AND 5200

Broderbund is one of the first computer software companies to announce games for the "dedicated" game systems with translations coming on some of their most successful titles. For the Atari 2600, they plan release of **SKY BLAZER**, a multi-level air combat simulation and **SOLO**, a completely new 3-D flight simulation program designed exclusively for the VCS. Two of Broderbund's biggest titles will be coming for the Atari 5200—**CHOPLIFTER** and **SERPENTINE**.
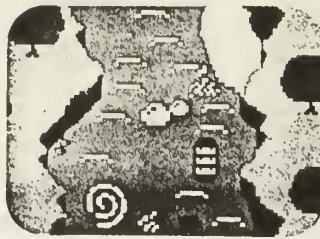
SAFECRACKER (★★★½/★★★½) is a very challenging game for one player in which you play master spy. Your assignment (should you decide to accept it) is to drive through the streets of a foreign city, searching out embassies and the secrets they contain. (Clever color-coding of the screen border indicates which directon you should take to find an embassy.) Within each Embassy is a safe—pick the lock before time runs out, and you'll learn part of the combination to the Treasury vault plus find items such as keys, microfilm, cameras or chemicals. (You can blow the safe up with TNT, but you won't learn part of the Treasury vault's combination.) Once the locks of four Embassy safes have been picked, you drive to the Treasury vault to grab five gold bars and a bonus chance (you start with five). But there's more to this game than finding safes and picking combinations! While driving your blue spy car, you must avoid colliding with innocent citizens' white cars or being shot at from black Secret Police vehicles. Fortunately, your car is equipped with guns to shoot forward or backward, though shooting citizens' cars will cost you up to 200 points. There are three skill levels, each containing more civilian traffic and more aggressive Secret Police than the last.

ABSORBING GAME PLAY

Imagic has done another great job of exploiting the capabilities of the Intellivision system. The graphics offer very good cartoon-like renditions of city streets, buildings and parks, and the cars are quite realistic. The diagonal layout of streets gives a good feeling of depth to the screen. Sound effects are not extensive, limited mainly to gun blasts, TNT explosions, car crashes, and the squeal of tires against curbs. Game play is quite absorbing once you master the techniques of steering your car plus all the other controls you must learn. Do try this one at the easiest level for a while, because there are no other vehicles on the streets until you've entered three embassies. At the higher levels, the amount of traffic you encounter makes the game very challenging and hectic! Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

ODYSSEY ENTERS 2600 AND COLECO FRAY

Although there was nothing even *CLOSE* to a finished game, we were able to get more complete descriptions of the planned third party software Odyssey will be producing in the second half. Because these licenses were *JUST* arranged, it will be later in the year before we see anything in finished form.

In addition to **THE ADVENTURES OF THE PINK PANTHER** (VCS, Odyssey², ColecoVision) where the Pink Panther must steal the famous Panther diamond and escape unnoticed, other titles include **POWER LORDS** (Atari VCS, Odyssey²,ColecoVision) in which you control Adam and Shaya, the extraterrestrial warriors fighting to defend the universe from the deadly aliens. For the ColecoVision system *ONLY*, **CAVERN** is an adventure fantasy in which you select and name your characters, determining strength, intelligence, wisdom and dexterity. **SWAT TEAM 2000** (Coleco), requires you to help a SWAT team find the vulnerable flash point in the midst of a city and destroy the aliens attacking them from within. **AIR DEFENSE** (Coleco), is a game of strategy as you control the nation's defense satellite.

IN-FLIGHT VIDEO GAMES!

Canadian Pacific Air will offer game sets for rental on their Vancouver to Amsterdam flight including BLACKJACK, BASEBALL, BOXING, DONKEY KONG, SNOOPY TENNIS, and MICKEY MOUSE. What a great way to pass the hours in the air! If this is successful, could it mean that games will start popping up in the air everywhere?

ATARI TAKES POLE POSITION

Most games at the show were titles we have told you about in the past couple of issues; however, we were *VERY* impressed with the graphics we saw! **POLE POSITION** for the 5200 looked terrific as did several other titles. The 2600 titles also looked good—they have continued to put more time and money in new games since the first of the year.

BUILT-IN VOICE SYNTHESIS!

We bet you didn't know that your 5200 will be able to generate speech WITHOUT a separate synthesizer! The first two games which will use this ability will be **REALSPORTS BASEBALL,** in which the umpire will call everything from balls and strikes to foul balls and outs. The second game coming with voice will be **BERZERK**, a familiar title to gamers. The voice will include taunts and jeers of the robots.

SNOOPY AND THE MUPPETS

For the VCS, **SNOOPY AND THE RED BARON** is the first game coming from the agreement with Chas. Shultz. In this game, Snoopy takes to the air in his "Sopwith Camel" doghouse to challenge the Red Baron. **MISS PIGGY'S WEDDING,** the first title from the Muppets agreement, features Kermit on the run in a church maze after he's changed his mind about marrying Miss Piggy, who's in hot pursuit. **PIGS IN SPACE,** another Muppet game, features several Muppets in a series of three "out-of-this-world" games that parody space video games.

Additional titles for the 5200 include **ROAD RUNNER,** a skill and strategy game featuring the desert duels of the Road Runner and Wil E. Coyote. **SPORT GOOFY** features Goofy in a two-game "Jumpathalon" which includes "Running Sky Dive" and "Pogo Pop". A 5200 version of the hit arcade game, **XEVIOUS** is also on the boards. By the way, the long-awaited 2600 adaptor for the 5200 has *just* begun shipping at a retail of $79.95. We find this price a bit high in light of the current market discounting for the 2600.

VOICE RECOGNITION

We had a chance to work with the voice activated headset controller for the 2600 which uses a combination of voice synthesis and voice recognition. Each voice game has a list of commands which appear on the screen which will be vital to the game. When the Controller ships later this Fall (retail $99.95), Atari plans to have four games available immediately: REALSPORTS BASEBALL, STAR RAIDERS, BATTLEZONE, and BERZERK. You will *NOT* have to own the Voice Controller to play these games.

SPACE AGE JOYSTICK

The **SPACE AGE JOYSTICK** was also announced, which combines the 8-position joystick atop a pistol-grip firing device. Retail is set at $14.95 each and should be in your stores sometime in July.

AMBITIOUS PLANS AT CBS

Several titles are planned for the Atari VCS, Intellivision, and Atari 5200. The planned titles are: **SOLAR FOX** (VCS, Intellivision, and 5200), which features 26 unique patterns, including a hidden code word; and **TUNNEL RUNNER** (VCS), which sets the player in a 3-dimensional maze full of monsters and dead ends and dares him to get out. Also coming is **BLUEPRINT** (VCS, Intellivision, 5200) which puts the player's memory to the test in a fast-paced race to uncover the secret password. **KICK-MAN** (VCS) is a game of speed and dexterity as you control a clown on a precarious unicycle. As balloons rain down, he must catch them on his head or kick them up and try again. **WINGS** (VCS, Intellivision, 5200) puts the player in the pilot's seat of a futuristic jet fighter. **TARG** (VCS) puts the player's stamina and skill to the test as he attempts to destroy invading Targ ramships before they destroy him. **OMEGA RACE** (VCS, Intellivision, 5200) challenges the player to clear the field of Droid Ships, Vapor Mines and other Omegans. **MOUNTAIN KING** (5200 and 2600 VCS, Intellivision) will feature a translation of the Atari computer game in which the player seeks diamonds and hidden treasure, aided by musical clues. Both **MADDEN FOOTBALL** and **DOMINO MAN** will be made available for the 5200 and Intellivision later in the Fall.
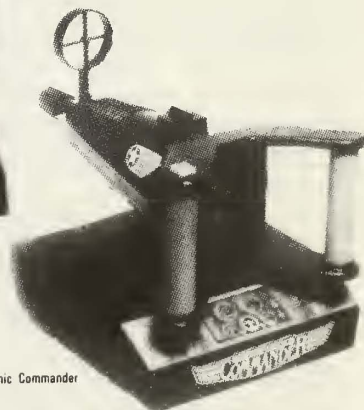
In the Intellivision format only, look for translations of **WIZARD OF WOR, GORF,** and **K-RAZY SHOOT-OUT.**

RAM PLUS POWER CHIP

We can now give you more details on the Ram Plus Power Chip which will be used on such games as TUNNEL RUNNER, and WINGS. CBS tells us that this chip will triple the RAM and ROM to enable more detailed graphic display, more game play configurations, and more play action. Another feature will be extended game play which can "remember" your past performance and adapt to your abilities. The games we looked at were not finished, so we will have to hold our judgements as to whether the Ram Plus Power Chip is better than some of the VCS-compatible games on the market now.


Flight Commander

Cosmic Commander

DR. "J" SIGNS WITH NEW COMPANY

ELECTRONIC ARTS has signed NBA basketball stars Dr. "J" Julius Erving and Larry Bird, and cartoonist Gahan Wilson to develop entertainment packages to be available later this year. Erving and Bird will help Electronic Arts capture their moves and strategies in an Atari and Apple basketball game.

NEW VENTURE FOR DR. "J"

We spoke with Dr. "J" and asked why he was venturing into the video games area. He told us that he's always loved games and is looking forward to working with cartoonist Gahan Wilson on a realistic basketball computer game.

LAST YEAR VECTREX—THIS YEAR VIDGUNS!

Milton Bradley will release two separate **POWER ARCADE** peripherals for the Atari VCS. The first, **FLIGHTCOMMANDER,** features a command console which promises the look and feel of a machine gun with barrel gunsight, firing button, and two-handed operation. The second console, **COSMIC COMMANDER**, is designed for the player to see control gauges flash and experience similar vibrational feedback while firing the gun. FLIGHT COMMANDER will be sold with the cartridge, **SPITFIRE ATTACK,** with six levels allowing you to experience the sensation of flying while trying to survive dogfights, flak, etc. COSMIC COMMANDER will come with **SURVIVAL RUN,** where you must thread your way through a maze of tunnels in space on a mission to seek and destroy the Droigian outpost. Both Power Arcades, with cartridges, will retail for about $40 each.
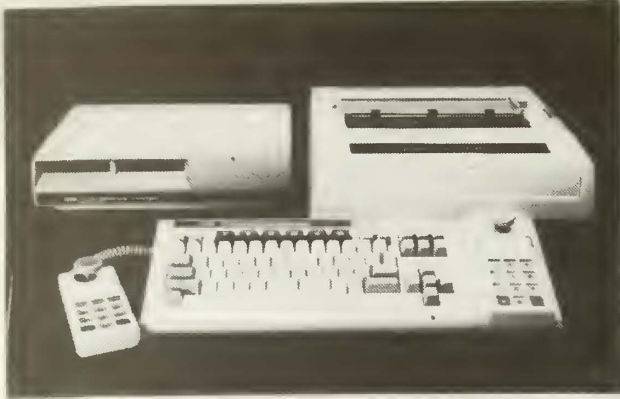
COLECO UNVEILS ADAM

The Coleco computer has had its official debut, and the facts and figures are pretty impressive. We're quite sure that many of you have read about this unveiling, but, as always, we will take you through the system in more depth and explain what it means to *YOU!*

First, the basic information for those of you who have not had the opportunity to read about it: Coleco has named its computer **ADAM,** and it is a total system. Included in your initial purchase, retailing around $600, is a 75-key sculptured keyboard and Coleco's word processing program, SMARTWRITER. The second item included in the package is the MEMORY CONSOLE with 80K RAM (expandable to 14-4K), a modular expansion port which accepts a variety of peripherals including ALL ColecoVision expansion modules, and a game cartridge slot for all ColecoVision game cartridges. The Memory Console includes a dual drive expansion port for the addition of a second optional drive. Included in the Memory Console is a digital DATAPACK which can "store up to 500K of information—the equivalent of 250 double-spaced, typewritten pages." (This system replaces their previously announced wafer system Two digital data packs will be included with the package—Super Buck Rogers Planet of Zoom, and Smart BASIC, which is Applesoft source code compatible. (Before you get *too* excited, that only means that you can take a program written in Applesoft and COPY it into your ADAM by typing in the entire program). Also included in the basic system is a letter quality printer! It's bi-directional, 80-column, daisy wheel type (daisy wheels of many types are interchangeable and available at office and computer stores everywhere), that prints 120 words per minute. ADAM is CP/M compatible and Coleco plans to make available, on digital data packs, the most popular of the thousands of CP/M programs available. Coleco also plans further management programs such as personal planning, spread sheet, and financial management. Planned peripherals include a memory expander (taking the memory to 144K) for under $150; a modem for under $175, and a CP/M compatible disc drive. No delivery dates are available for the items "on the drawing board". You may also hear that ADAM includes a full-function calculator. We feel this is definitely stretching the facts a bit, as what they are talking about is the ColecoVision game controllers, which have not been modified at all for the ADAM. Any of you who have worked with the ColecoVision controllers would agree that the keypad is awkward and would be a poor substitute for a calculator.

All in all, we must commend Coleco for coming up with an attractively priced, COMPLETE, home system that will bring many more people into the home computer fold with an easy-to-understand, easy-to-use system.

OUR APOLOGIES

Last month we promised an interview with Designer Matthew Hubbard of Activision. Unfortunately, Mr. Hubbard took ill and was unable to do the interview. We hope to reschedule the interview as soon as possible.

ADAM KEYBOARD ADAPTOR FOR YOUR COLECO

For those of you who already own a ColecoVision and are wondering about the keyboard module—well, the ADAM is it. However, because you do not need the ColecoVision ports and joysticks, it *IS* a slightly modified ADAM and should retail in the neighborhood of $400. You will get all the other items such as the printer, Memory Console, etc. While Coleco has told us that they plan distribution of ADAM in August, we sincerely doubt there will be any real quantity of them at that point.

SOFTWARE AVAILABILITY?

Before you rush out and buy one, however, keep in mind that at least for the near term, you will not find software for the system. You will be restricted to the built-in word processor and Datapacks that are included with the ADAM. Coleco plans the introduction of several "supergames" for this system, but it could be months before you see any quantity of titles.

UNITRONICS COMPUTER UPDATE

As a follow-up to the information we gave you last month, we spent some time with the designers at UNITRONICS to get a good look at their **SONIC** home computer. Initial software support will include Microsoft Basic, along with several gamewafers including **BUGGERS,** an action maze running skill game; **LEPRECHAUN,** an encounter with leprechauns for young players, and **KALEIDOSKETCH,** a sketching program that requires joysticks.

In addition to their interface for the Atari 2600 (see June issue), Unitronics will also make an Interface Module II which will plug into the ColecoVision game slot creating a 48K computer in conjunction with the SONIC. They plan an 8K RAM expansion board together with a high speed Waferdrive for mass storage of digital data. A filing system for the Commodore VIC-20 is also planned. Once this is in place, the VIC-20 owner would have compatibility with the gamewafers that Unitronics plans to market. Delivery on all the Unitronics products is planned for the third and fourth quarter; however, we do not know how deep their distribution will be and whether there will be an availability problem on both the hardware and software. As we learn more, we'll let you know.

1200XL COMPATIBILITY PROBLEMS

It appears that more and more games are surfacing with a compatibility problem with the Atari 1200XL. In fact, we've heard that this is the *main* reason for the discontinuance of the 1200 (which is a *real* shame for those who have purchased the 1200XL.) After a reader told us Sierra On-Line's **ULYSSES AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE** did not work on his 1200, we called Sierra and learned that *none* of their graphics adventures and some others on disk (Mission Asteroid, Wizard and Princess, Lunar Leeper, and Crossfire) will even load! Jawbreaker (disk) and Crossfire (cart and cass) will load but there is no keyboard control and Frogger (disk) will not always load. Sierra games which *do* work fine in the 1200 include Mouskattack (D), Wall War (D), Marauder (D), Frogger (Cart), and Golf Challenge (cass and Cart).

Although Sierra continues to test their games on the 1200, they now do not plan any alterations *because* Atari is abandoning the system. Sierra did tell us they plan extensive tests on the new Atari XL computers as soon as they are available.

NEW ATARI COMPUTERS

Atari has announced an entire line of "XL" computers which will *REPLACE* their current line (the 400, 800, AND 120-0XL will all be discontinued). The entire line is set for introduction in the third and fourth quarter (as well as peripherals; however, not all prices are set yet.) The 600XL (MSR $199) is 16K RAM, expandable to 64K; the 800XL has 64K RAM; the 1400XL has 64K RAM with built-in modem and voice synthesizer; and the 1450XLD is 64K RAM with built-in dual-density, double sided disk drive, modem, and voice synthesizer. The entire line features built-in BASIC, HELP key, and more (look for our complete comparision chart within the next month or two.) The line will be complimented by several peripherals including an 80-column letter quality printer retailing at $349.95, direct connect Modem, increased memory disk drive, light pen, touch tablet, super joystick with 8-direction output, and Trak-Ball.

ATARI-SOFT

On the software front, Atari plans cartridges of many new titles before the end of the year including **POLE POSITION, MS. PAC-MAN, DONKEY KONG JR., JOUST, PENGO, ROBOTRON, EASTERN FRONT, FOOTBALL, SOCCER, TENNIS,** and **PAINT,** a program which turns your computer into a canvas, and your joystick into a paintbrush. The suggested retail price is 39.95 and includes three separate programs on one diskette.

DATASOFT ANNOUNCES ECONOMY LINE

Datasoft has also formed a new division, GENTRY SOFTWARE, geared as a popularly-priced line, ranging from $14.95 to $19.95! Initial titles include **STARBASE FIGHTER,** an outer space shoot-'em-up (Atari—disk only); **MAGNETO BUGS,** in which you get one look at the course and beginning locations of the Magneto Bugs before setting out to destroy them (disk only—Atari version on side one, Apple II, IIe on the other side). Additional titles include **MANIAC MINER,** in which you experience the odd effects of gravity in an abandoned mine (Atari disk). **MEMORY MANIA** and **MAXWELL'S DEMON** features two puzzles on one disk. Memory Mania tests your ability to unscramble a picture divided into four to 64 pieces. Maxwell's Demon tests skill and nerve as you try to separate atoms of hydrogen and helium (Atari disk). All the above games will retail at $14.95.

At the $16.95 level, **TARGET PRACTICE** allows you to shoot elephants, bears, ducks, and rabbits and a surprise if you reach the tenth round. (Atari disk and cassette packaged together). In **ROSEN'S BRIGADE** you must face an array of planes and choppers while you penetrate behind enemy lines and rescue your crew as they bail out. In **SEA BANDIT,** challenge the mysterious force of the dark ocean as you search for and capture lost treasures (Atari disk and cassette).

At the $19.95 level, **SPIDERQUAKE** has you guiding a hopelessly lost spider on his way to Spider Mountain. (Atari disk and cassette).

IMAGIC GOES COMPUTER

Several titles are planned for various computer formats with shipments beginning in the Fall. Translations are planned for DRAGONFIRE and NOVA BLAST for the VIC 20. In new titles, VIC-20 and Atari computers versions will be coming for FATHOM, MOONSWEEPER, and WING WAR

IMAGIC AND TI HOOK-UP

Imagic and Texas Instruments announced a joint venture: Imagic will be developing new games and translations of existing Imagic titles for the TI 99/4A, including DEMON ATTACK and MICROSURGEON.

SOFTWARE FOR OTHER SYSTEMS

Several of Atari's more popular titles are also going to be made available for Apple, IBM PC, TI, VIC-20 and Commodore 64. Included will be such hits as **PAC-MAN, CENTIPEDE, DIG DUG, DONKEY KONG** and **DEFENDER.** In addition, through a licensing agreement with Synapse, Atari will offer **SHAMUS, PROTECTOR, SLIME,** and **PICNIC PARANOIA** for the TI.

2600 COMPUTER KEYBOARD

Atari's 2600 keyboard will release in October for under $90.00. Originally called "My First Computer", it is now known as **"THE GRADUATE".** Initial programs for the system include introductions to programming using Microsoft Basic (built into the Graduate keyboard); educational programs, home management aids, and many games. Among the entertainment titles planned are **DONKEY KONG** with three screens; **ROBOTRON: 2084** where deadly robots have taken over the world. More than 95 moving characters on the screen are promised; and **CAVERNS OF MARS,** based on the already popular computer game for the Atari computers. All the games have a suggested retail of $40.45.

SUMMER PLANS FROM BRODERBUND

Broderbund plans several interesting titles for the personal computers. **CARGO BAY** (Atari computers) tells the story of an experienced dock worker who is responsible for managing the flow of emergency supplies being delivered to his port, when natural disaster demolishes the cities around Cargo Bay **OPERATION WHIRLWIND** (Atari computers) allows you to brush up on your military strategy, moving your battalion through a series of skirmishes and battle actions. **MATCHBOX** fills your screen with a grid of 36 numbered boxes, concealing an animated menagerie of colorful characters, creatures, and objects. The object of the game is to match identical squares and then solve a hidden word puzzle.

BRODERBUND MEETS THE COMMODORE

Broderbund enters the Commodore 64 market with conversions of four of their most popular titles—**CHOPLIFTERI, SEAFOX, SERPENTINE,** and **DAVID'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC.** VIC-20 owners will not be left out either, as conversions of **A.E., SKY BLAZER,** and **SEAFOX** are planned shortly.

EPYX GOES ARCADE

The first in a series of arcade licenses will be coming shortly from EPYX for the Atari, Apple, IBM, TRS-80, and Commodore 64. From Midway comes **SEAWOLF II,** featuring the player as the famous submarine captain and **GUNFIGHT,** a well-known arcade shoot-out. From Exidy comes **CIRCUS,** with its bouncing clown, **SPECTAR,** a battleship maze game, **FIRE ONE,** a submarine chase adventure game, and **STARFIRE,** an outer space combat game. All of these games will begin shipment in the Fall.

In the action/strategy category, several titles are planned including **PITSTOP; GATEWAY TO APSHAI,** a sequel to TEMPLE OF APSHAI; **JUMPMAN JUNIOR,** the sequel to JUMPMAN; **ROM'S REVENGE,** a role-playing fantasy game; **SILICON WARRIOR,** set in a three-dimensional grid with characters who appear and disappear; **SWAT RESCUE,** which involves a rescue at a bank; and **LUNAR OUTPOST,** in which the player must defend earth from a full-scale alien invasion.

BITS & BYTES

Tigervision plans computer versions of **SPRINGER, POLARIS,** and **RIVER PATROL** for shipment in the late summer.

Micro Lab has three new games on the board including **DEATH IN THE CARIBBEAN**, an adventure game in search of buried treasure; and two arcade games, **DINO EGGS** and **CRISIS MOUNTAIN.**

Softsync will release several titles for the 64 including **COSMIC GORILLA, TUNNEL VISION, BUG BLASTER, CIRCUIT RUNNER**, and **RED ALERT.**

HES will release **ATTACK OF THE MUTANT CAMELS**, a sequel to the highly successful GRIDRUNNER (again for both the VIC-20 and 64.)

Fox's big push for the summer will be the multi-format release of **PORKY'S**, based on the movie. Versions for the 2600, 4/800, TI994/A, Intellivision, ColecoVision, and VIC-20 are on the boards.

Sega plans four new titles for release later in the year, including **STAR TREK, BUCK ROGERS, CONGO BONGO,** and **THUNDERGROUND**. Not all games will be available for all systems due to licensing restrictions.

Tronix will introduce **JUICE** for both the Atari computers and Commodore 64. It was designed by the same person who designed KID GRID.

Activision plans development of new "original" games for the various computer systems. Also in the works enhanced versions of **RIVER RAID** and **KABOOM** for the Atari computers.

TG Products plans four games for the Atari computers, including **FROIDS, NIGHTSTRIKE, OZZY'S ORCHARD**, and **ABRACADABRA.**

You'll soon be **able** to play Scrabble on a hand-held with **MONTY PLAYS SCRABBLE.** With state-of-the-art data storage, it will feature up to a 44,000 word vocabulary and a response time of under 3 minutes for the most complicated move.

Atari will make available a 48K Memory Expansion Kit designed to upgrade the 400 to 48K. Atari regional repair centers will install the board for $130, and for those who are technically inclined, you can install it yourself for $110 by purchasing it through APX.

...Eduware releases **PRISONER 2** for the Atari computers. It promises hours of deductive fun in an inter-active fantasy based on the PBS TV show of the same name.

...Sunrise Software will begin producing games in the Fall with two games for the Atari computers and one for the 2600. For the computer, look for **PROFESSOR SMYTHE'S MATHERCISE** (a math game of speed and acurracy) and **MAYAN MYSTERY** (a multi-screen adventure/shoot 'em up). **NOAH AND THE ARK**, a maze game where you must look for the mates to your animals before the rain begins, is scheduled for the 2600. Other games for various systems are being developed for pre-Christmas release.

...Atari has announced a price reduction on its 5200. Retail will now be $199.00. In addition, PAC MAN will be included with all new consoles sold. The joystick has also undergone some changes (see our story in the last issue). A more durable boot, and self-centering have been added.

...Vectrex has announced a price reduction on its unit, with a new list price of $100.

...Zircon's Video Command Joystick also comes down in price from $15.95 to $9.95.

...One of the next big trends will be light pens and sketching tablets with introductions coming from several companies including Atari, Vectrex, and third party sources. Expect prices to come down slightly as availability increases.

TI SIGNS THIRD PARTY AGREEMENTS

Texas Instruments is becoming very aggressive in the home computer market as they have begun signing key deals for third party software for the 99/4A. In addition to the deal made with IMAGIC described elsewhere in this issue, they have signed an extensive deal with MILTON BRADLEY and we understand they are in negotiations with such software companies as Epyx, Roklan, and more.

VOICE RECOGNITION ON THE TI

TI's deal with Milton Bradley has several aspects to it. First, human voice recognition will be made available through the use of a plug-in peripheral called the MBX, and it will be sold with a sixty-four position key pad with overlays for the various cartridges, a three-axis joystick, and headset microphone for the voice command function. Among the cartridges is **CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL**, a game in which players control the movement of the ball by a series of voice commands. Other games include **METEOR BELT** (players and their computer co-pilot do battle against enemy ships.) **SPACE BANDIT** (players must snatch up space crystals in a 3-D maze), **BIG FOOT** (six mountains, each more challenging than the last, provide obstacles for players as they try to dodge boulders and eagles to climb high and capture Bigfoot), and **SUPERFLY** (players must maneuver flies into position to destroy alien spiders before the next batch of spider eggs hatch). In **SEWERMANIA**, players need to defuse a time bomb in a sewer filled with rats and alligators in order to escape. Included among children's programs are **TERRY TURTLE'S ADVENTURES, I'M HIDING, HONEY HUNT**, and **SOUND TRACK TROLLEY.** Planned for the fourth quarter, the MBX system should retail around $130 and the additional multi-function joystick will retail around $30.

TI AND FOX

Four new TI games are planned (apart from the MBX System), including **M*A*S*H**, developed under license from Fox Games. In **SNEGGIT** players control a chicken that guards eggs from hungry snakes. In **MOONMINE** you must capture treasures stolen from earth. The game includes synthetic speech capabilities. The above games are $39.95. **ENTRAPMENT** has you in command of spaceship that patrols the earth's atmosphere. This game requires the TI-Mini Memory cartridge and a cassette recorder(MSR 19.95).

ROKLAN RELEASES ATARI GAMES

ROKLAN will release several games for Atari computers (MSR 44.95) and Apple computers (MSR 39.95) this summer. Among them are **LIFESPAN** in which the player watches the birth of his character and, through game play, affects the development and personality of that character. **CASTLE HASSLE** allows the player to explore the evil and mysterious castle's 60 rooms and race against time to find the 40 mysterious treasures hidden there. **ROCKBALL** is a translation of the arcade game where the player finds himself cruising through Alpha Galaxy and suddenly is confronted with showers of hot meteorites. Fast-recharging lasers are the only means of survival. **EYES** is a chase game where you've got to get the eyes before they get you. **DA' FUZZ** is billed as one of the wackiest, wildest car chases ever played.

On the education entertainment side, Roklan will ship several Atari computer titles (MSR 44.95 cart; 39.95 disk). **PYRAMID PUZZLER** teaches kids basic math skills as they race against themselves or the computer in a frantc climb to the top of a towering pyramid. **STAR MAZE** teaches division as you help Poor Thid back to its home planet. Math is also the lesson in **SPACE JOURNEY** and **PICTURE PARTS,** a math-action game where kids can create funny faces.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..VIC 20

GOLD FEVER (★★★½/★★★½) from **TRONIX** is a single-player climbing game, and it's one of the better games we've seen this year for the VIC-20. You play the role of a miner searching for gold in an abandoned mine full of runaway Boxcars, evil Claim Jumpers and rolling Boulders. There are two alternating mazes of horizontal ledges interconnected by ladders that repeat throughout the nine levels of play. The object is to have your miner gather all the piles of gold, hurdle the Boxcars, Claim Jumpers and Boulders, and reach the doorway to the next level of the mine—all before his oxygen runs out! You'll find that some of the gold cannot be reached by simply running along ledges and climbing ladders, because there are chasms to be breached. Crossing the chasms is a tricky operation requiring you to have the miner in just the right position to move across as a boxcar temporarily fills the gap. One misstep and the miner falls to his death! The game becomes more challenging in the higher levels: the more gold the miner gathers, the faster the obstacles move.

WELL ANIMATED

The graphics in GOLD FEVER are very good, with more fine detail than typically found in games for the VIC-20. The miner is basically a stick figure, but he's very well animated. Of the obstacles, we especially liked the rendition of the boulder and its accompanying sound effects. Musical effects include brief fanfares every time the miner claims some of the gold. As with most good climbing games, this one is a great challenge to eye-hand coordination and timing. Joystick control is nearly effortless, so you have to overcome an initial tendency to overdo it. (We ran our miner into a few Boxcars inadvertently before we became accustomed to the feel of the controls.) Particularly if you like climbing games, GOLD FEVER belongs in your VIC-20 game collection. (Cartridge) Recommended. (MSR $39.95)

NEW VIC-20 TITLES

DATA-ASSETTE is entering the U.S. computer field with several titles for the VIC-20 and 64. Included for the VIC-20 are QUACKERS, a video shooting gallery; **ANNIHILATOR,** where you must defend humanoids from assorted space maniacs; **ORBIS,** where your one-man army defends uranium fuel dumps from invading Zylons by planting deadly space mines; **NIGHT-CRAWLER,** an action game where you venture into the "Green Forest" and outwit a bunch of creatures. In **KRELL** you much defend the Zymwatts from the evil Tharg; **COLONEL'S HOUSE** is an interactive 16K mystery adventure; **SKRAMBLE** has you guiding your spacecraft through unknown adventures; **ALIEN SOCCER** features an outer space soccer game; **MYRIAD** is a journey through nine levels of alien space formations (requires 3K RAM expansion); **TANK WAR** is a two-player game testing skill and reaction time; and **SPACE STORM,** a 3-D version of the arcade game.

NEW 64 TITLES

For Commodore 64s, they will release **MONOPOLE,** a cassette version of the famous street game set in London; **ADVENTURE PACK I** a cassette selection of MOON BASE ALPHA, BIG BAD WOLF, and A COMPUUTER ADVENTURE; and **GRAVE ROBBERS** an adventure game with eerie sounds and many pitfalls. All titles will carry a suggested list price of $19.95.
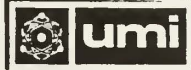
AT YOUR SERVICE

If you can't locate a an item that you've read about in The Video Game Update, just drop us a note and a self-addressed stamped envelope. We'll provide you with the company's address and phone number (if available) so you can find out where to purchase it in your area. Just one more way THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE is at your service!

GRAND MASTER (★★★½/★★★★) is an excellent electronic chess simulation for anyone who wants to learn the game or simply play when no opponent is available. The black and white board has numbered ranks (horizontal rows) and lettered files (verticalcolumns), allowing for simple keyboard entry of desired moves. (For those who prefer color display, options allow choices among 8 foreground and 16 background colors.) All standard and special chess moves, such as castling and en passant, are available. The computer will even play the role of chess tutor, offering suggestions for your next move, if you wish. It is also instructive to watch the computer's "thinking process" before it finalizes its move, because the best move it has discovered so far is always noted on the screen. Since the instruction booklet outlines the rules of the game, it's quite possible for a complete beginner to sit down at the keyboard and learn how to play, but GRAND MASTER can also challenge the most experienced player at the higher levels. (There are nine levels of difficulty, with the computer's respose time varying from five seconds to two hours.) This one is an excellent choice for those who want to learn chess or for players without a partner. (Cassette; 8K expansion required) Recommended. (MSR $39.95)

ARACHNOID (★★★½/★★★½) is a buggy invasion game for one player. You play a spider that has just laid a nest of eggs which must be protected for the time it takes them to hatch. The invaders are lines of swarming ants that snake down the screen toward your spider's initial position at the bottom. Your spider can move anywhere on the screen while it shoots sticky webs to immobilize the ants. The idea is to zap enough ants to form a wall of webbing which the active ants will be unable to penetrate. If your spider can wall off the invading ants, it can just wait for the eggs to hatch. Then it's on to the next and more difficult level of play. Of course, it can't be that simple! There are some meddling insects—scavenging gnats and buzzing flies—that spoil your strategy by carrying off encapsulated ants and opening up your line of defense. Your spider must also deal with deadly wasps and intelligent ants that seek out its position. These are invaders worth shooting!

GOOD WITH TRACK-BALL

We had a lot of fun playing this game. Graphics are quite simple, but they're very colorful and effective. You get plenty of music, from the opening "Funeral March of a Marionette" (theme from the old *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* TV show) to "Reveille" and "Taps!" Game play is very involving, and it gets especially hectic as the advancing hordes of ants gradually force your spider to work only in the lower portion of the screen. Incidentally, we liked the full-screen mobility of our spider, because it allowed for greater use of strategy, especially in the earlier stages of the game. Superficially, this game resembles CENTIPEDE, but there are enough differences that ARACHNOID cannot be considered a copy. Like CENTIPEDE, however, game play is even better with a track-ball controller than with a joystick. (Cartridge) Recommended. (MSR $44.95)

SPEECH FOR THE 64

Commodore is preparing release of a Speech Module for the Commodore 64. The user will be able to program music, graphics, and speech simultaneously. The system will be used for enhanced games. The first two titles planned are **WIZARD OF WOR** and **GORF.**

Several new games are planned for the 64, including the ZORK trilogy: **THE GREAT UNDERGROUND EMPIRE, THE WIZARD OF FROBOZZ,** and **THE DUNGEON MASTER.** Other adventure games include **DEADLINE,** in which you have a 12-hour limit to solve one of the most baffling cases in criminology history (the game kit includes an actual dossier on the crime); **STARCROSS,** a science fiction adventure; and **SUSPENDED,** in which you are in suspended animation. Working through 6 robots, each equipped with different capabilities, you try to solve a puzzle of problems.

DIG DUG (★★★½/★★★½) brings a very good version of Atari's own arcade game to the home screen for one or two players at any of ten difficulty levels. You control Dig Dug, a white-suited little creature who burrows his way underground, creating his own maze of tunnels, while he avoids or destroys Pooka the monster and Fygar the fire-breathing dragon. The methods for ridding the earth of Pookas and Fygars are unique among video games: they can be crushed by having Dig Dug tunnel under a boulder so that it falls on the meanies, or they can be literally blown up by having Dig Dug extend his blue hose into them while you pump your joystick firing button repeatedly. You have to be quick, especially at higher difficulty levels, because Pookas and Fygars will turn into ghosts if Dig Dug doesn't reach them soon enough. Ghosts are particularly dangerous because they can move directly through the ground, turning back to their former nasty selves only when they enter a tunnel. (In their spectral state, they can only be destroyed by bonking them with boulders.) Bonus points are awarded when Dig Dug munches the fruit or vegetable that appears for 10 seconds in the center of the screen after two rocks have fallen.

DIG YOUR OWN MAZE

DIG DUG is a whimsical game that has been very popular in the arcades, and this version contains all the delightful silliness and challenging game play of the original. Graphics nearly duplicate the coin-op, offering splashy colors and cute characters. Play action is reminiscent of some maze games, yet the action of digging tunnels in constantly new patterns is more appealing than always following the same predetermined pathways. Because the player has more control in this game, strategic thinking adds to the enjoyment. It's also refreshing to play a game in which you don't shoot at your enemies! DIG DUG is lots of fun to play and a must for your game library. (Cartridge)
Recommended. (MSR $44.95)

DONKEY KONG (★★★/★★★★) is based on the hugely popular arcade game by Nintendo in which your on-screen character, Mario the carpenter, must save his girl from the clutches of the brutish ape, Donkey Kong. Coin-op fans will be thrilled to learn that this adaptation for one or two players contains *all four screens* of the original game! In each of the screens, Mario must scale a different structure built of girders while avoiding barrels the ape rolls at him, firefoxes that chase him, crazily bouncing springs, or buckets of sand on conveyor belts. Timing is critical as Mario climbs ladders and ramps, removes rivets, or hops onto a series of elevators in an attempt to rescue his girl at the top of each structure. As Mario climbs, Donkey Kong beats his chest to the accompaniment of a resounding "boom, boom" sound effect, while the girl screams "Help!" When Mario reaches his girl, a red heart appears above the sweethearts' heads—but happiness is fleeting, and Mario's heart breaks as the ape whisks the girl away to the top of the next structure.

LIVELY AND EXCITING

This version of DONKEY KONG is one of the best arcade adaptations we've seen for any home game or computer system. This game is so lively and exciting that we had difficulty dragging ourselves away from it to write this review! (And we thought we were tired of DONKEY KONG—were we in for a surprise!) The graphics are vividly colorful and very well animated, especially the truly menacing ape. The familiar

music of the original game is heard throughout, and the player is treated to several of the between-screen sequences of the coin-op, such as the ape's falling down onto his head when Mario completes the rivet screen. Purists will applaud the fact that firefoxes jump out of the oil barrel on the first screen to chase Mario, and the ape tosses barrels diagonally across the screen at higher skill levels. The game can be played at any of five difficulty levels, allowing you to start at the beginning or farther into the game. Regardless of skill level chosen, new challenges appear as you're able to complete more screens. To answer the inevitable question, this is definitely the best home version of DONKEY KONG. The ColecoVision version, as good as it is, cannot match this one for brilliant color, sheer excitement, and faithful adherence to the details of the original arcade game. This could change if Coleco releases an enhanced, "Super" DONKEY KONG for their Adam computer, but Atari's version is unquestionably the new king of the hill as of this writing. This game is a must for your collection. (Cartridge)
Recommended. (MSR $49.95)

MINER 2049er (★★★½/★★★★) by **MICRO FUN** is the first independently produced software for ColecoVision, and the game is definitely a winner! Since this marks our *fourth* review of MINER 2049er, we'll keep the game description brief. (See May, June issues for reviews of versions compatible with Atari computers, Atari 2600 and Atari 5200.) In this multi-screen climbing game for one or two players (alternating turns), the object is to guide Bounty Bob, a miner in the year 2049, through the stations of a radiation-filled mine inhabited by mutant organisms. Bounty Bob must "claim" the stations by traveling over every inch of girder-like framework within a limited time period. The mutants must be avoided unless Bob has captured one of the previous miners' possessions, which temporarily allow Bob to eliminate any mutant organism he touches. Each screen is different, some presenting the toughest challenges we've encountered in climbing games for the home video screen. Bounty Bob has to climb the usual quota of ladders and ramps, but he also rides lifts, transporters, moving platforms, and even shoots himself out of a cannon!

ELEVEN SCREENS!

The original MINER 2049er for Atari computers has ten screens, but Micro Fun just had to go one better and add an eleventh for the ColecoVision version! Bounty Bob is still a strange-looking little guy, and the graphics are not quite as richly detailed as some games for this system, but the overall look is very colorful. There are a few especially good graphic effects, such as the vat of radioactive waste in Screen 6 that gurgles and bubbles like some atomic witch's brew. The "Clementine" theme music is missing from this version, and there is no provision for recording high scores, but the most important element—game play—is outstanding. The action is fast, and the controllers work very smoothly in moving Bounty Bob through the mine. For those of you who may wonder why we gave this version a slightly higher "Star Rating" than the original, keep in mind that games are compared *only* to others for the same system when we award the Stars. We feel that this version of MINER 2049er is the best climbing game yet for the ColecoVision. It is supremely challenging to even the best players, and it's highly addictive.
Recommended.

PLAY "DALLAS" AT HOME

Datasoft has signed an agreement with Lorimar Productions to bring you an adventure game based on the hit TV show, DALLAS. In **DALLAS QUEST** your mission is is out-smart J.R. Ewing in the search for a lost map to a rich oil field. The game is planned on diskette for Atari computers, Apple II and IIe, Radio Shack, and Commodore 64. (MSR 39.95).
POOYAN, an arcade game by Konami, which has you battling a pack of wolves in order to protect helpless piglets roaming the forest is planned for Atari computers in July and later release for the Apple, VIC-20, Commodore 64, and Atari 2600 (MSR 34.95).

We are holding review of two games, **LIFESPAN** by Roklan and **PRISONER 2** by Eduware as we received them just prior to deadline and we want to spend several hours with them in order to review them properly. Look for those reviews next month.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Back issues are available for most issues of THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE (no copies left of Vol. 1, Number 1,2, and 3). Send $2.00 for each back issue you wish. Buy any four for $6.00 and any six for only $9.00. Make certain you have a complete set!

COMPUTERS FOR KIDS

TOMY is introducing **TOMY TUTOR**, a 32K ROM, 16K RAM (expandable to 64K) computer geared towards kids entering the computer market for the first time. The specifications look pretty impressive: built-in BASIC, 16-color graphics system, 256x192 pixels, 101 upper/lower case keyboard (ASCII) with raised keys, and built-in graphics program. It is scheduled to retail under $150 with an unprecedented 5-day free home trial!!

PERIPHERALS PLANNED

Among the peripherals planned are a Data Recorder, Floppy Disk Drive, Modem, 40-Column Printer, Voice Synthesizer, and RAM Expansion Boards.

FIFTEEN GAMES PLANNED INITIALLY

Several games are planned, both original programs and licensed from other companies. Among those planned are **TYPE ATTACK, POOYAN, DEMON DIGGERS** (a DIG DUG-type game), **HYPERSPACE, LOCOMOTION, BOMBARDIER, SPACE DIVISION, CAR-AZY RACER**, and more.

REPROGRAM GAMES YOU TIRE OF!

ROMOX has come up with the first electronic distribution of computer and video games via retailers. What this means to you is that you can go to a retailer and purchase a game for approximately $25. If you tire of that game, go back in, and for a fee of $10, you can have the ECPC (Edge Connector Programmable Cartridge) reprogrammed with another game! Sounds great, right? Well, it certainly *COULD* be something major as it evolves. The drawback at this point is there are only about 18 games available (all developed by ROMOX); however, they are in active negotiation with several companies. IF they are successful in reaching agreement with some of the good software companies, the system would be of great value to game players. Again, we must stress that software availability is the key. Right now, they are set up to program cartridges for the Atari computers, VIC-20, TI 99/4A, and Commodore 64 with plans to offer cartridges for Atari 2600.

TI GAMEPORT ANNOUNCED

ROMOX plans their **GAMEPORT** expansion module for late summer delivery. This unit will allow owners of the new TI 99/4A to use third party cartridges for their computer. (This is in response to TI's announcement of their intention to modify their 99/4A so it will not accept ROM cartridges.) The suggested retail will be $39.95.

NEW ATARI COMPUTER GAMES

In addition to their other plans, Romox is preparing new software for shipment. First, their new games for Atari computers include **TAXI**, a harrying taxi ride through the city; **WATERWORKS**, which follows the trail of an industrious sewer cleaner in a pipeline maze; **SEACHASE**, a combination of submarine survival and treasure hunting; **SKETCH**, a visual arts game of drawing; **TOPPER** a two-player tortoise and hare chase; and **STARION**, a multi-screen space game in which you must rescue a group of prisoners in a cave deep in outer space.

VIC-20 AND TI GAMES

Three games will be introduced for the VIC-20 including **PRINCESS AND FROG**, a fairy tale; **TYPO**, a word game/space maze; and **WHIZ KID**, a math and spelling tutor in an ice hockey game setting.

PRINCESS AND FROG will also be available for the TI 99/4A, as well as **HEN PECKED**, a two player game set in a barnyard; and **ANT EATER**, a two player game of anthill survival.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI 4 / 8 / 1200

FROGGER (★★★/★★★½) brings an adaptation of the Sega arcade hit to the convenience of cartridge format for Atari computer owners. (Cartridges are the best choice when children play computer games without supervision, because they are easier to handle and less fragile.) This game of FROGGER is identical to the Atari 5200 version. (5200 review appears in this issue, and the basic game description can be found there.) Graphics and musical accompaniment are excellent in this computer version, which features especially colorful animation. It's a visually appealing game that's lots of fun to play, whatever your age or experience. It is playable at slow or fast speeds, and you can even change speeds anytime during the game. Hopping your frog in any of four directions is a simple matter of nudging the joystick for each hop. (There is no provision for keyboard control.) While moving the frog is easy, keeping it alive through all the traffic, snakes and alligators is another matter, especially since the game becomes more difficult as you progress! FROGGER has earned the status of a video game classic, and this version would be a worthwhile addition to your collection, especially if you don't already own the disk or cassette version by Sierra On-Line. (Cartridge)
Recommended. (MSR $44.95)

DATAMOST ATARI TITLES

DATAMOST'S new Atari titles include **COSMIC TUNNELS**, a "Captain Sticky" adventure saga (cart 39.95, disk 34.95); **WIZ 'N' ROO** a two-player game requiring one player to play the Wizard, the other (or computer) to play the Kangaroo in a game of 3-D perspective (cart 39.95, disk 34.95); **MONSTER SMASH** which has you trapped in a dark cemetary. (cart 39.95, disk 34.95); **TOPSEE TURVEE** an "upside down, 3-D perspective" game featuring two-grid action. (cart 39.95, disk 34.95). In **JET BOOT JACK,** you collect the magic keys and rebuild the exit bridge which will enable you to escape from the underground labrynth on a distant planet (cart 39.95, disk 34.95). In **VENUS VOYAGERS,** you must pilot your craft down through one of four tunnels to reach a planet where a stranded co-cadet awaits your rescue (cart 39.95, disk 34.95). In **MAIL BOY,** you have a limited time to deliver all the mail in a large office building (cart 39.95, disk 34.95). **ROUNDABOUT** is a classic point 'n shoot (disk 34.95); **AIR STRIKE II** sends you on a mission over enemy territory to zap out fuel storage tanks while avoiding enemy missiles (disk 34.95). **NIGHT RAIDERS** is yet another 3-D simulation game where you must fly throughout your town in a spacecraft and destroy the robots (disk 34.95). **PAINT WIZARD** is a computer graphics package which lets you draw in color on the computer screen. (disk and cart 49.95).

MICROCOMPUTER PLANS

Coming from Microcomputer for the Atari computers are a **COMPUTER FOOTBALL STRATEGY** game and **T.G.I.F.**, a party game (1 to 4 players) which recreates a typical week in the lives of the working class (Monday comes with bills to pay, Tuesday is lottery day, etc.)

AVAILABILITY UPDATE

ATARI 2600

JUNE
x-Galaxian (AT)
Joyboard (AM)
x-London Blitz (AH)
Off Your Rocker (AM)
Rabbit Transit (STP)
x-Robot Tank (ACTV)
x-Solar Fox (CBS)
x-Star Strike (MNTWK)
Trackball (AT)
Tunnel Runner (CBS)
x-Tutankham (PB)
x-Wall Ball (AH)

JULY
Blueprint (CBS)
Burgertime (MNTWK)
Crackpots (ACTV)
Deathstar Battle (PB)
Death Trap (AH)
Donkey Kong Jr. (COL)
James Bond 007 (PB)
Moonsweeper (IMGC)
Porky's (FOX)
Power Grip (WICO)
Proline Joystick (AT)
Q*Bert (PB)
Rush Hour (CVD)
Snoopy & Red Baron (AT)
Stronghold (CVD)
Super Cobra (PB)
Sweat (STP)
Turbo (COL)

AUGUST
Cosmic Commander Power Arcade(MB)
Fathom (IMGC)
Flight Commander Power Arcade(MB)
Incredible Hulk (PB)
Jungle Hunt (AT)
Kangaroo (AT)
Kool & Pitcher Man (MNTK)
Party Mix (STP)
Popeye (PB)
River Patrol (TGV)
Spike's Peak/Ghost Manor (XON)
Springer (TGV)
Survival Island (STP)
Thunderground (SEGA)
Wings (CBS)

SEPTEMBER
Battlezone (AT)
Decathalon (ACTV)
Donald Duck Speedboat (AT)
Kick-Man (CBS)
Krull (AT)
Lord of the Rings (PB)
Mad-Netter (CM)
Omega Race (CBS)
Pogoman (CM)
Pole Position (AT)
Quick Step (IMGC)
Sir Lancelot/Robin Hood (XON)
Star Trek (SEGA)
Sword of Saros (STP)
Targ (CBS)

OCTOBER
Adv of Pink Panther (ODY)
Alpha Beam (AT)
Big Bird's Egg Catch (AT)
Bump & Jump (MNTK)
Cookie Monster Munch (AT)
Dig Dug (AT)
Dumbo's Flying Circus (AT)
Ewok Adventure (PB)
Joust (AT)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Mountain King (CBS)
Power Lord (ODY)
Rocky & Bullwinkle (MNTK)
Sky Blazer (BRO)
Star Trek (SEGA)

NOVEMBER
Buck Rogers (SEGA)
Miss Piggy's Wedding (AT)
Pigs in Space (AT)
Sorcerer's Apprentice (AT)

INTELLIVISION

JUNE
x-Burgertime (MAT)
Empire Strikes Back (PB)
M*A*S*H (FOX)

JULY
Buzz Bombers (MAT)
Donkey Kong Jr. (COL)
Gorf (CBS)
Jedi Arena (PB)
Mission X (MAT)
Mystic Castle (MAT)
Turbo (COL)
Tutankham (PB)
Wizard of Wor (CBS)

AUGUST
Blueprint (CBS)
Dungeons & Dragons Tarmin (MAT)
James Bond 007 (PB)
Joystick w/keypad (WICO)
Omega Race (CBS)
Popeye (PB)
Q*Bert (PB)
Solar Fox (CBS)
Zaxxon (COL)

SEPTEMBER
Dreadnaught Factor (ACTV)
One-Player Baseball (MAT)
Super Cobra (PB)

OCTOBER
Beezor (IMGC)

FALL
Controller w/joystick (MAT)
Fathom (ACTV)
Master of Universe (MAT)
Moonsweeper (IMGC)
Motocross (MAT)
Pinball (MAT)
Scooby Doo (MAT)

ODYSSEY
OCTOBER
Powerlords

COLECOVISION

JUNE
x-Blackjack
Super Action Rocky Battles Champ

JULY
Miner 2049er (MIC)
Mr. Do
Porky's (FOX)

AUGUST
Quest for Tires (SYD)
Rocky
Roller Controller (w/Slither)
Super Action Controller (w/Baseball)
Super Action Football

SEPTEMBER
Air Defense (ODY)
Buck Rogers
Dino Eggs (MIF)
Dragonstomper (STP)
Escape from Mindmaster (STP)
Frogger (PB)
Globe Grabber (MIC)
Joystick w/keypad (WICO)
M*A*S*H (FOX)
Phaser Patrol (STP)
Powerlords (ODY)
Q*Bert (PB)
Scraper Caper (MIC)
Sub Roc
Super Donkey Kong Jr*
Super Gorf*
Super Smurf*
Super Sub Roc*
Super Time Pilot*
Super Turbo*
Super Zaxxon*
Time Runner (MIC)

* indicates data-pak for use in ADAM ONLY

VECTREX
JUNE
Bedlam
Fortress of Narzod
Heads Up Soccer
Spike
Spin Ball
Web Wars

AUGUST
Star Castle

SEPTEMBER
Dark Tower
Polar Rescue
Pole Position

OCTOBER
Batter Up

OCTOBER
Cavern (DDY)
Crisis Mountain (MIF)
Fall Guy (FDX)
Fathom (IMGC)
Frenzy
Globe Grabber (MIF)
Moonsweeper (IMGC)
Scraper Caper (MIF)
Tarzan
Wing Wars (IMGC)

ATARI 5200
JUNE
x-Frogger (PB)

JULY
Blueprint (CBS)
Gorf (CBS)
K-Razy Shoot-Out (CBS)
Miner 2049er (BIG5)
Mountain King (CBS)
Space Dungeon
2600 Adaptor
Wizard of Wor (CBS)

AUGUST
Analog joystick (WICD)
Kangaroo
Pole Position
Springer (TGV)
Tac-Scan (SEGA)

SEPTEMBER
Jungle Hunt
Ms Pac-Man
Omega Race (CBS)
Pengo
Polaris (TGV)
D*Bert (PB)
Star Trek (SEGA)

OCTOBER
Berzerk (Voice(
Choplifter (BRO)
Dig Dug
Domino Man (CBS)
Fathom (IMGC)
Joust
Madden Football (CBS)
Moonsweeper (IMGC)
Omega Race (CBS)
Popeye (PB)
Realsports Baseball(voice)
Satan's Hollow (CBS)
Serpentine (BRO)
Solar Fox (CBS)
Super Cobra (PB)
Vanguard
Xevious
Wings (CBS)

NOVEMBER
Battlezone
Buck Rogers (SEGA)
Combination Joystick (WICO)
Congo Bongo (SEGA)
Moon Patrol
Road Runner
Sport Goofy
Tempest

ATARI 4/8/1200
JUNE
x-Frogger (PB)
Jumpman Jr (EPYX)
x-Seachase (Rom)
x-Shadow World (SYN)
Sketch (RDM)
Spacemaster X-7 (FOX)
Starion (ROM)
x-Taxi (RDM)
Topper (ROM)
x-Waterworks (ROM)

JULY
Abracadabra (TG)
Blue Max (SYN)
Cosmic Creep (TEL)
Demolition Herby (TEL)
Dragonstomper (STP)
x-Droids (TG)
Fast Food (TEL)
Gateway to Apshai (EPYX)
Lifespan (ROK)
x-Nightstrike (TG)
x-Ozzy's Orchard (TG)
Paris in Danger (MIC)-Disk
Pooyan (DS)
Porky's (FOX)
Scuba Dooba Doo (GAM)
Star League Baseball (GAM)

AUGUST
Air Strike II (DM)
Blueprint (CBS)
Chess (PB)
Cosmic Tunnels (DM)
Dimension X (SYN)
Escape from Mindmaster (STP)
Football (MIC)
Jet Boot Jack (DM)
Juice (TRO)
Monster Mash (DM)
Night Raiders (DM)
Paint Wizard (DM)
Psi Warrior (EPYX)
Q*Bert (PB)
Duasimodo (SYN)
Roundabout (DM)
Springer (TGV)
T.G.I.F. (MIC)
Topsee Turvee (DM)
Venus Voyagers (DM)
Wiz N Roo (OM)
Zeppelin (SYN)

FALL
Cargo Bay (BRO)
Death in Caribbean (MIF)
Lunar Outpost (EPYX)
Pitstop (EPYX)
Polaris (TGV)
Risk (PB)
Rom's Revenge (EPYX)
Silicon Warrior (EPYX)
Super Cobra (PB)
Swat Rescue (EPYX

OCTOBER
Domino Man (CBS)
Solar Fox (CBS)
Wings (CBS)
NOVEMBER
Risk (PB)

VIC-20
JULY
A E. (BRO)
x-Attack of Mutant Camels (HES)
Fast Food (TEL)
Fun With Music (EPYX)
x-Laser Zone (HES)
Princess and Frog (ROM)
Q*Bert
Ram It (TEL)
Salmon Run (SYN)
Seafox (BRD)
Typo (RDM)
Whiz Kids (ROM)

AUGUST
Foxy 1 (TEL)
Frogger (PB)
In The Chips (CS)
Polaris (TGV)
Repton (SIR)
Springer (TGV)
Tac-Scan (SEGA)

NOVEMBER
Buck Rogers (SEGA)
Congo Bongo (SEGA)
Tutankham (PB)

COMMODORE 64
JUNE
x-Attack of Mutant Camels (HES)
David's Midnight Magic (BRO)
Evolution (SYO)
Maze Master (HES)
Seafox (BRD)
Serpentine (BRO)

JULY
Astroblitz (CS)
Choplifter (BRD)
Deadline (Com)
Fuego (UMI)
Grand Master (UMI)
Morgol (SYN)
Motor Mania (UMI)
Renaissance (UMI)
Save New York (CS)
Starcross (COMM)
Suspended (COM)
Zork I,II,III (CDMM)

AUGUST
Frogger (PB)
In The Chips (CS)
Juice (TRO)
Pennant Race (UMI)

SEPTEMBER
Alice (UMI)
Death in Caribbean (MIF)
Scraper Caper (MIF)

NOVEMBER
O*Bert (PB)

TI 99/4A
JUNE
Frogger (PB)

AUGUST
Miner 2049er (TGV)
Porky's (FOX)
O*Bert (PB)
Springer (TGV)

THIRD QUARTER
Buck Rogers (SEGA)
Entrapment (TI)
Fall Guy (FOX)
M*A*S*H (TI)
Moondust (CS)
Moonmine (TI)
River Patrol (TGV)
Sneggit (TI)
Star Trek (SEGA)

Company Name Codes.
ACTV - Activision
AH - Avalon Hill
AM - Amiga
AT - Atari
BRO - Broderbund
COL - Coleco
COMM- Commodore
CS - Creative Software
CVD - CommaVid
CM - Computer Magic
DM - DataMost
DS - DataSoft
EPYX - Epyx
FIR - First Star
FOX - Fox Games
GAM - Gamestar
IMGC - Imagic
MAT - Mattel
MB - Milton Bradley
MIC - Microcomputer games
MIF - Microfun
MNTK - M Network
ODY - Odyssey
PB - Parker Bros.
ROK - Roklan
ROM - Romox
SIR - Sirius
STP - Starpath
SYD - Sydney
SYN - Synapse
TEL - Telesys
TG - TG Products
TGV - Tigervision
TRO - Tronix
VEC - Vectrex
XON - Xonox