

# THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

INCLUDES

## Computer Entertainer

**NEW**

**NEW**

© JUNE, 1983

12115 Magnolia Blvd., #126, No. Hollywood, CA 91607

TWO DOLLARS

A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman  
VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

### IN THIS ISSUE...

#### PREVIEWS OF...

Activision software  
Coleco Computer  
Imagic software  
Starpath plans  
Vectrex plans  
Odyssey enters 2600 and  
Coleco software field  
Interview with Rob Fulop  
about his new game  
Information on the planned  
new Atari 5200 controller  
Exclusive preview of  
Unitronics computer and  
wafer system

#### REVIEWS OF OVER 25 NEW GAMES including:

Burgertime, Mission X,  
and Buzz Bombers from Mattel  
Robot Tank from Activision  
Jungle Hunt from Atari  
Kangaroo, Space Dungeon,  
Realsports Tennis, and  
Vanguard from Atari for 5200  
Web Wars and Fortress of Narzod  
from Vectrex

#### FOR COMPUTERS...

E.T. Phone Home, Repton, Final  
Orbit, Boulders and Bombs  
Mountain King and more  
...And the FIRST 3rd party  
software for the 5200  
.....and that's just part of it!

#### COMING NEXT MONTH...

##### IN-DEPTH SHOW NEWS

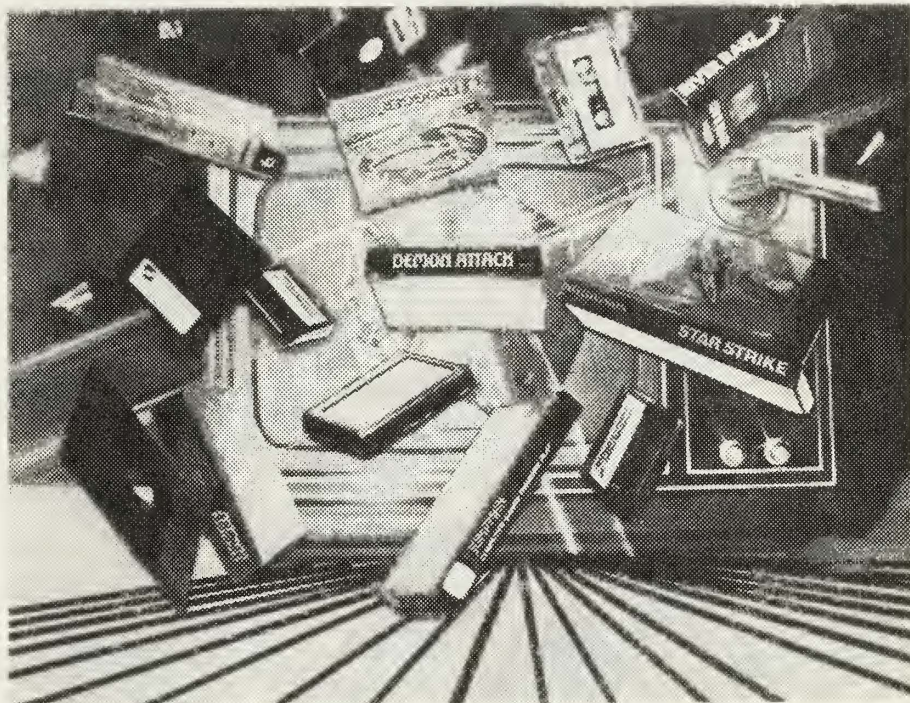
including INTELLIVISION III  
COLECO COMPUTER  
SNEAK PREVIEW OF Q\*BERT  
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH  
DESIGNER MATTHEW HUBBARD of  
ACTIVISION who has a HOT new  
Computer game coming!

##### REVIEWS OF OVER 20 BRAND NEW GAMES INCLUDING...

SAFECRACKER by Imagic  
WHITE WATER by Imagic  
MR. DO by Coleco  
DIG DUG for Atari 4/800  
"THE BOSS" JOYSTICK  
...AND MANY SURPRISES!

##### VIDEO TAKE-OUT'S TOP 10

1. ENDURO (ACTV-2600)
2. KEYSTONE KAPERS (ACTV-2600)
3. MS PAC MAN (AT-2600)
4. LOOPING (COL)
5. DOLPHIN (ACTV-2600)
6. PEPPER II (COL)
7. TRUCKIN (IMGC-INT)
8. CENTIPEDE (AT-2600)
9. GORF (COL)
10. HAPPY TRAILS (ACTV-INT)



The Video Game Explosion continues and we're  
in the thick of it!

Photo by Andre Miller

### OUR NEW LOOK DEBUTS

We are debuting our New Look, but the same great information, previews, and reviews. As you read this issue, we are all at the Consumer Electronics Show gathering information, interviewing, and getting the information that will PACK the July issue--from our opinions of the Coleco computer system, the Intellivision III and more

#### IN BRIEF...

...Parker Bros. licenses ASTRO CHASE from First Star for the Atari 2600 and possible ColecoVision cartridge (see May issue for review of ASTRO CHASE by First Star)

...Parker Bros plans showing of their first computer software with releases targeted for the Atari 4/8/1200. Computer versions of FROGGER, POPEYE, SUPER COBRA, CHESS, TUTANKHAM, and the classic board game, RISK should be available in the Fall.

...Atari to announce new titles for the 2600 including BATTLEZONE, DONALD DUCK SPEED BOAT, MISS PIGGY'S WEDDING, POLE POSITION, MOON PATROL, JOUST, and more.

### IF YOU LIKE TO PLAY, WE'VE GOT YOUR BUTTON!

If you're at Summer CES, stop by our Booth -PW21 in McCormick West/Mezzanine Level, and pick up your FREE bright yellow button.

If you can't make it to the Show, we still want you to have your button so you can tell the world how you feel! Send 50 cents to cover postage, and we'll send your button right out!

**I  
PLAY  
GAMES**

# NEW Computer Entertainer

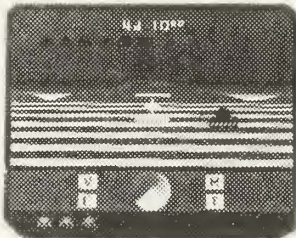
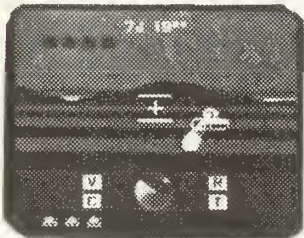
**JUNGLE HUNT**

(★★★½/★★★★)



is another of the really good arcade translations that have been created in recent months by Atari. This one is based on the coin-op by Taito which features a jungle hunter attempting to rescue a young lady captured by cannibals. **JUNGLE HUNT** is a timed, multi-screen adventure for one player with two skill levels, easy and expert, in which you control Sir Dashly, big game hunter *extraordinaire*. In the first screen, Sir Dashly must leap from swinging vine to swinging vine to cross the Deadly Forest. Only the joystick firing button is used, and timing is everything! Sir Dashly's next challenge is the crocodile-infested Reptile River. He can swim on the surface or underwater (as long as his breath holds out) to avoid the crocodiles with their snapping jaws, or he can stab them with his knife for extra points. In the third screen, the Boulder Field, Sir Dashly must run and leap over small, rolling boulders and deal with the larger, bouncing boulders as best he can. With good timing, the large boulders can be avoided by running under them while they are in the air or ducking under them to keep from being crushed. It is possible, but tricky, to take the perfectly timed, extra large leap that is necessary to clear these big bruisers and earn extra points. Once past the Boulder Field, Sir Dashly enters the Cannibal Camp. With luck, you'll have some needed time left on the 500-second timer, because this last screen calls for the most precise movements. Spear-wielding savages bar the way to Lady Penelope, and Sir Dashly must leap over them, one at a time, to reach his lady love. These cannibals jump back and forth to the accompaniment of a jungle chant, while you must find exactly the right time and place to send Sir Dashly into a heroic leap, avoiding the poisoned tips of the cannibals' spears. After he jumps the last cannibal, Sir Dashly rushes to the waiting arms of Lady Penelope, and they dance briefly while a bonus is added to your score. Since a jungle hunter's work is never done, Sir Dashly then returns to the Deadly Forest for the next level of play.

Atari has done a great job of translating this arcade hit, considering the limitations of the 2600 system. All the key elements of the coin-op are here, although in simpler form. Game play, particularly in the expert version, is satisfyingly close to the original. If you like **JUNGLE HUNT** in the arcades, you'll want this version to play at home.  
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

**ROBOT TANK**

(★★★★½/★★★★)

is something new in combat games, a first-person contest which seems to place the player inside a tank to do battle against the robot tanks taken over by an evil computer. Since your tank is also a robot tank, you are actually outside the tank, operating it by remote control. But the game has a first-person feel because you view the landscape and approaching tanks through a horizontal "window," actually a video screen with cross-hairs in its center for aiming your laser-guided projectiles. Above the window/video screen is a record of how long you've been playing in game-days and hours. (E.g., 8d 6h is the sixth hour of the eighth day.) The number of robot tanks destroyed is also noted at the top of the screen. Below your window, there is a radar screen and a damage indicator. An enemy tank appears as a white dot on the radar screen before you can see it through the window; when the white dot moves to the top of the scanner, the enemy tank is directly in front of your tank. When your tank is hit by enemy fire, the damage indicator may show any of four things: radar damage (radar inoperative); video damage (periodic black-outs); tank tread damage (reduced mobility); or cannon damage (reduced fire power). With one devastating hit or an accumulation of lesser ones, your tank will be destroyed, and

your tank's video screen will be full of static and diagonal interference lines.

Your battle against the robot tanks continues 24 hours a day, and you'll see the landscape go through the day to night changes from sunrise to sunset and back again. In addition, there are random changes in the weather conditions. Visibility is impaired in the fog and on gray, rainy days. If there is a snow alert, the mountains in the background will start to turn white, then everything will become snow-covered, and it will be more difficult to control your tank. There is a lot going on in this game, but the basic object is to destroy the enemy robot tanks before they annihilate your tank. You can wait for the enemy to approach your position, or you can seek their tanks out aggressively. Whichever your choice, the moment of battle is very exciting as you dodge the enemy's fire while attempting to deliver the final blow. You must destroy twelve tanks (a squadron) to gain a bonus tank, and you will have earned it!

Every time we play a new game designed in the first-person, "you are there" style, we wonder why more games aren't done this way because they tend to have a more realistic, exciting feel. **ROBOT TANK** is no exception: this is the best combat game yet for the Atari 2600 system. The changes of weather and time of day are inspired graphic touches that add a lot to the realism, too. Kudos to designer Larry Miller for a great game!  
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

**MINER 2049er**

(★★½/★★★★)



gives us yet another incarnation of Bounty Bob, the miner stuck in a radioactivity-filled mine in the year

2049. Due to the limitations of the Atari 2600 system, it simply isn't possible to have all ten screens of the original game. The compromise is a reasonable one: graphics are sacrificed somewhat in order to provide more challenging game play on three screens. In this single-player game we get the Slides, Transporters, and the Cannon (screens 2, 3 and 10 of the original game). The object on each screen is to have Bob claim every level (touch every bit of the girder-like framework) within a limited time period, while avoiding an untimely demise by falling or bumping into any of the mutant organisms. On each screen there are possessions left by old miners; when Bob grabs one, the mutants flash and become vulnerable for a few moments. It is supposed to be possible to avoid the mutants by jumping over them, but we never seemed able to get the timing just right. There is absolutely NO margin for error!

The Slides screen consists of ladders and girders with a few chutes that cause Bob to plummet downward if he steps in the right spot. With a little practice, this screen remains challenging, but not overly difficult. The Transporters screen allows Bob to teleport from level to level up through the center of the screen. The mutants aren't any nastier on this screen, it's just that the miners' possessions are more difficult to reach without encountering a mutant first. We tried every strategy we could think of, and the best we could manage was eliminating all but one mutant. That last mutant got poor Bob every time, because we were unable to jump over it. (Please don't flood our office with letters telling us how you cleared the second screen after 10 minutes of playing the game—we couldn't stand it!) Even if we didn't get to play it, at least we saw the Cannon screen in the auto-play introduction to the game. Bounty Bob must load the cannon with a carefully chosen quantity of TNT to blast himself to the upper levels of this screen because there are no ladders. Worse yet, there are two extra mutants and no miners' possessions to help Bob survive! Good luck to you if you survive the Cannon screen; you'll need it to make it through the second round of screens, because there are no miners' possessions on any of them!

The graphics of **MINER 2049er** are very colorful, but not outstanding. However, we feel this was an acceptable sacrifice to obtain the very high level of challenge and good game play in this cartridge. This is one of the most exasperating climbing games we've played on the Atari 2600—and that's a compliment! The action is considerably slower and less fluid than in the original computer game, but this version is still a very good game in its own right.  
Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

## CAKEWALK

(★★★½/★★★★½)

## 9 COMMAMVID™, INC.

is a whimsical game that reminded us of one of the stunts on the old *Candid Camera* TV show: the unsuspecting person must catch cakes coming off conveyor belts in a bakery and transfer them to shelves without dropping in any. All goes well until belts speed up or the pastries become closely spaced, and what a mess! In this single-player game, you control a baker who moves in an open, vertical slot near the right side of the screen, as he patrols the ends of six horizontal conveyor belts bearing various kinds of baked goodies. If he's in the right spot, he catches the pastry, boxes it (this must happen while his back is turned, because you don't see it done), and places the boxed pastry on the outgoing belt at the right edge of the screen. However, if he drops a pastry, it falls straight down and lands in a gooey heap at the bottom of the screen. A little janitor shuffles on screen and sweeps away the mess, using up one of your "cleanups." (You start with four cleanups, and it's possible to earn more; once they're used up, the game is over.) The initial "wave" consists of widely-spaced pastries, including fancy birthday cakes and chocolate-iced golden layer cakes, on four of the six conveyor belts. These are fairly manageable, especially since you have the ability to stop any one belt for about four seconds by pressing the firing button on your joystick. If you have cleanups remaining at the end of the wave, your baker earns a coffee break! A steaming cup of coffee slides to the end of the center belt, and the game will not resume until the baker drinks his coffee. (Make him touch the cup to resume the action and earn an extra cleanup.) In later waves, the action gets wilder as pastries are spaced in tighter groups of two and three, and some belts move faster than others. Occasionally a knife and fork will appear; the baker must NOT catch these, or else he will end up as a heap to be swept up by the janitor. And when the Gingerbread Men start dancing along the conveyor belts, watch out! Their dancing is erratic, speeding up and slowing down so that it can be very tough to judge which one will reach the edge of the belt first.

Typical of Commavid games to date, this one offers a wealth of game variations, including combinations of features such as "fast baker," "pause to box" (adds difficulty because of a brief stop for each pastry), and "all gingerbread men" (a real challenge). One feature that made the game much easier for us and led to higher scores was "belt speedup," in which moving the joystick to the right causes the belt nearest the baker to quicken its pace. This feature gives you a lot of control over the game. Those intent on photographic records of high scores will like the fact that the game returns to the title screen at the end, showing both your score and the game variation played.

CAKEWALK has very colorful and amusing graphics, from the dancing gingerbread men to the little janitor with his push-broom. Game play is challenging enough for serious game players, yet simple enough for children in the early stages of the easier variations. Although it's a cute game, it is definitely NOT for children only. Commavid has taken a clever idea and given the game enough depth to keep the game interesting long after the initial appeal of the cute theme has worn off. Recommended.

## STARPATH™ CORPORATION

Hopes are to show five or six new games for the Supercharger at the show. We have information on two of the titles at this point. The first, SWEAT, is a multi load decathlon game where up to nine players can participate in ten reproduced events of the decathlon. The second, RABBIT TRANSIT, involves three separate game screens. The player is a rabbit who must avoid snakes and poison moths, take a boat ride and jump platforms while dodging dropped objects. The third screen will be what the company terms "a clever scoring display".

## ZIMAG

Zimag has made the decision to exit the video and computer game business to return to the manufacture of blank video and audio tape. They have only released two or three games for the Atari 2600 and the same is true for the Atari 4 / 800.

## M\*A\*S\*H

(★★/★★½)

consists of four game variations playable by one or two people. In the first game (solo version), "Welcome to Korea," you take the role of Hawkeye Pierce against your computer opponent, Frank Burns. The object is to rescue wounded men from the battlefield, picking them up and returning them to your M\*A\*S\*H base. You operate a very low-flying helicopter which must be



flown around trees on the battlefield to reach the wounded. Frank Burns' computer-controlled chopper has no such handicap because it can fly *through* trees! While the two helicopters are picking up wounded men, a North Korean tank moves back and forth at the bottom of the screen, shooting at the choppers. When a chopper is hit, an ambulance pushes it off the screen. (Apparently nothing happens to the wounded men inside the downed chopper, because the number you rescued before being shot down is transferred to your next chopper.) Once thirty men are rescued, you move to a bonus surgery round in which you must remove as many pieces of shrapnel from the patient as you can in 15 seconds. If the shrapnel touches your patient, this segment ends with the exclamation, "Ferret Face!" at the top of the screen. In the two-player version, players fly their helicopters at the same time over the battlefield (neither can fly through trees), and each receives 15 seconds in the operating room. The first player to score 999 points is the winner. The third game, "Cease Fire," is essentially the same as the first, except that the helicopters are smaller and the tank has stopped launching projectiles.

In the second game, "Colonel Potter," a small plane flies back and forth across the top of the screen, dropping skydiving medics without parachutes. Playing against the computer or a friend, you race to catch the medics before they hit the ground. (This variation is like Kaboom with obstacles.) As in the earlier variations, the computer-controlled chopper can fly through trees, and there is a bonus surgery round each time 40 medics have been rescued. The fourth game, "O.R.," involves the operating room only. The object is to remove as much shrapnel as possible from the wounded patient in a limited period of time.

For all the tremendous popularity of the M\*A\*S\*H series, we doubt that consumers will make the video game the kind of hit the TV show was. When we saw the prototype at the Consumer Electronics Show in January of this year, we had hopes the game would be improved prior to release. In fact, when we saw the first TV commercials for it recently, the graphics of the game screens shown in the advertising were considerably better than the prototype we saw in January. When we sat down to play M\*A\*S\*H for this review, we were disappointed to find that this game IS the same one we saw in January, and it is NOT identical to the game in the commercial. The game screens shown in the ad appear to be taken from a yet-to-be-released computer version of the game. The graphics of the Atari 2600-compatible game are blocky and primitive, especially in the operating room screen. Only the helicopters, tank and ambulance look fairly good. We found game play lacking in any qualities that would keep kids or adults interested in more than a few casual run-throughs. Not Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)



In a move that could be very interesting, Atari and MCA Video Games have announced a joint venture which will be entitled **STUDIO GAMES**. Interesting because MCA was smart enough to tie into a "biggie" in the games arena instead of attempting to produce their own games and Atari will now have access to some terrific possible movie titles such as JAWS, SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT, and others. Expect announcements of actual title plans within the next several weeks.

## STAR STRIKE (★★★/★★½) is a fairly direct



translation of the earlier single-player game for Intellivision, and this version is a little easier to learn than the original. You control a single spaceship flying over an alien space station. Within the trench-like depression running down the center of the station (shades of *Star Wars*) are eight missile silos. These must be bombed before one of them launches a missile to destroy the Earth. There is a time limit for saving the Earth, and you can keep track by noting the position of the earth relative to the trench. The Earth starts at the upper left of the screen, gradually making its way toward the center of the trench. Once the Earth is centered, if you haven't bombed all eight silos, any silo still active will launch a missile to destroy Earth. Annihilating the silos would be no problem, but for the alien ships attacking from behind and the meteor-missiles attacking from in front of your spaceship. As long as the alien ships are behind you, they can only be avoided; once they pass your ship, they can be hit with your laser fire. If the aliens hit your ship, it will fall a short distance, but it can be brought back up without crashing if you're quick on the controls. Meteor-missiles can also be destroyed with your lasers, but if the missiles hit your ship, they will temporarily scramble your guidance system. You'll know when this happens, because your ship will quiver and tend to move opposite the direction you think you're steering it. Fortunately, the effects of collision wear off quickly. By far the most unusual aspect of this game is the absence of any kind of point scoring. You amass no points for wiping out alien ships, meteor-missiles or silos. Furthermore, you have but one ship to save the Earth. This is all-or-nothing war! Either you knock out all eight silos and save the Earth, or the Earth dies!

The graphics of STAR STRIKE approximate those of the original Intellivision version fairly well, with good use of three-dimensional perspective. The game itself is straightforward, and it should appeal to those who like first-person space games. Despite the originality of a game without point scoring, we found it difficult to get excited about this one. We recommend trying STAR STRIKE before deciding to add it to your collection.

### CRITICALLY SPEAKING...ACCESSORIES

**THE POWER STICK** is the smallest joystick yet designed



for compatibility with the Atari 2600, Sears Video Arcade, Commodore VIC-20 computer and the Atari 4/8/1200 computers. This joystick is a real featherweight that is meant to be cradled in the palm of either hand. The two firing buttons then fall naturally under the thumb and index finger, and the short, 1½-inch stick is manipulated with the other hand. The player has the option of using

either of the firing buttons, or even both at once. (Even though there are two firing buttons, this joystick is not useable with ColecoVision games requiring both action buttons. It does work with ColecoVision games requiring only one button.) The Power Stick has an extra-long cord, allowing you a little more distance from your game unit than the standard Atari joystick. The joystick is said to employ a new switching technology with eight separate contact points, allowing for more positive direction changes and increased control.

In using this joystick with some of our favorite games, we found it quite comfortable to hold. Its extremely light weight helped cut down on fatigue in long playing sessions. The shape is somewhat similar to that of the Atari paddle controller, although the Power Stick is smaller. One of the two firing buttons on the Power Stick is in about the same position as the single one on the Atari paddle. This gave the unit a familiar feel, although the firing buttons on the Power Stick require less pressure to operate. The self-centering joystick itself is ex-

tremely short and must be controlled with two fingers. Action of the stick is fairly tight and positive, with a very short throw, though there is no confirming feel or sound associated with placing it in any given position. The Power Stick worked well with all the games we tested, and it seemed especially easy to use with maze games. We found ourselves favoring our index finger for firing, ignoring the button under our thumb. The firing button arrangement is reasonably comfortable. We feel the Power Stick is best suited to children and other players with small hands. Anyone with large hands will find this joystick much too small.

(MSR \$11.95/single, \$19.95/pair)

### UPDATE ON KING PONG

As we reported way back in our October issue, Nolan Bushnell (by now you ALL know he is the founder of Atari and Pong) will be free from his agreement with Warner Communications to reenter the game field this October. The rumblings are coming in stronger and stronger from his new company. (By the way, his new company is named SENTE. (For those of you who follow such things, he came up with the name Atari several years ago from the oriental game, GO. In the game, GO, Atari is a polite term of warning, equivalent to "check" in chess. Sente, in the same game, is the challenging response, "you are about to be engulfed".) He has indicated he plans to come back with exciting new products which will put him squarely back on the game map. We know he has been developing robots through one of his other companies for use in the home, etc. but could he be also working on a top secret project along the same lines for one of the existing systems, namely Atari??? And, is there a chance that some sort of prototype will be unveiled at the Show??? Or has Warner Communications gotten wind of his plans and reminded him that his agreement says he will not come back into the games market IN ANY WAY until the term runs out in October???

### LATE FLASH

We have just learned that Nolan Bushnell and Atari have resolved their differences regarding Bushnell's reentry into the videogame arena. It seems that Atari quietly sued Mr. Bushnell in April to keep him out of the game business until October. Well, the two parties have buried the hatchet and come up with an agreement that should make everyone happy. Bushnell has agreed to stay out of the home game market and develop only coin-op games that promise to dazzle and fully involve the player. Meanwhile, Atari has gained the exclusive rights to market home versions of Bushnell's games. With the introduction of laser technology for coin-op games and all the surprises that Bushnell undoubtedly has up his sleeve, we can't wait to see the results!

### CLASSICS CORNER DEBUTS...

We are debuting our CLASSIC'S CORNER with this issue. In the future, based on available space, we will be reviewing older games which we have not previously reviewed. Reviews will be done in all areas -- from 2600-compatible, to the various computer systems. If there are any games YOU'D like to see reviewed, drop us a line and we'll do our best to accommodate you!

#### EXPLANATION OF RATING SYSTEM:

★★★★—EXCELLENT

★★★—GOOD

★★—FAIR

★—POOR

First set of stars—Quality of graphics

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.

UPDATE ONE ON ONE  
ROB FULOP, DESIGNER



157  
**FATHOM**

The temperature between Los Angeles and the Silicon Valley was heating up, just as FATHOM, a hot new video game from Imagic, was beginning to heat up the assembly line! Jon Badeaux of VIDEO GAME UPDATE was on the phone with Rob Fulop, Imagic resident genius and creator of NIGHT DRIVER, MISSILE COMMAND and DEMON ATTACK... not to mention SPACE INVADERS for the 2600-VCS! We initially thought Rob was one of the older of the game designers, but the fact of the matter is, Rob is just one of the newer creators of gaming devices. He had graduated from college less than four years ago when he went to work for Atari. Only a few years later did he co-found Imagic, now one of the leaders in home video software. As a "powerful form of entertainment," Rob decided his interest in Backgammon, Chess and Go had to take a back seat to video games. And we are certainly glad he did!!!

As he will later explain, you need not have a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of California Berkeley to create video games... but it doesn't hurt!

VGU: What "computer" languages did you learn in college?

Rob: I learned BASIC, FORTRAN, PASCAL, and C language, but I use "assembly" language now. It's the language most designers write in. It is basically the same as machine language, except you write in words that are translated into numbers, whereas machine language is numbers only. It's the most primitive language. It's by far the most tedious language to write, but it produces the most compact code. If something like FATHOM were done in "Pascal" it would take almost four times the amount of code.

VGU: When you write a game, do you have people come in and help you on a project.

Rob: I work in a mode in which I ask people for their input. In other words, I ask if they like this portion, this portion and this portion. But I do have total control. On FATHOM I actually worked with an artist! In fact FATHOM was the first game in which an artist was used for all graphics! He worked directly with me. If I asked for a mermaid, he would design four mermaids and I would choose one. He is just more talented than I am at drawing pictures. And I plan to keep doing it this way! It's a very effective way of working.

VGU: Is it difficult to come up with a new game?

Rob: I think it's extremely difficult! It's difficult to come up with a FUN game which people enjoy playing over and over again. It is easy to come up with a game that is just like all the other games. There are so many SPACE INVADER games and PAC-MAN-type games, but an original game is very, very hard! You have to try all kinds of things. We've tried all kinds of random things, and when we come up with something, we use it.

VGU: You, personally, were one of the first to use stark, black backgrounds as a graphic device in your games. Why did you do this?

Rob: Simply because the colors came out better. Colors are more vivid against a black background, and the objects stood out better. Also, on the Atari VCS there is a series of black lines at the left side of the screen that are annoying, and if you use a black background you don't see them.

VGU: To talk about DEMON ATTACK for a minute, it was obviously a big hit. Do you ever have a "gut feeling" that you have struck gold?

Rob: I knew it would do well. I'm not too sure the people in the marketing department felt that way. It looked a lot different than everything and it was fun to play, but I didn't think it would do as well as it did. I was actually very delighted when it did so well... it is still my favorite game.

VGU: We have a lot of readers who score really well on the game and wonder why, after a certain point, the screen goes totally black. Is there a reason for that?

Rob: That happened because I wanted to have a way to end the game, and I wanted the players to win the game. I was really tired of games you don't win, and at the time we were releasing the game, I could get through six levels of the game. So I arbitrarily chose a number where the game would stop. Now, with the knowledge kids can get through the game so fast, I'd do it differently.

Continued on page 40

**IMAGIC**

Another big introduction planned for the Show, this time games are planned for several systems. First, as we mentioned

last month, the first four Imagic titles for ColecoVision will be shown. Three of the titles are DRAGONFIRE (already out for the VCS and Intellivision); NOVA BLAST (currently available for Intellivision); and a brand new title, MOON SWEEPER. MOON SWEEPER, which will also be introduced for the Atari 2600 and Intellivision, promises 3-D graphics. Pilot a rocket ship through space while watching planets orbiting through the darkness. You must head for one of the desolate planets to save the marooned human miners. As you fly low, hostile aliens drop missile modules in your path. Radar will help you locate the miners. Pick them up, hit the acceleration rings that launch you into space. Then you head for other, more difficult planets.

Five to seven new cartridges are planned for the Atari VCS, including TARANTULA; SOLAR STORM, where you fight laser-shooting invaders, while being bombarded by flaming meteors, sun spots, and Sizzloids, which are so hot that just a few of them can set your world on fire! If you hit enough targets the scene shifts to an orbiting gun platform and you fire at enemy spaceships; and FATHOM, the newest game by award-winning designer, Rob Fulop (see interview in this issue). This is promised to be an adventure game which has a very "fluid" feel. You begin as a seagull, searching the horizon for treasures. You play tag with the clouds and watch out for the fiery volcanoes below. Change into an enchanted dolphin and swim down through seaweed and past deadly octopi, to the bottom of Neptune's kingdom, where there's a beautiful mermaid waiting to be rescued. The challenge increases as the obstacles in your path grow in number. This game is also planned for an Intellivision adaptation.

In addition to FATHOM and MOON SWEEPER for the Intellivision, Imagic will unveil its first game licensed from a coin-op, BEEZOR. ATLANTIS is still planned for the Atari 4/800; and DRAGONFIRE and ATLANTIS are planned for the VIC 20.

**Telesys** The Telesys thrust at the show will be computer games, although there is a "possibility" they will show one 2600-compatible "Puzzle" game which would not be available until sometime in the Fall. Two familiar titles will be coming for the VIC 20—FAST FOOD and RAM IT. In addition, one new VIC 20 game will be introduced entitled FOXY 1. This is a space / maze game with no patterns and different shapes on each screen. At this point, seven screens are planned, although that could change. The enemy ships on each screen will emanate from spinning pinwheels with different speeds on every screen. They will also introduce their first games for the Atari 4 / 800 with FAST FOODS, COSMIC CREEP, and DEMOLITION HERBY, all previously available for the 2600. FAST FOODS has undergone one major change for both the VIC 20 and Atari 4 / 800. In the 2600 version you have to avoid the purple pickles. In the computer version, in addition to avoiding the purple pickles, you must eat the green pickles. As you miss green pickles, a bar advances towards the left of the screen, giving you a smaller and smaller area to work in. Retail on all the computer games will be under \$30.

**COMMAVID**

In addition to the newly released VCS game, CAKEWALK (reviewed in this issue), two

other games will be featured at the show. They are RUSH HOUR where you live out your wildest traffic jam fantasies as you smash and dodge your way through the traffic; and STRONGHOLD where you blast through the whirling force fields in space and destroy the lethal alien planet crawlers. By the way, MISSION OMEGA, which was announced in January, has been "put on a back shelf" so release of the game is uncertain.

**REALSPORTS TENNIS**

(★★★★/★★★★)



A Warner Communications Company

is the most realistic video tennis simulation yet, offering many options for one or two players. You have a choice of playing singles against the computer or against a friend, or you and a friend can play doubles with one computer player on each team. Any of the games can be played at intermediate or advanced skill level. (They aren't kidding about the advanced game—you must be very fast and good at tennis strategy.) A scoreboard is provided to enter the player(s) name(s) (up to seven letters), which is a nice touch. Scoring is the standard 15-30-40-game, with provision for Deuce (tie scores). It takes six games with a two-game advantage to win a set, and you must win two out of three sets to win the match. Players exchange ends of the court at all the appropriate times.

While you can play a fairly casual game just rallying the ball back and forth, the game really becomes more exciting and challenging when you take advantage of the strategic possibilities. You have the choice of serving to your opponent's forehand or backhand, depending on which firing button you press. A lob (high, arching shot) can be chosen instead of the usual groundstroke, but this can be dangerous against a computer opponent. You may find that your computer opponent will then smash the ball right down your throat! The option providing the most in strategic possibility is the ability to program your return to fall within any of nine different areas in your opponent's half-court. This feature adds a great deal to the singles games, and it's downright necessary in the doubles game. When playing doubles, it's quite possible to find you and your friend idly watching while the two computer-controlled players slug it out at the net. This could go on indefinitely if you don't program a return to fall into the backcourt so that you and your friend can participate in the game again!

Graphics are terrific in REALSPORTS TENNIS: the players move fluidly, and the court perspective gives a good feeling of depth. Details such as the shadow under the ball and the webbing of the tennis net add to the visual appeal. The sound effects are good, too. This game not only looks great, but it's a lot of fun to play. This is one time when the controversial 5200 joystick works extremely well in controlling your player. You can move your player anywhere you need him with ease and accuracy. It takes some practice to work the joystick and keypad simultaneously, but we became quite proficient after a few games. We've played a lot of tennis, and we found this game as much fun as the real thing, but a lot less tiring!

Recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

**SPACE DUNGEON**

(★★★½/★★★★½)

sets a search-for-treasure adventure in outer space in this game based on the coin-op by Taito. Your role is commander of a space archaeological expedition to a planet where life was destroyed by a group of cosmic enemies: Deathsquares, Guards, Corner Zappers, Enforcers, Thieves, Executioners, Spore Cases and Pikers. The ghosts of these creatures are trapped in the Space Dungeon that contains the archaeological treasures of this past civilization: Iron Crosses, Copper Pieces, Silver Stars, Golden Fleece, and the magnificent Platinum Ark.

As you move your ship from chamber to chamber within the Space Dungeon, you can keep track of your progress on the bird's-eye-view map at the top of your screen. Armed with only your laser to defend against the cosmic ghosts, you search out the treasures, depositing them temporarily in your red treasure box at the top of the screen. Whenever you're ready, whether or not you've explored all chambers on a level, you can take your treasures to the "Collect Bonus" cube in one of the chambers. Points for each piece of treasure you have collected will be registered at this time, and you then pass through a dimensional space warp to the next level. If you choose the more difficult task of exploring every chamber before moving to the next level, you will earn a 10,000-point bonus upon leaving the level, and you will have earned it! Each successive level brings the possibility of more valuable treasures—and much nastier enemies. In some chambers, you'll be attacked by so many different creatures that you're sure it's impossible to survive. (You may be right!)

SPACE DUNGEON's graphics are abstract, but very color-

ful and varied. The game itself is unusual, and it takes some getting used to because you must use BOTH controllers. One joystick is used for directing your ship through the dungeon, and the other is used to direct the fire of your laser cannon. (The firing buttons are not used in this game.) This would be difficult to manage, except for the fact that a special "controller brace" is packed with the cartridge. This yoke effectively keeps both controllers locked together, and you have the option of deciding which hand should control which function. Once you get used to managing two joysticks (no trick at all for arcade aces), the game is fascinating to play. In SPACE DUNGEON, you never know what's on the other side of a doorway—sometimes it's nothing at all but an empty room, and sometimes it's total disaster with more creatures than you can handle! This is a very good game, combining elements of the fantasy/adventure game with all the action of outer-space shoot-outs.

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

**VANGUARD**

(★★★½/★★★★)

is an excellent adaptation of the popular multi-screen arcade game by Centuri, and it is playable by one or two space adventurers. Your mission consists of traveling through seven tunnel zones to the City of Mystery, where your task is to destroy the great Gond. Your progress through the tunnel is visible at all times on the tunnel map at the top of your screen. Your spaceship is equipped with four laser guns (forward, aft, port and starboard), and they can be fired in pairs. All this firepower is necessary, since you'll be meeting some unpredictable enemies in your travels through the tunnel.

In the Mountain Zone you will encounter Fire Mist copters and Harley Rockets. Fortunately, only the Harleys will fire at you. Fly through an energy pod in the Mountain Zone, and you can crash into enemy objects and score some fast points as long as the VANGUARD theme music plays. The next screen, the crystal-walled Rainbow Zone, requires your ship to move diagonally upward, even though the ship's attitude remains horizontal. Here you'll encounter Helm Balloons attacking from all directions. At least they don't fire on your ship! There are more Harleys and Mists in the colorful Styx Zone, and then it's on to another Rainbow Zone. This one slants downward and is full of attacking Ammo Balloons. The fifth screen, the Striped Zone, is especially tricky with its choice of upper and lower passages. In the upper passage, Garime Monsters jump up and down and stomp on your spaceship, while the lower passage is littered with barriers that must be shot to make them collapse. In both passages, you must sneak past Floating Paynes, and there are enemy bases that can be destroyed for points. Energy pods grow along the lower passage—if you can get to them in time! Next you'll enter a third Rainbow Zone (more Helm Balloons), and then it's on to the Bleak Zone inhabited by Kemlus Snakes and spear-shaped Romeda Ships. The coiled Kemlus Snakes with quivering tails will take you for a ride and gain you bonus points if you dock with one, but your limit is three rides. After that, blast 'em! The Romeda Ships rain down erratically on your ship, and they must be avoided or destroyed. Once you have conquered the tunnel, enter the City of Mystery where Gond presides behind two moving barriers. While a wall behind you slowly closes in and missiles are aimed at your ship's starboard side, you must shoot away at Gond's protective barriers. There is one opening in each, and you can destroy Gond only when the openings line up. The longer you can survive before destroying Gond, the more bonus points you will accumulate.

VANGUARD offers very good graphics and a large variety of challenges in game play. Very few games present the player with such a multitude of attackers to battle while maneuvering horizontally, diagonally and vertically. We especially liked the continuation feature, which allows the less experienced solo player to travel through all the tunnel zones, even after losing all ships. As long as you're in the first tunnel, you can hit the "pause" button to re-start where you lost your last ship. (Your point total reverts to zero.) The game is exciting and challenging, a truly first-rate conversion of the arcade game.

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING...ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

**KANGAROO** (★★★½/★★★★) is an excellent adaptation of Atari's own arcade hit featuring a boxing Mother Kangaroo trying to save her Baby Kangaroo from a mean bunch of monkeys. The game offers four different game screens playable by one or two at novice or advanced skill levels. (The novice game has one less monkey, and apples are not dropped from the top of the tree, as they are in the advanced and the original coin-op versions.) Fans of the arcade game will recognize the delightful theme music in this game. The first screen is by far the easiest, requiring only that you direct mama Kangaroo to hop along tree branches and climb ladders while avoiding monkeys and the apples they throw. Monkeys can be punched, and mama 'roo has a choice of jumping over, ducking under, or punching the apples. A few strawberries hang from the tree branches, and your Kangaroo can jump up to eat them for extra points. If she rings the bell (up to three times per screen), the strawberries will be replaced by tomatoes, then cherries, and finally pineapples, with each fruit worth more points than the last. If mama reaches her caged baby at the top of the screen, "Mom" appears above baby's head, a musical theme plays, and a bonus (depending on the time elapsed) is added to your score.

Mother Kangaroo must negotiate a stairway of logs in the second screen. The wide gaps require a "super leap" and a good sense of timing to avoid having poor mama fall to her death. In the third screen, Baby Kangaroo is caged atop a column of monkeys. Mama can punch out the monkeys, one at a time, or she can climb ladders to a branch from which her baby's cage is accessible. The monkeys are up to their usual shenanigans, but they have one extra trick in this screen. Each time a monkey ambles along a branch and reaches the baby's cage, he adds himself to the column of monkeys. It can be a little discouraging to have this happen just as you think you've had Mother Kangaroo punch out the very last monkey in the tower! The fourth screen is a maze of ladders and logs (not all of them completely connected), and the monkeys seem to be everywhere at once! If you manage to have mama rescue her baby in this screen, the whole sequence will repeat with more fruit on the trees and more aggressive monkeys.

KANGAROO is one of the better climbing games in the arcades, and Atari has done a great translation of their own game. Graphics are very colorful and as similar as possible to the coin-op screens—only the monkeys leave a little to be desired. The use of music adds a lot to the game, too. Game play is varied, and most sequences require a lot of skill to complete. The concept is cute, giving the game an appealing personality. It's a winner in the arcades and a must for your home collection.

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

**MINER 2049er** (★★★/★★★½) is the first game for the Atari 5200 by an independent software producer, and it brings the ubiquitous Bounty Bob character to the screen once more! This version is a duplicate of the original game produced for the Atari 4/8/1200 computers, complete with all ten screens, a "vanity board" (record of the top ten scores each session), and the theme music, "Clementine." The game for one or two players (alternating turns) follows the adventures of Bounty Bob in the year 2049, as he attempts to claim all ten stations (game screens) of a mine filled with radiation and inhabited by mutant organisms. The stations are "claimed" by causing Bounty Bob to travel over every bit of girder-like framework within a limited time span. (A Miner Timer at the top of the screen tells you how much time you have left to complete the station.) In each station, Bounty Bob must avoid contact with any of the mutant organisms unless he has just captured an item lost by a previous miner. For a short time after Bob captures one of these items, the mutants will change color and can be eliminated for extra points if Bob touches them.

The mine stations themselves are full of escalating challenges. The first station, the Mine Shaft, is a fairly easy-to-negotiate series of ramps, and most players should have no trouble mastering it. This is followed by the Slides, a screen on which Bob can find himself slipping down several levels if he steps on just the right spot on a girder. Unfortunately, it's quite possible for Bob to slide right into a mutant organism if he's

not careful! In the third station Transporters in the center of the screen can let Bob "beam up" to any level of the framework, but he remains vulnerable to the mutants even while transporting. (The shimmering graphic effect while transporting is reminiscent of the effect when Captain Kirk and others used the transporters in the *Star Trek* TV show.

Stations 4 and 5, Lillipads and Advanced Lillipads, present Bob with an island-hopping challenge that even includes some slides and moving islands in the advanced screen. Timing becomes more critical than ever with some very difficult moves to be made. The designer has slipped in a practical joke in station 5, and we fell for it! (No, we're not going to tell you what it is!) In station 6, there is a deadly tank of radioactive waste and some really tough mutants. Station 7, Advanced Transporters, is a regular three-ring circus with Transporters, Slides, and moving Lillipads! The Lift in station 8 allows Bounty Bob to hoist himself anywhere in the station, and in station 9 he must deal with the deadly Pulverizers. In station 9, Bob must also perform aerial feats by walking onto moving pieces for a quick ride across the station and a well-timed jump to a platform on the other side! For the supremely skilled player who reaches the Cannon (station 10), the most difficult of all challenges is dealing with the mutants without benefit of special items to make them momentarily vulnerable. Bob becomes the human cannonball in this one, shooting himself to any level of the station. To accomplish this feat, he must load the cannon with TNT—not too much TNT, mind you, or it's bye-bye Bob!

There are enough fast-moving challenges in this game to keep the player busy for many, many hours of frustration and triumph. As all good games should be, this one is highly addictive. Although the graphics are less than outstanding, they are varied and colorful. We especially liked the fact that the entire color scheme changes each time you start with a new Bounty Bob.

Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)

**ACTIVISION** Among the games coming for the 2600, Activision will release DECATHLON, in conjunction with the Olympic year coming. This will be a new twist for the sports buff as it will include ALL events of a standard Decathlon (ten different game screens!) such as shot put, races, pole vault, etc. They plan new multi-uses of the standard joystick. For instance, in the broad jump, you will have to propel your man with the joystick, time the exact point of release, etc. As in the Olympics, there will be three medals available—gold, silver, and bronze. Up to four competitors can play with all scores registered. Promised to have "very fluid movements" and realistic sound effects, the game is designed by award winner, David Crane. (retail \$31.95). CRACKPOTS, also for the 2600, is described as a "hectic pug battle". The player helps a rooftop gardener hurl flower pots to crush bugs that are attacking the building and garden. If six bugs manage to get to the first level of the building before they are destroyed, you lose one floor of your building. With bonus flowerpots you can squish more than one bug. Set to retail at \$31.95, CRACKPOTS is designed by Dan Kitchen (designer of Keystone Kapers). DREADNOUGHT WAR, designed for the Intellivision, is a strategic science fiction space battle. In what the company terms as a "David vs. Goliath" space battle, you are a small space fighter protecting planet Terra. Dreadnoughts (six of them) are huge and have multiple weaponry which must be destroyed. You must go after the various weapons and eventually go for the ship's engine. They can blow up earth if you don't knock it out. You must deal with one Dreadnought at a time. The game promises to have complex graphics and sound effects.

Activision also promises the first computer software games they will produce for the Atari 4 / 8 / 1200. They plan adaptations of KABOOM and RIVER RAID using the expanded capabilities of the computer. Planned as Fall releases, also look for one or two original titles for the computer.

VGU: We are aware of the different kinds of testing each game goes through before the release date. Could you shed some light on it from your point of view?

Rob: There are two kinds: before and after the protos (prototypes) are released. If it is before, it is basically more a function of engineering. I will tell the testers the kinds of things I want the kids to be asked. For instance, I'll want to know if the game is too hard or if it's too easy, if they like/dislike something. AFTER it is released the marketing department will ascertain how well the game is going to do, if we should bother advertising the game, and how many units we will sell (how many we should build). Essentially we want to know how well it's going to do on the market.

VGU: When DEMON ATTACK was made for other systems (Intellivision, Odyssey, Atari 400/800 computers) what kind of input did you have?

Rob: The other designers were pretty much on their own. As you can see, some versions are closer to the original than others. I worked very closely with David Johnson on the Atari Computer version, and it's almost an identical copy. But with the others it was on the basis of when they asked a question I'd try to answer them, so they were pretty much on their own.

VGU: To sidetrack for a minute, as we all know, DEMON ATTACK came out for systems other than its original VCS release. If a version is made of ANY game for ANY system OTHER than the original, who decides the end result?

Rob: This is that type of work where it's pretty much up to the designer. If enough people agree that something is not good, it won't be released. But there is no one person here that has the authority to say that this shouldn't be like this. Each individual has his type of work; there is no one to say what is good and what isn't.

But if someone had done a version of DEMON ATTACK, and enough people didn't like it, then we'd make the person keep working on it.

VGU: Well, Rob, I know enough people have sifted through this to find out everything there is to know about FATHOM, so let's get to that. I'm curious about floating graphics and the whole concept of the game.

Rob: It's basically a game that's designed to look more like a cartoon than any other type of video game. At the beginning of the game, the player controls a dolphin in the water. You have total freedom to move the dolphin wherever you want. You can even jump out of the water. The objective is to find a trident. Once you find the three parts to the trident, you are able to go down to the bottom of the ocean and release the mermaid from the spell on her. It's a very, very simple adventure game. And during the course of the game, your dolphin can jump out of the water and turn into a seagull. As a seagull you can fly over the ocean, over the land, over the mountains and into the clouds. You really have a lot of mobility. You can look through the air, fly over volcanos, swim in the water and more. It's really designed to give you a feeling as if there's a cartoon and you can control all the characters in the cartoon. Once you do it one time, you do it again and there are more places you can go. Same for the third and other levels. Hopefully the better you get at it, the more you find out about it. That, to me, is the hook to make a good game. You pick it up and every time you play, you learn something new and want to play it again. You use what you learned, and something else will get you going, too. It's really a lot of fun.

VGU: Without giving away secrets, are there things to discover along the way we won't read about in the instruction booklet?

Rob: Yes, there are! That's really what I like, and in coin-op games there are lots of things like that and you never know about them until you play them. And I don't see ANY reason why it's necessary to tell players or list every little detail in the manual. To me, that is the whole fun of it. It's an adventure game and you want to find out (on your own) how to go about doing things.

VGU: It sounds as if FATHOM is more a game you play to win, rather than just score points.

Rob: FATHOM has seven levels. After you have succeeded going through the seven levels you've essentially won the game. But, unlike a lot of games, you're getting points for how well you do. So once you get through seven levels you can play it again and get a higher score. We find it takes most kids about 100 hours to get through the seven levels. Then they can get through it in about 30 minutes, but they can get through it with higher and higher scores by doing it. It's hard to explain because there are so many things to explore along the way.

VGU: How did you happen to hook up with an artist on this project?

Rob: We have some very good graphic tools here. We have a system that lets an artist sit down with a TV set and draw ON the TV set. The artist can draw on the same resolution as a TV. So, we decided to approach it that way, because so many people who program computers can't draw. It seemed to be a very logical way to go.

VGU: Silly question, I'm sure, but do you get frustrated by the limitations of the Atari VCS?

Rob: I get VERY frustrated by the VCS, but it is what I really do best, so I keep doing it. It is so obvious when you see a game by somebody who knows the system and someone who doesn't. I really haven't used the other systems that much, and I imagine when you use them a lot, you have much more freedom to do whatever you want.

VGU: I know, aside from being a great designer and programmer you are personally a part of Imagic, the company. What are your functions?

Rob: Basically to think of video games that will do very well. That's pretty much my job here. I've tried to work a little with marketing, but these are areas where I have no expertise at all. What I am really good at is going into arcades and deciding what is fun and WHY it's fun, and trying to think of games people will like. Also, helping other engineers and other designers.

VGU: When you were in school and college, did you ever think of being famous and winning an award for something like DEMON ATTACK? I mean, how do you take these accolades?

Rob: I am very proud (to be recognized) for my efforts. I really am. I never thought anything like this would happen. It was a total shock when DEMON ATTACK became so popular. I had no visions of being that good at anything.

VGU: What kind of computer do you use to develop games?

Rob: I used a GENRAD development system, and the 6502 microprocessor that's in the Atari. It's a development system that allows me to create programs for the Atari. Most programmers use whatever the company provides for them as tools.

VGU: Is there a way someone with an idea and a computer can become a programmer?

Rob: Yes. Now, the more popular way is to get a personal computer, such as the Atari 400 or 800 or one of the Apple Home Computers, and basically learn assembly language, either in school or in a book, and basically write a game. I would start by copying a game, one as simple as PONG or SPACE INVADERS, and then come up with your own game. It is just like the book business: you send it in to a company that produces software. That's what's happening now in the personal computer field. A lot of people are doing just that.

It was at this point Jon and Rob decided to meet again... this time in person, rather than via telephone, at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago where Rob will be able to see his own picture and read his own words in this issue of The Video Game Update. We thank Rob for his time and EAGERLY await FATHOM for our testing facilities (not to mention our homes)!!!

EDITORS NOTE: FATHOM is scheduled for release later this summer, and will be reviewed shortly before that time in The Video Game Update!!!



## ATARI DEVELOPS NEW 5200 CONTROLLERS

Atari is in the process of developing new controllers for the 5200 due to the problems that the current controllers have caused game players. In addition to solving some of the internal warranty problems, they will also address the complaints regarding the analog joystick and the difficulty of using it for certain games such as PAC MAN. The new joystick will feature BOTH analog and self-centering as the analog works very well with a number of games. That's the good news. The bad news is that if you already own a 5200, they will NOT be replacing the joysticks for you UNLESS you have a problem WHILE IN WARRANTY. The new joysticks will be packaged with all new 5200's and will be available as a separate item which you can purchase. Atari has not targeted an availability date on these new joysticks and they will probably not be available until sometime late this summer. As a result, the new 5200 units on your dealer's shelves will include the old joysticks AT LEAST for the next 2-3 months. A retail has not been set yet for the joystick as a separate item.

**Computer Magic Ltd.** will introduce their first two 2600-compatible games at the show, POGOMAN featuring a man on a pogo stick avoiding obstacles and MAD-NETTER, an action/adventure game with the main character wielding a butterfly net, avoiding snakes and other sinister creatures. Both games have been previously available for the Atari 4/800 as this company has produced several games for the 4/800 in the past. Plans are not firmed as of this writing, but they also may introduce new games for the Atari 4/800.



## CRITICALLY SPEAKING...VECTREX

### WEB WARS



(★★★★/★★★★)

is a futuristic, three-dimensional game for one or two players in which you become the Hawk King and fly through the Web of Fantasy in an attempt to capture strange creatures to display in your trophy room.

As the game begins, your Hawk King soars into the seemingly endless, tunnel-like web at a speed noted as 40 m.p.h. on the speedometer in the lower left corner of the screen. (You can make the Hawk King fly faster or slower—anywhere from 10 to 240 m.p.h.) Squadrons of star-shaped guardian Drones attempt to destroy the Hawk King, but they can be eliminated by shots from the Hawk's Drone Blaster. (If they are not destroyed, they will return to follow your Hawk at a speed ten m.p.h. faster than the speed you were traveling when you passed them.) In between dodging and shooting at the drones, the Hawk must fly into position to snare occasional exotic creatures by using its Capture Rod. Once a creature has been snagged, a square portal will appear, growing larger as your Hawk flies closer to it. That portal leads to the Trophy Room, so you must line up your Hawk to fly through and then hang your creature on the wall. Each time you return to the Web of Fantasy from the Trophy Room, your flying speed will have increased; another species of creature will appear, and it will be more difficult to capture than the last species. There are twenty species in all, and some of them are quite fanciful creatures indeed!

Accuracy and quick thinking are imperative in this game. The menacing Cosmic Dragon will appear if you fail to capture a species after two of its creatures have appeared, or if you fail to enter the portal to the Trophy Room after two attempts. The Dragon first materializes at some distance, but as it comes within range, it begins shooting fireballs with deadly accuracy. This prehistoric-looking character should be kept in its cave if at all possible, because it is a tougher opponent each time it reappears!

We found WEB WARS to be a very exciting game with a wide range of player control over the speed of the contest. The graphic execution shows off the capabilities of the Vectrex unit beautifully, giving the best feeling of depth since HYPERCHASE for this system. Your Hawk King flaps its wings convincingly in flight, and guiding it up the steep sides of the webbed tunnel gives you a feeling similar to racing a bicycle along the nearly vertical portions of a velodrome. Speed demons will love this game, but those who would prefer to play at a more cautious, deliberate pace can do so. The game has elements of the classic shoot-em-up style, but there is enough originality of concept to keep the player returning again and again. WEB WARS is a must for your Vectrex collection!

Recommended.

### FORTRESS OF NARZOD (★★★★½/★★★★½)

uses a medieval theme of battling an evil wizard and his sinister emissaries, but it is more characteristic of the action genre of games than the fantasy/adventure quests that often incorporate such creatures. In this game for one or two players (alternating turns), you take the role of the last honorable wizard who is attempting to defeat Narzod's guardians and destroy his fortress. Your wizard rides in a magical hovercraft equipped with a blaster to shoot at the evil creatures he encounters along the three roadways to the fortress. Each walled-in roadway takes several angled turns between the foreground (bottom of the screen) and the guard tower in the distance (top of the screen). The guardians move toward your hovercraft from the guard tower, each hurling one deadly Spiker which can destroy your hovercraft on contact. Because of the angles in the roadway, there can be a great deal of strategic thinking involved in hitting the advancing guardians and avoiding their fire. You'll also find that bullets from your blaster can ricochet off the walls, destroying guardians, their Spikers—or even your hovercraft, if you're not careful! (Note to parents: there's a hidden geometry lesson in this for the kids!) On each of the three roadways, you will face three waves of guardians: DoomGrabbers, Tarantulas and Ghouls. However, the number of guardians increases on the second and third roadways, and their Spikers will split in two when hit by your blaster. On the second roadway, the guardians are joined by crying Warbirds. They will not fire at your hovercraft, but contact with any of them will eliminate your

craft. (On the third roadway, the Warbirds will fire.) But the Warbirds can also be used as a defense: when blasted, they will act as temporary shields from the guardians' Spikers. If you manage to survive the guardians on all three roadways, you will be allowed to pass through the final guard tower into the Fortress of Narzod itself. Here you face the final challenge, the Mystic Hurler. This creature is equipped with an unlimited number of Spikers, and it takes six hits to eliminate him. Destruction of the Mystic Hurler will cause the Fortress of Narzod to disintegrate. Once again, the forces of good triumph over evil!

As we have seen in other Vectrex games, the graphic capabilities of the unit allow for a greater feeling of depth than is evident in most video games, and perspective is used well in FORTRESS OF NARZOD to create the illusion of depth. We really enjoyed the challenges this game has to offer. Dealing with the angled walls adds difficulty and an element of strategy to what could have been an ordinary shooting game.

Recommended.



We've spoken about the planned light pen in earlier issues and release is still planned for the Fall. Four cartridges will also be available for the light pen system: ART MASTER, is an introduction to the graphic capabilities of the Vectrex. It includes "Connect the Dots," "Sketching," and "Beginning Animation" (this cartridge will be given away free as a special Fall promotion with the Light Pen). MELODY MASTER is a learning tool introducing the player to the fine art of music composition through an "entertaining and exciting" approach. ANIMATION is described as a step beyond the animation skills available in the Art Master cartridge, with unlimited graphic opportunities. MAIL PLANE is a graphic depiction of the world's geography combined with a new game that instructs as it entertains.

We've been calling the Vectrex system the "sleeper" system all along, and with the introduction of the 3-D IMAGER, we reiterate what we've said before—this is a NIFTY little system well worth its cost. The 3-D IMAGER is a special peripheral which plugs into the second hand controller port and allows the player, when used in conjunction with special cartridges, to play in real 3-D and full color—on the current hardware! As a special promotion, anyone purchasing a Vectrex this Fall will receive a free 3-D IMAGER. The unit will retail under \$40 and three cartridges will initially be available around the same time—NARROW ESCAPE, 3-D MINE STORM, and POLE POSITION.

We will also see the Computer Keyboard Add-on we've talked about in the past. The keyboard, coupled with an expander, adds 16K ROM and 16K RAM. The 65-key, full travel keyboard will permit easy entry of programs and data. Special User Friendly keys will also be featured. Storage will be provided with the use of a wafer tape storage device (known as a stringy floppy). This storage medium, which you will be hearing more and more about, is as easy to use as a cassette, but provides 128K bytes of storage. The planned retail is under \$80. Basic will be built into the system and five new cartridges will be made available. These include: THE SOUND STUDIO, a music composition cartridge which allows the player to create music and even mix 3 separate tracks; EXPLORING THE SOLAR SYSTEM, CREATE-A-GAME/MAZE which is the first in a series of cartridges that allow the player to learn how to program while developing their own game; BASIC ANIMATION, an art and turtle graphics cartridge that allows for beautiful animation on the screen; and BASIC SCIENCE, a learning cartridge that teaches the basic laws of physics through the use of game techniques. In early 1984, a word processing system will be introduced which will be able to handle a full page of text, unlike any system that hooks up to a television.

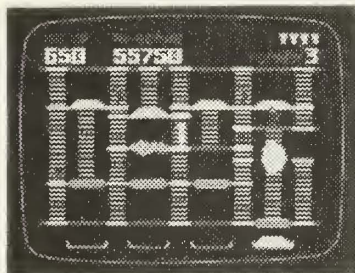
New cartridges which will be shown for the basic Vectrex include POLE POSITION; STAR CASTLE, the arcade classic; DARK TOWER VOLUME 1, based on the Milton Bradley fantasy adventure game; POLAR RESCUE, an underwater adventure game under the polar ice cap; and BATTER-UP, Vectrex's video baseball.

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING...INTELLIVISION-COMPATIBLE

### BURGERTIME

(★★★★½/★★★★)

#### INTELLIVISION



is the first direct arcade translation by Mattel. The original concept was licensed by Data East to Mattel for home games and to Bally/Midway for coin-op use. In this amusing climbing game for one or two players, you play the role of Chef Peter Pepper as he attempts to assemble three or four burgers. The ingredients (buns, lettuce, meat patties, tomatoes) are positioned separately on planks, one above the other on the screen, and the planks are connected by different ladder arrangements in each of the seven different game screens. The object is to run your chef over a part of a burger, causing it to drop one level and subsequently displace any burger parts directly below it. The process is repeated until you have a row of completed burgers at the bottom of the screen. Of course, no game of this type could be designed without some problems for the main character to overcome. In this one, the enemies are hot dogs, pickles and eggs, and contact with any of them will cause you to lose one of your chefs. (*Why* it's so important for these characters to prevent Peter Pepper from completing his burgers is one of those little video game mysteries that isn't ever explained.) Other than staying out of their way, the chef's only defense is his trusty pepper shaker. One shot of pepper at close range is enough to immobilize a hot dog, pickle or egg for a few moments and allow Peter Pepper a chance to get away. (No, you can't make these creatures sneeze to death—too bad!) The chef starts the game with only four pinches of pepper in his shaker, but more can be accumulated by gobbling up the bonuses of french fries, coffee, ice cream and ketchup whenever they appear. Once you have played this game a few times, you'll learn to conserve those pinches of pepper just as long as possible. By the time Peter Pepper reaches the fourth screen, it is impossible to complete all the burgers without at least one pinch of pepper, and it takes some fancy maneuvering to do it with just one. There are a few other tricks Peter Pepper can pull on his pursuers, though nothing eliminates them completely. With good timing, it's possible to drop a burger ingredient on top of one or more of the nasties, or even lure one of them onto an ingredient that's about to drop. These moves earn extra points and temporarily take the involved creatures out of the action.

Typical of Mattel games, this one may be played at any of four speeds. Only the fastest one compares to the arcade game in pace, but the slower ones are good for learning the patterns the nasties follow. While the graphics cannot be expected to duplicate the coin-op, they are very colorful and compare well to other games for this system. (For those players who simply *must* know—yes, there is an intermission cartoon.) Musical sounds are more prevalent than is typical for Mattel games, and they're a welcome addition in this one. Play action is this game's strongest point, however, striking a good balance between cuteness and solid challenge. BURGERTIME is a game that kids and adults will play over and over because it's irresistible. Recommended.

In an effort to keep you abreast of all the plans from the various manufacturers, we had learned that a new 2600-compatible game, KAMIKAZE SAUCER, was planned from computer software firm, **SYNCR0**. In further checking, we have found that, although they do plan the game (the premise, by the way, is you are piloting a rocketship through deep space when you encounter a wave of alien saucers. You must fight them and not allow any to escape to report your location to their Kamikaze Squadron) for eventual release, there is nothing planned for the foreseeable future and it will, in all likelihood, be AT LEAST the winter before we hear more.

### BUZZ BOMBERS

(★★★★½/★★★★)



is a bzzz-y little one-player game full of bees, bees, and more bees. Armed with nothing but a spray can that you can move back and forth at the base of the screen, you must stop the bees from flying down and pollinating so many flowers that your spray can becomes immobilized in the garden. The appropriate music, "Flight of

the Bumblebee," plays as yellow worker bees enter the screen from both edges near the top. Hit a bee with a blast from your spray can, and it turns into a yellow honeycomb. (Avoid making the honeycombs disappear by spraying them, because you'll earn extra points when the hummingbird appears later and eats them.) The bees fly back and forth, dropping down a level each time they hit the edge of the screen or a honeycomb. Any bee that isn't sprayed before it reaches the bottom of the screen will pollenate the flowers. If this happens enough times, the movement of your spray can will be restricted, or you may even lose your spray can altogether.

After the first few levels, the yellow worker bees will be joined by lightning-fast, white killer bees. These, too, can be sprayed, but they are much more difficult to hit. When you do manage to hit one, it turns into a red honeycomb which is worth up to three times as many points as a yellow honeycomb when eaten by the hummingbird. With a dead-eye aim and a little luck, you may get one or more beehives on the screen. These are formed by bees that become stuck on their flight down, usually between a honeycomb and the edge of the screen. If you can avoid zapping them with your spray, they will earn you bonus points at the end of the level. You should also avoid spraying the blue hummingbird—too many hits make her turn green and disappear for a while.

We found BUZZ BOMBERS to be a totally delightful game. The graphics are very well drawn. The little wings on the bees even move as they fly! We especially liked the realistic, random quality of the movements of the bees and the hummingbird as they stop and hover in mid-air occasionally. Those accustomed to arcade games will also enjoy the opening title sequence and the animated intermission entertainment that occurs after completion of some levels. Sound effects, from the constant musical background to the buzzing of the bees, are excellent. The earliest levels of game play are easy enough for children, but probably too difficult for tots. (There is only one difficulty level provided, which is unusual for Mattel games, but we did not find this to be a drawback.) The action escalates quickly, though, and the challenge is frenetic enough for older game players with considerable experience. Most important of all, this is a very entertaining game to play. We kept returning to play BUZZ BOMBERS "just one more time"—it's a winner!

Recommended.



The Odyssey<sub>2</sub> has been put on indefinite "hold" as they appear to be backing off the Odyssey systems a bit and will actually announce upcoming software for the Atari 2600 and ColecoVision! They are working on approximately five new games, with only ONE for the Odyssey<sub>2</sub>. First, the Pink Panther license that was owned by U.S. Games has surfaced with the Odyssey people. They plan ADVENTURES OF THE PINK PANTHER for both the Atari 2600 and ColecoVision sometime before the end of 1983. What we do not know at this point is whether the plans for an 8K game, as announced by U.S. Games, will survive (as you recall, we were very excited by the initial graphics and gameplay we saw from U.S. Games back in February). Another title planned is POWER LORD I for the 2600, ColecoVision, and Odyssey<sub>2</sub>. Three other games in the early development stage are (these are working titles only) CAVERN, FLASHPOINT, and AIR DEFENSE—all for ColecoVision. All titles are planned for release before the end of the year.

**CRITICALLY SPEAKING..INTELLIVISION-COMPATIBLE**  
**MISSION X** (★★★★★½) will appeal to those



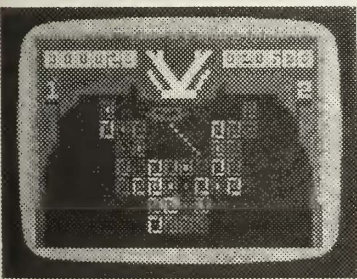
who enjoy combat simulations. The game is licensed from Data East, and it puts you in control of a World War II attacker bomber flying a search-and-destroy mission over land and water. Playable at any of four skill levels by one person only, the game starts with your plane on the runway. Pull back on your stick (if you

have one) to take off, or press the bottom edge of your disc. The screen scrolls downward, giving the impression that your plane is flying forward. (You have no control over speed, except by your choice of skill level.) The object is to bomb as many targets as possible, including anti-aircraft installations, roads, railroad tracks, bridges, tanks, trucks, trains, ships and aircraft carriers. As soon as you start to attack, the enemy below will launch guided missiles to knock your plane out of the sky. Avoid the missiles by turning quickly or changing your altitude, or the missiles can be destroyed by firing your wing-mounted guns (*not* easy to do). After you've been playing for a while, speeding enemy planes will appear, firing away at your plane. These are even more difficult to dodge than the ground-fired missiles, but quick reflexes will save your plane. If you're feeling especially daring, you can also fire at the enemy planes—shooting one down is good for lots of points. Periodically, the runway will reappear, and you should fly at minimum altitude over the runway for bonus points. (Don't bomb the runway, though, because there is a penalty!) At this point, you'll get an on-screen update of the number of hits and points you have scored, plus a count of your reserve planes. Take off again on another bombing run, and you may find yourself flying at night. Your plane is more difficult to see, and you can't see your bombs at all as they drop. You will see some spectacular explosions as your bombs hit their targets, and brightly colored flak illuminates the night.

MISSION X is a game that grows on you, especially as you develop the sense of timing necessary to hit your targets from various altitudes. With such varied terrain, the bombing runs remain interesting, and there are always plenty of targets. As you gain skill, you'll learn to concentrate on the targets with the highest point values, and the game becomes even more interesting. While the graphics are not outstanding, except for the nighttime portions of the game, most of the targets are at least identifiable. For those who like combat games, this is a particularly good one.

Recommended.

**VECTRON** (★★★★ / ★½)



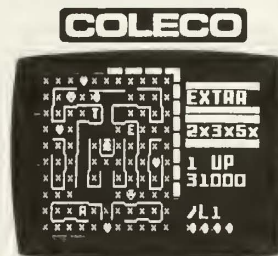
is a highly abstract game for one or two players. You'll never figure this one out if you don't read the instructions, and you may not understand it even then. The object of the game on each level is to build an energy base, section by section. This is done by moving energy blocks into place and then filling them with energy blasts from your V-gun at

the top of the screen. The V-gun is aimed and fired simultaneously by pressing the outside edge of your controller disc in the direction you wish to fire. While you're trying to build the energy base, which is something like a wall, various "nasties of the universe" nibble away at it in an attempt to stop you. These creatures bear names such as Hungrees, G-Spheres, Diamondbacks, Blue Meanies and Prizums, among others. They can be destroyed by energy blasts from your V-Gun, or they may self-destruct when they run into an energy block that has been temporarily reinforced by energy from an E-Pak. E-Paks float onto the screen periodically; aim and shoot at one with your V-gun, which will liberate its energy.

Then you must maneuver your energy block to capture this free-floating energy so that the energy block will be temporarily reinforced against attacks from nasties. If you can complete the energy base at one level, you move on to create a new energy base at the next level.

VECTRON has unusually stunning and colorful graphics; it's a very pretty game to look at. However, we found the game itself unnecessarily confusing and lacking in any kind of strong concept to hold it together. It reminded us of some movies we've seen that were beautifully photographed, had great sets and costuming, but practically no plot. Not recommended.

**LADY BUG** (★★★★★½) is based on the Universal



coin-op, and it offers a choice of four skill levels for one or two players. You play a Lady Bug flying through a maze filled with flowers, hearts and letters. Everything she eats earns you points, but blue hearts will multiply your score. If the Lady Bug munches the letters when they're yellow, the bonus indicator spelling "Extra" will start to fill in.

(Completing the word automatically finishes the maze and earns you a bonus Lady Bug.) Of course, the Lady Bug cannot nibble away unmolested for long. When the timing border of the maze changes color completely, a predatory insect leaves the bug box in the center of the maze to chase her. To aid her in evading the nasty insects, there are turnstiles throughout the maze that only she can operate. Also scattered through the maze are deadly skulls. If the Lady Bug can lure a predator into contacting the skull, the insect will be eliminated. You have to be careful to keep her away from the skulls, though, because they can also eliminate her on contact. Once all the predatory insects have left the bug box, a vegetable snack appears there, and it can be eaten for points. (The vegetables change with each new maze.)

Graphics are wildly colorful in this game, though a few items such as the hearts and skulls are a barely recognizable. The cheerful music adds a festive touch to the game—it's good to hear more use of music in video games. Game play is very good. In fact, we feel this is one of the best maze games yet for the Intellivision system. One of LADY BUG's strongest points is the variety of strategic possibilities available to the player. It's a great game!

Recommended.

**FROGGER** (★★★★ / ★★½) is Parker Brothers'



first game for this system, and Intellivision owners should be very happy to have their own version of this coin-op hit licensed from Sega. One or two can join in the fun at any of four different skill levels. The object is to hop your frog from a sidewalk, across a busy highway onto a river bank, and then across the river to his home bay within a limited time period. The game starts with the familiar FROGGER musical theme and your first frog on a sidewalk preparing to dart across four lanes of traffic to the river bank. Even the river bank isn't always safe—red snakes sometimes slither by! The frog crosses the river by hopping onto floating logs or turtles. Turtles sometimes dive, though, and your frog can't swim! Sometimes a lady frog appears on a log; hop your frog onto her log to rescue her, and you'll earn bonus points for taking two frogs to home bay. The river has its dangers, too: alligators snap at Frogger, and otters sometimes grab him off the end of a log. In some game variations, floating off the screen on a log will eliminate your frog, just as it does in the coin-op game. Hopping your frog into home bay keeps him safe from further danger, but watch out for alligator heads that sometimes materialize in those bays! If a fly appears in the home bay the frog is jumping into, you score extra points. If you can bring five froggies home successfully, the game continues at a higher difficulty level.

Colorful graphics, sprightly music, and delightfully amusing game play combine to make FROGGER a great game. The game variations offer difficulty levels suitable for players of all ages. This title by Parker Brothers was one of 1982's most popular games in the Atari 2600 format, and it should prove equally irresistible to Intellivision owners. Recommended. (MSR \$42.95)




**UNITRONICS**, one of the many new companies expected at C.E.S., has filled us in on what they plan to unveil at the show. First, they will introduce SONIC Home Computer, a 6502 microprocessor. It includes a TI graphics chip for "Coleco quality" graphics; full sound generation capability; full-stroke keyboard with 70 keys; and eight function keys. It will be 48K RAM (expandable to 128K) with 4K of ROM. Once again, we see the use of the new (and probably biggest peripheral of 1983) stringy-floppy waferdrive which is capable of 128K memory per wafer. Microsoft Basic on wafer will be packaged with the SONIC and should retail in the vicinity of \$200. They are contemplating inclusion of a 32K high resolution game and a Spreadsheet and Word Processing wafer with the unit. If those additional pieces of software are included, the list price will undoubtedly change.

We have learned exclusively that they have already signed some very exciting licensing agreements with Broderbund, Sierra On-Line, Epyx, London Software, Spinnaker, EduWare, and Artsci (they have Magic Calc and Magic Window which would be the spreadsheet and word processing programs supplied with the unit if they decide to go that route.) With each agreement, Unitronics will have access to the entire library and will start with one or two titles from each line. Initially they will offer FROGGER from Sierra, with two new games to be developed—LUNAR LEAPER and LEARNING WITH LEAPER. The first from Spinnaker will be FACEMAKER; first from Epyx is TEMPLE OF APSHA; first from Broderbund is AE; EduWare's first is Spelling Bees; and from London will come TRION.

They have some really interesting plans that involve the Atari 2600 (we bet the 2600 designers had NO idea how versatile their system was way back when it was first designed). How would you like to hook-up a wafer disc to your 2600 and purchase game "albums" for under \$30 which have 4-6 games on each wafer?? That's what they plan, in addition to an interconnection (retailing around \$12.00) which would hook-up their SONIC computer with the 2600 enabling conversion to a full-function computer.

## COMPUTER SOFTWARE NEWS

  
Atari has just told us of their intention of developing third party software for the Apple II series, Commodore 64 and VIC 20, IBM, Radio Shack and the TI 99 / 4A! Planned for initial release sometime this summer, Atari will market some of their more popular educational, home management, personal development software, and, of course, their hit computer games. This will be good news for several home computer owners who would LOVE to play PAC MAN, DONKEY KONG (as yet unreleased by Atari), DIG DUG (also unreleased as yet), and many more. As we get details on the titles and release dates, we will pass them along to you.

HES has just licensed the extremely popular SHAMUS game for release on the VIC 20. In its Atari format, available through Synapse Software, the game has been constantly one of the top selling games on the market. It pits a dark knight detective against a horde of robot henchmen controlled by the evil Shadow. To defeat the Shadow, players guide Shamus through a deadly maze, using only razor-sharp daggers to defend themselves while the enemy fires power bolts and laser blasts. Successful players will ultimately come face to face with the Shadow itself for the final conflict. Scheduled for your retailer's shelf soon, the cartridge will retail for \$39.95. A second game coming is COCO 2, described as an innovative teaching game with animation. The game teaches the user the fundamentals of computer game design through colors, sounds, and weapons to make scoring or speed changes or to write a totally new game. It will be available for the VIC 20 at \$39.95 (you must upgrade to 16K to accommodate the software); Commodore 64; Atari 4/800 for \$44.95. You must upgrade to 32K on the Atari 400. The game will be available

on cassette or diskette for the systems.

Benji, the lovable dog, will make his debut with HES in the new Benji Discovery Series. The first game to be released, BENJI'S SPACE RESCUE, sends Benji on a rescue mission in outer space. In the course of helping Benji complete the rescue mission, children learn about the planets and other bodies that make up the solar system. Initially available for the Commodore 64 and VIC 20, future versions are planned for the Atari 4/800.

**synapse** In addition to new titles for the Atari 4/8/1200, Synapse will enter the VIC 20 arena for the first time. Initially, three titles will be available within the next month. They are SQUEEZE where you control a farmer trying to dig irrigation ditches. You must contend with bulls running around trying to stop you as you develop a system to bring water where you need it. Fill up the ditches you dig and keep the bulls away! In SALMON RUN, you are the proverbial salmon trying to swim upstream to spawn. You must avoid various obstacles, jump up dams, find little eggs, etc. while a bear, fishermen with lures, etc. try to stop you. ASTRO-PATROL is a space action "shoot 'em up". NEW YORK CITY, planned for the Fall, is an encounter with the Big Apple. You control a car around mid-town as you maneuver around traffic (no easy task in NYC), park, put money in the meter, go into the subway, etc. The twist with this game is that each time you get out of the car (bank, library, subway, Central Park, etc), you enter a "mini-game" which must be played out. There will be a total of six mini-games in the game. Suggested list for the VIC 20 series will be \$19.95.

New games will also be announced for the Atari 4/8/1200 with SHADOW WORLD, a multi-player game which combines two techniques: independent split screen—half to one person and the other half to the second person, independent of each other. You can jointly control a jet fighter and a helicopter defending the skies, or work against each other. (suggested retail \$34.95 disk or cassette). DIMENSION X places you in a vehicle on the surface of a distant planet. You must plot your course on a full screen sector map and enter active combat zones. This game marks the first use of Altered Perspective Graphics, described as a new technique that generates rapidly moving backgrounds in a simulation of visual perspective. Synapse tells us that in testing the game, players were often seen weaving and dodging in their seats in response to this technique! BLUE MAX is a World War I dog-fight game with air-to-air, ground-to-air, straffing and bombing action, and 3-D diagonal scrolling.

**PDI** will show several new titles for the Atari 4/800 will be at the show, the majority of which fall into the educational category. TEDDY'S MAGIC BALLOON is an interactive story for preschoolers, complete with voice narration and an illustrated storybook. ROBIN'S HALLOWEEN is a story with a voice narration designed to help young children develop reading skills. JERRY WHITE'S GAME MACHINE is five games in one: Racing, Gotcha, Bowling, Leapfrog, and Musical Letters. ALPHABET ARCADE contains games that build alphabet and dictionary skills. STEP BY STEP 2 is a sequel to NEW STEP BY STEP whereby you learn intermediate BASIC programming. In addition to the above, PDI plans to introduce a new version of MOONBASE IO, the game which was chosen as "Most Innovative Computer Game of 1982" by Electronic Games magazine.

**ULTRASOFT INC.**, a relatively new software company, has told us they plan to enter the Atari 4/8/1200 and Commodore 64 market this Fall. Initially, they will release Atari versions of two successful adventure Apple titles, THE MASK OF THE SUN and THE SERPENT'S STAR.

**E.T. PHONE HOME**

(★★★/★★★)

is an adventure game starring E.T. and his earthly friend, Elliott. Although there are some similarities, this is definitely NOT the same E.T. game released earlier for the Atari 2600 system. Accompanied by the familiar theme music from the movie, E.T. appears at the start of the game. The pieces

he will need to build his phone appear on the screen as he thinks of them. (There are nine difficulty levels in the game, and fewer phone pieces are needed at the lower levels than at the higher ones.) All the possible pieces include a battery, circuit board, coat hanger, fork, record player, saw blade, tin can, tinfoil, umbrella, and wire. You must remember not only the shapes of these pieces, but also their color when you go searching.

Initially, your on-screen character is Elliott, the young boy who befriends the Extra-Terrestrial. Since it is much too dangerous for E.T. to search for the phone pieces himself, the task is Elliott's. The phone pieces are scattered and hidden all over the multi-screen setting which scrolls in all directions. Elliott hears a special sound whenever he is near a piece, and it will materialize if he gets very close. If E.T. needs the piece, Elliott must pick it up and return to his house with it. If you can't remember whether the particular piece is needed, you can activate the telepathic link between Elliott and E.T. to find out, but this saps some of E.T.'s limited amount of energy. While Elliott is searching, scientists and FBI agents are looking for E.T., and they will harass Elliott by following him and generally getting in his way.

Once Elliott finds all the necessary pieces, E.T. will actually speak to you. This is a pretty neat trick without benefit of a voice synthesizer! Then E.T. himself will appear at Elliott's house, and you must guide him to his ship's landing site in the woods. You must avoid contact with scientists or FBI agents, because they will drain more of his energy. When E.T. reaches the landing site, his ship will appear, he will walk up into it, and E.T. goes home!

Graphics in this game are much improved over the Atari 2600 game, as they should be. Your on-screen character, Elliott, is tiny in relation to his setting, but you can still tell that he's a human figure dressed in blue pants and red shirt. E.T. looks very good in the telepathic link sequences and at the start of the game. Toward the end of the game when you must guide him to his ship's landing site, he is quite small on the screen, but you can recognize him as the E.T. character. Game play is enjoyable and suited to a very wide range of skills because of the nine difficulty levels. The first level, in which you must locate only four pieces of E.T.'s phone, is quite appropriate for kids, and they should enjoy the game—especially when E.T. speaks. There is even educational value in requiring the player to remember and match shapes and colors. The higher levels, which require the player to find as many as ten pieces in a limited time period, will provide plenty of challenge for older players. This is an enjoyable adventure game for fans of E.T. (Cartridge)

Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)

**MOUNTAIN KING**

(★★★★/★★★★)

is a very impressive fantasy adventure game that looks like a winner from the moment you start playing it! You assume the role of the Explorer inside a diamond mine which contains the secret Temple Chamber of a forgotten civilization. If you can challenge the guardians of the Chamber, seize the crown within, and escape with it to the top of the mountain, then you will become the Mountain King.

The game opens with the figure of the Explorer dancing across the mountaintop to the tune of Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King." You'll notice that he is capable of the floating leaps of a ballet dancer, which he will need to move among the ledges in the diamond mine within the mountain. The Explorer must move quickly (there is a time limit) among the sparkling diamonds, collecting them from the dark walls to earn the points he must have to make the Flame Spirit available. Besides the diamonds, there are hidden treasure chests in the mine, and they can only be seen when he shines his flashlight on them. It is a truly wondrous effect when the blue beam of the flashlight illuminates one of the chests—it drew "oohs" and "ahs" from our staff members! While the Ex-

plorer is collecting diamonds, gray bats flutter around. They're no problem at this stage, but they become a nuisance later. Another nuisance is the giant green spider that skitters along the bottom of the mountain. Its favorite trick is to wrap your Explorer up into a neat little package with his web. (The spider will also steal the Crown or Flame Spirit from the Explorer after the first level.)

Once the Explorer has collected 1000 diamond points, the Flame Spirit becomes available (signified by a dancing flame near the bottom of the screen). The Flame Spirit is invisible, except when illuminated by the flashlight, so you must listen to the theme music. As your Explorer scrambles around, the music becomes louder as he approaches the hidden Flame Spirit and wanes as he moves away. When the Explorer captures the Flame Spirit, a sparkling halo surrounds him. At this point he must hasten to the entrance of the Temple Chamber, which is guarded by the ominous Skull Spirit. Offer the Flame Spirit to the Skull Spirit, and your Explorer may enter the Temple, scale the walls, and place the Crown on his head. Now you must maneuver your Explorer to race to the mountaintop where the Perpetual Flame burns, so that he can become the Mountain King. Unfortunately, the gray bats have other ideas—they will snatch that Crown from the Explorer's head before you know it! If you succeed in getting your Explorer to the mountaintop, you will receive bonus points and continue playing at the next highest level.

MOUNTAIN KING is one of those rare games that is totally captivating. It's difficult to imagine this one being anything but a runaway best-seller. The graphics are gorgeous, from sparkling diamonds to the wash of the flashlight's beam. At a time when both fantasy/adventure games and climbing games are enjoying great popularity, this one offers elements of both in a contest that still manages to be totally original. A superb game! (Cartridge)

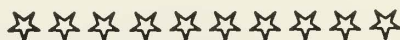
Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

**BOULDERS AND BOMBS**

(★★★★/★★★★)

is a graphically great looking game where you must help your Spelunkers escape from beneath a hostile alien planet. First, you control a rotating auger as you must clear an unobstructed tunnel from left to right so your Spelunkers can escape. You use the joystick to control the direction of movement and the tunnel only needs to be large enough for the Spelunker to pass through. You push the fire button to determine which of the two, Spelunker or auger, is in active control. You must free three Spelunkers and you only have one alien night & day to move each one from left to right. After all of your Spelunkers have escaped, you'll move up to the next Quadrant (level) with a total of 15 Quadrants. If you make it through the 15th Quadrant, 84 more quadrants open up to you! Of course, there are several obstacles along the way. There are boulders which you must either bore through or around and, obviously, boring through a boulder is a slow process. Meanwhile, in the skies above there are alien bird creatures and alien probe birds which randomly insert fungus into the subsurface, along with an occasional pair of deadly magna-titanium rods. Your auger must drill out the fungus and rods for your Spelunker to pass but don't let the fungus or rods fall on the Spelunker or it's instant death. Your Spelunker can pick up bonus bombs along the way which can be used later to blow-up a boulder, fungus, or whatever in your path. To detonate a bomb, you quickly turn your joystick in a complete circle and the bomb appears and BOOM! There are nuances to the game which are not brought out in the instruction manual, so you will continue to learn more about the game as you go. This is certainly not a game for those who like fast "shoot 'em ups, but this is a fascinating strategy/tunneling game that should keep you involved for hours. (cartridge)

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)



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!

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI 4 / 8 / 1200

### REPTON



### Sirius™

(★★★★/★★½) is an arcade-type, horizontally scrolling game for one player. You control the Star Fighter, Armageddon, as you attempt to save the space colony of Repton from the attack of the Quarriors. The Armageddon is armed with lasers, deadly nuke bombs, and shield power. As you fly over the cities of Repton, the locations of all alien attackers can be seen on the radar screen at the bottom of your picture. The attackers can be chased either to the right or the left, and they come in many forms. The enemy is guarded by Nova Cruisers, which split into two Singleships when hit. Mine Layers scatter deadly debris in your path. Spye Surveillance Satellites do not attack, but they are protected by great numbers of SAM-type missiles. The Dynes shoot deadly energy beams, and the Draynes are attempting to steal from Repton's power grid. The Draynes can be foiled by flying through their energy beams and then through the power tube to recover the power they have stolen. (Your ship is equipped with an energy converter to recapture the stolen power.) The Quarriors themselves are busy little workers, constantly adding blocks to build their surface base. If the Quarriors manage to complete their base, or if all the energy is drained from the Repton power grid, the game is over.

REPTON has beautifully detailed graphics, and lovers of shoot-em-up space games will love the shattering explosion effects. Game play requires strategy and speed, not allowing the player to rest for a moment lest the space colony be lost to the Quarriors. While there is nothing particularly original in the concept and execution of this game, it is a very good space shoot-out in the tradition of Defender, Protector, and others of the type. Fans of this type of game should take a look at REPTON. (48K disk; also available for Apple.) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

**FINAL ORBIT** (★★½/★★) puts you in a Destroyer Satellite orbiting the Earth, from which you must defend against the attack of the dreaded Maladroids. You have a view into black space with a few twinkling stars, and you get advance warning of approaching Maladroid fighters and satellites on your Radar Display at the top of the screen. A cross-hair indicates your gunsight to aid in aiming your lasers. Once an approaching enemy is in range, it will appear on your screen, and two tracking arms at the base of the screen will automatically position your gunsight to follow the enemy's vertical movement. All you have to do is worry about side-to-side movement. Of course, the enemy will fire at your Destroyer, too, and each hit causes energy losses from your protective shields. Energy can also be drained from the Earth anytime an enemy attacker penetrates your defenses and hits the planet. Whenever energy levels in either your Destroyer or the Earth reach critical levels, you must follow a retreating Maladroid fighter (identifiable by a white bar across its back) to its base. Your energy supplies will be restored by destroying the Maladroid Base.

FINAL ORBIT's graphics are said to be "simulated 3-D," but the effect is not particularly noticeable. About the only feeling of depth we got from the game was the fact that the enemy attackers grow larger or smaller as they are approaching or moving away from your Destroyer. We found nothing outstanding about the graphics. In fact, they are comparable to some of the better games for the Atari 2600, which is something less than we would expect of a game for the Atari computers. Game play isn't exactly inspiring, either. The basic concept of shooting at enemy attackers in the depths of outer space has been done better in a number of games, including Star Raiders by Atari (versions for their computers and the 2600) and Starmaster by Activision and Star Voyager by Imagic, both for the Atari 2600. (Cartridge; also available for Commodore VIC-20) Not Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

In addition to the release of MINER 2049ER for ColecoVision in July, Microfun also plans fall releases of three other ColecoVision-compatible titles. The first, SCRAPER CAPER, is the second game featuring the Bounty Bob character; GLOBE GRABBER is a multi-level pinball game; and TIME RUNNER is a "shoot 'em up" space station assembly game.

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..VIC 20

### PIPES



is an interesting educational game for one player in which you must connect a pipeline from a reservoir to every house on the screen. You are the plumber and

can choose the number of houses to be connected (one to five houses). You start with a bankroll of \$2500 to \$8100, depending on the number of houses you have chosen to connect to the reservoir, and each piece of pipe purchased from the pipe factory costs a specific amount of money. The pipe factory is stocked with limited quantities of straight pipe, elbows, tees, cross-pieces and valves. There is a map of the community showing the locations of all houses and the reservoir, plus any pipes you have already installed. Using the map as a guide, the object is to connect every house to the water supply, using as little pipe and money as possible to finish the job. The pieces of pipe are selected and installed one at a time. Of course, you must be sure there will be no leaks when the water is turned on!

This game has simple graphics that are clean and colorful. It is a fairly slow-moving game, but this gives a child the time needed to think about which piece of pipe to buy and where to install it. The game teaches spatial relationships and stresses the ability to pre-visualize, plan, and think ahead. The simplest version of the game (only one house to connect) is suitable for very young children, while the versions with more houses should tax the conceptual thinking abilities of older children. (Cartridge; no additional memory required.) Recommended.

**FIRST STAR SOFTWARE**, the company who brought you ASTRO CHASE last month, has some new titles and licensing plans for the home computer and game market.

New software planned includes BRISTLES which is planned for the Atari 4 / 8 / 1200, Apple, VIC 20, and Atari 5200. Written by Astro Chase's Fernando Herrera, it stars Peter the Painter who must paint a house all one color while steering clear of Bucket Chucker. PANIC BUTT-TON (VIC 20, TRS 80) features a conveyor belt where the baker must complete cakes as quickly as possible. FLIP FLOP (Atari 4 / 8 / 1200 and Atari 5200) features two characters—a kangaroo and monkey. No details on the game are ready yet. All the above games should start making their way to your dealer's shelves later this summer.

For future development, First Star has signed a joint venture with Marvel Entertainment based on Marvel's Super Heroes.

## CLASSICS CORNER..ATARI 4 / 8 / 1200

### DAVID'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC (★★★★/★★½)



is Broderbund's version of pinball and it's a winner! This version uses the paddle controllers with the two buttons controlling the left and right flippers. The Paddle One dial controls the launching spring tension and the Paddle One button fires the ball. While you're playing the game, you can "joustle" the machine for extra bounce with the space bar. Overuse of that feature will create a TILT and bonus points for the ball in play will be lost. The BREAK key will freeze play if you're interrupted. You have the traditional flippers at the bottom of the screen, with two flippers in the top level at an angle. In addition to the features you are used to in a pinball machine, there is a "Magicsave" feature which, when activated, may save a ball that is about to be lost down one of the side columns. You can score big bonus points by dropping your ball down the Ball Collector, an S-shaped curve in the top level. If you are good enough to drop three balls in the ball collector, they will be released for multiple ball play. You can save high scores to disk and up to four players can compete in one game. This version has good action and requires constant involvement from the player. We have played several pinball games where the ball will propel around the screen on its own for quite some time. In DAVID'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC, the ball does not stay in play on its own for much time at all, so your skill at maneuvering the flippers and space bar will be your key to high scores. (48K disk) Recommended (MSR \$34.95)



Sirius™

One of the major software companies, Sirius plans to show 34, count 'em, 34 new games and formats at the Show for the Apple, Atari, IBM, VIC 20, Commodore 64, and Panasonic 200 home computers. First, for the Atari 4/8/1200 (all in cartridge form) is FINAL ORBIT (see review this issue). Secondly, ALPHA SHIELD which is an outer space fast-action game in which you struggle to gain entrance to a force-field and destroy enemy Alpherions. The enemy shield has weak points; but if you fire and them and miss, the shield absorbs the energy of your weapons. CAPTURE THE FLAG is a fast action game combining split screen technique with color graphics. You can compete against the computer or another person using joystick, paddles, or the keyboard. Each player occupies a different sector of a play field filled with objects, and has his own 3-D view of the field, as you run through it in a high-speed tag game whose object is to capture the opponent's flag. SPIDER CITY is a mission through dangerous tunnels, featuring a split screen with an underground tunnel city at the bottom and a play field at the top. Your object is to penetrate the tunnels, hatch open the enemy pods and blow up the newly hatched aliens before they grow into monsters and attack you. SQUISH 'EM, with 15 levels of play, has you climbing a 48-story building under construction to retrieve a suitcase of money. A combination of monsters and falling objects make your climb to the top perilous.

Four disk games for the Atari 4/8/1200 will be shown including REPTON (see review in this issue), CINEMAN which is a multiple screen, arcade type game. It features a cartoon bird whose specialty is stunts for television. He'll try anything—and the more difficult the stunt, the more he gets paid, three progressively difficult levels, each with its own set of challenges. TYPE ATTACK teaches typing skills in a fast-action arcade style game. WAVY NAVY is a battle on the high seas against such enemies as kamikaze fighters, helicopters and Exocet missiles. You must cope with huge rolling waves that continually change your ship's position.

For you VIC 20 owners, Sirius will show three games which have been available for some time—FAST EDDIE, TURMOIL, and SNAKE BYTE. In addition, there will be VIC 20 versions of FINAL ORBIT, REPTON, SPIDER CITY, SQUISH 'EM, and TYPE ATTACK (see descriptions above). In addition, PLASMANIA will be featured, an arcade-style game simulating a voyage through the veins of a critically ill patient. You are in a race against time to save the patient's life.

Commodore 64 owners have several games also. In addition to versions of FAST EDDIE, REPTON, SNAKE BYTE, SQUISH 'EM, and TURMOIL, three other games will be shown. OZZIE OZONE, SPACE CADET features music, sound effects, and 3-D color graphics in a space game as you bomb cities, shoot the enemy Dudes and refuel from helium balloons floating across the sky. SHADOW SCORCHER lets you pilot an air car over a continually changing landscape, where the shadow of your own ship sweeps among the shadows of flying saucers trying to shoot you down. You must navigate over obstacles, evade bombs, blast through walls, dodge under and around telephone poles and wires, and battle creatures of fire blowing deadly smoke rings. WAYOUT is a 3-D action game featuring 26 different mazes, each with its own set of quirks to the challenge of finding the way out of the maze. Drifting fireflies show you which way the Wind is blowing, giving you a clue as to the direction of the exit. You must always be on guard against the mischievous Cleptangle, which constantly tries to steal the compass and map-maker.



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

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ACCESSORIES

**KOALAPAD** is a touch tablet allowing a computer user of any age to draw directly on the video screen, bypassing the keyboard. The KoalaPad is small (6 by 8 inches, 1 inch deep) and light (1 pound), making it easy for hand-holding or placing on a table or one's lap. It is sold with the MICRO ILLUSTRATOR software package, and did we ever have a fun trying it out! The idea is to create a friendlier interface with the



computer than is possible through the keyboard alone. We found the KoalaPad and its software package so easy to use that we hardly had to refer to the instruction booklets. It's a matter of plugging the KoalaPad into the computer, booting the disk, and choosing your options from the pictorial menu on your screen. Commands include freehand drawing, point, line, attached lines, rays, fill in (color enclosed areas), frame, box, circle, disc, erase, storage (save and retrieve pictures), normal vs. magnified picture, and HELP! You have an entire brush set to work with, allowing you to draw with fine lines, fat lines, double and triple lines and more, plus a whole palette of colors. Using finger or stylus (included), simply draw on the KoalaPad, and watch your artwork materialize on the screen.

Best you think the KoalaPad is good only for electronic doodling, the manufacturer has exciting plans for it. Other packages to be made available soon include education and entertainment software such as SPIDER EATER, a music education game; THE ILLUSTRATOR, an advanced graphics program; DANCING BEAR, a cartoon animation package; and SPELLICOPTER, a spelling education game. With its capability to be used as a custom keyboard with overlays for any combination of characters or graphics, future business applications will also be available. In addition, the KoalaPad can be used as a video game controller with two firing buttons. CHOPLIFTER is one game that works especially well with this controller. For advanced programmers, instructions are provided for reading data from the touch tablet and incorporating the data into your own software programs.

The KoalaPad with software program is currently available for the Apple computers (MSR under \$125.00), and it will soon be available for Atari, Commodore 64 and IBM computers. It's a good alternative to mice or light pens at a competitive price. The kids will fall in love with it, but the KoalaPad is great for adults, too.

### SUBSCRIBE TO THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE FOR ONLY \$19.00

(12 issues—mailed to you each month via First Class)

Foreign Airmail—\$32.00

Foreign Seamail—\$24.00

check or money order  Visa  MasterCard  American Express

\_\_\_\_\_

Card No. (all digits, please)

\_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date (Visa/Mastercard)

Valid from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(American Express)

Signature (required if using credit card)

Please Print

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## AVAILABILITY UPDATE

(Based on projected release dates given to us by the manufacturers. May change without notice)

### ATARI 2600

#### MAY

x-Dolphin (ACTV)  
x-Enduro (ACTV)  
x-Flash Gordon (FOX)  
x-Keystone Kapers (ACTV)  
x-Miner 2049er (TGV)  
x-Miner 2049er (ACTV)

#### JUNE

Bank Heist (FOX)  
Donkey Kong Jr. (COL)  
Joyboard (AM)  
Off Your Rocker (AM)  
Realsports Soccer (AT)  
Realsports Tennis (AT)  
Robotank (ACTV)  
Solar Fox (CBS)  
Springer (TGV)  
Star Strike (MNTWK)  
Trackball (AT)  
Tunnel Runner (CBS)  
Turbo (COL)

#### JULY

Burgertime (MNTWK)  
Deathstar Battle (PB)  
Galaxian (AT)  
James Bond 007 (PB)  
Porkey's (FOX)  
Proline Joystick (AT)  
O\*Bert (PB)  
Rush Hour (CVD)  
Stronghold (CVD)  
Super Cobra (PB)  
Tutankham (PB)

#### AUGUST

Incredible Hulk (PB)  
Jungle Hunt (AT)  
Kangaroo (AT)  
Popeye (PB)

### SEPTEMBER

Gravitar (AT)  
Krull (AT)  
Lord of the Rings (PB)  
Mad-Netter (CM)  
Moon Patrol (AT)  
Pogoman (CM)  
Pole Position (AT)

### OCTOBER

Alpha Beam (AT)  
Battlezone (AT)  
Big Bird's Egg Catch (AT)  
Cookie Monster Munch (AT)  
Dig Dug (AT)  
Donald Duck Speedboat (AT)  
Oumbo's Flying Circus (AT)  
Joust (AT)  
Sorcerer's Apprentice (AT)

### ATARI 5200

#### MAY

#### Trackball

#### JUNE

Kangaroo  
Pole Position

#### JULY

2600 Adaptor  
Miner 2049er (BIG5)

#### AUGUST

Kangaroo  
Pole Position  
Space Dungeon

#### SEPTEMBER

Frogger (PB)  
Jungle Hunt  
O\*Bert (PB)  
Realsports Baseball  
Vanguard

### OCTOBER

Dig Dug  
Joust  
Pengo

### INTELLIVISION

#### MAY

x-Happy Trails (ACTV)  
x-Safecracker (IMGC)  
White Water (IMGC)

#### JUNE

Burgertime (MAT)  
Donkey Kong Jr. (COL)  
Empire Strikes Back (PB)  
Gorf (CBS)  
x-Lady Bug (COL)  
M\*A\*S\*H (FOX)  
Turbo (COL)  
Wizard of Wor (CBS)

#### JULY

Buzz Bombers (MAT)  
Jedi Arena (PB)  
Mission X (MAT)  
Tutankham (PB)  
Zaxxon (COL)

#### AUGUST

James Bond 007 (PB)  
Popeye (PB)  
O\*Bert (PB)  
Super Cobra (PB)

### VECTREX

#### JUNE

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

### ODYSSEY

#### MAY

Atlantis (IMGC)

### COLECOVISION

#### JUNE

Blackjack  
x-Mr. Oo  
Roller Controller (w/Slither)  
Super Action Controller (w/Baseball)  
Super Action Football  
Super Action Rocky Battles Champ

#### JULY

Destruction Derby  
Miner 2049er (MIC)

#### AUGUST

Super Donkey Kong Jr\*  
Super Gorf\*  
Super Turbo\*  
Super Zaxxon\*

#### SEPTEMBER

Frogger (PB)  
Globe Grabber (MIC)  
M\*A\*S\*H (FOX)  
O\*Bert (PB)  
Scraper Capar (MIC)  
Time Pilot (COL)  
Time Runner (MIC)

\* indicates wafer for use in Super Module 3 ONLY

### ATARI 4/8/1200

#### MAY

x-Alpha Shield (SIR)-Cart  
Blue Max (SYN)  
Communist Mutants (STP)  
Dig Dug (AT)  
Dimension X (SYN)  
Dragonstomper (STP)  
Escape from Mindmaster (STP)  
x-E.T. Phone Home (AT)  
Nexar (SIR)-Cart  
Spider City (SIR)-Cart

### JUNE

x-Boulders & Bombs(CBS)  
Bumper Bash (SIR)-Cart  
Chess (PB)  
Critical Mass (SIR)-Disk  
Flip-Out (SIR)-Disk  
Frogger (PB)  
x-Mountain King (CBS)  
Shadow World (SYN)  
Spacemaster X-7 (FOX)  
Type Attack (SIR)-Disk  
Wavy Navy (SIR)-Disk

### JULY

Cosmic Creep (TEL)  
Demolition Herby (TEL)  
Fast Food (TEL)  
Paris in Danger (MIC)-Disk  
O\*Bert (PB)  
Scuba Oooba Ooo (GAM)  
Star League Baseball (GAM)

### AUGUST

Psi Warrior (EPYX)

### VIC-20

#### MAY

Atlantis (IMGC)  
Demon Attack (IMGC)  
Spider City (SIR)  
Squish 'Em (SIR)  
Turmoil (SIR)

### JUNE

Final Orbit (SIR)  
Fly Wars (SIR)  
Frogger (PB)  
K-Razy Antiks (CBS)  
K-Star Patrol (CBS)  
Pipes (CS)  
Rat Hotel (CS)  
Salmon Run (SYN)  
Spacemaster X-7 (FOX)  
Squeeze (SYN)  
Vein Game (SIR)

### JULY

A.E. (BRO)  
Fast Food (TEL)  
Fun With Music (EPYX)  
O\*Bert  
Ram It (TEL)  
Seafox (BRO)

### AUGUST

Foxy 1 (TEL)

### TI 99/4A

#### JUNE

Frogger (PB)

#### AUGUST

O\*Bert (PB)

Company Name Codes

ACTV - Activision  
AM - Amiga  
AT - Atari  
BRO - Broderbund  
CBS - CBS Electronics  
COL - Coleco  
CS - Creative Software  
CVD - CommaVid  
CM - Computer Magic  
EPYX - Epyx  
FIR - First Star  
FOX - Fox Games  
GAM - Gamestar  
GGC - Great Game Company  
IMGC - Imagic  
MAT - Mattel  
MIC - Microcomputer games  
MIF - Microfun  
MNTK - M Network  
ODE - Odesta  
ODY - Odyssey  
PB - Parker Bros  
PDI - Program Design Inc  
SIR - Sirius  
SPCV - Spectravision  
STP - Starpath  
SYN - Synapse  
TEL - Telesys

**COLECO** In speaking with Coleco prior to the Show, they are extremely excited about their planned unveilings. In fact, we were told that their computer introduction will have more impact to the home computer field than last year's introduction of ColecoVision to the video game field! Promised as a "State of the Art" system, the computer will be packaged with all the necessary hardware and software peripherals to be totally functional in the three primary areas of home computing: entertainment, information management, and education. We understand this is a system which is TOTALLY SEPARATE from the ColecoVision and, in addition to this computer package, they will also unveil a computer keyboard for the ColecoVision. We expect this computer system to introduce the use of the microdrive system. Before we go further, we'll explain what the microdrive system is (also known as stringy-floppy—you'll be hearing alot about these stringy-floppy systems as a very good alternative to the disk and cassette systems of loading data for your computer.) It uses a microwafer (the format your Super Game—for use with Super module 3—will come on) which is a thin endless-loop tape cartridge approximately the size of a normal business card, similar to an 8-track tape in that it moves in only one direction with the beginning and end of the tape spliced together. These wafers are used in a Microdrive which operates many times faster than an audio cassette drive (and much less prone to error), and is many times less expensive than a disk drive. The Microdrive is capable of recording 128K of information. This microdrive system will be built into the Super Module 3 which will be the system to "read" the wafer games. Another plus factor of this system is that the blank microwafers cost in the vicinity of \$3.00 each.

The Super Expansion Module 3 will, of course, be at the Show as we are expecting initial shipment in August (they

have indicated there will be NO modules shipped before that time). And, just to confuse you a bit more, the wafers to be packaged with it have changed AGAIN! As we go to press, the wafers to be included will be SUPER DONKEY KONG and SUPER BUCK ROGERS. It appears that the first additional wafers to be made available will be SUPER ZAXXON, SUPER DONKEY KONG JR, SUPER TURBO, and SUPER GORF, all scheduled to ship around the time of the Super Module. By the way, we have been told that the price point on the wafers will be virtually identical to what you are now paying for ColecoVision cartridges. And, in answer to the question of a driving module for SUPER TURBO—YES, you will use a driving module, but SUPER TURBO will not come with it (it will also be priced in the \$35 range). You will have to own the Driving Module which is already on the market.

While we're on the subject of the Super Game Module, we want to "clear the air" on EXACTLY how much RAM the Module has. We had been told by Coleco that the Module has 128K which is true; however, the Module itself will only have 16K (simply a Memory Expander, similar to what you can purchase for your VIC 20, etc.). The real RAM capability is in the wafers themselves (see explanation above of the Microdrive system) which is how Coleco will be able to bring the total "Arcade Experience" home, including intermissions, with the wafer system.

A short update on the cartridges for the original ColecoVision includes the news that ROCKY will require the Super Action Controller and VICTORY will require the use of the Roller Controller. TAC-SCAN, which had been reported as an upcoming Coleco cartridge in other game publications, will NOT be available from Coleco for ColecoVision.

© 1983 Video Game Update \$24 annually in U.S. funds for 12 issues, published monthly, distributed by first class mail. Foreign \$32 Airmail; \$24 Seamail. Send payment to: Video Game Update, 12115 Magnolia Blvd., #126, North Hollywood, CA 91607. (213) 761-1516. "The Video Game Update" accepts no advertising from any game manufacturer. The philosophy of this newsletter is to provide the reader with honest evaluations of game products on the market. It is our intention to act as an independent watchdog, providing critical commentary and analysis. The opinions are solely those of Video Game Update and are not influenced by the manufacturers. To describe a game, we may use existing literature from the manufacturer, but that will have no bearing on the rating system.

Any reproduction, duplication, or re-publication of this copyrighted work without written consent of Video Game Update is strictly prohibited. Any violation of applicable copyright laws will be vigorously prosecuted and subject to civil and criminal penalties. This work may not be changed or altered in any manner.