

Computer Entertainer

the newsletter

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Twenty is the result of telephone
with a selected group of retailers
and contributors throughout the country

COMING...

Complete Wrap-Up from CES
Interview virtually every
company during the Show!
NEWS including...
for pak
Mac
Atari ST
Print
e of Apshai Trilogy
r Amiga

New, Advanced Videogame System Revealed

Perhaps you will recall a very small item in our February, 1986 issue which mentioned an unidentified new videogame system which we knew to be in top-secret development at the time. Many of you commented on that five-line story, and a few of you tried your very best to coax the information out of us. (We definitely know how to keep a secret, as many of you have learned.) Finally, the developer of that system can now be revealed. SEGA of America, Inc., a newly-formed subsidiary of Tokyo-based SEGA Enterprises, Ltd., will introduce an "advanced, new, interactive videogame system" at the Summer CES in Chicago this month.

The SEGA Card

Although we haven't seen this new system yet, we did receive a sample of the "SEGA Card," a revolutionary, 256K software medium no larger than a double-thick credit card. Nothing about the appearance of this small, solid slab of plastic betrays its function except a double row of gold contacts across one end. The SEGA Card would seem to be extremely durable, and it certainly is portable! What remains to be seen, of course, is the character and content of the games encoded in this new software medium.

The SEGA Master System

SEGA plans to distribute its new Master System nationwide this fall, just in time for the important Christmas gift-buying season. Said to offer superior graphics, fast-action gameplay, and a superb combination of music and sound effects for enhanced excitement and realism, the \$150 package will include a Power Base console, a light-gun for precision target shooting, two controller pads, and one Mega Cartridge containing two different games. We are every bit as curious about this new system as you are, so you can be sure that we will spend plenty of time at the SEGA of America CES exhibit. We will report on our reactions in next month's issue. Certainly the appearance of another advanced system underscores the re-vitalization of the videogame industry, which is nothing but good news for game players.

It's CES Time Again

Twice a year, in January and June, the letters "CES" are sprinkled liberally through the stories in this newsletter. The letters stand for "Consumer Electronics Show," the huge, semi-annual trade show that features the electronic goodies we enjoy so much--all kinds of video and audio gear, telephones, computer hardware and software, and much more. Because this show is geared to products for the consumer or home user, rather than the business user, it tends to draw more of the developers of entertainment software than some of the trade shows, such as Comdex, which focus on computers and business software. As a result, it is an important show to us and to you, giving us a chance to see samples of what is planned for your amusement and amazement for the balance of the year. Because we are your eyes and ears at the many CES exhibits, you will continue to see those three letters in our news items.

Apple Rumors

The rumor mills within the computer industry are churning with information about the new flagship computer of the Apple II line, reportedly due to be available this September. We've checked with a variety of sources and pieced together enough to get a pretty good idea of what to expect. (Understand that those who have legitimate access to the new machine, such as developers working on software for it, have signed nondisclosure agreements with Apple. They are bound by these agreements, yet many are excited about the machine and have a difficult time not talking about it, particularly to anyone who already knows something about it.)

...continued on Page 11

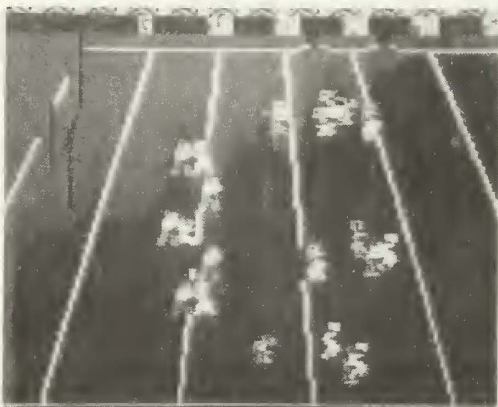
Critically Speaking...Commodore 64/128 Compatible

GBA CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL TWO-ON-TWO (◆◆◆◆/◆◆◆◆) has been developed by Gamestar for Activision and it's really a winner! It's a computer basketball simulation which tops Electronic Arts' *Julius Irving/Larry Byrd One on One* with far more options including the fact that teamwork is brought into play. You can work on your various shots first by entering a practice session (not a bad idea) where you can get a feel for hook shots, jump shots, dunks, inside and outside shooting, and more. Once you're ready to either face the computer or a friend, you'll choose from one of four divisions, as well as drafting a teammate from ten available players within each division. You will assign a playing style including specific skills and characteristics to your primary player. In either offensive or defensive play, you'll be able to direct your computer teammate to the zone you designate. When playing offense, you can run and dribble, choosing to either shoot or pass the ball to your teammate for him to either manipulate or go for a basket. On defense, both your players will work to either block a shot or attempt a steal.

Definitely The Best

This game brings computer basketball up another notch as there's a great deal more excitement and skill needed when there are four players on the court than the two we've been able to play with in *One on One*. We also liked the fact that you have much more options available in the skill of your players as you're working from a much more diverse database of players. Gamestar has indicated that they will be converting this title for other, unnamed, computer systems later in the year. With the popularity that we predict this game will garner, they will have no choice! (one player; two-player simultaneous; joystick required; boots automatically on a C128)

Recommended (MSR \$34.95)



FOOTBALL (◆◆◆1/2/◆◆◆◆) has just surfaced in another version, this time from the simulation wizards, SubLogic (designers of *Flight Simulator*). When it arrived, we thought, "oh no, not another football game!" But, they've done an incredible job with this one as it is truly the best of both the football simulators and football games. You are in control of virtually every aspect of this game, starting from the point at which you can change player data. Here you can change ratings on catching ability, power, speed, and more. Once you're satisfied with your changes, you move on to the Main Scoreboard where everything you need to know about the game is there.

The Kick-Off

Now that you've got your team on the field, you'll choose (offense) to run or pass. If you choose to run, you'll have pick from seven different types of run plays. Then there's formations to pick from (a complete description of each found in the documentation), and selecting the primary running back. If you've chosen to pass, you'll find yourself making several choices there, also. You'll find no shortage of choices to be made while playing defense; either, include which of your linebackers you want to blitz, how to set pass defense, and more. Once you've set-up the play you wish, it's on to the next screen where both teams are lined at the line of scrimmage. Once the offensive team controller presses his/her firebutton, the play begins. If you don't touch your joystick after the play has started, the play will be carried out with the ball carrier gaining or losing a predetermined number of yards. So, sports fans, you don't just kick back and watch your choices carried out by the ball players. You must engage all your gaming skills as you direct, via your joystick, the play as it unfolds. Remember, you've only directed what you want in the earlier screens. Just like in the real game, once the team is on the playing field, they must attempt to execute what has been called in the huddle!

Lots of Control

SubLogic has packed a lot of game into this program, with virtually endless combinations of plays available to the gamer. The prompts on the screen make it easy to work through the various screens without constantly referring to the documentation (you'll need some knowledge of the game of football, however, to have a satisfying game). The graphics are quite good in the gaming portion, although nothing more special than the other football games on the market on the C64. The real hook here is the vast choice of game plays available, with tremendous control over the actual game. SubLogic has itself another winner! (one player; two-player simultaneous; joystick required)
Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

Win a Cruise on the Mississippi

In connection with the release of *MURDER ON THE MISSISSIPPI* for Commodore 64/128 and Apple II, Activision is sponsoring drawings for cruises on the "Mississippi Queen" for both consumers and retailers. Look for specially marked packages of the game to get your entry blank.

THE RATING SYSTEM:

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

◆ = ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS (1st set of stars=quality of graphics; 2nd set=quality of game play and entertainment value)

◇ = APPLICATION PROGRAMS (1st set of diamonds=quality of graphics; 2nd set=quality of performance and suitability of use in home)

NA - Not Applicable (i.e. all-text programs not rate for graphics)

New Programs from Epyx

In order to retain a few surprises, Epyx was willing to reveal only a few of its plans for CES. And, like other companies, some of its decisions about what to show are made at the last possible moment, based on what the programmers have managed to whip into shape in the last few days before the show. They will be showing their brand-new martial arts program, **WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP**, in versions for both C64/128 and Atari XL/XE. (The C64 version is reviewed in this issue.)

More Entertainment Titles

In addition, Epyx will be showing four new entertainment titles for various systems. (See Availability Update for specific release dates for the different versions.) **MOVIE MONSTER GAME** is set for C64/128, Apple II, and IBM. **WORLD GAME**, a kind of continuation of the Epyx Olympics-style programs, will feature a series of sports which are specific to certain international settings, such as cliff-diving in Mexico. It will be programmed for C64/128, Apple, IBM, and Atari ST. **SUPER CYCLE**, a motorcycle racing game, will be available on C64/128 and Atari ST. **WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING** for C64/128, Apple, and Atari ST portrays the violent and often humorous moves of professional wrestling. Besides these entertainment offerings from Epyx, there were some hints that the company may be preparing to move into a new category of products. If any announcements are made at CES, we will report on them in our next issue.

Useful Programs from Batteries Included

Batteries Included, the company that provides so many useful productivity programs for a number of computers, plans a varied offering at CES with heavy emphasis on offerings for the Atari ST. **THE LINK**, a program that combines an electronic diary with a database for Atari ST and Macintosh, shows year, month, week, and day on the screen at the same time. If you change an entry on a particular day, for example, it is automatically changed on the year, month, and week pages. **BTS THE SPREADSHEET** for Atari ST, Macintosh, and Amiga is a 1000-column by 1000-row spreadsheet. The versions for Mac and ST also provide a smaller, "desk accessory spreadsheet" which can be used as an application within another program, such as a word processor. (The Amiga version, because of the computer's multi-tasking ability, can do the same thing without the need for a separate desk accessory spreadsheet.) **TIME AND BILLING** (IBM, ST) is a professional office administration program that assists with daily records, billing, and accounts receivable.

New Versions of Familiar Programs

Some familiar Batteries Included programs will be shown in new versions. The word processor, **PAPER CLIP**, will be released in an Apple version, and **PAPER CLIP WITH SPELLPACK** will be available for the Atari 130XE. **THE CONSULTANT** (database) and **HOEPAK** will be ready later this year for Atari ST. Currently available for IBM, **ISGUR PORTFOLIO SYSTEM** (stock portfolio management) and **I*S TALK** (telecommunications with spelling checker) are coming in June for the ST. The portfolio program will also be converted for Mac and Amiga. An advanced version of the popular word processing program, **PAPER CLIP ELITE** with integrated spelling checker, idea processing, and graph functions, is set for IBM, ST, and Amiga. More advanced programs: **DEGAS ELITE** (lots of new features added to the successful drawing program) for ST, Amiga, and IBM and **B-GRAPH ELITE** (graphing and charting) for ST.

THUNDER for Writers

The one program that Batteries Included seems most excited about is **THUNDER** for Atari ST. This \$39.95 program is subtitled "The Writer's Assistant," and it can be called up from within GEM-based programs for the ST. It has been tested successfully with a number of word processors from other companies and seems to work with most true GEM applications, according to Batteries Included. **THUNDER** is a 50,000-word spelling checker that operates in three different error-correcting modes: as a desk accessory, a standard "as-you-type" checker, or an artificial intelligence program that automatically checks for misspelled words you have a problem with. (For example, if you know you tend to type the incorrect "alright" instead of "all right," you can inform the program of this fact. It will automatically correct your mistakes every time you make it.) The program is also an abbreviation explainer with built-in conversions of states, provinces, days of the

week, and months. (You type "Mon," and the program expands it to "Monday.") Personal abbreviations can also be added, so that "SYJJ" is expanded to "Sincerely yours, Joe Jones," for example. The program also includes statistical functions, such as counting the number of words, unique words, sentences, and paragraphs. It also has the ability to scan written material for the number of words and numbers of syllables in the words to determine the approximate reading grade level of the material. **THUNDER** would seem to be a very helpful program for anyone who does a lot of writing.

Macintosh Programs for Youngsters

Springboard Software has converted two of its most popular early learning games for Macintosh and Macintosh Plus. **EARLY GAMES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN** provides lively graphics and animated learning activities for ages 2-1/2 to 6. Eight learning games teach basic skills, such as adding and subtracting, recognizing shapes and letters, reciting the alphabet, typing on the computer keyboard, and spelling the child's own name. **EASY AS ABC** uses images such as jumping frogs and buzzing bees while helping 3 to 6-year olds develop their ability to identify letters, put them into alphabetical order, and match upper and lower case. Both programs feature printable screens and retail for \$49.95 each. They carry a money-back guarantee that the child's designated skills will be increased through use of the programs.

Broderbund to Debut New Titles at CES

Six or more new Broderbund titles will be on display at CES, but they want to keep a few secrets. They did tell us that **WHERE IN THE USA IS CARMEN SANDIEGO?** will be shown for Apple II. The animated mystery adventure will include a copy of Fodor's "Travel Guide to the U.S.A." in the package, and it is set for a late summer release. They promise a new graphics package, a game, and a few "complete surprises" at CES. We'll have more Broderbund news in our next issue.

New for Owners of IBM PRINT SHOP

Broderbund recently released **THE PRINT SHOP GRAPHICS LIBRARY DISK 2** for IBM computers with 175 additional, ready-to-use graphics. **THE PRINT SHOP** for IBM has also been updated. It now supports the Hercules Monochrome Graphics Card and includes an improved hard disk protection system compatible with standard methods for relocating and backing up program files.

Text Adventures for ST

Synapse, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Broderbund, has just released versions of **ESSEX** and **BRIMSTONE** for the Atari ST. These are text adventures with sophisticated parsers that are played in real time. **ESSEX** is a science fiction epic, a tourist's trip into outer space that turns into a rescue mission. **BRIMSTONE** casts the player as Sir Gawain, Knight of the Round Table, who ventures into the netherworld for a series of fantastic experiences and encounters. Both programs are also available for Apple II, Atari XL/XE (2 drives), Commodore 64/128,

More Sports from Access

Access will be showing Amiga and Atari ST versions of **LEADER BOARD** in their CES booth. (The game will be available at retail a few weeks after CES.) We were very impressed with the initial Commodore 64/128 simulation, and it should be even better on these two computers with advanced graphics capabilities. Access will also be showing a new sports game, **TENTH FRAME** (MSR \$39.95), a professional bowling simulator for C64/128. Features include true perspective of the game with 3-D animation, lifelike sound effects, multiple levels, of play, and league competition which allows up to eight different bowlers. Previously, bowling has been under-represented among computer sports simulations. Access is going to take care of that!

Spinnaker Acquires Hayden Software

In a move which will ensure the future of Hayden development, as well as availability of current and past programs such as **VideoWorks** and **Sargon**, Spinnaker has acquired Hayden as a subsidiary.

The Activision Family

With a series of acquisitions and mergers behind them, the Activision fold now includes Gamestar, Infocom, and Creative Software. The Activision family promises many introductions at CES, not all of which they were ready to talk about in advance of the show.

Amiga and Atari ST

Enhanced versions of two major Activision titles are nearly ready for release this summer: LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE DISCOVERY KIT (MSR \$49.95) for Amiga and Atari ST and GARRY KITCHEN'S GAMEMAKER COMPUTER DESIGN KIT (MSR \$59.95) for Amiga. We're told that the Little Computer People found in Amigas and STs will be able to move into somewhat more elaborate "houses-on-a-disk" than their fellows in Apple IIs and Commodore 64/128s. For example, the Amiga and ST houses have an organ instead of a piano. And preliminary research at Activision has shown that Amiga and ST Little People are extraordinarily talented. They know more musical compositions and can play more games than the Little People in Apples and C64/128s. We expect GAMEMAKER to be truly spectacular in the Amiga version. When we saw it while it was still in development in January, we noted that Amiga's multi-tasking ability meshed beautifully with the multiple functions of GAMEMAKER.

GameMaker Libraries

Existing versions of GAMEMAKER for C64/128 and Apple II, along with the new version for Amiga, will be even more enjoyable when the new GAMEMAKER SPORTS LIBRARY and GAMEMAKER SCIENCE FICTION LIBRARY become available later this year. Set for release in C64/128 and Apple formats this summer (MSR approx. \$35-\$45), these libraries will provide entire collections of ingredients and tools that are specific to sports and science fiction/fantasy games. Exact prices and release dates for the Amiga versions of these libraries have not yet been set, but we are told that they will be available this year.

Personal Choice Software

Activision will debut their first home productivity titles at CES. The four initial offerings are updated and improved versions of titles that were gained when Activision acquired the Creative Software line. To be released under the label "Personal Choice Software," these packages are designed to be easy to use and offer power at a reasonable price. I AM THE C-128 (MSR \$34.95) is a 9-chapter, interactive tutorial that teaches the new computer user about the Commodore 128 itself, along with an introduction to BASIC programming. This is an updated version of the very popular "I Am the C-64" from Creative Software.

Writing, Filing, Planning

The rest of the Personal Choice Software packages making their bow at CES are WRITER'S CHOICE, FILER'S CHOICE, and PLANNER'S CHOICE. The three programs will be available separately for Apple II, IBM PC/PCjr/Tandy 1000 (MSR \$49.95 each), and C64/128 (MSR \$39.95 each). WRITER'S CHOICE is a word processor with 50,000-word spelling checker, context-sensitive help screens, and the ability to preview final layout of your text. FILER'S CHOICE allows you to perform filing and record-keeping tasks with your choice of formats and includes a report writer that can combine files. PLANNER'S CHOICE is a spreadsheet program with many choices of formats and layouts. In cases where different configurations of the same computer exist, these programs are capable of recognizing the capacity of the machine on which they are used. (an example would be the difference between a 64K and which they stand 128K Apple IIs.) All three programs can be purchased together as the PERSONAL CHOICE COLLECTION (MSR IBM PC, and Macintosh. Synapse and Broderbund plan to show their newest electronic novel, BREAKERS, for the first time at CES. The first versions will be available this summer. (MSR \$119.95, except C64/128 at \$99.95).

Back-Ups and Support

With the introduction of the Personal Choice line, Activision is instituting a policy of providing back-up disks to registered owners for a small fee. They also plan to provide

customer support on a personal level. To that end, a hot-line phone number will be staffed by individuals prepared to offer technical and general support for the Personal Choice titles.

SubLOGIC Helps Improve Spelling Skills

A series of programs entitled WHOLE BRAIN SPELLING has been developed by SubLOGIC for Apple (MSR \$34.95) and Commodore 64/128 (MSR \$29.95). The programs are designed to help children and adults develop internal visualization skills to improve spelling, actually teaching a method for learning how to spell. Color graphics are used to provide positive feedback and to emphasize visual aspects of the learning process. WHOLE BRAIN SPELLING is sold separately in six different word-level versions: General (ages 10-adult), A Child's Garden of Words (ages 5-9), Fairy Tale, Scientific, Medical, and Business.

Graphics System for IBM

Also new from SubLOGIC is the X-1 Graphics Board featuring custom Graphics Microprocessor (GMP) chips, high-speed color graphics and real-time animation. The GMP chips are said to enable the X-1 to draw polygons up to 10 times faster than the maximum drawing speed of the IBM Professional Graphics Adapter. Software is included to take advantage of the GMP's custom instruction set. Custom language interfaces to Microsoft BASIC, C, Fortran, and Assembler are included, along with demonstration programs with source code for each language. The X-1 Graphics Board with system software is available for \$2990.

More on THE BOOK OF ADVENTURE GAMES II

Last month we reprinted a letter from Arrays, Inc./The Beta Division about errors in *The Book of Adventure Games II*. I talked about the issue of piracy and illegal copies of software. The item drew an interesting response from Brian Moriarty, one of the Infocom authors, who has given us permission to share it with you. He informed us, "I can say with authority that 'Crimson Crown' was not the only game misrepresented in that volume. The section on my game 'Wishbringer' is obviously based on an early Beta release version.

"Schuette's 'Wishbringer' map includes two locations ('Troll Cave' and the southernmost 'Underground' room) that I deleted long before the commercial release. The game solution and scoring chart are also incorrect and misleading, as all of the puzzles associated with the Troll Cave were changed when the Cave disappeared.

"Infocom Beta disks are sent only to outside testers who sign a nondisclosure agreement. This contract forbids a tester from distributing or even talking about the game under consideration, and requires that the original disk be returned when evaluation is complete. I'm therefore forced to conclude that the 'Wishbringer' section of *The Book of Adventure Games II* is based on an illegally obtained copy of the software.

"P.S.: Steve Meretzky tells me that Schuette's coverage of 'A Mind Forever Voyaging' is also based on a pre-release version. And Dave Lebling just pointed out several locations in the 'Suspect' map that were removed before the final release."

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE...

Don't miss out on all the great back issues! We've been covering the computer and dedicated game field for five years. Most issues are still available (none left of Vol 1, #13). Send \$2.00 for each back issue you want. Buy six or more and they're just \$1.50 each. Make certain you have a complete set!

News from Spinnaker

UXB, one of the Spinnaker family of software labels, had planned to release versions of **KUNG FU: WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST** for the Amiga and Atari ST. Unfortunately for martial arts fans who own either of those machines, that program has been shelved "for the foreseeable future," according to a company spokesman. The game was in development on the Amiga, with plans to convert from the Amiga to a version for Atari ST, but programming problems due to "poor documentation" of the Amiga led to cancellation of the title.

Air Combat Emulator

UXB will be showing a new import from Great Britain at CES. The game for Commodore 64/128 is "A.C.E.," which is pronounced just like the high-point playing card and stands for "Air Combat Emulator." According to a company spokesman, the game features fast action, digitized speech, smooth animation, a variety of weapons systems, mid-air refueling, an overhead map, multiple airports in which to land your plane, and varied combat against aircraft, tanks, and ships. With the large number of flight simulation programs available, UXB plans to help you "choose the right one" by pricing theirs at a very tempting \$19.95.

Mysteries to Solve

A new Telarium graphics and text adventure will also be shown at CES. **THE SCOOP**, an action-adventure in which you become a newspaper reporter involved in a mystery, will be available this summer for Apple II and Commodore 128. (It will be available later for other systems.) This game is based on one of two books written by Agatha Christie during the period when she was involved with a group of authors known as the London Detection Group. The second Agatha Christie book from this period will be available as an interactive VCR mystery, **BEHIND THE SCREEN**, coming from Spinnaker this fall. An Ellery Queen story will be the basis of another VCR mystery to be released at the same time. Its current working title, which could change by the time it is released, is **THE OPERATING ROOM MYSTERY**. It's interesting to note that Spinnaker did some focus-group testing to learn what players want most from a VCR mystery. As a result of which Spinnaker learned from their research, these interactive VCR mysteries are 30 minutes long, require no fast-forwarding or winding, are entirely video-based (no board), can be replayed hundreds of times, and will sell for less than \$20. A large group of people (aged 10 to adult) simply watch the video for 30 minutes and then attempt to solve the mystery. The mystery to us is how this seemingly straightforward approach can yield a game that is replayable a number of times. The secret of that bit of magic is known only to the insiders at Spinnaker! (Sorry, Beta owners, but the Spinnaker interactive VCR mysteries will be available in VHS format only.)

Interactive Video for Education

Spinnaker is also applying interactive video technology to education with a two-volume set of **BEAT THE S.A.T.'S** (one tape each for the verbal and mathematics sections of the Scholastic Aptitude Tests). Each video comes with a 32-page workbook and a money-back guarantee to improve your S.A.T. scores by 100 points. The material for these interactive videos was developed by attorney and veteran test preparation teacher, Suzy Vlk. (That's not a typographical error--honest!)

Critically Speaking...Multi-Systems

FOOBLITZKY (♦♦♦♦♦1/2) is the unexpected: a game from *Infocom* with graphics! (The graphics are of the simple and cute variety.) Quite a departure from their usual interactive fiction, this is a multi-player game of deduction and strategy for ages 14 to adult. The setting is the city of Fooblitzky, a dog-eat-dog world where your goal is to figure out and then obtain the four objects needed to win the game. Fooblitzky is a pleasant little city laid out in quadrants, one visible at a time on your screen. Its inhabitants, of which you will become one, are all dogs. (No, that doesn't make it a dog of a game!) Each player begins by secretly selecting one of the 18 items (toothpaste, screwdriver, banana, basketball, pig, teddy bear, etc.) in the game, which is then placed in one of his or her lockers in the city. (If there are only two or three players, the computer will select items until a total of four is reached.) The computer then displays the cost of each of the four correct items, an important clue to be noted. Each player is issued money (foobles), exactly twice as much as needed to buy one each of the correct items.

Similar to a Boardgame

Gameplay is similar to that of a boardgame, except that the computer keeps track of things and avoids problems like losing small game markers and dice. The idea in **FOOBLITZKY** is to move among the quadrants of the city, visiting the stores to purchase items and learn what's out of stock (another possible clue to what the correct items are). There are six different kinds of stores, each carrying three different items. Each quadrant has the same six kinds of stores, but their stock may not be the same. Instead of visiting a store in person, though, you can use a turn to phone and find out what's in stock. The game has a variety of "activity squares" such as restaurants (earn foobles by washing dishes), **UGH** (Underground Gliding Highway for moving between quadrants), pawn shops (buy or sell items), lockers, hospitals (where you're sent when hit by a car at a crosswalk), check point (tells

easier to understand than it would have been with solid sails and boats. Altogether, the combination of recorded tutorial, program, and detailed instruction book provides a very good introduction to sailing. The variety of courses and motorboat option provide plenty of gaming challenge, and the two-player long-distance option is a welcome bonus. (Solo or competitive play; Keyboard; 64K disk. Optional: Hayes or Hayes-compatible modem or direct-connect cable.) Apple II and IBM PC/PCjr versions reviewed (both in same package). Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

New Utilities for Amiga

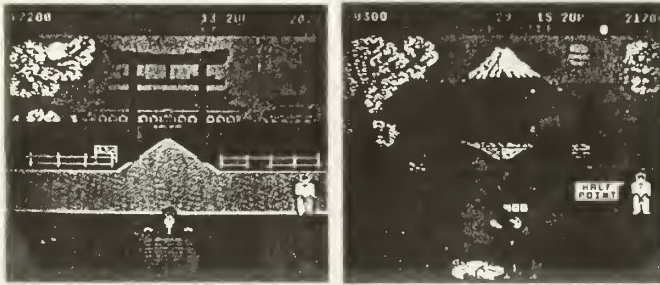
Two new programs from Digital Creations have joined the growing list of titles available for the Commodore Amiga. **DIGITAL LINK** is a telecommunications package for Amiga owners yearning to reach out and touch other computer owners via modem and telephone line. The other entry is the whimsically named **GIZMOS**, a software collection of mini-applications varying from extremely useful to downright exotic. You get a calendar, memo pad, calculator, game, and graphing functions, along with several other items. Among the more unusual functions is a data encryptor for those who want to keep their files beyond the reach of prying eyes. A data compressor is also included, presumably for those who never have enough disk space to store all their files. Both programs carry a manufacturer's suggested retail of \$49.95.

Critically Speaking...Commodore 64/128 Compatible

WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP (◆◆◆1/2◆◆◆1/2) is the latest in sports games from *Epyx*, and it looks like another case of martial arts fever has struck a software design team. Like "Karate Champ" from Data East and "Kung Fu: Way of the Exploding Fist" from UXB, WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP centers around a martial arts tournament between two fighters. We rate the Epyx entry better than "Karate Champ," but not quite as good as "Exploding Fist," for reasons which we will explain in a moment.

Mini-Tour of the World

The designers of this game give you a mini-tour of the world, as the fighters trade blows in eight international settings. Whether they're throwing kicks on the beach at Rio de Janeiro or leaping in front of the torii of a Japanese temple, these guys mean business. With 16 authentic-looking karate moves at your command, your job is to get your fighter to win matches and move gradually from white belt to black-belt status. This turns out to be a little easier against a human-controlled opponent (a good way to learn the game). The computer-controlled opponent is tougher, but not overly difficult to beat once you've mastered at least a few of the kicks, punches, and defensive moves. Even in the two-player game, though, you'll have to deal with the computer opponent sooner or later, because the winner of a two-player match must face the automated fighter.



Energetic Fighters

These martial-arts fighters are extremely energetic, so there's plenty of action. And they crumple convincingly when hit well, even showing a few facial expressions with certain moves. (If you ignore your joystick for a few seconds, your fighter will turn toward you and move his mouth, as if he were saying, "Come on, already!") All matches are scored by a referee who stands quietly in the background and announces the results in a cartoon-style balloon. Between rounds, the fighters must pass tests of skill to advance: breaking bricks with their heads or dodging flying spears and knives. The scenes in the game are accompanied by oriental-sounding music, and the fighting action is punctuated with hitting sounds. (Music and sound effects can be turned off, if desired.)

Comparisons Are Inevitable

Since this is now one of three similar martial arts contests available for the same computer, comparisons are inevitable. Both graphically and in its gameplay, WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP easily outclasses "Karate Champ." In the Epyx game, the fighting figures are more realistic, the moves better, and the action more exciting. It is a very good portrayal of karate fighting made into an arcade-style game with plenty of punch. However, the Epyx game is not quite as solid in feel and lacks the special elegance of movement that characterizes "Kung Fu: Way of the Exploding Fist." (Our resident martial-arts expert, a former instructor, faulted WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP's computer-controlled fighter on excessive movement and energy that is not always focused on a specific goal. For the vast majority of game-players, however, this is a very minor criticism that doesn't affect the enjoyment of the game.) Martial arts fans, even those who already own the other games, will still want to add WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP to their libraries. Action gamers can't seem to get enough of martial arts software, and they certainly won't be disappointed with this game. (Solo or competitive play; Joystick.) C64/128 version reviewed; coming soon for Atari XL/XE. Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

THE ARC OF YESOD (◆◆1/2◆◆1/2) and THE NODES OF YESOD (◆◆1/2◆◆1/2) are a pair of related games on one disk, part of the Silver Disk Series from *Firebird Licensees*. Now that we've had experience with a number of these Silver Disk titles, we begin to see a common problem with most of them: they lack clear instructions.

Either we've been a bit luckier in figuring out some of the previous games in the series as we played them, or else this latest pair is a little tougher than the others we've tried. We read every word in the instruction booklet and discovered little more than fanciful prologue to the apparent jobs at hand in the two games: retrieving some sort of alien Monolith from lunar caverns. According to the stories, the Earth is vulnerable to a terrible threat from outer space, and it's your job to save the world from sure destruction. Nowhere does anyone explain what (or who) the Yesod is (or are).

Seeking the Alien Monolith

Both games are near-clones of each other, casting you in the role of Charlie, the astronaut. Charlie is involved with an outfit known as ICUPS, the International Commission for Universal Problem Solving. The problem he must solve is finding and destroying the Monolith, an alien Monolith that poses such a danger to Earth it is apparently a sophisticated eavesdropping device that has been beaming information about Earth's defenses to hostile aliens. In the first game, Charlie is at the outskirts of the Capital City of the planet Ariat, where the Monolith is believed to be stored. In his white suit and astronaut bubble-style helmet, he wanders along an open area at the edge of the city, where he finds openings in the ground with ladders that lead to the planet's surface. Once he descends into the cavern-like chambers, he is beset by all kinds of unidentified creatures, including some that look like chickens. His main defense against most of these pests (except the chickens and a few others) is to release a sphere from the top of his head. Once released, this sphere is under your joystick (or keyboard) control and can fire at the creatures. When you want to move Charlie again, the sphere must be led to touch the astronaut. It's all rather strange, and we never did find the Monolith, or the Arc of Yesod (whatever that is).

Lunar Deja Vu

After playing around with the first game a while, we tried the second and experienced an immediate feeling of deja vu. Here's old Charlie again, and this time he's wandering around on the surface of the Moon. When he steps into a crater, he descends into a series of subterranean caverns that look suspiciously like the chambers under the Capital City of Ariat. Of course there are nasty creatures dwelling beneath the surface. Charlie doesn't have the odd sphere that he used on Earth, though. Instead, he has acquired an even more bizarre ally in his quest for the Monolith: a moon-eating mole! The mole is released from the top of Charlie's head just like the sphere was, and it can demolish many of the creatures flying around in the caverns. But the mole can also get its way through the walls of caverns, creating passageways for Charlie as he searches for the Monolith.

Too Similar to Each Other

These two games are much too similar to each other to be legitimately considered separate games. One is simply the extension of the other, offering more screens to explore in a similar fashion. That would be all right, if it weren't for the fact that the gamer has to discover so much about the games on his or her own. Even in an inexpensive package, there is no excuse for providing such scant instructions. If the game is truly self-explanatory as it is played. Unless you're interested in an exercise in frustration, we suggest you pass up this pair. (Solo play; Joystick or keyboard; Pause; Double-sided disk.) Available for Commodore 64/128 only. Not recommended. (MSR \$19.95)

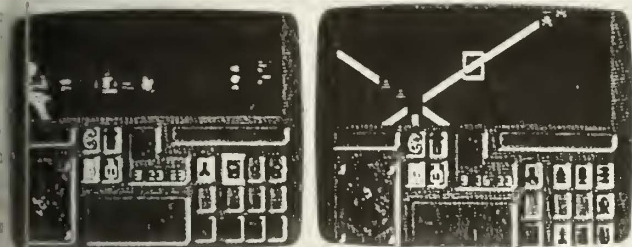
QUAKE MINUS ONE (◆◆◆/◆◆) is a graphic adventure game from *Mindscape*, one of three such games licensed from Beyond through the International Computer Group. After we struggled our way through QUAKE MINUS ONE, we realized that its excessive reliance on the manipulation of icons reminded us of "Shadowfire," another graphic adventure from Mindscape which we reviewed in February. Not surprisingly, that game was also developed by Beyond.

Terrorist Sabotage

The story behind this game is that a terrorist organization, the Liberation front (RLF), is trying to set off a massive earthquake by sabotaging the computers of a sub-oceanic power station. The power station, drawing energy directly from the Earth's core, serves the electric needs of the industrialized nations of the world. Five computers control that power station, and the RLF has taken control of four of them. With less than ten hours to go before the earthquake planned by the RLF, your job is to capture or destroy the four renegade computers by using Hermes, the one computer not controlled by the RLF.

Critically Speaking...Commodore 64/128 Compatible

Mobile Remote Units controlled by the Hermes computer, yours is essentially a seek-and-destroy mission under the pressure of limited controls.



As you search for the renegade computers and the mobile remote units under their control, you view locations within the Titan complex through the view screen of one of your Hermes Mobile Remote Units. A fairly complicated control panel below the view screen gives information about the unit's systems (engines, fuel pumps, etc.), a keypad for accessing the seven control modes of the Remote Mobile Unit. It was in moving between and among the various control modes (transition, thrust, static, weapons, junction, repair, and command) that we got bogged down time and again. Until we had logged a lot of time with the game, we found it nearly impossible to remember which mode did what and how to access it. This slowed us down an awful lot in a game where time is very important.

Lost Interest

Once we had played long enough to have a good idea of what we were supposed to be doing, we found that we had lost interest. Somehow the sterile, robotic world of a power station wasn't a fascinating place to be, even under the pressure of imminent world cataclysm. One renegade computer looked and acted pretty much like the next, and we simply weren't fired up by the idea of shooting a variety of weapons at them and trying to outsmart their plans. Our procedural complaint about *QUAKE MINUS ONE* is that the necessity of constantly referring to the instructions tends to pull you out of the world of the game's story. To our way of thinking, this defeats the purpose of using icons for control in the first place. Ideally, icons are supposed to make control of a program easier, not more difficult. To sum up our reaction to this game: it's more trouble to learn than it's worth. (Solo play; Joystick; Pause; Disk) Available for Commodore 64/128 only. Not recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

THE LORDS OF MIDNIGHT (♦♦♦1/2♦♦1/2) is another graphic adventure from *Mindscape* which was licensed from Beyond, but this one has the virtue of offering a slightly different approach to the typical tale of medieval fantasy. Although the adventure contains both graphics and text and is keyboard controlled, there is no parser to communicate with. Instead, single-key commands cover a repertoire of possible choices. You control four different characters, with additional lore and armies to be recruited along the way. The game can be played as a quest, a war, or as a combination of the two.

The Land of Midnight

This tale takes place in the Land of Midnight, a once warm and prosperous place that has been chilled by Doomdark the Witchking. Witcher's grip never loosens its hold on the Land of Midnight, and the ice war generated by the power of Doomdark's Ice Crown saps men's courage. The computer controls the evil legions of Doomdark, while you take the role of Luxor the Moonprince, Lord of the Free. You also control his son, Morkin, along with Corleth the Fey and Rothron the Wolf, plus other characters who are loyal to the Moonprince. Your characters are controlled individually, and you have the ability to view the surroundings in any direction from their own perspective. We enjoyed this unique approach to the graphic portrayal of the landscape and the Land of Midnight. Depending on the moves you make with your characters, you can take one of several approaches to defeating Doomdark the Witchking. Combining the forces who are loyal to Luxor, you can attempt a military assault on Doomdark and his armies. Or you can concentrate on Morkin, sending him on a quest to the Tower of Doom to destroy the Ice Crown. It is also possible to follow both courses at the same time, even changing strategies in mid-game.



Easy Enough for Novice Adventurers

The graphic settings of *THE LORDS OF MIDNIGHT* are cast in cool blue and white, conveying the chill of Doomdark's reign over the land. The ability to view different perspectives within those settings is unusual for a role-playing adventure. The game itself, with its lack of dependence on a parser, is easy enough for novice adventurers to try. Experienced adventurers may be disappointed at its lack of options, though. (You are limited to looking in various directions, selecting one of four characters to control, moving in the direction your character last looked, "thinking," or choosing one of a few possibilities in a certain situation, such as "seek" or "hide.") Because of these limitations, we would not recommend the game for any but the most inexperienced of adventure gamers. (Solo play; Keyboard; Formatted disk required for game-saving.) Available for Commodore 64/128 only. (MSR \$29.95)

The End of Frustration

If you're a typical action-game player, you have more than a few pieces of software lying around which you've never quite managed to conquer. Perhaps you've been stymied on the 11th screen of "Bounty Bob Strikes Back" or stopped by the 32nd screen of "Jumpman." After long hours of frustration, sweaty palms, and joystick-cramped fingers, you gave up hope of ever making it to the next screen. You don't have to be frustrated any longer, fellow gamer, because Mastertronic has come to the rescue! They have just released *THE INFINITY MACHINE*, a truly eccentric cartridge for your Commodore 64 or 128.

Turning Off Sprite Collisions

The cartridge works in conjunction with your game on disk, allowing you to turn off your game's ability to detect sprite collisions on a selective basis. (A sprite collision occurs when one object hits another on the screen, such as a bad guy vaporizing your character with a gunshot or by bumping into it.) Because the effect is switchable, you can play your game normally up to the point of the nemesis screen, then turn on *THE INFINITY MACHINE* and let your character sail through the screen unscathed. You'll finally make it to the next screen! Of course, it's cheating—but who cares? Think of how envious your game-playing friends will be when you describe the final screen in excruciating detail! There is a drawback, though: your fame will be short-lived when your friends discover *THE INFINITY MACHINE*, too. What price infinite game play? A mere \$24.95.

Accolade Conversions and New Titles

Like some others we've talked to, Accolade intends to keep a few secrets for CES. They will be showing some conversions of existing titles, including *MEAN 18* for Atari ST, *HARDBALL* for Macintosh, and *PSI 5 TRADING CO.* for IBM. One new game for Commodore 64/128 will debut at CES: *ACE OF ACES*, a World War II combat simulation. *DECEPTOR*, an arcade-style adventure featuring transformable robot creatures, is a second new title for C64/128 which may be shown at CES. We'll provide you with more details on those games after we've seen them.

More Accolade Conversions

Accolade has a few more conversions slated for release this year, although these will not be shown at CES. They include *MEAN 18* for Amiga, *PSI 5 TRADING CO.* for Apple, and *HARDBALL* and *FIGHT NIGHT* for Atari XE/XL. (Check Availability Update for specific release dates on these titles.)

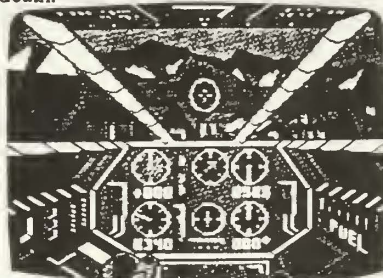
Commodore 64/128 Compatible

INFILTRATOR (◆◆◆◆/◆◆◆◆) is an action game by **Chris Gray Enterprises** for **Mindscape** that pulls out all the stops. It's a helicopter flight simulator combined with ground-based action, salted with a healthy dose of insouciant humor. You take on the role of a character reminiscent of Buckaroo Banzai, one Captain Johnny "Jimbo-Baby" McGibbits, also known as The Infiltrator. McGibbits is described as a "super-soldier, ace helicopter pilot, ballistics expert, engineer, neurosurgeon, politician, movie actor, rock star, world-class motorcyclist, explorer, karate expert, and devil-may-care all around nice guy." If you think you can live up to that description, then you're ready to play this game. (Even if you can't live up to it, you'll have a good time trying!)

Chopper Attack Mission

You are Jimbo-Baby McGibbits, and the game begins with a briefing on your mission against the Mad Leader and then an exterior view of your Gizmo Attack Chopper, "The Snuffmaster" (Whizbang Enterprises model DHX-1). As you settle into your pilot's seat and key in the start-up and ignition sequence, you'll notice that the screen display shows the view through the cockpit window, an array of instruments, and the hands of the pilot (that's you) on the two control sticks. After you take off, gain altitude, and arm your cannons, you'll want to program the ADF (Automatic Direction Finder) right away, because you'll soon be busy watching for other aircraft as you fly through enemy airspace. The air is full of friends, foes, and maniacs, and you can't judge them (nor they you) on appearance. You must communicate with all other aircraft you see, attempting to find out who they are so you can identify yourself in a way to let you pass unmolested. If you give the wrong ID or encounter a maniac, you're stuck with an aircraft battle to the death.

The Ground Mission



Assuming you make it safely through enemy airspace to your destination, you must switch your chopper into Whisper Mode for an undetected landing. From here, your mission continues on foot, beginning with an attempt to pass yourself off as an enemy guard. Once you have entered the enemy compound, you have a limited amount of time and the use of several helpful devices (explosives, camera, sleeping gas, etc.) to help you complete your mission. This portion of the game is an action adventure with plenty of suspense, excitement, and more than a few close calls with the Mad Leader's guards. If you complete the mission in the allotted time, it's time to return to your chopper and get the heck out of there! There are three missions, each more difficult than the last. You must complete each one successfully before you will be permitted to move on to the next.

Outstanding in Every Way

This is great stuff! Mindscape has come up with a superb combination of flight simulation and the intrigue of spy-style adventuring in this game. INFILTRATOR is outstanding in every way, from its realistic, three-dimensional graphics and excellent sound effects to the variety of play action and unrelenting pressure to complete the missions. And we really got a kick out of the character of Jimbo-Baby McGibbits built through quotes and tidbits scattered through the instruction booklet. A sample: "If you blow the mission, you can forget about the film rights. But hey, you're beautiful. I Love ya'. Let's do lunch." (This guy is definitely connected with the L.A./Hollywood entertainment business--the only industry where people "do" lunch.) If you love action and high adventure, this is your game. (Solo play; Joystick and keyboard; Pause; Disk.) Available for Commodore 64/128 only.

Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

Apple-Compatible

COLOSSUS CHESS IV (◆◆◆1/2/◆◆◆1/2) is a new entry from **Firebird Licensees** which the publishers tout as "the best computer chess program available on any micro today." They back up what could certainly sound like a pie of public relations puffery with documentation of head-to-head competition with a wide range of other chess programs for home computers. In the tests, sixteen games were played at various levels by each tested program against COLOSSUS CHESS IV. One point was awarded for a win, half a point for draw, and no points for a loss. COLOSSUS CHESS IV scored full 16 points against most of the programs tested. The best of the competition ("Mychess 2.0" by Beyond) managed 5.5 points against 10.6 for COLOSSUS. The second and third place finishers were "White-Knight Mk12" from BF Publications (4.5 points against 11.5 for COLOSSUS) and tie between "Sargon III" from Hayden and "Superchess 3.0" from CP Software (3.6 points against 12.4 for COLOSSUS).

Features

We have no chess players of international caliber on our staff, so this program was an awfully tough opponent for us. Rather than attempt to evaluate its quality of play, we will tell you about its many features. The first thing we noticed was speed. This program seems faster than a number of others we've tried, probably because it does some of its "thinking" during your move, based on what it assumes is your most likely move. On an average, the program examines 3.5 million positions per second, and it works from an opening book of about 3000 positions which it uses to play the first few moves of the game quickly and accurately. COLOSSUS understands all rules of chess, including underpromotions, fifty move rule, and all draws by repetition. It can handle standard mates including "King and two Bishops versus King" and the problematic "King, Bishop and Knight versus King."

More Features

COLOSSUS stores the 120 most recent moves in any game and allows you to step backward or forward within the moves. At any point in the game, the program can be forced to make your move for you, effectively changing sides with you. The program can be made to play itself in demonstration, replay an entire game up to the current position or step aside and let you make the moves for both sides while the program checks for legality. There are six modes of play, including tournament play, infinite mode (finding the best move from a certain position), and problem mode (solving mating problems). If you're feeling particularly smart, you can play "blindfold" chess, in which the pieces of one or both sides are made invisible. The program can print a variety of information, including current board position, current move record, or a running record of the moves as they occur.

Additional Features with 64K

The Apple version works on a 48K machine, but it has additional features when you have 64K RAM or more. On a 64K Apple, COLOSSUS can display a very attractive three-dimensional board and allow adjustments to its "draw" score, effectively making it either easier or more difficult for you to achieve a draw by repetition of position. And if you'd like to try something a little different, the program disk also contains 10 classic games played by the best micro, mini, and mainframe computer chess programs against each other and against human opponents. (Solo use; Keyboard.) Apple II version reviewed. Also available for Commodore 64/128. Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

Another Look at RINGS OF ZILFIN

We were asked by Strategic Simulations, Inc. to take another look at RINGS OF ZILFIN, an animated fantasy adventure for Apple II computers which we reviewed in March of this year. At that time, we rated the game "average" for graphics and "fair" for gameplay (2.5/2). Strategic Simulations registered a mild protest on the basis that our review was "out of line" with a couple of reviews which had appeared in other publications. Specifically, they felt that our reviewer might not have spent enough time with the game, referring to the statement by a reviewer in another publication that he had invested over 25 hours of playing time." Each of our reviewers is assigned a quantity of programs each month, and such an investment of time could easily lead to 500 or more man-hours (12.5 man-weeks) in playing time alone for each issue—before so much as one word could be committed to print. We simply do not have a large enough staff to support that kind of time investment.

However, we do re-evaluate previously reviewed programs occasionally, especially when the publisher revises a program or if we receive a great deal of reader response to a particular review. (We received minimal reader response to the RINGS OF ZILFIN review; only one reader was critical of the review.) In this case, SSI has revised the program, adding a "level of difficulty" choice to the beginning of the game and providing extensive hints for surviving and prospering in the earlier stages of the game. Our reviewer, an experienced adventure gamer, played the game again and spent enough time to venture more deeply into the game than before. With the Level of Difficulty option, the earlier stages of the game can be made a little easier because of giving the hero more equipment. Sure enough, this helps Reis survive more easily. However, this new session, even with hints and more equipment for the hero, did not change our reviewer's mind about the game. "The most I would do is perhaps add half a point to gameplay, increasing the rating from 'fair' to 'average,' because I still don't find anything about RINGS OF ZILFIN that's exciting enough to raise it above that level of evaluation." And so it stands. As we've said before, we do not expect everyone to agree with our reviews all of the time. Reactions to games are necessarily personal and subjective, just as reactions to any other form of entertainment can never be entirely objective.

Busy Times for Electronic Arts

Electronic Arts is riding high. They just moved into larger quarters, business is booming, and they are about to enter an 18-month period in which their release schedule will average six to eight products a month. Two brand-new titles will be announced for the first time at CES, along with a showing of many new titles, conversions, and entries from the Electronic Arts affiliated labels. The brand-new titles are SCAVENGER HUNT and MURDER PARTY, both to be done for Apple II and Commodore 64/128 later this year. SCAVENGER HUNT is the brainchild of Dan Buntin, who is well known to gamers for

"M.U.L.E.," "Heart of Africa," and "Seven Cities of Gold." This is a family game for up to four players. MURDER PARTY is described as an adult party game for up to seven players which uses the computer before the party but does not require the use of a computer at the party itself. Before you throw your murder party, you feed your computer the names and a few facts about your seven friends. The program generates a mystery scenario with clues personalized to those people and even prints out the invitations. Sounds like fun!

Amiga Release Schedule Moving Again

After some delays, it looks as if the Electronic Arts releases for the Amiga are getting ready to flow again. Between now and October, there are to be 19 Amiga programs from Electronic Arts and its affiliated labels. Due to release this month is Stuart Smith's ADVENTURE CONSTRUCTION SET (MSR \$39.95), a multiple award winner in formats for other computers. The Amiga version includes all the construction set features, the seven mini-adventures ("Land of Aventuria"), and the full-length adventure ("Rivers of Light"). Amiga owners will also get a bonus of a second full-length adventure, a science fiction epic. The "Deluxe" series of programs will expand this month, too, with the long-awaited release of DELUXE VIDEO, along with a supplementary clip-art disk for DELUXE PRINT and an Art and Utility Disk for DELUXE PAINT. The latter includes more art, a slide show feature, a print spooler, a new version of Polyscope (the kaleidoscope) that allows the user to freeze images and save them. More good news for Amiga owners: the release of both INSTANT MUSIC and MARBLE MADNESS (MSR \$49.95) is imminent. According to an Electronic Arts spokesman, MARBLE MADNESS is incredibly close to the look, sound, and play action of the arcade game.

More New Titles

TIMOTHY LEARY'S MIND MIRROR, released first for IBM, has just shipped in versions for Apple (MSR \$34.95) and C64/128 (MSR \$32.95). Dr. Leary, the psychologist and former counter-culture hero turned software author, is scheduled for a two-week, ten-city tour on behalf of his program starting in mid-June. He will make personal appearances in software stores and be a guest on a number of radio and television programs. Moving from one psychological topic to another, we haven't forgotten AMNESIA, even if the subject of that upcoming text adventure can't remember who or where he is. The game will be available very soon for Apple (MSR \$44.95) and C64/128 (MSR \$39.95). Another conversion: the IBM version of SUPER BOULDER DASH (MSR \$29.95) should be ready next month. In the realm of re-releases, Electronic Arts recently sent out an updated version of "Wizard," the game designed for C64/128 by Progressive Peripherals and Software. The new version is known as ULTIMATE WIZARD (MSR \$29.95), a climbing and jumping game with casting of spells. The game features more than 100 different dungeon playfields and a construction set for building more. This new version features additional artwork and more levels than the original. Another re-release is Stuart Smith's AGE OF ADVENTURE for Apple (MSR \$29.95) and Atari XL/XE (MSR \$22.95), which

includes two full-length adventures, "Ali Baba" and "Return of Heracles."

More on Adventures

Speaking of adventures, THE BARD'S TALE has been such a big success for Electronic Arts that they sometimes feel they are spending all their time on the phone answering game players' questions. In self defense, they have put together a "Bard's Tale Clue Book" (MSR \$12.95) which should be ready this month. By the way, work is underway on the sequel to THE BARD'S TALE. To be ready this fall, the game is THE ARCH MAGE'S TALE. Affiliated Label Action The release schedule from Electronic Arts' affiliated labels is a full one, too. A wide variety of programs is set for the balance of 1986. (Please check Availability Update for specific release dates.) Origin Systems has just released OGRE for Apple, and it will be ready for C64/128 later this year, along with AUTODUEL and MOEBIUS. ULTIMA III comes to Amiga this month and to Atari ST next month. Origin's hint book for ULTIMA IV, "Way of the Avatar," finally appeared in stores at the end of last month. A new affiliated label, Reality Development Corp., has just released VENTURE'S BUSINESS SIMULATOR (MSR \$100) for IBM. The company was formed by a group of former Wharton Business School people, and their program is a translation of the mainframe business simulator used in classes at Wharton. MaxiSoft will add to their line of productivity programs for Amiga later this year with MAXIPLAN SPREADSHEET. Software Country has just started shipping CHESSMASTER 2000 for Apple, C64/128, and Atari XL/XE (MSR \$39.95); it will be made available for IBM, Macintosh, Amiga, and Atari ST later this summer. Software Country claims that this program beats "Sargon III" since it is based on an algorithm from a dedicated chess machine that is more highly regarded among the upper echelons of chess players than the one on which "Sargon III" is based. Also coming from Software Country is the NEW TECHNOLOGY COLORING BOOK for Amiga.

MURDER ON THE MISSISSIPPI (◆◆◆1/2◆◆◆1/2) is a charmingly animated graphic adventure designed by Adam Bellin for *Activision*. It is a 19th-century murder mystery set on a Mississippi riverboat, the "Delta Princess." As the stately vessel churns its way down the river to New Orleans, one of the passengers is murdered. As luck would have it, the noted British detective, Sir Charles Foxworth, and his loyal companion, Regis Phelps are among the vacationing passengers. The player takes the role of Sir Charles, attempting to solve the mystery in the three days left before the "Delta Princess" reaches New Orleans.

Controlled with Joystick

The most unusual aspect of this adventure is its accessibility. Although there is text, there is no parser and no reliance on the keyboard. The game is controlled entirely with a joystick, using simple menu choices. (The Apple version will permit keyboard control as an alternative to the joystick.) The game begins with the figures of Sir Charles and Regis standing on one of the four decks of the "Delta Princess." Sir Charles can be directed anywhere on the ship with the joystick, and Regis always follows faithfully. There are two decks containing 24 numbered staterooms and common rooms,

the promenade deck with wheelhouse, and the lower deck an engine room to explore. There are eight suspects to meet and cross-examine, but your first task as Sir Charles is to discover the body of the deceased. With that accomplished, your fellow passengers will have more to say to you, and the evidence you begin to gather will have more value.

Plenty of Options

The design team has done a very good job of incorporating plenty of features and options in this game while simplifying the user interface. After discovering the body, Sir Charles and Regis can move nearly anywhere on the ship (some rooms are locked) and inspect, search for evidence, and question the others on board. Talking to passengers is extremely important, helping Sir Charles build his case and develop hypotheses. Passengers can be asked about themselves, the victim, evidence, and other passengers. They can even be asked to follow Sir Charles and Regis to another location on the ship. However, the single most helpful (and unusual) feature of the game is the ability to take notes on what the suspects say from within the program. When Regis asks "Would you like the notebook, m'Lord?" and you have Sir Charles answer "yes," the suspect's statement appears along with a "helping hand" controlled by the joystick. The helping hand is used to highlight the portions of the statement you wish to make note of, and they are then saved in an electronic notebook for the balance of the game. These notes are especially handy in getting additional information from suspects, because you can share your notes with a suspect in order to elicit reactions or clues. Incidentally, a game save progress can be saved to the program disk. (Only one can be saved.)

Accusation

When you think that you have gathered enough evidence, it's time to make an accusation. If you've accused the real culprit and have sufficient evidence, you will have solved the crime. Accuse the wrong suspect, or even the right one with insufficient evidence, though, and Sir Charles will be rewarded by getting thrown off the riverboat. When you do solve a crime, the game can be played again because there are 10 possible endings with many variations on each.

Thoroughly Entertaining

MURDER ON THE MISSISSIPPI is a thoroughly entertaining game that will even appeal to those who don't usually enjoy adventures because of the frustrations of dealing with parsers. Although interacting with this game is simplicity itself, making it suitable for novice adventurers, there are enough features and options to keep more experienced mystery buffs interested. The graphics are well animated, bright and colorful. Whimsical touches add to the game's appeal, along with a good use of sound effects and music. (We especially enjoyed the different musical themes for each character.) MURDER ON THE MISSISSIPPI is a good bet for the whole family. (No parser; Joystick; Disk.) Commodore 64/128 version reviewed. Coming soon for Apple II at \$39.95. Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

MOVED???

Don't forget to tell us so you don't miss any issues. Send us your new address, along with your old zip code and subscriber number (the last FOUR digits of your mailing label) and we'll do the rest!

Infocom Showing Three Titles

Infocom will be showing their new games at CES in Division's booth, since the merger between the two companies is all but complete. In addition to TRINITY, an Interactive Fiction Plus title set to release this month, they will be showing two previously unannounced titles. LEATHER GODESSES OF PHOBOS is to be a standard-level entry in a new category for Infocom: comedy. (With a title like that, could it be anything but comedy?) We have a difficult time seeing comedy as a new category for this company, though, because many of their past titles have been heavily laced with the special brand of irreverent Infocom humor. It will be interesting to see what they come up with in a title that's supposed to be funny all the way through. The other new game is MOONMIST, Infocom's first mystery tale at the introductory level. This one is described by an Infocom representative as being a "great story line."

New Games from IntelliCreations

IntelliCreations, owner of the Datasoft trade name, will be showing a wide variety of new programs at CES, with even more programs waiting in the wings. THE NEVER ENDING STORY (MSR \$29.95) is available now for Apple II, Atari XL/XE, and Commodore 64/128. The game is a fantasy adventure based on the book and movie of the same name. The player becomes the hero, Atreyu, who faces the trials and terrors of the ever-consuming "nothing" with his sidekick, Fear the luck dragon. MIND PURSUIT (MSR \$29.95) for Apple II and C64/128, also available now, is a knowledge and trivia test at three levels of difficulty for all ages, complete with music and graphics clues. Additional question disks will be available at \$14.95.

Detective and Word Games

All would-be sleuths can look forward to 221 B BAKER STREET, which is the address of the one-and-only Sherlock Holmes. The object is to wander the streets and alleys of London, gathering clues to solve one of 30 cases included with the game. The program is set for Apple II, Atari XL/XE, and C64/128 (MSR \$29.95), with two supplementary disks (MSR \$14.95) available. Each additional disk contains 30 cases, along with a set of new graphics for the various locations in the game. CROSSCHECK is a crossword-like game with strategic elements that can be played by up to four people. The game will be available for Apple II, Atari XL/XE, C64/128 (MSR \$29.95), and IBM PC/PCjr (MSR \$39.95). Additional game disks with new word clues will be available at \$19.95 for all systems.

Alternate Reality Continues

The second installment of the series, ALTERNATE REALITY-THE DUNGEON will be ready for 8-bit computers (Apple, Atari, Commodore) this fall. The first game, ALTERNATE REALITY-THE CITY, is set for fall release in enhanced versions for Macintosh, IBM PC/PCjr, Atari ST, and Amiga. (By the way, we just received the second issue of the "Alternate Reality Newsletter," and players of the game can really pick up some useful hints. Be sure to send in your warranty card if you haven't already done so.)

Reported Games

IntelliCreations has acquired some licenses recently. One is from Novagen, a British company whose MERCENARY: ESCAPE FROM TARG will be marketed in the U.S. by IntelliCreations. The game is an action-adventure rendered in

three-dimensional, vector graphics in which the player is a 21st century soldier of fortune. It combines flight simulation, use of ground vehicles, and strategy. The game will be available for Atari XL/XE, C64/128 (MSR \$29.95), and Atari ST (MSR \$39.95). IntelliCreations has also acquired licenses from Konami for PING PONG and YIE AR KUNG FU. The latter is a martial arts game that is a best-seller in Great Britain. IntelliCreations also licensed one of their own titles, THE GOONIES, to Konami. THE GOONIES is available now in Japan for the Nintendo Family Computer, and Konami will introduce THE GOONIES as a coin-op game in the U.S. this July. Konami is expected to release THE GOONIES this fall in the U.S. in a version for the Nintendo Entertainment System. (See related story in Video Game Update section.)

Video Utility

IntelliCreations is also working on a utility program that should be of interest to VCR owners. Tentatively titled VIDEO SHOP, the program will let you create title screens with various type fonts, borders, fades, etc. for your home video recordings--even if you don't have a video camera! This one is in the early stages of development, so there will be more to report at a later date.

Commodore 64 Forever?

It looks as if Commodore will be featuring the venerable 64 at CES, emphasizing the newly redesigned Commodore 64C. We're told that the changes in the keyboard/CPU unit are mostly cosmetic. The chief advantage of the new package, which will sell in the range of \$200-\$230, is the inclusion of GEOS, the snazzy new 64 operating system, and the QUANTUM LINK telecommunications program. Although they've been mentioned by several publications, the latest word is that Commodore's IBM-compatible PC-10 and PC-20 will NOT be shown at CES. (Both units are currently available in Europe.)

Apple Rumors...continued from Page 1

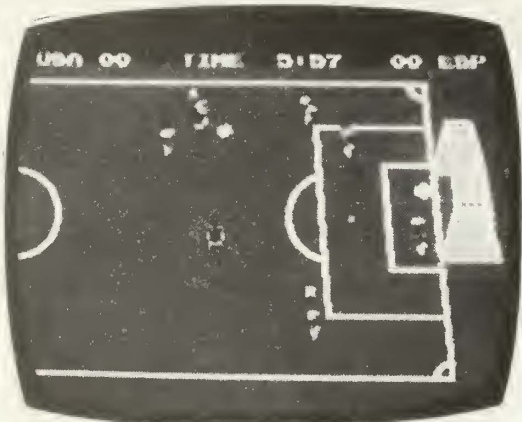
A 16-Bit Apple II

Variouly referred to as "Apple IIx," "Cortland," and "Rambo," the 256K machine will be the first 16-bit Apple II, running about three times faster than a IIe or IIc at 3.6 MHz. Although some sources have reported it as expandable to 4.25 Megabytes, we have reason to expect a 6 Mbyte limit. New software packages of all kinds are in development now, but the machine is also compatible with software for the Apple II family. Expected features include built-in networking capability, a detachable keyboard with numeric keypad, mouse, expansion slots, and the best color and sound yet from an Apple computer. (One developer said it "looks like a color Mac." Another said "graphics and performance are outstanding.") The disk drive(s) will not be built into the unit, allowing the purchaser to set it up with a hard disk drive, if desired. Pricing is unknown but expected to be in the range of \$1500 and up. Its introduction this fall is likely to lead to Apple IIe and IIc price cuts just in time for Christmas buying.

Bridge between Apple II and Macintosh?

Is this new computer the much-anticipated "bridge" between the Apple II and Macintosh lines? Technically, it could be. In fact, it could also be a bridge to IBM compatibility. Whether either capability is actually offered is a marketing decision for Apple to make. And if Apple doesn't provide it, third-party developers certainly could. Stay tuned--we'll keep you informed as we learn more about the next machine in the "Apple II forever" line!

THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE



SOCCER (◆◆◆◆/◆◆◆◆), one of the original sports games made available by *Nintendo*, brings the popular European sport to your NES system. This version features most of the action of the real thing as you'll be involved in a game which includes dribbling, throw-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks, and indirect free kicks. The passing is done by dribbling the ball up and down the field, passing to your teammates. There's a great deal of fancy footwork needed, both to move the ball offensively, and try and steal the ball when you're playing defense. The one thing we couldn't do with this version, unlike its real counterpart, was to pass the ball by kicking it and having a teammate "catch" it with his head (a move we always enjoyed Pele making). If you move the ball into the goal area and the goal tender stops the ball from entering the goal net, he'll kick it back into the field of play, hopefully for one of his teammates to take control of the ball. You'll have your choice from five skill levels as well as the choice of three lengths for your half times. The player which you are controlling is designated with a marker, and the marker will switch to another player as you pass the ball to him. On defense, you'll have the same designated control, with the ability to move the player in any of four directions as he attempts to take the ball away from the offense.

Good Gameplay Marred by Controller

This is a game which, if it hadn't have been for the awkwardness of the controller, would have garnered four stars. It's loads of fun and has plenty of action. This is the first game in which we found the + Control Pad to be too small and awkward in controlling our player. The way in which the commands are needed, the game would have been much easier to control with a traditional joystick. Perhaps with a good deal of practice, the pad will not hinder your gameplay too much. (One other note regarding the Control Pad...our in-house sports gamer is left-handed and this pad was particularly tough because of that. In other Nintendo games, our left-handed player found it wasn't as difficult as the games did not require such multi-use of the pad. How 'bout an adaptor for left-handers?) The graphics are particularly good in this game as there's lots of detail in the players as they race down the field, arms waved upwards in a cheer when they've just scored. The crisp graphics allow you to always have a good feel of where you are on the field and what the other players are doing. There's even a group of cheerleaders who come out at halftime

to do a quick number! We did find the music a bit bothersome so we turned down our set. (one player; two-player simultaneous; pause)
(MSR \$29.95)



SUPER MARIO BROS. (◆◆◆1/2/◆◆◆◆) for the *Nintendo* Entertainment System features the familiar Mario character in a whole new adventure so loaded with surprises and discoveries that it could take months to experience the all. In this game, Mario attempts to rescue Princess Toadstool daughter of the Mushroom King, from imprisonment at the hands of the Koopa, a tribe of turtles famous for their black magic. The Koopa have cast an evil spell over the Mushroom People, a spell which only Princess Toadstool can break.

Sheer Delight

Mario's quest to save the princess is long and arduous--for him. For the game player, it's sheer delight, like accompanied by a worn-out finger or two. We had the feeling that we had barely touched the surface of this game after playing for hours, because each trip through the same region seemed to reveal new secrets of the game. Mario walks, runs, swims, and jumps his way through various worlds of the Mushroom Kingdom, avoiding the Koopa Troopa and other nasty creatures. There are countless ways that he can discover mushrooms that were made invisible by the Koopa turtles, a running into them can be a rewarding experience. The formerly invisible mushrooms can turn him into Super Mario, Fire Mario, or Invincible Mario, at least until he bumps into a bad guy again. There are coins to collect, too--a whole shower of them in one spot we found. They're good for points and a hundred of them earns you an extra Mario.

Truly Addictive

SUPER MARIO BROS. belongs in that special hall of fame reserved for truly addictive action games, the kind that keep you from being on time for supper. The graphics are cute and comical, the music lively, but it's the great depth of play action that keeps you playing again and again. No owner of the Nintendo Entertainment System should be without this game--it's a must! (Solo or 2-player alternating; Pause.)
Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

3rd Party for Nintendo!

What can only be good news for those who own or intend to buy the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), we have independent confirmation from several sources that third-party software for the system is already in the works and likely to be available later this year. Most, if not all, of the third-party titles will be licensed through Nintendo. As we have noted before, Nintendo is very aware of past problems in the videogame market and is determined to see that they are not repeated with the NES. One of their concerns is that the market not be flooded with large numbers of inferior games developed by backward-engineering of the system in order to make a quick buck. To that end, we understand that the NES contains security devices which are designed to make non-sanctioned game development extremely difficult. Thus, we expect that most third-party software for the NES will bear the Nintendo "Seal of Quality Assurance" because the developers will be working closely with Nintendo.

The Games in Japan

Knowing some of the more than 100 titles currently available in Japan for the Nintendo Family Computer, we can make some educated guesses about what U.S. game players might expect to see for the NES here. Look for games from well-established Japanese coin-op manufacturers, of course, including Konami, Nichibutsu, Tecmo, and others. Nintendo is sure to insist that only the very best of the Japanese coin-op titles be available here for the NES. Some will be familiar because the arcade machines have been available in the U.S., but we're likely to see others that are known only in the Japanese market. We also expect to see some titles from American companies. For example, these American titles are available now or will be soon for the Nintendo Family Computer in Japan: KARATEKA and LODERUNNER (Bilderbund), SPY VS. SPY (First Star), GHOSTBUSTERS and SUPER PITFALL (Activision), and THE GOONIES (Datasoft, licensed to Konami). As soon as we learn more details, our readers will be the first to know, as usual!

New Way to Buy Nintendo System

Starting this month, Nintendo will offer its system in a new configuration, allowing consumers an inexpensive way to begin playing. The previous combination of Control Deck, two controllers, Zapper light-sensing gun, R.O.B. video port, and "Duck Hunt" and "Gyromite" Game Paks will continue to be sold as the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) Deluxe Set (MSR \$179.95). The new option is to purchase the NES Control Deck, which includes two controllers and the "Super Mario Bros." Game Pak (MSR \$99.95). The Zapper (MSR \$29.95), R.O.B. (MSR \$49.95), and "Duck Hunt" (MSR \$34.95) and "Gyromite" (MSR \$39.95) Game Paks will be available separately for the first time.

New Title for Zapper

Nintendo also announced a new title to be available later this summer for use with the Zapper. GUMSHOE (MSR \$34.95) casts you as Mr. Stevenson, a secret agent whose daughter has been kidnapped. You must collect five diamonds for the ransom, using your trusty Zapper to blast cans, stop cars, shoot down planes, and eliminate other obstacles on your way through city, ocean, sky and forest screens. The previously announced action game, HELI FIGHTER, has been postponed.

Reader Reactions

James Cooper of Storrs, Connecticut cancelled his order for the Atari 7800 game system--and offers Atari a piece of his mind: "I am disgusted with Atari. Consequently, I'm just not going to buy a 7800. Atari announced a March 1 release date, and here it is two and a half months later, and no one has seen one. I could accept these delays a couple of years ago, but times have changed. How could Atari screw up their release of the 7800, when they made the decision to release months in advance, and the material has been ready to ship for two years? I don't trust Atari because of this obvious example of mismanagement and lack of organization. Will they dump the product on the market and then drop it? The bizarre, fanatical secrecy surrounding their plans for the 7800 also leaves me suspicious."

(Editor's note: we have had no confirmation of any shipments, in spite of the fact that we have been assured by at least one Atari executive that it has shipped...while other Atari employees tell us that it will ship "any day"...draw your own conclusions!)

Howard Hisel of Chicago, Illinois comments on a review: "I've been a subscriber for 3 years and rarely have any disagreement with your evaluation of all the different games. I do wish you would take another look at Nintendo's Pinball, though. I did agree with you at first, about being bothered by the split screen, but I've found, after playing many times, this becomes a very little annoyance...The game play is very fast and exciting. The colors and sounds are excellent. I believe if you give this game another chance, that you will find it an excellent game after your first misgiving."

(Editor's note: reader reactions are printed on an occasional basis, when comments are judged to be of interest to many of our subscribers. Quotes will be attributed by name, unless a reader requests that his or her name not be printed.)

Our New Look...

Those of you who have been with us over the years have seen us adapt to the new technologies in our attempt to bring you the news faster. This month brings us to a totally in-house, electronic composition and paste-up operation as we have added some new software.

A number of you have asked how we go about putting the newsletter together and it seemed that this would be a good time to fill you in. All of our writer/reviewers work on the Apple IIe computers with *Magic Window* by Artsci and *Appleworks* by Apple as word processors, and we take a Radio Shack TRS 100 portable computer with us when travelling to such functions as the C.E.S. All the Apples and the Radio Shack then are downloaded, via a direct-connect 2400 baud modem to our Macintosh 512K. There all the stories, reviews, etc., are re-formatted. Up until this month this part of the operation was done manually and then put down on art boards before heading to the printer, normally requiring 1 to 1-1/2 days. This month we have initiated the use of PAGEMAKER, a desktop publishing tool designed by Aldus. This program has given us even more flexibility (and a few more precious hours before going to print) than we've had in the past, as well as giving the newsletter a much cleaner look. Once the newsletter is laid-out the way we want it, we print the master pages on our Apple Laserwriter which we've been using for about five months. Those master pages head to our printer at 8am, it's printed by 3pm, and in the hands of our mailing service by 4pm. The stamped, stuffed envelopes which arrive at your door are dropped off at the Post Office by 8pm the same day, allowing us to insert late-breaking stories as late as one hour before going to the printer!

AVAILABILITY UPDATE

ATARI COMPUTERS

MAY
 x-Foobitzky (Inf)
 x-Mech Brigade (SSI)
 x-Racing Destruction Set (EA)
 x-Super Boulder Dash (EA)
 x-U.S.A.A.P. (SSI)
JUNE
 x-Chessmaster 2000 (EA)
 Hardball (Aco)
 Paperclip w/SpellPack-130XE (BI)
JULY
 Age of Adventure (EA)
 Crosscheck (DS)
 Fight Night (Aco)
 Mercenary: Escape from Targ (DS)
 221 B Baker Street (DS)
AUGUST
 Leather Goddesses of Phobos (Inf)
SEPTEMBER
 Alternate Reality 2:Dungeon (DS)
 Moonmist (Inf)
SECOND QUARTER
 AcroJet (Mic)
 x-Beachhead II (Acc)
 Conflict in Vietnam (Mic)
 Crimson Crown (Pen)
 Frank & Ernest's Adv (Pen)
 Gunship (Mic)
 Mind Pursuit (DS)
 Mission on Thunderhead (AH)
 Multitots Kit (MB)
 x-Music Studio (Act)
 x-Never Ending Story (DS)
 Oo-Topos (Pen)
 x-Raid Over Moscow (Acc)
 Spy vs Spy Island Caper (FS)
 Superman the Game (FS)
 U.S.A.A.P. (SSI)
 x-Wizard's Crown (SSI)
THIRD QUARTER
 Breakers (Syn)
 Lords of Conquest (EA)
 Mail Order Monsters (EA)
 Margaritaville (Pen)
 Moebius (Ori)
 Ogre (Ori)
 Ronin (Syn)
 Touchdown Football (EA)
FOURTH QUARTER
 Deadly Summer (Syn)
 Gamemaker (Act)
 House of Changes (Syn)
SECOND HALF
 Battlegroup (SSI)
 Phantasia (SSI)
 Wrath of Denenthor (Sie)

ATARI ST
APRIL
 x-Black Cauldron (Sie)
 x-Brimstone (Syn)
 Dragonworld (Tel)
 x-Financial Cookbook (EA)
 Phantasia (SSI)
 x-Sword of Kadash (Pen)
 Wizard of Oz (Spn)
MAY
 x-Esex (Syn)
JUNE
 Alternate Reality: City (DS)
 I'S Talk (BI)
 Isgur Portfolio System (BI)
 Leader Board (Acc)
 Little Computer People (Act)
 Mean 18 (Aco)
 Time Link (BI)
 Trinity (Inf)
JULY
 Mercenary: Escape from Targ (DS)
 Ultima III (Ori)
AUGUST
 Leather Goddesses of Phobos (Inf)
 Star Quest (Sie)
SEPTEMBER
 Alternate Reality: City (DS)
 Moonmist (Inf)
 Towers of Seven (Sie)
OCTOBER
 Defender of the Crown (MDS)
 Sinbad & Throne of Falcon (MDS)
 Star Rush (MDS)

SECOND QUARTER
 Computer Baseball (SSI)
 x-Coveted Mirror (Pen)
 Donald Duck's Playground (Sie)
 Frank & Ernest's Adv (Pen)
 Flight Simulator II (Sub)
 Gamemaker (Act)
 GATO (Spe)
 Gunship (Mic)
 Homework Helper:Writing (Spn)
 Isgur Portfolio (BI)
 Kempelen Chess (Sie)
 King's Quest (Sie)
 Multitots Kit (MB)
 x-Music Studio (Act)
 Oo-Topos (Pen)
 Orbiter (Spe)
 Phantasia (SSI)
 x-Rogue (Epy)
 Silent Service (Mic)
 ST One-Write (Sie)
 Sundog (Aco)
 x-Temple of Apsah Trilog (Epy)
 Winter Games (Epy)
THIRD QUARTER
 B-Graph Elite (BI)
 Consultant (BI)
 King's Quest III (Sie)
 Margaritaville (Pen)
 Paperclip Elite (BI)
 Super Cycle (Epx)
 Time & Billing (BI)
 World Championship Wrestling (Epx)
 World Game (Epx)
SECOND HALF
 Championship Golf (Game)

COMMODORE 64/128

MAY
 x-Alter Ego (Female)(Act)
 x-Wizard of Oz (SSI)
WIZARD OF OZ (SSI)
 World's Greatest Football (Epy)
THIRD QUARTER
 Breakers (Syn)
 Lords of Conquest (EA)
 Mail Order Monsters (EA)
 Margaritaville (Pen)
 Moebius (Ori)
 Ogre (Ori)
 Ronin (Syn)
 Touchdown Football (EA)
FOURTH QUARTER
 Deadly Summer (Syn)
 Gamemaker (Act)
 House of Changes (Syn)
SECOND HALF
 Battlegroup (SSI)
 Phantasia (SSI)
 Wrath of Denenthor (Sie)

COMMODORE 64/128
MAY
 x-Alter Ego (Female)(Act)
 x-Bop & Wrester (Min)
 x-Chessmaster 2000 (SC)
 x-Colossus Chess IV (Fir)
 x-Football (Sub)
 x-Frankie Goes to Hollywood (Fir)
 x-GBA Basketball 2 on 2 (Act)
 x-Geos (Corn)
 x-Graphic Magician Jr (Pen)
 x-Infinity Machine (Mas)
 x-Leader Board Tour Disk 1 (Acc)
 x-Mind Pursuit (DS)
 x-Multitots (MB)
 x-Murder on the Mississippi (Act)
 x-Never Ending Story (DS)
 x-Oo-Topos (Pen)
 x-Print Shop Companion (Bro)
 x-Rings of Zilfin (SSI)
 x-Spitfire 40 (AH)
 x-Superbowl Sunday Championship Team Disk (AH)
 x-Timothy Leary Mind Mirror (EA)
 x-Ultimate Wizard (EA)
 x-Wizard's Crown (SSI)
 x-World Karate Championship (Epy)
JUNE
 A.C.E. (Spn)
 Alternate Reality: Dungeon (DS)
 Amnesia (EA)
 Filer's Choice (PCS)
 Movie Monster Game (Epy)
 Planners Choice (PCS)
 Tenth Frame (Acc)
 Ware With All (Hit)
 Writer's Choice (PCS)
JULY
 Ace of Aces (Aco)
 Amnesia (EA)
 Crosscheck (DS)
 Mercenary: Escape from Targ (DS)
 221 B Baker St (DS)
AUGUST
 Deceptor (Aco)
 Fairlight (Min)
 Gamemaker Sports Library (Act)
 Gamemaker Science Fiction Lib (Act)
 Leather Goddesses of Phobos (Inf)
SEPTEMBER
 Alternate Reality: Dungeon (DS)
 Moonmist (Inf)
OCTOBER
 Arch Mage's Tale (EA)

SECOND QUARTER
 Commando (DE)
 x-Conflict in Vietnam (Mic)
 Crossbones (Act)
 Frank & Ernest's Adventure (Pen)
 Gateway (Pry)
 Gunship (Mic)
 Inside Story (Acc)
 Kempelen Chess (Sie)
 Kung Fu II:Sticks of Death (UXB)
 Macbeth (AH)
 Mission on Thunderhead (AH)
 Multitots Kit (MB)
 Phantasia II (SSI)
 Portal (Act)
 River Boat (Act)
THIRD QUARTER
 AutoDuel (Ori)
 Breakers (Syn)
 Graphics Library #4 (Bro)
 Margaritaville (Pen)
 Moebius (Ori)
 Murder Party (EA)
 Ogre (Ori)
 Ronin (Syn)
 Scavenger Hunt (EA)
 Super Cycle (Epy)
 World Game (Epy)
FOURTH QUARTER
 Deadly Summer (Syn)
 House of Changes (Syn)
 World Championship Wrestling (Epy)
SECOND HALF
 Wrath of Denenthor (Sie)

COMMODORE 128

JUNE
 I Am the C-128 (Pcs)
 Trinity (Inf)
SECOND QUARTER
 HomePak (BI)
THIRD QUARTER
 Alternate Reality: City (DS)
 Championship Golf (Game)
 Scoop, The (Tel)
AMIGA
MAY
 Black Cauldron (Sie)
 Deja Vu (Min)
 x-Digital Link (DC)
 x-Gizmos (DC)
 Gunship (Mic)
 Kings Quest (Sie)
 x-Music Studio (Act)
JUNE
 Adventure Construction Set (EA)
 Art/Utility Disk for DeluxePaint (EA)
 DeluxePrint Clip Art Disk (EA)
 Deja Vu (Min)
 Instant Music (EA)
 Leader Board (Acc)
 Little Computer People (Act)
 Trinity (Inf)
 Ultima III (Ori)
JULY
 Marble Madness (EA)
AUGUST
 GameMaker (Act)
 Leather Goddesses of Phobos (Inf)
 Mean 18 (Aco)
 Star Quest (Sie)
SEPTEMBER
 Alternate Reality: City (DS)
 Moonmist (Inf)
 Towers of Seven (Sie)
OCTOBER
 Defender of the Crown (MDS)
 Sinbad & Throne of Falcon (MDS)
 Star Rush (MDS)
SECOND QUARTER
 Coveted Mirror (Pen)
 Deluxe Video Const. Set (EA)
 Flight Simulator II (Sub)
 Frank & Ernest's Adv (Pen)
 GATO (Spe)
 Halley Project (Min)
 Keyboard Cadet (Min)
 Multitots Kit (MB)
 Oo-Topos (Pen)
 Orbiter (Spe)
 Radar Raiders (Sub)
 Return to Atlantis (EA)

Rogue (Epy)
 Sargon III (Hay)
 Temple of Apsah Trilog (Epy)
 Winter Games (Epy)
THIRD QUARTER
 BTS Spreadsheet (BI)
 Championship Golf (Game)
 Chessmaster 2000 (SC)
 Kings Quest II (Sie)
 MaxiPlan Spreadsheet (EA)
 Margaritaville (Pen)
 New Technology Coloring Book (SC)
FOURTH QUARTER
 DEQAS Elite (BI)
 Isgur Portfolio (BI)
 PaperClip Elite (BI)
SECOND HALF
 Phantasia (SSI)
 Wizard's Crown (SSI)

APPLE II

APRIL
 x-American Challenge:
 Sailing Simulation (Min)
 x-Black Cauldron (Sie)
 x-CardWare (Hit)
 x-Colonial Conquest (SSI)
 x-Conflict in Vietnam (Mic)
 x-Field of Fire (SSI)
 x-Foobitzky (Inf)
 x-Ogre (Ori)
 x-Oo-Topos (Pen)
MAY
 x-BeachHead II (Acc)
 x-Chessmaster 2000 (SC)
 x-Colossus Chess IV (Fir)
 x-Mind Pursuit (DS)
 x-Multitots (MB)
 x-Never Ending Story (DS)
 x-Timothy Leary's Mind Mirror (EA)
JUNE
 Age of Adventure (EA)
 Amnesia (EA)
 Filer's Choice (PCS)
 Lunar Explorer (ET)
 Movie Monster Game (Epy)
 Murder on the Mississippi (Act)
 PaperClip (BI)
 PartyWare (Hit)
 Planners Choice (PCS)
 Star Quest-128K (Sie)
 Towers of Seven-128K (Sie)
 Trinity-128K (Inf)
 Ware With All (Hit)
 Writer's Choice (PCS)
JULY
 Crosscheck (DS)
 221 B Baker Street (DS)
AUGUST
 Gamemaker Sports Library (Act)
 Gamemaker Science Fiction Lib (Act)
 Leather Goddesses of Phobos (Inf)
 Lords of Conquest (EA)
 Psi 5 Trading Co (Aco)
SEPTEMBER
 Alternate Reality: Dungeon (DS)
 HeartWare (Hit)
 HollyWare (Hit)
 Moonmist (Inf)
SECOND QUARTER
 Forbidden Quest (Pry)
 Frank & Ernest's Adventure (Pen)
 Gateway (Pry)
 Gunship (Mic)
 James Bond Goldfinger (Min)
 Mission on Thunderhead (AH)
 Mr Pixel's GameMaker (Min)
 Nine Princes in Amber (Tel)
 PaperClip (BI)
 Raid Over Moscow (Acc)
 Smart Money (Sie)
 Space Snatchers of Aratone-128K (Sie)
 Spy Va. Spy Island Caper (FS)
 Superman the Game (FS)
 Super Sunday (AH)
 Touchdown Football (EA)
 Under Fire (AH)
THIRD QUARTER
 Breakers (Syn)
 Championship Golf (Game)
 Graphic Library #4 (Bro)

Margaritaville (Pen)
 Murder Party (EA)
 Ronin (Syn)
 Scavenger Hunt (EA)
 Scoop, The (Tel)
 Where in USA is Carmen Sandie (Bro)
FOURTH QUARTER
 Deadly Summer (Syn)
 House of Changes (Syn)
 Kings Quest III-128k (Sie)
 Movie Monster Game (Epy)
 World Championship Wrestling (Epy)
 World Game (Epy)
SECOND HALF
 Wrath of Denenthor (Sie)

MACINTOSH

MAY
 x-Alter Ego (Female)(Act)
 x-Archon (EA)
 x-Early Learning Games/Young Children (Spr)
 x-Easy as ABC (Spr)
 x-Flight Simulator (Mic)
 x-Gemstone Warrior (SSI)
JUNE
 ComicWorks (Min)
 Time Link (BI)
 Trinity (Inf)
 Uninvited (Min)
JULY
 Isgur Portfolio System (BI)
AUGUST
 Hardball (Aco)
 Leather Goddesses of Phobos (Inf)
 Availability Update Continues on Back Page

COMPANY CODES

ACC...Access
 ACO...Accolade
 ACT...Activision
 AG...Avant Garde
 AH...Avalon Hill
 AT...Atari
 BAN...Bantam
 BAU...Baudville
 BL...Batteries Inc.
 BRO...Broderbund
 CBS...CBS Electronic Pub.
 COM...Commodore
 COS...Cosmi
 DC...Digital Creations
 DE...DataEast
 DS...DataSoft
 EA...Electronic Arts
 EPY...Epyx
 ET...Electric Transit
 FIR...Firebird
 FP...Fisher-Price
 FS...First Star
 GRO...Grolier
 HAY...Hayden
 HIT...HiTech Expressions
 INF...Infocom
 INT...INTV Inc.
 MAS...Mastertronic
 MB...Multitots
 MDS...Master Designer Sftwr
 MIC...Microprose
 MIS...Microsoft
 MIN...Mindscape
 ORI...Origin
 PCS...Personal Choice Software
 PEN...Penguin
 PRY...Priority
 RDC...Reality Dev. Corp
 SC...Software Country
 SCR...Scarborough
 SIE...Sierra
 SIL...Silicon Beach Software
 SPE...Spectrum-Holobyte
 SPN...Spinnaker
 SPR...Springboard
 SS...Simon & Schuster
 SSG...Strategic Studies Group
 SSI...Strategic Simulations
 SIR...SirTech
 SUB...SubLogic
 SYN...Synapse
 TEL...Telarium

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Cossus Chess (Ap;Co)	28.80			
Disk Hunt (Nin)	28.50			
Flblitzky (Ap 128K; I; Mac; At)	28.80			
Football (Co)	28.80			
GA Championship Basketball 2 on 2 (Co)	26.10			
Gomite (Nin)	33.50			
Intrator (Co)	22.30			
Lds of Midnight (Co)	22.30			
Murder on the Mississippi (Co)	26.10			
Murder on the Mississippi (Ap*)	28.80			
Nintendo Deluxe System w/robot & gun	137.00 ♦			
♦ - plus \$6.00 Shipping				
Nintendo Control Deck (+ \$4.00 ship)	77.00			
Que Minus One (Co)	22.30			
Rgs of Zilfin (Ap;Co)	28.80			
R.B. Video Robot for Nintendo (+ \$2 ship)	38.00			
Soccer (Nin)	24.00			
Star Mario Bros (Nin)	24.00			
World Karate Championship (Co)	22.30			
Zapper Light Gun for Nintendo (+ \$1 ship)	20.30			

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C=Commodore 64/128;I=IBM PC/PCjr;Mac=Macintosh;

S=Atari ST;Int=Intellivision;Nin=Nintendo

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Availability Update continued
 from Page 14.

Macintosh

- SEPTMBER
 Alternate Reality: City (DS)
 Moonmist (Inf)
 Towers of Seven (Sie)
 OCTOBER
 Defender of the Crown (MDS)
 King of Chicago (MDS)
 Sinbad & Throne of Falcon (MDS)
 Star Rush (MDS)
 SECOND QUARTER
 Custom Calculator (EA)
 Dick Francis High Stakes (Min)
 Forbidden Castle (Min)
 Frank & Ernest's Adventure (Pen)
 Homepak (BI)
 I Damiano (Ban)
 InMotion (Ann)
 James Bond: Goldfinger (Min)
 King's Quest (Sie)
 Lunar Explorer (Ann)
 Luscher Profile (Min)
 The Mist (Min)
 Oo-Topos (Pen)
 Orbiter (Spe)
 PaperClip Elite (BI)
 Payroll-MacOneWrite (Sie)
 x-Phantasia (SSI)
 Rendezvous with Rama (Tel)
 Shadowkeep (Tel)
 Skyfox (EA)
 Tellstar (Spe)
 Temple of Apshei Trilogy (Epy)
 Vgw to Kill (Min)
 Voodoo Island (Min)
 THIRD QUARTER
 Breakers (Syn)
 BTS Spreadsheet (BI)
 Chessmaster 2000 (SC)
 King's Quest (Sie)
 King's Quest II (Sie)
 Margaritaville (Pen)
 Print Shop (Bro)
 Ultima 4 (Ori)
 SECOND HALF
 Championship Golf (Game)
 Phantasia (SSI)
 IBM PC/PCjr
 MAY
 x-Alter Ego (Female)(Act)
 x-American Challenge:
 Sailing Simulation (Min)
 x-Championship Golf (Game)
 x-50 Mission Crunch (SSI)
 x-Foobitzky (Inf)
 x-Joe Theismann Football (AG)
 x-Music Studio (Act)
 x-Print Shop Graphics #2 (Bro)
 x-Timothy Leary's Mind Mirror (EA)
 x-Venture Business Simulator (RDS)

JUNE

- Balance of Power (Min)
 Filer's Choice (PCS)
 Lunar Explorer (ET)
 PartyWare (Hit)
 Planner's Choice (PCS)
 Star Quest (Sie)
 Towers of Seven (Sie)
 Trinity (Inf)
 Ware With All (Hit)
 Wilderness (ET)
 Writer's Choice (PCS)
 JULY
 Psi 5 Trading Co (Aco)
 Super Boulder Dash (EA)
 AUGUST
 Leather Goddesses of Phobos (Inf)
 SEPTMBER
 Alternate Reality: City (DS)
 Moonmist (Inf)
 SECOND QUARTER
 Adventure Construction Set (EA)
 Amnesia (EA)
 Black Cauldron (Sie)
 CardWare (Hit)
 Championship Gold (Act)
 Chris E Lloyd Tennis (AG)
 Crosscheck (DS)
 Decision in the Desert (Mic)
 Dick Francis High Stakes (Min)
 Entrepreneur's Game (AG)
 x-Great Intl Paper Airplane
 Construction Kit (SS)
 Hardball (Aco)
 I*S Talk (BI)
 James Bond Goldfinger (Min)
 Mind Pursuit (DS)
 Multibots Kit (MB)
 Operation Market Garden (SSI)
 Orbiter (Spe)
 PaperClip Elite (BI)
 Payroll Pkg-PC OneWrite (Sie)
 PC OneWrite (Sie)
 Powers of Seven (Sie)
 Smart Money (Sie)
 Space Shuttle (Act)
 Space Snatchers of Aratoon (Sie)
 Super Sunday (AH)
 Temple of Apshei Trilogy (Epy)
 THIRD QUARTER
 Breakers (Syn)
 Chessmaster 2000 (SC)
 PaperClip Elite (BI)
 Ronin (Syn)
 Ultima 4 (Ori)
 FOURTH QUARTER
 Deadly Summer (Syn)
 DEGAS Elite (BI)
 House of Changes (Syn)
 Kings Quest III (Sie)
 Where in World is C. Sandiego (Bro)
 SECOND HALF
 Battle of Annetnam (SSI)
 Rings of Zilfin (SSI)

INTERACTIVE VCR TITLES

- JUNE
 Beat the S.A.T./Math (Spn)
 Beat the S.A.T./Verbal (Spn)
 SEPTMBER
 Behind the Screen (Spn)
 Operating Room Mystery (Spn)
 INTELLIVISION
 MAY
 x-Championship Tennis (Intv)
 x-World Cup Soccer (Intv)
 JULY
 Hover Force (Intv)
 AUGUST
 Super Pro Football (Intv)
 Thin Ice (Intv)
 SEPTMBER
 Tower of Mystery (Intv)
 FIRST HALF 1987
 Karate Champ (Intv)

ATARI 7800

- MAY
 System pkgd w/Pole Position II
 Centipede (At)
 Deluxe Asteroids (At)
 Dig Dug (At)
 Food Fight (At)
 Galaga (At)
 Joust (At)
 Moon Patrol (At)
 Ms Pac Man (At)
 Robotron:2084 (At)
 Stargate (At)
 Xevious (At)
 JUNE
 Ballblazer (At)
 Rescue on Fractalus (At)

NINTENDO

- JUNE
 Donkey Kong
 Donkey Kong Jr Math
 Donkey Kong 3
 Donkey Kong Jr
 Mario Bros
 Popeye
 AUGUST
 Balloon Fight
 Gumshoe
 Heli Fighter
 Mach Rider
 Urban Champion

NOTE: Any program noted with an "x" indicates it has shipped prior to our going to print. May not be in national distribution yet, however.

Critically Speaking...Multi-Systems

THE AMERICAN CHALLENGE: A SAILING SIMULATION (♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦) is a combination tutorial & racing program from Tom Snyder Productions Mindscape. The package includes a 45-rpm record with sailing tutorial on one side and the song, "Win Back Cup," on the other. The tutorial is voiced by a salty-sound gentleman with a distinctly New England accent. The song written and performed by Tom Snyder (the software author not the erstwhile TV talk-show host).

Learning to Sail

Novice sailors will definitely want to start out with sailing tutorial to learn the ropes (and sails and rudder, et al). Although there is a transcript of the record in the instruction book, the recorded tutorial is much easier to use. If your record player is not convenient to your computer, you may want to dub the tutorial onto a cassette since so many people own portable cassette players these days. Once you are comfortable controlling your sailboat, you can try racing one of the seven courses. There's an eighth course, the "Cup Race," but you cannot race on that course until your sailboat has completed the other seven courses with a winning time. For a change of pace, you can also race on any of the courses with a motorboat. Of course, the motorboat covers the course faster, and it gives you the opportunity to get to know the course a little better.

Race Against a Friend

We've saved the best feature of this program for last: you can race against a friend who also has a copy of the program. Your two computers can be connected directly via cable or over the telephone lines via modem. Very few programs provide for this kind of long-distance competition, yet it's just the sort of thing to appeal to many computer users.

Good Graphic Approach

The designers used an interesting combination of standard graphics for backgrounds with vector-style graphics for the outlines of boats and sails. This approach makes the visual representation of sailing much easier to understand than it would have been with solid sails and boats. Altogether, the combination of recorded tutorial, program, and detailed instruction book provides a very good introduction to sailing. The variety of courses and motorboat option provides plenty of gaming challenge, and the two-player long-distance option is a welcome bonus. (Solo or competitive play. Keyboard; 64K disk. Optional: Hayes or Hayes-compatible modem or direct-connect cable.) Apple II and IBM PC/jr versions reviewed (both in same package).

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)