Computer Entertainer
the newsletter

BITS AND PIECES....

Helicopter Simulator from Sierra

Described by a Sierra spokesman as a "killer simulator," SIERRA 3D HELICOPTER SIMULATOR is expected to ship this month in IBM format, with an Atari ST version to be ready before Christmas. The program was an unsolicited submission from a college student, which impressed the Sierra staff so much that they purchased it immediately. The simulator includes eight sub-games said to feature outstanding graphics and relentless action. As it was described to us, one of the game scenarios sounds like a scene from the movie, "Blue Thunder," because you guide your chopper among city skyscrapers while being chased by another helicopter. (This one sounds as if it has definite possibilities!)

Animated Adventures

In other news from Sierra, the 3D animated adventure, SPACE QUEST, will be available soon for IBM, to be followed by versions for ST and Amiga this fall and winter. TOWERS OF SEVEN (FANTACIDE) has been cancelled. The anxiously awaited KING'S QUEST III: TO HEIR IS HUMAN should be ready for IBM in November, with Apple, Amiga, and ST versions slated for early 1987. The IBM version of KING'S QUEST III will be Sierra's first entertainment product to support the EGA card, and it will be copyable to hard disk. The 128K Apple II version will also support hard disk and 3.5-inch disk drives. (You may notice an emphasis on IBM product from Sierra. This is due to greatly increased demand for programs in IBM format, credited to strong sales of the Tandy 1000 and a variety of IBM clones.) Sierra is also working on two all-new animated adventures for Amiga and Macintosh, but we were told that it is too early to divulge any details about the programs at this time.

Fantasy Adventure for 8-Bit Computers

Although Sierra has been emphasizing programs for the computers with 128K RAM or more, they will be returning to their roots with WRATH OF DENETHENOR, a two-disk fantasy adventure for Apple II, Commodore 64/128, and Atari XL/XE. The first two versions are set to ship in time for Christmas; the Atari version may be out in time for holiday buying, but it's possible that it won't be ready until early 1987. WRATH OF DENETHENOR should gain extra attention with its special pricing at only $19.95 suggested retail. (Please check the Availability Update for specific release dates on all Sierra products.)

### Hectic Pace at Electronic Arts

The pace is really hectic these days at Electronic Arts, between the programs from the company itself and the distribution and marketing of their Affiliated Label programs. Three new programs for IBM have just shipped: GRAND SLAM BRIDGE (MSR $60), WORLD TOUR GOLF ($50), and the previously unannounced STARFLIGHT ($50). BRIDGE is not a tutorial, but a program designed for playing and practicing with or without a partner. The program includes over one billion hands. GOLF is for one to four players, comes with 24 courses, and includes an easy-to-use hole construction set. The program also allows the creation of customized computer robot players so that you can simulate playing with any foursome imaginable, from your duffer friends to top pros. (Without question, 1986 will go down as THE year of computer golf simulations.) STARFLIGHT (to be reviewed next month) is a game of outer-space exploration that was reportedly 15 man-years in the making. It includes 280 star systems, 800 planets, and artificial intelligence-based communication with seven alien races, each with its own language, culture, and knowledge of ancient civilizations. A fractal generator creates the planetary vistas, allowing realistic views of a rotating planet beneath you as you come in for a landing. The program's database keeps track of 1.9 million unique locations on each planet, for a total of more than 1.5 billion explorable locations in the game. We have just one question: if STARFLIGHT took 15 man-years to develop, how many months or even years might it take the player to explore all of those locations?

New Titles from Electronic Arts

More new releases are coming from Electronic Arts, including DARK LORD, an illustrated text adventure for Apple II which is said to feature the fastest drawing routines yet seen in a program of this type. AMNESIA, EA's first text adventure, has been delayed several times, but it should finally appear this fall and winter for Apple, Commodore 64/128, and IBM. Also coming soon are ROBOT RASCALS (formerly
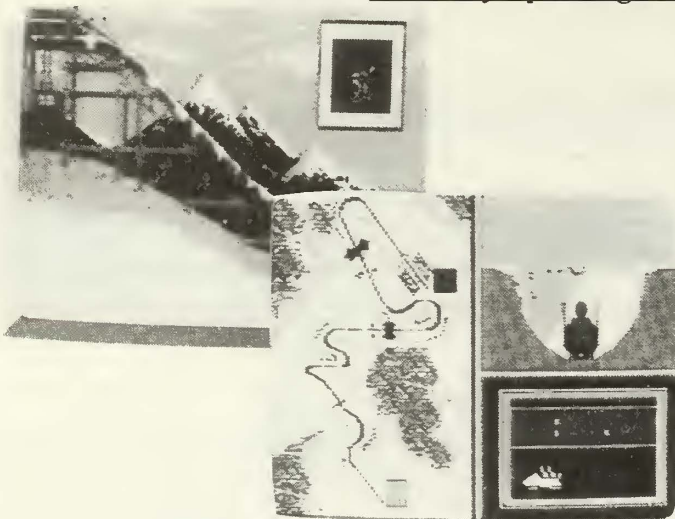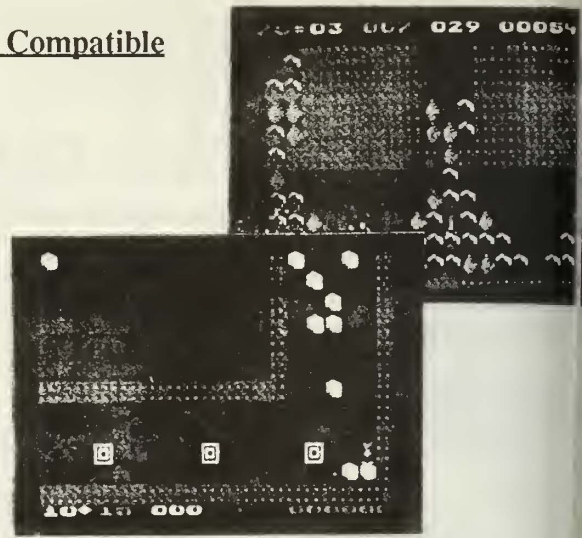
WINTER GAMES (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) has just been translated for the IBM PC by *Epyx* and it's offers the same fine graphics and gameplay as the earlier versions. There are sever events included within the program: hot dog aerials (ski jumping plus acrobatics), biathlon (cross country skiing and rifle shooting), figure skating (short program), free skating (choose your own choreography), and the grueling bobsled run. Up to eight players can choose any one of eighteen countries to represent, moving on to compete in any one or all of the events. You can practice within any of the events without scoring before moving on to actual competition where a panel of judges will score the events.

Gorgeous Scenery

As has been typical in the other Epyx olympic games, the scenery and graphics are superb. The graphics are greatly enhanced with the fine sound effects, as well as appropriate musical themes which introduce the various events. The colors are dazzling, adding to the realism and enjoyment of the games. The various contests themselves require a wide range of skills and joystick control. There are a number of skills which you'll have to master including precise timing, as well as tiny adjustments in the athelete's body as he works through certain events. Everyone seems to find one or two events that become their favorites, and we're no exception. We especially enjoy the ski jump and bobsled run; however, it's a highly personal choice with all sorts of combinations becoming the favorites of players. There has been so much success with Summer Games and Winter Games (in already released formats), that game players everywhere have written to Epyx with additional event suggestions. As a result of those ideas, watch for World Games to come to your home computer within the next few months. Meanwhile, IBM owners can enjoy the winter events. (1 to 8 players; joystick and color graphics card required; also available for C64, Apple, Macintosh, Atari ST)
Recommended (MSR $39.95)

SUPER BOULDERDASH (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) has been converted for the IBM PC by *Electronic Arts* and it remains one of our favorites! With Electronic Art's lowered retail on this program, it moves into a "Best Buy" category as it offers both the original BoulderDash, and BoulderDash II. The original game, named Arcade Game of the Year (1984) by Family Computing, features a collection of 16 caves where our hero, Rockford, must collect diamonds while avoiding exploding fireflies, vicious butterflies, and falling boulders. You must manuever Rockford through the various caves in a strategic manner in order to successfully move on to the next cave. As he digs the passages, the boulders fall and tumble. The trick is to learn in which direction, so you can use the boulders to trap the butterflies and exploding fireflies. If the boulders hit a butterfly, it will turn into diamonds which Rockford can then pick up.

Additional Fun in Sequel

The sequel, included in the package, offers 16 additional caves, with many of those caves sure to stump player for several sessions until they can devise the strategic way to get through that particular cave. As in the original, it will take quick thinking in order to make your way through the levels. You'll face the same enemies in BoulderDash II as i its predessor, including the deadly Amoeba who love to expand and turn an entire cave into boulders!

Fast Paced Action

Both games offer frantic action (Rockford taps his foot impatiently whenever you pause too long to think), and the need for strategy. While the 16 screens in the original game offers hours of enjoyment, the 16 new screens in the sequel give you more intricate problems and puzzles. Even the most seasoned player will find hours and hours of intricate play with a total of 32 screens offering five levels of difficulty. One of the all-time great computer games has gotten even better, thanks to Electronic Arts' price reduction! (one player, two player alternating; joystick or keyboard; color monitor only; also available for Apple, C64/128, Atari)
Recommended (MSR $14.95)

Baudville Expands to New Systems

BLAZING PADDLES (MSR $34.95), the all-in-one deluxe illustration package, has just been released for Atari XE/XL and is Baudville's first program for Atari users. They promise more to come for Atari this fall, including the casino program, VIDEO VEGAS ($29.95), which will also be converted for Commodore 64/128 ($29.95) and as Baudville's first entry for Amiga ($34.95). The colorful program including draw poker, blackjack, keno, and a video slot machine has been a big seller for the company in its original Apple II version. Baudville is also working on a new program for Apple, AWARD MAKER PLUS, which is promised to have more features than "that other certificate maker." The $49.95 tool will have the ability to print borders in color, and parchment paper will be available to give your award certificate that extra-special look.

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 rated for graphics)

Critically Speaking...
Commodore 64/128 Compatible

TRUE-STAT BASEBALL (♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) comes from the ...*Logic* author of Football and it's a fine program for the ...atically-inclined players. You begin by selecting the team ...u like to manage, then pick the team you want to play ...ga st. Included in the initial package (team disks are bound ...llow if the program is a success) are the baseball teams ...ro the 1985 season, as well as eight classic teams. This ...cludes such all-time greats as the '69 Mets, '59 Dodgers, '61 ...nd 27 Yankees, and more. You can also choose from three ...al arks--Dodger, Yankee, and the SubLogic stadium (this is ...no er area of expansion as there is an indication of future ...va bility of a Stadium disk which will feature every Major ...ea e stadium in the country). You then move on to whether ...ou wish to play the one-player game (against the computer), ...vo layer, or watch an all-computer version (a good way to ...in uce yourself to the action).

B ter Up

Once you're ready to manage your team, you'll find the ...no es available to you quite varied. When you're batting ...ou have a total of eight different options--from batting ...or lly to bunting for hit or sacrifice, hit and run, and more. ...ou second offensive decision must be made concerning your ...as running options. You'll have to make choices regarding ...ie ggressiveness of the running, and whether you wish to ...ea Once you've chosen the batting option, the screen goes ...to actual field where you'll see your choice enacted. Upon ...ie nish of the play, you'll go back to the statistics screen ...he you'll be told the result of the play (anything from a ...om run to strike-out, walk, put-out, double-play, etc. You ...an so change the batting line-up, remove a pitcher, etc.

T ing the Field

...u'll have defensive decisions to make, as well. Begin by ...ak g a pitching choice, whether it's to pitch normally, ...gg sively, intentional walk, pitch our, or pitching around ...ie atter. Once that's done, you'll have to set your defensive ...g ent. It's your choice to move the infield in, guard the ...or s, play aggressively, etc. All the choices, defensive and ...ffe ive, can be made with either a joystick or via the ...yl ard.

Tr ling, Updating, and More

Y can really get deeply involved in the art of trading and ...ea g new teams of your own. Via a Stat-Keeper disk, you ...n pdate your player's performances in the games you've ...er playing. That can be done automatically or manually, ...ep ing on the information you need. You can use the Stat-...ee r when you are making decisions regarding trades and the ...ke By the way, a tremendous feature of the game allows you ...nt out a hard copy of not only team stats, but of box ...or of individual games played or series. The statistics ...hi are built-in include everything you'd find in the real ...in from the obvious things such as batting average, ...all strikeouts, but also including total number of doubles, ...ipl , home runs, ability to throw the ball, fielding ...rc tage, base running ability, etc.

Pr ram With Depth

itially we thought, "yikes, another baseball game!" ...ow er, we were quickly impressed with the depth of this ...og m. There was also something very satisfying being able ... the actual play take place, as opposed to some ...ati cal games which are nothing but names and numbers. ...nd very player on the field acts and moves individually on ...er play. Being able to print out the player stats and box ...or are a big plus for those armchair managers out there ...ho vant to study the stats to be able to maximize their ...am efforts. We are very impressed with this program and ...gh recommend it to anyone who enjoys the statistical side ...s rts (and we know there's lots of you out there!) (One ...ay two-player alternating; joystick or keyboard) ...ec mended (MSR $49.95)

Electric Dreams Imported Software

Activision's newest label, Electric Dreams, makes its debut this month with three titles imported from England. The mission of this new label is to bring proven software hits from outside the U.S. to American game players. The move is a natural for Activision because of their strong presence in the international software market.

Three for Commodore and Apple

The first two Electric Dreams releases, ROCKY HORROR SHOW and SPINDIZZY, are reviewed this month and should start appearing in stores as you receive this issue. The third release, ZOIDS, will be available later this month. ZOIDS is an action/adventure game based on the Tomy toy characters, and the game has earned eleven software awards in Europe. In it, you are an Earthman in the world of Zoidstar, where you attempt to save the planet from the Red Zoid Imperial Leader, Redhorn the Terrible. All three games will be available for Commodore 64/128 (MSR $29.95) and Apple II (MSR $34.95)

Software Toolworks Debuts

Previously known by the name Software Country, the publisher of "Software Golden Oldies," "Chessmaster 2000," and the upcoming "New Technology Coloring Book" has changed its name to Software Toolworks. The company was founded by former radio and TV personality, Les Crane, and its products are distributed by Electronic Arts under their Affiliated Label program.

Bits & Pieces...*continued from Page 1*

known as SCAVENGER HUNT), a combination card and computer game for C64 and Apple, and MAKE YOUR OWN MURDER PARTY for the same two systems plus IBM. RADIO BASEBALL, a strategy game with a broadcast feature, is set for IBM this fall. And adventurers won't want to miss BARD'S TALE II: THE DESTINY NIGHT (formerly THE ARCH-MAGE'S TALE). And finally, fans of the inimitable Chris Crawford can look forward to his action-oriented wargame for Macintosh, PATTON VS. ROMMEL.

Lots of Conversions, Too

Plenty of existing Electronic Arts titles will find their way to new systems over the next several months: AGE OF ADVENTURE and MAIL-ORDER MONSTERS for Atari XL/XE, LORDS OF CONQUEST for Atari and Apple, SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD for Macintosh, MARBLE MADNESS ("looking unbelievably good") and ARCTIC FOX (said to be even faster than the original game on Amiga) for Apple and C64, REALM OF IMPOSSIBILITY for Apple, and DELUXE MUSIC CONSTRUCTION SET and THE BARD'S TALE for Amiga. We were told that THE BARD'S TALE is an "absolute stunner" on Amiga. Because of the graphic animation capabilities of Amiga, it's "the first time that the monsters are really scary." And sooner or later it had to happen: Electronic Arts has finally announced that its first entertainment product for the Atari ST will be SKYFOX. (FINANCIAL COOKBOOK is the company's sole previous entry in the ST market.)

EA Affiliated Labels

On the Affiliated Labels scene, Origin Systems plans conversions of AUTODUEL (C64, ST, Macintosh, Amiga), MOEBIUS (C64), OGRE (Atari 8-bit and ST), ULTIMA III (ST and Amiga), and ULTIMA IV (IBM). And Origin has re-worked the original ULTIMA I, the game that started it all, with better graphics and assembly language so that it looks better and runs faster. The classic game that many of today's newer players may never have seen will be available for Apple, Atari XL/XE, and C64 this winter. Origin has also picked up and re-designed RING QUEST (Apple) from Penguin, an illustrated text adventure that never got into full distribution before. Software Toolworks (formerly Software Country) will complete the CHESSMASTER 2000 lineup soon with versions for Amiga, ST, and Macintosh. They also plan to release the ST version of SOFTWARE GOLDEN OLDIES plus a new title for Amiga and ST, the NEW TECHNOLOGY COLORING BOOK. (Please check the Availability Update in this issue for specific release dates on programs from Electronic Arts and its Affiliated Labels.)

MARBLE MADNESS (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) from _Electronic Arts_ is Larry Reed's Amiga translation of the Atari coin-op game. Although the object of the game is simple--guiding your marble to the goal line of each screen--accomplishing that object is anything but easy. Along the 3-D tracks and hills, there are many obstacles to overcome. There are six different raceways, each with its own musical score and different creatures to contend with. You start with a Practice Race and finally move up to the Ultimate Race (#6). I have played this game for many hours and have yet to finish the Ultimate Race.

Spectacular Animation

The 3-D terrains in this game are incredible. The graphics and sounds will blow you away. And the animation is the best I have seen to date on the Amiga. From the "Marble Munchers" to the waving flags at the goal line, the animation is smooth and practically flawless. It's like watching a cartoon instead of just playing a computer game. And the game definitely keeps you on the edge of your seat and involved in the excitement of every roll of your marble. Lots of Surprises Electronic Arts does not tell you what to expect in this game. Only a reference card with loading instructions and game options is included in the package. I don't want to give away anything either, but I can tell you that there is action and surprise around every corner. One of my favorite raceways is the "Silly Race," where everything you know is wrong, and everything turns out to be the opposite of what you expect! Controller Option At the opening Option Screen, you can select one or two players, difficulty level, and the type of controller you wish to use. You can play with a joystick, mouse, or track-ball. And if you're fortunate enough to have an Atari-type track-ball, this is the time to break it out of moth balls. With the track-ball, which is what the the arcade version of the game uses, you have the ability to make extremely precise movements with your marble. If you don't have access to a track-ball (it's almost impossible to find one in a store anymore), the next best thing I have found is the mouse. It's almost like an upside-down track-ball. My least-preferred controller is the joystick. I found it too easy to over-shoot my marble with this controller and found myself falling off a cliff countless times. Besides the basic movement of the marble with your controller, you also have a "turbo-charge" feature. You get a little extra speed when you press the firing or mouse button while pointed in the direction you want your marble to move. This comes in handy when you're going up a hill or jumping--or when a "Marble Muncher" is about to swallow your marble!

Outstanding Conversion

In most cases, when an arcade game is translated to a home computer, something gets lost. Not this time! Absolutely everything from the pay-for-play machine is here--the same sights, the same sounds, the same play action and even more. You can even have two players racing to the goal at the same time, just as you can in the arcade version. But this is the first time that a game translated from a coin-op is even better than the original. The designers have added the turbo-charge feature, and they have given the Amiga version stereo sound, which is fantastic. The sound effects couldn't be better, such as the crash of two marbles colliding which reminds me of the sound of two glass cookie jars hitting each other.

Nit-Picking Time

The only negative things I noticed were extremely minor. One thing this game does not have is a "pause" feature. However, you do have a 15 to 18 second break between rounds while the next raceway loads from the disk. Another thing I noticed is that when there are two marbles on the screen, and depending on where you might be, the action does slow down slightly.

Best Game to Date

I feel that this is the best game for Amiga that I have seen and played to date. Hats off to Larry Reed and the Electronic Arts team who brought us a magnificent piece of software. This was a major effort by a lot of people. (I never saw so many credits for one game.) It was certainly delayed for a while, but well worth the wait. This is one truly outstanding game that shows off some of the Amiga's most outstanding qualities. (Solo or 2-player competitive; 512K; Mouse, joystick or track-ball.) Reviewed on Amiga; coming soon Commodore 64/128.
Recommended. (MSR $49.95) --Cal Chen

Stuart Smith's ADVENTURE CONSTRUCTION S (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) has been newly converted for Amiga _Electronic Arts_. In bringing this superbly crafted prog to Amiga, new features have been added, along with a br new, full-length adventure, "Galactic Agent," by Ken St. A (author of "Tunnels and Trolls" and president of the Adven Construction Set fan club). The other adventures present in e original versions of the program for Commodore 64/128 d Apple II are also here (full-length "Rivers of Light," one s adventure tutorial, and six mini-adventures on a variety themes).

Dream-Come-True Package

Along with the playable adventures you get a dream-co true package for any adventure fan: three different construc n sets, allowing you to give fullplay to your imagination creating games in the Fantasy, Spy/Mystery, and Sci Fiction genres. No programming knowledge is require build even the most complex adventure imaginable. adventure can contain as many as 240 "rooms" and props--a variety of terrains (desert, mountains, forests, r s, plains), all kinds of portals, magic spells, text, music, a truly mind-boggling array of creatures and things. And a of this wealth is very easy to control and use--even easier faster than previous versions. (If you get in over your he in creating a complex adventure, you can even let the pro m finish it for you.) One nifty trick, exclusive to the A a version of ADVENTURE CONSTRUCTION SET, is the a ty to keep both mouse and joystick plugged into your com er at the same time, using the mouse for editing and the joy k for playing, without having to unplug either one.

Improved Graphics, Digitized Sound

Graphics have been improved greatly in this new ve n, taking advantage of the Amiga's wonderful way with pic s. When editing graphics, you can use any of 32 colors, ea of which can be varied further with hue, color, and brigh ss controls. And this version of ADVENTURE CONSTRUC N SET also uses digitized sound, with a choice of 41 kin of musical themes and sound effects. The possibilities are er ss in this program that offers great depth, flexibility, nd countless hours of creative fun for adventure lovers. he Amiga version is the best yet--don't miss out on the fun! to 4 players; Mouse and/or joystick plus keyboard; 512K sk: one or more blank disks required.) Reviewed on Amiga: lso available for Commodore 64/128 and for Apple II (at $4 5). **Recommended. (MSR $39.95)**

Talking Disks from Covox

Covox, developer of the Voice Master speech synthesi and recognition system, will send you a disk that talks f $5 including first-class postage ($7 outside North America) he disk, which is not copy-protected, is meant to b an introduction to the capabilites of the Covox Voice M ter speech and music processor. If you're curious about h to make your computer talk, send payment to Covox, Inc. 57 Conger St., Eugene, OR 97402. Be sure to tell them ich computer you have. (Talking Disks available for Comm ore 64/128, Apple II+/IIe/IIc [64K], and Atari XL/XE.)

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE...

Don't miss out on all the great back issues! We've een covering the computer and dedicated game field for five ars. Most issues are still available (none left of Vol 1, #,3). Send $2.00 for each back issue you want. Buy six or ore, and they're just $1.50 each. Make certain you have a co lete set!

Critically Speaking...Amiga Compatible

DIABLO (♦1/2/♦♦) is a strategy/puzzle game created by Jay and Ruth Foreman and released on the *Classic Image* label. The game consists of tracks, panels, and a ball, and the object is to keep the ever-rolling ball from falling off a track or panel. This is done by moving tracks and panels around with your mouse.

Panels and Tracks

The playfield consists of 119 panels with two tracks per panel. There is one open or missing panel, which is what you use to manipulate the tracks and panels, keeping a continuous path open for the ball. Vertical and horizontal moves of tracks and panels are allowed, but diagonal moves are not. The playfield occupies the center portion of the screen, with all 119 panels displayed at once (no scrolling). To the left of the playfield is a "Status" area which shows the level you are on, the bonus score, extra balls available, and the "wrap count." (When the wrap count reaches zero, the ball will wrap around the track, provided there is a track or panel to receive it on the other end.) To the right of the playfield is a group of options: New (to start a new game), save, load, pause, quit, music (turns off music but not sound effects), and hyper-ball (to speed up the ball).

Not for Everyone

If you are looking for mind-boggling graphics or sound effects, you certainly won't find them here. The sound effects are minimal and very simple. The graphics are very plain. In fact, this game looks as if it might have been done on a Commodore 64 or Atari 8-bit computer instead of an Amiga. Because the rolling ball is so tiny and so much background detail (119 panels) has been crowded into only a portion of the full monitor screen, the game gets to be a little hard on the eyes after a while. (Some scrolling, which would allow for larger graphics, might have helped.) The music drove me insane after five minutes of play, and I really would like to thank the programmers for putting in the Music on/off option. As to the play value, some people may get some enjoyment from the strategic planning required to keep the game going. Personally, I found the game overly frustrating to play. And I can recommend the game, if for no other reason than the fact that it doesn't even begin to tap the capabilities of the Amiga computer. DIABLO is a waste of resources comparable to listening to a monaural record on a $3000 stereo system. With all the other great games on the market that DO use the Amiga's capabilities, I can't imagine wasting time on this one. Of course, if the premise of the game seems to interest you and you're attracted to its $29.95 price, then maybe you should get it. But I have a question for you. Why in the heck would you buy an Amiga and settle for software that delivers much less than the computer is capable of? (Solo play; Mouse; Paul.) Reviewed on Amiga; also available for Atari ST. Not recommended. (MSR $29.95)   --Cal Chen

Playboy Developing Software Line

Apparently looking for new arenas to conquer, Playboy is preparing to enter the computer software market. We have no idea what they're up to, but a reliable source tells us that Playboy has closeted a few top designers and committed everyone involved to absolute secrecy. At least they won't have to worry about their software products being pulled from the shelves of 7-11 Stores, since those convenience outlets don't sell computer programs!

Scarborough Absorbed by Mindscape

Scarborough Systems, makers of several productivity software programs including Mastertype, has had its assets acquired by Mindscape. Availability of the programs should continue, via Mindscape.

One Computer Shopper's Lament....
a Light-Hearted Look (or Is It?)

Well, I've decided to make the plunge...I'm going to buy a computer. I think I'll head to my nearest computer store and buy a Commodore 64. So, in I go...

The salesman says that's no problem, do you want the C64 or the C64C. For about twice the price, you'll get the latest model of the diehard. I ponder this, 'cause I don't wanna own last year's anything. While I'm trying to decide, I see a C64C semi-lookalike and ask what it is. The response is, it's a c128, which I can have for about $300. It's double the computer of the C64. And it's a WHOLE lot better than the 64 or 64C. It runs all the 64 software, but there isn't much software made specifically for the added memory. So, I scratch my head, and happen to see out of the corner of my eye, a nifty color monitor with some impressive color graphics on it. I say, "that looks like the C128. Does it really do all that?"

"No, that's the Commodore Amiga. For under $1000, it does all the things a Macintosh can do, only in color, and it's a great computer."

I say, "Macintosh? It does all the Macintosh functions for less than $1000? I'll take it!"

The salesman says, "No...it CAN do all those Mac things, but there's not too much software at the moment."

So now, pondering the C64, C64C, C128, and Amiga, I am completely baffled! I think, MAYBE if I look at them all one more time, I can decide. I look once more at the 64, 64C, the 128, and proceed to the display area for the Amiga. I suddenly realize someone turned this Amiga off, so I ask the salesman to see it again. Then he says, "That's not an Amiga, that is the PC. It's compatible with the IBM PC."

I gulp, "IBM compatible?!?"

He says, "OH! I didn't know you were looking for an IBM compatible computer. Here, look at these...the Commodore PC and the Commodore AT."

Seeing a nearby lounge, and feeling the need to lie down to contemplate all that's been said, I head off for the soda machine. Next to the vending area, there is a tv set with Cable News Network, advertising the Commodore Plus-4 for $99.95. I start to feel dizzy, and a clerk walks in and offers some assistance.

I say, "I'm thirsty, would you have any caffeine-free Classic Diet Cherry Coke Light???"

Access Dow Jones

Meca has just introduced MANAGING THE MARKET for IBM owners, allowing automatic access to Dow Jones News/Retrieval Service. This communications program can be used by itself to update securities prices or in conjunction with spreadsheets like Lotus 1-2-3 or Meca's Managing Your Money. Users can create customized "hot list" (of up to 225 securities) to check key prices. Purchasers of this $149.95 program get a free password for the Dow Jones News/Retrieval service ($75 value) as well as an hour's free connect time from Dow Jones.

Coleco Denies Computer Rumor

Two days after we went to press on our August issue, a Coleco representative returned our calls about the Macintosh-like, color computer which we had been told was secretly in development. The rumor was cordially--but flatly--denied. We did NOT get one of those responses that "neither confirms nor denies," the kind of answer which can lead you to believe that something really IS going on which they can't (or won't) talk about. It sounded like a genuine denial to us.

Thanks for the Memory

A computer wouldn't be a computer without memory. And if you get a few computer or game system owners together, sooner or later they will start comparing the relative merits of their machines, inevitably coming to the point of how much "memory" each system has. Anyone who is the least bit computer literate has learned to throw around a few numbers followed by that magic letter "K" (for "kilobyte," a measurement of memory capacity.) It has become very fashionable among computer owners to speak of 128K this and 512K that, even if they're not too sure about what it all means.

What Is Memory?

Memory, according to a dictionary of computer terms, actually refers to two different things. Since this newsletter is not intended as a technical journal (we leave that to others), let's explain it as simply as possible. The first meaning of memory covers the internal electronics of the computer itself, the storage area for data and programs which is a fast-working, but temporary holding area. It's temporary in the sense that anything held in this memory will disappear forever if the power to your computer is interrupted. This kind of memory is referred to as "RAM" (Random-Access Memory or read/write memory), and it's what most people mean when they use just the general term "memory." For example, we've all heard statements such as "my friend's computer only has 64K [RAM], but mine has 128K [RAM]." (A certain bragging tone can usually be detected in a statement like this, because it's meant to imply that "mine is better than his," which may or may not be true.)

External Memory

The second meaning of memory is external to the computer and refers to memory which works more slowly than the computer's own internal memory. This kind of memory is sometimes called "mass storage," and its home is within magnetic media read by floppy or hard disk drives, cassette tape drives, and the like. More exotic items, such as CD-ROM drives, fit in this category, too. (CD-ROM stands for "Compact Disc Read-Only Memory.") There are two main functions of external memory: loading information (programs) into the computer's internal, temporary memory and permanently saving other information (your data) so that it won't vanish into thin air when you turn off your computer. Your computer is virtually useless without both kinds of memory, internal and external, and the way these two kinds of memory interact has a lot to do with the kinds of programs you can and cannot run on your computer.

How Much Is Enough?

Back in the "dark ages" of personal computers (about four or five years ago), the 48K RAM in an Apple II+ or Atari 800 was considered a generous amount among computers typically used in the home. Many computers came with much less, such as the 5K Commodore VIC-20 or 16K Atari 400. The Commodore 64, "loaded" with 64K of RAM, was pretty fancy stuff, even though less than 40K of that memory space is usually accessible to the user. Now computer owners are straining at the memory boundaries of their machines--pushing 128K Apple IIs to 256K and beyond, turning 128K Macintoshes into 512K Fat Macs and full megabyte Mac Pluses, upgrading Amigas from 256K to 512K, eyeing Atari 1040STs over 520STs, and wondering where to find more memory space in their 640K IBM PCs. These amounts of RAM were beyond imagination just a few years ago, and yet computer owners keep looking for more. Just what are these people DOING with all that memory, anyway?

More Sophisticated Programs

Today computer owners are running far more sophisticated and powerful programs on their machines--programs that do more, programs that offer more spectacular graphics and sound, and programs that are just plain bigger than they used to be. All of this means that they are memory-grabbers. And in the interest of being much more "user friendly," some of the computers themselves eat up large chunks of their own RAM in providing graphic-oriented displays and other niceties, leaving less available RAM as working space for programs and data. The Macintosh is an excellent example.

Because of its graphic interface, a 128K Mac actually lea less working space for programs and data than does a 12 Apple IIe. Thus, two computers with the same amount of RA may not be able to handle equivalent programs because e computer uses its RAM space differently. And there is anot factor that affects a computer's ability to handle certain ki of programs: the capacity of its external storage memory.

Memory Comparisons

The interaction of a computer's internal RAM storage external disk storage is well illustrated by looking at a sin memory-intensive program available across multiple syste The best example we can think of is the new Interac Fiction Plus line from Infocom. Because these are text-o programs without graphics, the Infocom programs app virtually identical across systems. For example, TRINITY r only on these machines: Amiga, Apple II (128K minimu Atari ST, Commodore 128, IBM, and Macintosh (51 minimum). At first glance, it would appear that TRINIT main requirement is a machine with at least 128K. Then won't it run on a 128K Mac? Remember, the Macintosh ne a lot of its memory to manage its graphic interface, leav less working space for a very large and complex program TRINITY. Therefore, TRINITY needs 512K on Macintosh.

Problems with Disk Space

We can hear our Atari-owning readers grumbling at point, "But I have a 128K Atari 130XE. Infocom should TRINITY for my computer because it has enough memo True, the 130XE has enough RAM to handle the program, the problem here is the disk drive. Even in its enhar density mode, the Atari 1050 Disk Drive allows only 135 140K of data on the disk. According to the man who shc know, TRINITY author Brian Moriarty, that simply enough. TRINITY could run on the Atari 130XE only if disk drives were required to be on-line at the same time, impractical requirement because of the relatively small por of Atari owners who have two disk drives. Brian also tolc that "it's a miracle that TRINITY runs on the Apple II" bec it barely fits. The problem is not with the 128K of inte Apple IIe memory, but with limitations of disk space. Apple disk drive allows 143K of data on a disk, and second side of the TRINITY disk contains 170K. As B explained it, "Side two of this disk is formatted in a way t the devil's work. We had a teenager who worked for us a years ago and came up with this method of having a giant sector per track." This opened up space that is normally for separating sectors, and the space was used for data. designers using such tricks to squeeze more into programs, is it any wonder that there is more and more der for memory in today's computers?

CinemaWare Looks to October Releases

Master Designer Software, developer of the CinemaWare of interactive movies, is preparing for its first rele DEFENDER OF THE CROWN (Amiga), THE KING CHICAGO (Macintosh), and S.D.I. (Atari ST) next m Additional titles, SINBAD AND THE THRONE OF FALCON and STAR RUSH (both Amiga) won't be ready t early 1987. Conversions are already planned in early 198 S.D.I. (Amiga) and DEFENDER OF THE CROWN Macintosh, IBM and Commodore 64/128). Behind-the-Sc Tour Watch for next month's issue, which will featu behind-the-scenes tour of Master Designer Software's facil Based on the few samples of their interactive movies which saw at the Consumer Electronics Show in June of this yea can't wait to get a look at the progress on these innov programs!

TOP GUNNER from Microprose

Microprose seems to be taking aim at fans of this summer's hit movie, "Top Gun." The company has just released TOP GUNNER for Atari XL/XE and Commodore 64/128 (MSR $29.95). This is not a new simulation, but rather a compilation of three previous Microprose titles: AIR RESCUE I, MIG ALLEY ACE, and HELLCAT ACE. If you like air combat simulations and don't already own these titles, the TOP GUNNER package is a great bargain.

Not Another Computer Book!

Just when you think that every conceivable computer-related topic has been exhausted, when you think no one could possibly find anything really different and interesting about which to write yet another computer book, someone comes along to prove you wrong. The someone in this case is Dan Gutman, a 30-year-old syndicated newspaper columnist who writes about computers and technology. He is also the former editor-in-chief of *Video Games Player* magazine and its successor, *Computer Games* magazine. His book, due for late August release from Compute Books, is titled **I Didn't Know You Could Do THAT With A Computer!**

Purpose of Home Computers

Intrigued by the press release we received about his book, we gave Dan Gutman a call at his New York office to ask him a few questions about the subject of his new book, the "practical, unusual, and wonderful software" which he has dubbed "Weirdware." After a few minutes of conversation with this soft-spoken writer, it became clear to us that his purpose is nothing short of proving to anyone who will listen that the personal computer in the home does have a purpose--even many purposes. "Why do I need a computer?" Gutman challenges. "Why do I need a toaster? All it does is turn bread brown. A computer can be used for hundreds, even thousands of applications. Maybe because it doesn't have just one specific purpose, people think it has no purpose."

Personal Crusade

Gutman said that while he was the editor of *Computer Games* magazine, he thought that computers were good for games, word processing, spreadsheets, possibly databases, and little else. Then he started noticing tiny ads in the back of computer magazines, many of which were placed for programs produced by very small companies. He found programs to help you chart a horoscope, write your will, learn the Bible, dissect a frog, improve your memory, and on and on. As Gutman explains, "these are things you might want to do with a computer if you don't write, don't run a business out of your home, and don't want to spend $1000 to play games." He began collecting a file of these unusual, practical, interesting, and sometimes silly programs which he calls "Weirdware." The file grew to become a book, as Gutman launched "a personal crusade to put computers in the American home." He believes that people "have to see ways to use a computer in their everyday life" before this crusade can succeed. "For most of us, picking the right college or picking a winning horse are much closer to home than managing a business," he adds.

More Than 100 Programs

Gutman's book covers more than a hundred different programs, loosely organized in categories of Home and Family, Health and Fitness, Religion, Simulations, Astronomy, Sports and Hobbies, Gambling, Debatable Sciences, the Arts, Mental Health, Learning, Automobiles, Telecommunications, Animals, and a category for programs that didn't fit anywhere else. Many are programs you've never heard of and won't see in a software store. Gutman explains, "This book is my way of trying to explode the myth that the computer has no practical purpose in the home." He goes on to say that "the computer is the only appliance that you can bring home, plug in, turn on, and watch it do absolutely nothing--until you plug in all this wonderful stuff, Weirdware." Gutman believes that Weirdware is the future of computing, and he intends to let everyone know about it with his new book, **I Didn't Know You Could Do THAT With A Computer!** ($14.95, Compute Books)

Critically Speaking...
Commodore 64/128 Compatible

GAMEMAKER SPORTS (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) and **SCIENCE FICTION** (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) **DESIGNER'S LIBRARIES** from Activision are meant to be used with Garry Kitchen's GameMaker: The Computer Game Design Kit, a program that earned Garry the Computer Entertainer "Designer of the Year" award in 1985. Each Library disk includes a wealth of game elements to add to the fun of using the original program, including background scenes, sprites for characters and objects, animation routines, sound effects, and background music. As we took a tour through the two Libraries, we were very impressed with the highly professional look and sound of all the game elements provided. And everything in these two Libraries was designed using the original "GameMaker" as the programming tool, which gives you some idea of how sophisticated a tool "GameMaker" really is.

Tools to Let Your Imagination Soar

If you love sports games and would like to try designing a few with your very own special touches, the *SPORTS LIBRARY* will certainly make your job easier. Backgrounds and sprites include settings, characters, and objects for tennis, auto racing, golf, baseball, archery, boxing, football, hockey, pool, darts, skiing, and decathlon. To make your game more realistic, there are crowd sounds, referee whistles, revving engines, buzzers, the crack of a bat, and much more, along with musical themes such as those from the Olympic games. The *SCIENCE FICTION LIBRARY* gives you a fantastic assortment of aliens, spaceships, astronauts, explosions, missiles, weapons and more to be used in settings on space stations, planets, under the ocean, in caves and other strange places. There's plenty of music to choose from and a great variety of useful sounds, such as airlocks opening, blasters zapping, and spaceship motors. These Libraries provide you with the tools to let your imagination soar. Everything you find can be used as is, or you can tweak and fiddle with things until they're exactly the way you want them to be. No one who owns and enjoys "GameMaker" should be without one or both of these excellent Libraries. (Solo use; Joystick or Keyboard; GameMaker program required.) Commodore 64/128 version reviewed. Also available for Apple II at $24.95 each. Recommended. (MSR $19.95 each)

SPINDIZZY (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦1/2) is one of the first titles from *Electric Dreams*, the new Activision label that promises to bring the best of imported software to U.S. gamers. This one is a former #1 hit on three British charts, and fans of arcade-style skill games should find it very much to their liking. The story behind this game is that you are a mapmaker who has been called upon to explore a newly discovered "alternate dimension" which is hanging precariously in space. Using GERALD, a Geographic Environmental Reconaissance Land-Mapping Device, you set off to explore and map this surrealistic new world which is composed of some 400-plus 3D screens. There is no time for leisurely wandering about while gawking at the scenery, though, because a time limit has been imposed on your explorations. At least there are jewels scattered about this strange place which can be gathered to add to your time. But don't let the jewels give you a false sense of security, because many of them are extremely difficult to reach.

Convoluted World

It had to be a diabolical mind that conceived the convoluted world of this game. Even the seemingly flat surfaces have strange effects on the gyroscopic action of GERALD. And then there are the narrow ramps where a single wrong move sends GERALD hurtling into the blank infinity of space. There are mazes that seem to have no way out, lifts that are activated in secret ways, and the most amazing passages through obstacles of water and ice. There are shortcuts, trampolines, and puzzles to solve. The 3D screens of SPINDIZZY range from moderately difficult to downright impossible, and they'll make you slightly dizzy while they demand your total concentration. Don't tackle this one unless you're really good with a joystick, because the feeling of near-weightlessness in the game demands a delicate touch. SPINDIZZY has great graphics, delightful music, and it's absolutely addictive. (Solo or 2-player alternating; Joystick; Pause.) Commodore 64/128 version reviewed. Also available for Apple II at $34.95. Recommended. (MSR $29.95)

MERCENARY: ESCAPE FROM TARG (♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) is a combination of adventure game and flight simulator designed by Paul Woakes for *Novagen Software Ltd*. and released in the U.S. by *Datasoft*. In this game, your role is 21st Century soldier of fortune, an adventurer whose spacecraft crashes on the planet of Targ. Your ship cannot be repaired, so your ultimate goal is to find a way to escape from the planet. You're not completely on your own, because you have Benson, a ninth-generation, artificially intelligent portable computer, who becomes your link to the alien world of Targ. Soon after your crash landing, Benson informs you of a ship for sale and of a message from the Palyars, the peaceful inhabitants of Targ. They want your services as a mercenary in their resistance against the invasion of the Mechanoids, a race of robots who are attempting to take over Targ. Later, the Mechanoids will also offer to pay for your services. However, you must learn to tell the difference between Palyars and Mechanoids before you can earn much of anything from either.

Lots of Choices

This is an open-ended game with lots of choices, including three ways to get the interstellar rocket ship which you will ultimately need to escape from Targ. It's a game of large territory, including the Central City of Targ, the underground headquarters complex of the Palyars, and the Colony Craft which orbits above the planet where you will be able to sell items that you find on Targ. Well-honed map-reading and navigational skills are crucial to your success in escaping from Targ. Maps are included in the package for the Central City, the underground, and the Colony Craft. Benson helps with an ever-present compass and a location indicator that works on the planet's surface. (Surface locations are denoted with coordinates.) Traveling around the planet is accomplished on foot (very slow, but sometimes necessary), in ground-based vehicles (GBVs), and in four kinds of aircraft. There are many places to explore on the planet, but don't get sidetracked by too much idle sightseeing.

Tremendous Depth

MERCENARY offers a view of Targ rendered in 3D vector-style graphics. The sensation of movement over surfaces and through space soon becomes quite realistic, whether you travel by foot, GBV, or air. What gamers will really appreciate, though, is the tremendous depth of this program. The landscape of Targ turns out to be vast, with countless discoveries awaiting the adventurous Mercenary. The underground labyrinth of tunnels and chambers is equally exciting to explore. With experience, the Mercenary learns to interpret subtle clues found in the colors of the walls and the shapes of doorways. And then there is the challenge of dealing with the Palyars and the Mechanoids. There is even the thrill of battle action if the Mercenary becomes involved in the conflict between Palyars and Mechanoids. A combination of adventure, flight simulation, battle, exploration, and strategy makes this game a real winner. It can even be played to completion in several different ways, giving it repeat playability that is unusual in a role-playing adventure. (Solo play; Joystick & keyboard; Pause; Blank disk required for game-saving.) Atari XL/XE and Commodore 64/128 versions reviewed.

Recommended. (MSR $29.95)

SMART MONEY (◊◊◊/◊◊◊1/2) is a personal and small business finance management package from *Sierra* that goes beyond the currently popular programs of this type in a number of areas. At its most basic, the program is a godsend at helping you keep track of where your money goes. And knowing WHERE your money goes is the first step to controlling your finances instead of letting them control you. Employing an easy-to-understand, icon-based menu system that will be familiar to users of Sierra's "Homeword" word processing program, SMART MONEY lets you keep track of all the money you spend (including cash, checks, and credit card transactions.) The program allows for "automatic" transactions that occur on a regular basis, such as paycheck deposits, utility payments, etc., even reminding you of when payments are due. Extremely flexible budgets can be set up with ease. The program not only makes balancing your checkbook a snap, but it also simplifies your mont[ ] reconciliation of bank statements, even helping you find source of errors easily. The printing functions of the progr[ ] give you detailed analyses of net worth, profit and lo[ ] budgeted vs. actual income and expenses, the ability to p[ ] checks, and much more. And you do not need a background accounting to understand and use the program.

More Useful Than Others

Where Sierra goes beyond other financial programs of [ ] type is in making their program just a little more useful. F[ ] of all, there is no copy protection and therefore no ha[ ] about backups of the program or installing it on hard d[ ] Second, Sierra has included functions that help you deal v[ ] loans, IRAs, annuities, stocks, and investments. For exam[ ] the program can help you determine amount of equity in y[ ] home, now and in the future. It can calculate the declir[ ] balance of a loan, print amortized schedules of loans [ ] annuities, and even perform investment analyses showing [ ] and percentage gains for your stock portfolio. If you n[ ] better control of your money (and who doesn't?), SMA[ ] MONEY can help you, no matter what your income level. ['] program is well designed and documented, easy to use, and[ ] excellent value. (Apple II version requires 128K; supp[ ] Apple Memory Expansion card, Applied Engineering [ ] Checkmate RAM cards; copyable to UniDisk 3.5, ProD[ ] based hard disk. IBM PC/PCjr/compatibles version supp[ ] hard disk; color graphics card optional. Both versions sup[ ] mouse, serial and parallel printers, monochrome and RGB[ ] composite color monitors.)

Recommended. (MSR $79.95)

TASS TIMES IN TONETOWN (♦♦♦/♦♦♦1/2) is [ ] illustrated text adventure by *Interplay Productions* [ ] *Activision*. (Interplay also did "Mindshadow" [ ] Activision.) Set mostly in the rather bizarre community [ ] Tonetown, the game is a quest to find your lost Gramps. [ ] story begins normally enough at Gramps' house, where all [ ] seems to be left of the poor old gent is a greasy receipt f[ ] pepperoni and anchovy pizza. (Though he loved to eat [ ] things, they always gave him nightmares.) Once you fin[ ] few clues and make your way to Gramps' lab, you're on [ ] way to one of the strangest journeys ever taken in a comp[ ] game. You're headed for another parasphere far from Eart[ ] region known as Dreamland, Outer Edge, where you'll find [ ] ultra-plus village known as Tonetown.

Get Tass!

To make any progress finding Gramps in Tonetown, in [ ] just to survive, you have to establish a whole new mir[ ] that's even beyond valley-girl chic. Like what you're aft[ ] to get a take on being totally tass, really ultra-tone, and a[ ] being thrown out of town like that toneless Jonboi Wa[ ] was. (Read all about it in the "Tonetown Times.") Ask E[ ] to take you to the 'Tique, where Chaz can set you up with [ ] tass jumpsuits and hooplets and that ultra-plus di[ ] dyeorama look. Soak up the tass atmosphere after moonu[ ] Fast Freddies with a fizzie and a globurger. But stay away [ ] Franklin Snarl, the villain with green scales who [ ] blobpets to Tonetowners. (Snarl is definitively untass.) [ ] up your own tassitude, or you'll be out of Tonetown on [ ] ear without your Gramps. And don't forget your picks!

Tonetown Is Weird

Before you think we've taken total leave of our senses, [ ] slide back into normal-speak. By now you've probably g[ ] the point that Tonetown is one very weird place. In fact[ ] like a cross between the Twilight Zone and a bizarre [ ] video. Strange as the place is, though, it turns out to be [ ] of fun to try to get yourself in sync with this strange [ ] dimension. We were having so much fun getting tass [ ] ultratouch that we almost lost sight of why we wer[ ] Tonetown in the first place! Unfortunately, we never did [ ] Gramps. Looking on the bright side, though, that means [ ] we have a good excuse to take another trip to Tonetown!

Uncoventional

This illustrated text adventure turns out to be unconvent[ ] in more ways than just its setting. Keyboard entries are [ ] to a minimum by relying on a series of icons for frequ[ ] used commands, such as "get," "tell me about," "look,"[ ]

compass directions, and a few others. Use the keyboard if
you must, but it's a lot more fun (and easier) to use a mouse or
joystick. There's something very natural about clicking on an
icon for "get," then clicking on an object in the picture area,
and finding that object in your pictured inventory. Of course,
there are times when you must use the k
eyboard. But mechanics alone don't make an enjoyable game.
It helps if the graphics are well drawn, as they are in this
game. The story has to keep you interested and involved, and
TASS TIMES IN TONETOWN certainly does that very well
indeed. Take a trip to Tonetown and get tass--the experience
will make you ultra-tone! (Solo Play; Joystick, mouse &/or
keyboard; Blank disk required for game-saving.) Apple II and
IBM PC/PCjr versions reviewed; also available for Commodore
64/128 at $34.95; also available for Amiga and Macintosh
and coming for Atari ST at $44.95.
Recommended. (MSR $39.95)

Critically Speaking...
Apple-Compatible

BATTLEFRONT (♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) is the fourth in a series
of wargames by Roger Keating and Ian Trout of the Australian
company, *Strategic Studies Group*, distributed through
the Affiliated Label program of *Electronic Arts*. Keating
and Trout's simulations all have a common characteristic
which is worth noting: they are exceptionally easy to learn
without sacrificing any accuracy or realism in the battle
scenarios. This program is easy to learn because the authors
do not assume that the player knows everything there is to
know about wargaming in general, and they provide a really
good, step-by-step tutorial that gets the player familiar with
the mechanics of the program quite painlessly.

Land Combat at Corps Level

This particular wargame simulates World War II land combat
at the corps level. The computer can control either or both
sides, or you can play against a friend. Each side controls up
to 20 battalions (three divisions, including infantry, armor,
artillery, air cavalry, and marines). The program includes four
scenarios and a design kit for building your own scenarios.
The scenarios are Crete (1941), Stalingrad (1942), Saipan
(1944), and Bastogne (1944-1945). The game proceeds under
player control in standard wargaming fashion, with external
factors such as troop fatigue, air and naval support, and
changing weather conditions influencing battle outcomes.
Also, battle maneuvers are changing at all times, adding more
uncertainty to the outcomes and a degree of extra realism to
the game. Unlike many wargames, a typical scenario can be
played to completion in less than two hours. Once again,
Keating and Trout have created a detailed and realistic set of
wargaming scenarios that are easy to learn and rewarding to
play many times over. (Solo or competitive play; Keyboard.)
Apple II version reviewed; also available for Commodore
64/128.
Recommended. (MSR $39.95)

OGRE (♦♦♦/♦♦♦) from *Origin Systems* (distributed
under the *Electronic Arts* Affiliated Label program) puts
wargaming in a 21st Century setting dominated by the
terrifying, cybernetic super-tank, the Ogre. The computer game
is based on the popular Steve Jackson boardgame of the same
name. The playfield is a two-screen hex map littered with
rubble and craters from past nuclear explosions. Whether
played by two people or by one against the computer, the
object of the Ogre is to destroy the opponent's Command
Post. The opponent (the human player in a solo game) has to
defend the Command Post by destroying the Ogre. As simple
as it may sound when reduced to its essentials, the playing
of the game can mean involved and intricate strategies on
both offense and defense. The defensive player has forces
(infantry and armor) which are deployed in anticipation of the
Ogre's attack. Although the defensive player's forces are
always superior in number to the Ogre, the Ogre is
overwhelmingly fast and strong. OGRE is a game featuring
strategy, not action. It will appeal primarily to those who
enjoy the planning and scheming aspect of simulated warfare.
Note: the box and instructions for OGRE refer to the ability to
use a mouse to control the game, which would be especially

good with the program's pull-down menus. However, the
mouse option does not appear on the selection screen of the
game. (Solo or competitive play; Joystick or keyboard; Blank
disk required for game-saving.) Apple II version reviewed;
coming soon for Atari XL/XE and ST. MSR $49.95

SHARD OF SPRING (♦♦♦/♦♦♦) is a new fantasy role-
playing game from *Strategic Simulations*. According to
the story, the people of the Island of Ymros have been robbed
of eternal spring, which had been made possible by the Shard
of Spring, a gift of the Red Sorceror. The evil sorceress,
Siriadne, has shattered the crystal shrine and made off with the
Shard, plunging the land of Ymros into endless cold. Siriadne
has demanded tributes of food, sacrifices, and gold which have
impoverished the people of Ymros. Now it is up to you to
recapture the Shard of Spring, defeat the evil Siriadne, and free
Ymros from the bitter cold.

Fairly Typical Quest

In most respects, SHARD OF SPRING is a fairly typical
quest. It allows for a party of one to five adventurers, giving
you the option of starting with a ready-made party on the disk
or creating your own from scratch. Should you choose to
establish your own characters, you can keep up to five parties
active on your character disk at one time, although only one
party can explore at a time. Characters are built by choosing
their race (human, dwarf, troll, elf, gnome), their class (either
warrior or wizard available to humans, but other races have pre-
set class), and their traits (speed, strength, intellect,
endurance, skill). Some traits are pre-set by the program: hit
points, spell points, and experience. Then, depending on the
class of your character and the amount of its intellect, you can
assign a whole range of warrior or wizard skills. When you're
satisfied with your cast of characters, you can assign them to
one or more adventuring parties and prepare to start exploring
the Island of Ymros, including its dungeons.

Exploring and Combat

As you move on the pictorial strategic map of Ymros, your
party is represented by a single icon. Probably the first thing
you will want to do, before you start running into monsters, is
to enter the nearest town and acquire some equipment, such as
armor and weapons. That done, your characters are at least
minimally prepared for their first monster encounter, which
will happen very soon after they start exploring. It is in the
combat sequences that SHARD OF SPRING departs from other
games of this type. The action zooms in during combat,
allowing you to see and move all of your characters
individually. The setting in this combat arena will duplicate
the terrain of the area on the larger map where your characters
encountered the monsters. The combat action proceeds in
turns, allowing movement and/or attack, and the combat
sequences are animated. As a result, combat is more interesting
in this game than is sometimes the case in graphic-oriented
fantasy role-playing games. Incidentally, combat may consist
of any combination of physical attack and magical spells,
depending on the skill and experience of your adventurers.

Wide Range of Magical Elements

Fans of the fight-and-explore style of graphic adventures
will enjoy SHARD OF SPRING. The combat sequences are
more involving than most, and most players will really enjoy
the very wide range of magical elements in the game. Graphics
are quite good, especially considering that they are limited to
a portion of the screen. Losing some picture area is
worthwhile, however, when it means that there is more status
information immediately available to the game player. (Solo
play; Keyboard; Blank disk required.) Available for Apple II
only.
Recommended (MSR $$39.95)

16-Bit Apple II Announcement?
We may be days away from the official Apple announcement
of their long-awaited 16-bit Apple II. Planned for full
compatibility with previous Apple IIs, it will also feature
increased memory, and look something like the Macintosh.
Look for the announcement right around Sept. 20. They may
also announce a lower priced (under $3000) Laserwriter.

WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦♦1/2) from *Epyx* has now been converted to Atari format, giving owners of these computers their first new martial arts game since Broderbund's "Karateka." The game is an arcade-style contest in which your martial arts fighter faces a series of tougher and tougher computer-controlled opponents in eight international settings. (This is true even in the two-player game against a human-controlled opponent, since the game requires the winner of a match to go up against the computer fighter in order to advance.) There's plenty of variety in this game, as you learn to master the 16 different moves at your command. And the moves really look great! There are the usual punches and kicks, plus graceful leaps and tricky spins. These martial arts fighters are very energetic, and they crumple convincingly when they are hit solidly. They even show different facial expressions under certain conditions. In between tournament fighting rounds, there are tests of skill: breaking bricks with your fighter's head or dodging flying spears and knives.

Authentic-Looking Moves
Atari owners looking for a good martial arts fighting game will really enjoy this one. Not only are the moves graceful and authentic-looking, but the action is exciting and quick. (Unlike the original Commodore 64 version of this game, the Atari version can be speeded up or slowed down a little if you're not happy with the standard pace.) Typical of Epyx programs, the scenic backgrounds are lush and beautiful. The music, which can be turned off, is oriental-sounding, and the sound effects add to the realism of the action. (Sound effects, too, can be turned off, but we can't imagine why a gamer would want to.) WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP has plenty of punch, with depth provided by a good repertoire of authentic moves. And Atari owners can finally stop envying their Commodore-owning friends who have had a series of new martial arts games to play recently! (Solo or competitive play; Joystick; Disk.) Atari XL/XE version reviewed; also available for Commodore 64/128. Coming soon for Apple II and IBM. Recommended. (MSR $29.95)

FIGHT NIGHT (♦♦♦1/2/♦♦1/2) has just been converted for Atari owners by *Accolade Software*. Originally available for the Commodore 64, the game is a whimsical look at the world of boxing as you have the opportunity to go up against five different contenders who are cartoon-like characters. It's a straight-ahead boxing match which has five levels of difficulty, dependent on which opponent you choose. There are three rounds in which you can play against a friend, the computer, or watch the computer play itself. Your moves are directed by joystick as you can jab, move, fake a blow, and move left and right. You can win by points or knock-out.

Boxing Construction Set
The game also includes a construction set where you can choose from various heads, bodies, colors, legs, and control .The control is the most important of the choices as you choose the power of your boxer's jab and punch, as well as balance between offensive and defensive moves if you're constructing a computer-controlled boxer. You can save and modify your boxer for later use.

Pretty Routine
The match itself is pretty straight-ahead which can prove boring; however, Atari owners don't have the wealth of boxing games to choose from. Don't get us wrong...it is a very cute game with very colorful graphics. The construction set is a nice feature but it's certainly not the most complicated construction set we've seen. Our guess is that a great deal of memory was used up to come up with the bright, animated graphics. You may want to try this one out before purchase, if possible to see if it will hold your interest (we know, Atari owners are starved for software; however, there is more coming!) (one player; two-player simulataneous; joystick-controlled; also available for Commodore 64/128 and Apple) (MSR $29.95)

Stuart Smith's AGE OF ADVENTURE (♦♦/♦♦♦1/2) from *Electronic Arts* brings together t classic programs from the same designer who crea "Adventure Construction Set." The two games included h ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES and THE RETURN HERACLES, go back to the early days of adventuring on h computers. Neither has been seen available for some time, it's great to see them back in this combination package at irresistibly low price. Graphics and sound have been impro over the original versions of both programs. Although th is no "Computer Game Hall of Fame," these two games wo certainly be appropriate choices if anyone were to start one.

Ali Baba Rescues the Princess
ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES builds a great g around one of the best-loved adventure tales in all of w literature. It is the story of the Sultan's humble messenger, Baba, who sets out to rescue the kidnapped daughter of Sultan, the fair Princess Buddir-al-Buddoor. In the cla story, Ali Baba faces many perils, horrible beasts, cutthroat thieves to save the Princess and return her to grateful father. The game gives you the chance to become Baba yourself and rescue the princess. Though Ali Baba of classic tale faced the dangers alone, you can even enlist aid of other characters, taking advantage of their special s and talents.

Action-Oriented Adventure
The game begins with a rendition of Rimsky-Korsak "Scheherazade" that sounds amazingly good for notoriously tinny music reproduction capabilities of the A II. This music does a good job of setting the mood for a set in ancient Persia, and we enjoyed having it throughout the game, even though it can be turned off, if wish. The adventure itself is action-oriented. You control simple figure of Ali Baba as he explores the 62 diff rooms in the game. There are LOTS of monsters to figh avoid--110 different kinds according to the package, alth we didn't see them all. And there is treasure to be found. (\ would an adventure game be without booty? There have rewards besides a pat on the head from a grateful Sultan, all.) Of course, there is magic, too, and wonderful runes to which are full of clues and more than a few wisecracks. rune tells of Ali Baba's brother, a greedy sort who r escaped the thieves' den because he couldn't remember right magical incantation. The dummy thought that s "Open barley" would let him pass through the d)

Multiple Player Option One of the most enjoyable as of ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES is the ability tc ld new characters to your party any time you want. You can let your friends join in on the fun by taking turns contro g one character or a whole group of them. Very few adve games have this kind of flexibility. Overall, we found Ll BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES an absolute delight. game has a great storyline, lots of options, and en random events to make it fun to play over and over again.

Game of Greek Mythology
THE RETURN OF HERACLES delves into a different b of the classics: Greek mythology. In many ways, the stru of this game is similar to that of ALI BABA, since then many characters for you to control. However, in THE RET OF HERACLES, each character you add begins the game predetermined location. If you want to bring them togeth as an adventuring party, you must help each one fight his o way through a series of mythical monsters and rendezvous with the others at one of the points on the m ancient Greece which forms the playfield. As in ALI B A, several people can control one or more of the 19 charact in alternating turns.

Great Entertainment
The ultimate goal, whether you're playing as Heracles o of the other Greek heroes, is to complete the fabled t ve Herculean tasks. Zeus assigns the tasks one at a time, and ou must consult his Oracle for each assignment. The Orac of Delphi can provide clues and further information about ur current task, providing you grease the palms of her s d

...ts. While THE RETURN OF HERACLES is every bit as fun to play as ALI BABA, it has the added advantage of being educational because of the richly varied references to Greek mythology in the game. (Parents take note!) Together, the two games provide many hours of great entertainment for solo or group play. This package belongs in the library of all adventure gaming fans! (Solo or cooperative play; Joystick or keyboard; 64K; Blank disk required for game-saving.) Apple II version reviewed; coming soon for Atari XL/XE. Recommended. (MSR $14.95)

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW (♦ ♦ ♦/♦ ♦ ♦1/2) is one of the first releases from *Electric Dreams*, the new Activision import label. It is based on the hugely successful play by Richard O'Brien which became a movie that attained cult status in Europe and the United States. This is a truly a play-at-your-own-risk kind of game, because if you've never experienced the delicious madness of a midnight showing of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show," then you won't have the foggiest notion of what all this craziness is about. In fact if you're not familiar with the "Rocky Horror" phenomenon (or if you've seen the movie and didn't appreciate the campy, sexy humor), then you just might want to tune out of this review right now.

It Was a Dark and Stormy Night...

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW game follows the theme and feel of the movie, opening with a lightning-struck view of a gloomy castle. The infectious musical theme from the movie, the "Time Warp" sets the mood. (If you know and love the movie, it's hard to resist singing, "Let's do the Time Warp again...") Whoops--back to the story before we get carried away! Brad and Janet, super-straight young American sweethearts, find themselves at the mercy of the castle's host when they have a flat tire on a stormy night. The game begins as you choose to play the role of Brad or Janet and enter the manor of Dr. Frank N. Furter, mad scientist and leader of a pack of very strange people. As Dr. Furter explains himself in the movie, he's "a sweet transvestite from trans-sexual Transylvania." (In the game, Dr. Furter modestly keeps his bathrobe on, concealing the attire worn by the character in the movie: satin corset, garter belt, black stockings, and high heels. We warned you about tuning out!) Since Dr. Furter is a great fan of "scientific" experimentation, he has frozen your sweetheart in stone with his Medusa machine. With the limited time left before the castle turns into a spaceship and takes off for trans-sexual Transylvania, you must find and assemble all the pieces of the De-Medusa machine to bring your sweetheart back to life.

Odd Collection of Characters

Running all over the rooms of the castle and finding the pieces of the De-Medusa machine wouldn't be so difficult, even with the time limit, but for the interference of Dr. Furter's odd little collection of friends. There's Rocky Horror, the vision of masculine perfection who is Dr. Furter's latest creation. The Doctor will invite you "come up into the lab and see what's on the slab.") And there's another of the Doctor's experiments, Eddie the rock-and-roll motorcycle maniac. Riff-Raff the butler carries an anti-matter laser gun. And the ladies are no less eccentric: the frantic Columbia and the housekeeper, Magenta of the Bride-of-Frankenstein hair. They all get in the way. Some are even lethal. And they have such a bizarre sense of humor. One of their favorite tricks is to bump into you, steal your clothes, and leave you standing there in your underwear looking silly. That might be bearable, even with the insults they keep directing at you, but you have to find your clothes before you can continue assembling the De-Medusa machine.

Frantic and Fun

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW game is frantic and fun. The music is wonderful, even on the Apple, and the graphics are nicely animated and represent the familiar characters well. The game is a guaranteed winner for anyone who knows and loves the play and movie. We're not too sure how well it will play for anyone unfamiliar with the cult of Rocky Horror, so please understand that our rating is based on the premise that you are

a Rocky Horror fan. If you are, then this game will give you a whole new way to enjoy the special craziness that is Rocky Horror. (Solo play; Joystick.) Apple II version reviewed; also available for Commodore 64/128 at $29.95. Recommended. (MSR $34.95)

DiskWILL (NA/◊◊◊1/2) from *Self-Help Legal Services* is an extremely easy-to-use program for preparing a legal will in the comfort and privacy of your own home. The program was written by a lawyer and is meant specifically for non-lawyers. The document generated by the program, once properly signed and witnessed, is completely legal in all states except Louisiana. Unless you have an extremely large and complicated estate, there is no real need to consult an attorney at all when you use DiskWILL.

Getting Around To It

Like all too many people, we had never given much thought to preparing a will. Not that any of us thinks we're immortal, but making out a will always seems to be one of those perennially postponed tasks that we'll "get around to some day." With this inexpensive program, a computer, and a printer, "some day" is a lot easier to turn into "right away," especially if you don't have to deal with the inconvenience and expense of setting up an appointment with a lawyer. Using the program is a simple matter of booting the disk and answering a very clear set of screen prompts. The accompanying "WillTEXT" explains everything you need to know in the clearest possible terms, with an absolute minimum of confusing "legalese." When you're satisfied with the information you have entered, you can preview your completed will on the screen before printing it. The program does all the work of placing your information within the context of legally appropriate (but not confusing) language. There are even whole sections of the will that are entirely predrafted, requiring no input from you whatsoever. The whole procedure took us about 30 minutes from booting the disk to finished print-out: simple, painless, and inexpensive.

Wills for Two

The disk as provided can be used by two people, and all information except the legal names of the two people can be changed as many times or as often as you wish. The lack of ability to change a will-writer's name could conceivably be an inconvenience in the case of a woman who remarries, but otherwise the system seems to be very well thought out. This is a very useful program that saves money and time and may induce some people to write a will who otherwise might not have gotten around to it. (Apple II version reviewed; also available for Commodore 64/128 and for IBM PC/PCjr/XT/AT at $29.95. If not available at your software store, the program may be ordered directly from Self-Help Legal Services, P.O. Box 10694, Minneapolis, MN 55440, phone 612-924-3323; add $2.00 for shipping; MN residents add 6% sales tax.) Recommended. (MSR $24.25)

Joystick and More from Epyx

This month marks the introduction of the EPYX 500XJ joystick (MSR approx. $20), an ergonomically designed controller with microswitches that carries an impressive 5-year warranty. (We've been using a prototype of the stick since June, and we like it a lot because it's not tiring to hold.) THE MOVIE MONSTER GAME for Commodore 64/128, delayed by programming problems, should also be ready this month. And Epyx has just announced a new game, DESTROYER, for C64/128, Apple, and IBM. It combines plenty of action with a realistic simulation of naval warfare and lets you be commander of the ship or gunnery officer. New conversions of WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP were also announced recently for Apple and IBM. (See Availability Update for specific release dates.) Upbeat Mood The mood at Epyx is noticeably upbeat these days. Like many other software manufacturers we've talked to recently, their sales and profits are up. Epyx is looking forward to a good Christmas season, and they're preparing for it with their first-ever TV advertising to run on MTV around Thanksgiving.

Critically Speaking...Atari 7800-Compatible

GALAGA (♦♦♦/♦♦♦) is the sequel to "Galaxian," and this version is an *Atari* adaptation of the Bally-Midway arcade game licensed through Namco. It's a kill-a-bug-get-a-point type of game, an exciting and energetic venture into video space. The object, similar to other games of this sort, is to destroy all the insects (in this case hornets, bees, and their accompanying flagship), to go on to the next wave. (There are 32 waves in all.) It's very similar to the coin-op game, complete with the original music, but some of the insects are different. (Butterflies have become hornets, for example.)

Slide-and-Shoot

Anyone who has ever played a slide-and-shoot game will have no difficulty figuring this one out, even without help from the manual. The player's ship moves from side to side at the bottom of the screen, firing upward at the advancing hordes of insects and their accompanying flagships. These enemies fly in swirling and swooping patterns while firing upon the player's ship. The speed of their flight and the strength of their firing attack depend upon the skill level chosen: Novice, Advanced, or Expert. Both Novice and Advanced levels begin at the first wave, with faster and more intricate movement at the Advanced level. The player who chooses the Expert level shoots straight to the tenth wave, where the action is much faster and far more challenging. The insects are always the same from wave to wave, varying only their speed, flight patterns, and intensity of firing attack. After a few waves, the action changes momentarily to a "Challenging Wave," in which formations of non-shooting insects zip by, giving you the chance to earn bonus points.

The Flagship's Surprise

Each bee or hornet is worth a certain number of points, but the flagship provides a special surprise. Besides being worth more than twice the points of the insects, a flagship can descend and release a tractor beam to capture your ship. You have a chance to get it back by destroying the flagship, causing the captured ship to return and bond with your other ship for double firing action. Of course, your new double-wide ship presents a bigger target for enemy missiles, too. There are two cautions to observe about the flagship, though. You have to be careful not to shoot and destroy your captured ship instead of the flagship, and you can't let your last ship get caught in the tractor beam, which will end the game.

Kill Or Be Killed

This is a game for anyone who likes the basic kill-or-be-killed theme. The double-ship concept only makes it more exciting and fun. It's a little difficult to discern hornets from bees, but in the heat of gameplay, that becomes secondary. The overall graphics are well done, especially on the Expert level when the insects fly into formation so fast that it looks like animation instead of computer graphics. Just watching all that swirling motion is fantastic, but playing it is even better! (Solo or 2-player alternating; Pause.)
Recommended. (MSR $12.50)   —Tracy Miller

DIG DUG (♦♦♦/♦♦♦) is another in the first available titles for the 7800 from *Atari*. A popular game which has been produced for several game and computer systems, it features Dig Dug, the little guy in the white space suit who burrows underground tunnels, creating his own mazes. Within the subterranean world, there are firebreathing Fygars and trouble-making Pookas who want to bury you alive. There are two ways to deal with these enemies--crush them by tunnelling strategically under a boulder, cauing the rock to fall on them, or blow them up by extending the little blue hose into it and pressing your joystick button until the monster expands and explodes. The Fygars can also breathe fire, so Dig Dug must be expecially careful! If Dig Dug dawdles too long, the Pookas and Fygars turn into ghosts, making them particularly dangerous as they are not restricted to the tunnels as they move directly through the ground, reaching Dig Dug much more quickly. They return to their former selves only when they enter a tunnel. As ghosts, they also can not be blo up. Once all the monsters are destroyed, it's on to the n level.

Still Loads of Fun

This is one of those delightfully silly games that was fun a coin-op and continues to be a mainstay of the arc classics. The graphics are very similar to the earlier 5: version with splashy colors and very cute characters. T version follows the original (unlike the Atarisoft (computer version) with the pictorial representation of flow at the top of the screen to indicate playing level. There two levels of play for all you tunnel fanatics out there. the way, this is another 7800 game that is one you may w to think twice about purchasing if you have the 5200 as t are virtually identical. (On the other hand, as we've poir out before, due to the fact that the 5200 has b discontinued and repair can be expensive and difficult to you may want this for your 7800 library anyway as the cos so reasonable.) (one player; two player alternating; pause)
Recommended (MSR $14.95)

FOOD FIGHT (♦♦♦♦/♦♦♦♦) is the first truly "n' title *Atari* has released for the 7800 in that it has not h available for any other home system. That fact has not h missed by 7800 owners as severe shortages of the title h been reported coast to coast. The premise is simple in s coin-op based game. Charley Chuck loves to eat so wher went to a carnival, he headed straight for a food fight con. In order to win, and get to the ice cream cone on the lef the screen, Charley must race to the cone before it melts 2 seconds), without falling into one of the manholes, touc g his chef opponents, or being walloped by flying food that e chefs have tossed at him. Depending on the level of y (there are four skill levels), Charley is pitted against tw four chefs. They pop out of the manholes and take-off Charley who, as he's running for the cone, can pick-up d and toss it at the chefs. Charley can only stop m temporarily as they will, once again, pop up through manholes. When Charley reaches the cone, the chefs scat off until the next, more difficult screen. The second sc n features a chocolate cone and more food to throw at the c. There's everything from bananas to watermelon, cherry s, spinach, and more that Charley will be able to use as wea s against the aggresive chefs. The pace will become more d more frantic as the levels increase.

A Big Winner

We were anxious to get our hands on this particular titl as it is the first of the truly "new" titles and we weren't all disappointed. The graphics are just as cute as they car e. Charley is quite a character as he opens his mouth in ig way to gobble down the ice cream cone. The chefs re grapically very good, and the various types of food cy identifiable. The gameplay is fast- paced and will keep ny arcade action fan busy for hours. We kept trying to ar ourselves away to move on to the next game to review, nd found ourselves muttering, "just one more time and we'll a little better." - a sure sign of a game with staying power! nis is a definite for your 7800 library. (one player; two p er alternating; pause)
Recommended (MSR $14.95)

Video Ad Blitz Coming

As you receive this issue, both Nintendo and Sega are preparing to begin massive, multi-million dollar adver ng campaigns covering television and print media. From ha we've been told of the two campaigns, anyone who sn' already heard the news should be very aware of the rebi of video games by Christmas. It certainly looks as if Chri as 1986 will be a very bountiful holiday for video gamers!

Sega Is on Schedule

With the critical F.C.C. approval finally granted in mid-August, Sega is busy with last-minute details and prepared to release its Master System right on time at the beginning of September. According to a Sega spokesman, five games will be available at the same time as the Sega Master System: TRANSBOT and GHOST HOUSE on 256K Sega cards (MSR $30 each) and the 1024K Mega Cartridges CHOPLIFTER, FANTASY ZONE, and WORLD GP (MSR $35 each). Later this month, they plan to release the Sega Cards MY HERO, TEDDY BOY, and F-16 FIGHTING FALCON along with BLACK BELT and ACTION FIGHTER on Mega Cartridge. Including the two games, HANG ON and SAFARI HUNT, which are included with the Master System, that will mean a respectable total of twelve games in the first month of release. (The Sega Master System, including Power Base, two Control Pads, Light Phaser gun and Combo Mega Cartridge with two games carries a manufacturer's suggested retail price of $150. There is also an alternative Base System with HANG ON and ASTRO WARRIOR on Combo Mega Cartridge, but without the Light Phaser, which will be available in some locations at MSR $125.)

More Games Coming

Sega has plans to release many more games over the next six months, but not all of the titles have firm release dates yet. Among others, gamers can look forward to a whole series of sports games on Mega Cartridge, all with names that begin with "Great," including GREAT BASEBALL, BOXING, FOOTBALL, GOLF, ICE HOCKEY, and TENNIS. A Sports Pad (MSR $60), which is a trackball-style controller, will be used with these games. Other planned titles on Mega cartridge include PRO WRESTLING (first announced as ALL-STAR WRESTLING), THE NINJA, BANK PANIC, and the Combo Mega Cartridge, MARKSMAN SHOOTING with TRAP SHOOTING. We were also told about RAMBO, a game based on the popular movies, in which the normal single-shot action of the Light Phaser will be converted to semi-automatic firing! Watch these pages for reviews, beginning with our evaluation of the Sega Master System next month.

Delays, Shortages in Atari 7800 Software

Although eight titles have now been released for the Atari 7800, only about half of them are readily available at such locations as Toys'R'Us, according to numerous reports from our readers around the country. After the release of the 7800 Pro-System unit and the first seven titles in June, GALAGA is the only follow-up release so far. (GALAGA is reviewed in this issue.) And three titles have disappeared from the most recent list of 7800 titles from Atari: MOON PATROL, STARGATE, and RESCUE ON FRACTALUS. We were not able to find out whether the first two have been merely delayed or totally cancelled. We were told that the release of RESCUE ON FRACTALUS is "up in the air" due to programming problems. Looking at the balance of Atari's schedule of 7800 games set for release between now and Christmas, we think it's likely that quite a few of them will be "bumped" to early 1987. Even with some delays and cancellations, though, Atari can still make a good showing for the important Christmas selling season if they manage to release at least half of their announced games (10 or more between now and December). Anything less than that, however, will make it difficult for Atari's system to compete effectively against the two Japanese giants, Nintendo and Sega.

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!

Konami and Nintendo Sign Agreement

Konami, Inc. signed a licensing agreement with Nintendo on July 8, 1986 which makes Konami an approved third-party developer of software for the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in the United States. This move had been expected because Konami's parent company in Japan already produces a number of very popular titles for the Japanese version of the Nintendo system, the Nintendo Family Computer. According to Ben Har-El, president of Konami, Inc. of the U.S., the company's first NES game, GRADIUS, will be in stores no later than mid-November. Although this title will not be familiar to U.S. game players, Mr. Har-El told us that it is a top seller in Japan and is currently the only space game available for the Nintendo system. He also told us that this is just the beginning, as Konami expects to have several more games ready for this Christmas season. And Konami is also moving at "full steam" on software for computer systems other than the NES. We expect to have more news from Konami next month.

IBM
NOVEMBER
Amnesia (EA)
Kings Quest III (SIE)
Ultima IV (ORI)
World Games (EPY)
THIRD QUARTER
Conflict in Vietnam (MIC)
Decision in the Desert (MIC)
Dick Francis High Stakes (MIN)
Gettysburg: Turning Point (SSI)
Goldfinger (MIN)
Indiana Jones/Revenge (MIN)
Mind Pursuit (DS)
Operation Market Garden (SSI)
Orbiter (SPE)
Ronin (BRO)
Superbowl Sunday (AH)
FOURTH QUARTER
Battle of Antietam (SSI)
Championship Baseball '86 (GAM)
Deadly Summer (BRO)
DEGAS Elite (BI)
Frank'n'Ernest's Adv (PEN)
GBA Basketball 2 on 2 (GAM)
Gunship (MIC)
House of Changes (BRO)
Portal (ACT)
Rings of Zilfin (SSI)
Where in World Is C Sandiego? (BRO)
FIRST QUARTER 1987
Defender of the Crown (MDS)
Pawn, The (FIR)

INTERACTIVE VCR TITLES
SEPTEMBER
Behind the Screen (SPN)
Operating Room Mystery (SPN)

INTELLIVISION
AUGUST
Hover Force (INT)
x-Thin Ice (INT)
SEPTEMBER
Super Pro Football (INT)
Tower of Doom (INT)
FIRST QUARTER 1987
Commando (INT)
Karate Champ (INT)

ATARI 2600
AUGUST
Midnight Magic (AT)
Pac-Man Jr. (AT)
Solaris (AT)

ATARI 7800
AUGUST
x-Galaga (AT)
SEPTEMBER
Ballblazer (AT)
Choplifter (AT)
Desert Falcon (AT)
Impossible Mission (AT)
Karateka (AT)
Skyfox (AT)

Summer Games (AT)
Touchdown Football (AT)
Xevious (AT)
1 on 1 Basketball (AT)
FOURTH QUARTER
Demolition Derby (AT)
F-15 Strike Eagle (AT)
GATO (AT)
Hatrick (AT)
Rescue on Fractalus (AT)
Super Huey (AT)
Winter Games (AT)

NINTENDO
AUGUST
Balloon Fight (NIN)
Gumshoe (NIN)
x-Mach Rider (NIN)
Tag Team Wrestling (DE)
x-Urban Champion (NIN)
OCTOBER
Karate Champ (DE)
Ring King (DE)
FOURTH QUARTER
Gradius (KON)

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM
SEPTEMBER
Base System/Hang On/Astro Warrior (SEG)
Master System/Hang On/Safari Hunt (SEG)
Action Fighter (SEG)
Black Belt (SEG)
Choplifter (SEG)
F-16 Fighting Falcon (SEG)
Fantasy Zone (SEG)
Ghost House (SEG)
My Hero (SEG)
Teddy Boy (SEG)
TransBot (SEG)
World GP (SEG)
FOURTH QUARTER
Bank Panic (SEG)
Graphics Board (SEG)
Great Baseball (SEG)
Great Boxing (SEG)
Great Football (SEG)
Great Golf (SEG)
Great Ice Hockey (SEG)
Great Tennis (SEG)
Marksman/Trap Shooting (SEG)
Ninja (SEG)
Pro Wrestling (SEG)
Rambo (SEG)
Space Harrier (SEG)
Sports Pad (SEG)

NOTE: Programs noted "x" have shipped as of press time but may
not yet be in national distribution. Projected shipping dates are
provided by manufacturers and subject to change.

AVAILABILITY UPDATE

ATARI XL/XE

JULY
x-Wizard's Crown (SSI)

AUGUST
x-Blazing Paddles (BAU)
x-Fight Night (ACO)
x-Mercenary: Escape/Targ (DS)
x-Millionaire (BLU)
x-Star Scenery Disks (SUB)
x-Top Gunner (MIC)
x-Touchdown Football (EA)
x-Tycoon (BLU)
x-World Karate Champ. (EPY)

SEPTEMBER
Advs in Europe (PEN)
Advs in North America (PEN)
Alt. Reality 2: Dungeon (DS)
Bop'N Wrestle (MIN)
Gunslinger (DS)
Infiltrator (MIN)
Leather Goddesses (INF)
Lords of Conquest (EA)
Video Shop (DS)
221 B Baker Street (DS)

OCTOBER
Advs in South America (PEN)
Age of Adventure (EA)
Guzerian (AH)
Mail-Order Monsters (EA)
Moonmist (INF)
Ogre (ORI)
Video Vegas (BAU)

NOVEMBER
Pawn, The (FIR)

DECEMBER
Ultima 1 (ORI)

THIRD QUARTER
Acro Jet (MIC)
Breakers (BRO)
Chimera/Mercenary (FIR)
Crosscheck (DS)
Destroyer Escort (MIC)
Donald Duck's Plygrnd (SIE)
Gettysburg: Turning Point (SSI)
Gunship (MIC)
Mind Pursuit (DS)
Ronin (BRO)
World's Greatest Football (EPY)

FOURTH QUARTER
Battleground (SSI)
Coveted Mirror (PEN)
Crimson Crown (PEN)
Deadly Summer (BRO)
Frank'n'Ernest's Adv (PEN)
House of Changes (BRO)
Oo-Topos (PEN)
Phantasie (SSI)

FIRST QUARTER 1987
Wrath of Denethenor (SIE)

ATARI ST

JULY
x-Leader Board (ACC)
x-Mean 18 (ACO)
x-Phantasie (SSI)
x-Winter Games (EPY)
x-ST OneWrite/Cash Disb. (SIE)

AUGUST
Breakers (BRO)
Donald Duck's Plygrnd (SIE)
Dragonworld (TEL)
x-Hacker II (ACT)
x-Oo-Topos (PEN)
Paintworks (ACT)
x-Silent Service (MIC)

SEPTEMBER
Advs in Europe (PEN)
Advs in North America (PEN)
Alternate Reality: City (DS)
Golden Oldies (ST)
Leather Goddesses of Phobos (INF)
Mercenary: Escape from Targ (DS)
Space Quest (SIE)
Starglider (FIR)
Ultima III (ORI)
World Games (EPY)

OCTOBER
Adves in South America (PEN)
Chessmaster 2000 (ST)
Moonmist (INF)
S.D.I. (MDS)
Super Cycle (EPY)
Tass Times in Tonetown (ACT)

NOVEMBER
AutoDuel (ORI)
Championship Wrestling (EPY)
Ogre (ORI)
Skyfox (EA)

THIRD QUARTER
Computer Baseball (SSI)
Consultant (BI)
Flight Simulator II (SUB)
GATO (SPE)
King's Quest (SIE)
Orbiter (SPE)
Sundog (ACO)

COMMODORE 64/128

JULY
x-Commando (DE)
x-Filer's Choice (PCS)
x-Planner's Choice (PCS)
x-Super Cycle (EPY)
x-SuperBowl Sunday Team 85 (AH)
x-Where in World Is C Sandiego? (BRO)
x-Writer's Choice (PCS)

AUGUST
Ace of Aces (ACO)
x-Battlefront (SSG)
x-Breakers (BRO)
Championship Baseball '86 (GAM)
Deceptor (ACO)
x-Gamemaker Sports Lib (ACT)
x-Gamemaker Science Fiction Lib (ACT)
x-Gettysburg: Turning Point (SSI)
Gunship (MIC)
x-Hacker II (ACT)
x-Mercenary: Escape from Targ (DS)
x-Phantasie II (SSI)
x-Pure-Stat Baseball (SUB)
RoadWar 2000 (SSI)
x-Star Scenery Disks (SUB)
x-Top Gunner (MIC)
Tracker (FIR)

SEPTEMBER
Adventures in Europe (PEN)
Adves in North America (PEN)
Alt. Reality: Dungeon (DS)
Amer. Challenge Sailing (MIN)
Darkhorn (AH)
Dr. Ruth Game/Good Sex (VIC)
Executive Leader Board (ACC)
Fairlight (MIN)
Gunslinger (DS)
Leather Goddesses (INF)
Marble Madness (EA)
Movie Monster Game (EPY)
Pawn, The (FIR)
Robot Rascals (EA)
Rocky Horror Show (ED)
Shard of Spring (SSI)
Spindizzy (ED)
Tass Times in Tonetown (ACT)
Tenth Frame (ACC)
Video Shop (DS)
World Champ Wrestling (EPY)
World Games (EPY)
Zoids (ED)
221 B Baker Street (DS)

OCTOBER
Advs in South America (PEN)
Arctic Fox (EA)
AutoDuel (ORI)
Bard's Tale 2: Destiny Night (EA)
Destroyer (EPY)
Guzerian (AH)
Make Your Own Murder Party (EA)
Moonmist (INF)
Video Vegas (BAU)
Wrath of Denethenor (SIE)

NOVEMBER
Amnesia (EA)
Moebius (ORI)

DECEMBER
Ultima 1 (ORI)

THIRD QUARTER
Breakers (BRO)
Crosscheck (DS)
Destroyer Escort (MIC)
Graphics Library #4 (BRO)
Iwo Jima/Falklands (FIR)
Macbeth (AH)
Ronin (BRO)
Scoop, The (TEL)
Shard of Spring (SSI)
Theatre Europe (DS)
Toy Shop (BRO)
Wooden Ships/Iron Men (AH)

FOURTH QUARTER
Deadly Summer (BRO)
Frank & Ernest's Adventure (PEN)
House of Changes (BRO)
Portal (ACT)

FIRST QUARTER 1987
Defender of the Crown (MDS)

FOURTH QUARTER
Championship Baseball '86 (GAM)
Championship Golf Vol 1 (GAM)
Frank'n'Ernest's Adv (PEN)
Gamemaker (ACT)
GBA Basketball 2 on 2 (GAM)
Gunship (MIC)
Portal (ACT)
Quest, The (PEN)
Sierra 3D Helicopter Simul. (SIE)

FIRST QUARTER 1987
Defender of the Crown (MDS)
Kings Quest III (SIE)

COMMODORE 128

JULY
x-I Am the C-128 (PCS)
x-Trinity (INF)

SEPTEMBER
Pawn, The (FIR)

THIRD QUARTER
Alternate Reality: City (DS)
Scoop, The (TEL)

FOURTH QUARTER
Championship Golf Vol 1 (GAM)

AMIGA

JULY
x-Archon 2: Adept (EA)
x-Art/Utility Disk for DeluxePaint (EA)
x-DeluxePrint Clip Art Disk (EA)
x-DeluxeVideo (EA)
x-Instant Music (EA)
x-Marble Madness (EA)

AUGUST
x-Adventure Const. Set (EA)
x-Crimson Crown (PEN)
Flight Simulator II (SUB)
Gamemaker (ACT)
Gunship (MIC)
Hacker II (ACT)
x-Leader Board (ACC)
Mean 18 (ACO)
Pawn, The (FIR)
x-Transylvania (PEN)

SEPTEMBER
Adventures in Europe (PEN)
Advs in North America (PEN)
Alternate Reality: City (DS)
Chessmaster 2000 (ST)
Deja Vu (MIN)
Leather Goddesses (INF)
Starglider (FIR)
Tass Times in Tonetown (ACT)
Video Vegas (BAU)

OCTOBER
Advs in South America (PEN)
Defender of the Crown (MDS)
Moonmist (INF)
New Technology Coloring Book (ST)
Winter Games (EPY)

NOVEMBER
AutoDuel (ORI)
Bard's Tale (EA)
Deluxe Music Constr (EA)
Space Quest (SIE)
Ultima III (ORI)

THIRD QUARTER
GATO (SPE)
King's Quest (SIE)
King's Quest II (SIE)
Orbiter (SPE)
Sargon III (Hayden)

FOURTH QUARTER
Championship Baseball '86 (GAM)
Championship Golf Vol 1 (GAM)
Coveted Mirror (PEN)
DEGAS Elite (BI)
Frank & Ernest's Adv (PEN)
GBA Basketball 2 on 2 (GAM)
Isgur Portfolio (BI)
Oo-Topos (PEN)
PaperClip Elite (BI)
Phantasie (SSI)
Portal (ACT)
Wizard's Crown (SSI)

FIRST QUARTER '87
King's Quest III (SIE)
S.D.I. (MDS)
Sinbad & Throne of Falcon (MDS)
Star Rush (MDS)

APPLE II

AUGUST
x-Age of Adventure (EA)
x-Battlefront (SSG)
Darkhorn (AH)
x-Filer's Choice (PCS)
x-Gamemaker Sports Library (ACT)
x-Gamemaker Sci. Fiction Lib (ACT)
x-Gettysburg: Turning Point (SSI)
x-Hacker II (ACT)
x-Ogre (ORI)
x-Planner's Choice (PCS)
Psi 5 Trading Co (ACO)
RoadWar 2000 (SSI)
Shanghai (ACT)
x-Shard of Spring (SSI)
x-Smart Money-128K (SIE)
Variable Feasts (BRO)
x-Writer's Choice (PCS)

SEPTEMBER
Adventures in Europe (PEN)
Adves in North America (PEN)
Alternate Reality: Dungeon (DS)
Amnesia (EA)
Bop'N Wrestle (MIN)

COMMODORE 128 (Dr. Ruth section)
Dr. Ruth Game/Good Sex (VIC)
Gunslinger (DS)
Infiltrator (MIN)
Leather Goddesses/Phobos (INF)
Pawn, The (FIR)
Rocky Horror Show (ED)
Spindizzy (ED)
Tass Times in Tonetown (ACT)
World Karate Championship (EPY)
Zoids (ED)
221 B Baker Street (DS)

OCTOBER
Advs in South America (PEN)
Arctic Fox (EA)
Award Maker Plus (BAU)
Destroyer (EPY)
Guzerian (AH)
Lords of Conquest (EA)
Make Your Own Murder Party (EA)
Moonmist (INF)
Movie Monster Game (EPY)
Realm of Impossibility (EA)
Ring Quest (ORI)
Robot Rascals (EA)
World Games (EPY)
Wrath of Denethenor (SIE)

NOVEMBER
Bard's Tale 2: Destiny Night (EA)
Dark Lord (EA)
Marble Madness (EA)
Ultima 1 (ORI)
World Champ Wrestling (EPY)

THIRD QUARTER
Airheart (BRO)
Animate (BRO)
Crosscheck (DS)
Goldfinger (MIN)
Graphics Library #4 (BRO)
Indiana Jones Revenge (MIN)
Nine Princes in Amber (TEL)
Ronin (BRO)
Scoop, The (TEL)
Spy Vs. Spy Island Caper (FS)
Superman the Game (FS)
Superbowl Sunday (AH)
Toy Shop (BRO)
Where in USA Is Carmen Sandiego? (BRO)

FOURTH QUARTER
Championship Baseball '86 (GAM)
Championship Golf Vol 1 (GAM)
Deadly Summer (BRO)
Frank & Ernest's Adv (PEN)
Gunship (MIC)
House of Changes (BRO)
Portal (ACT)

FIRST QUARTER 1987
Kings Quest III-128K (SIE)
Space Quest-128K (SIE)

MACINTOSH

JULY
x-ComicWorks (MIN)
x-Shanghai (ACT)
x-Isgur Portfolio System (BI)
x-Time Link (BI)

AUGUST
Dark Castle (SIL)
Hacker II (ACT)
HardBall (ACO)
Star Trek Kobayashi (SS)
World Builder (SIL)

SEPTEMBER
Adventures in Europe (PEN)
Advs in North America (PEN)
Alternate Reality: City (DS)
Leather Goddesses/Phobos (INF)
Mac Pro Football (AH)
Pawn, The (FIR)
Tass Times in Tonetown (ACT)

OCTOBER
Adventures in South America (PEN)
Chessmaster 2000 (ST)
King of Chicago (MDS)
Moonmist (INF)
Patton Vs. Rommel (EA)

NOVEMBER
AutoDuel (ORI)
Seven Cities of Gold (EA)

THIRD QUARTER
Breakers (BRO)
Dick Francis High Stakes (MIN)
Forbidden Castle (MIN)
Goldfinger (MIN)
Indiana Jones/Revenge (MIN)
Kings Quest (SIE)
Kings Quest II (SIE)
Luscher Profile (MIN)
Mist, The (MIN)
Orbiter (SPE)
Print Shop (BRO)
Rendezvous with Rama (TEL)
Shadowkeep (TEL)
Toy Shop (BRO)

(Top right column)
Ultima IV (ORI)

FOURTH QUARTER
Champ Golf Vol 1 (GAM)
Coveted Mirror (PEN)
Frank & Ernest's Adv (MIN)
Oo-Topos (PEN)
Phantasie (SSI)
Portal (ACT)

FIRST QUARTER 1987
Defender of the Crown (MDS)

IBM PC-PCjr/Tandy 1000

JULY
x-Lunar Explorer (ET)
x-Super BoulderDash (EA)
x-Winter Games (EPY)

AUGUST
x-Bank St. Writer Plus (BRO)
x-Chessmaster 2000 (SC)
x-Crosscheck (DS)
x-Filer's Choice (PCS)
x-Grand Slam Bridge (EA)
x-Hacker II (ACT)
HardBall (ACO)
x-I*S Talk (BI)
x-Oo-Topos (PEN)
x-Planner's Choice (PCS)
x-Psi 5 Trading Co (ACO)
Shanghai (ACT)
x-Smart Money (SIE)
Space Quest (SIE)
x-Starflight (EA)
Variable Feasts (BRO)
x-World Tour Golf (EA)
x-Writer's Choice (PCS)

SEPTEMBER
Adventures in Europe (PEN)
Advs in North America (PEN)
Alternate Reality: City (DS)
Bop'N Wrestle (MIN)
Dr. Ruth Game/Good Sex (VIC)
Infiltrator (MIN)
Leather Goddesses/Phobos (INF)
Sierra 3D Helicopter Simulator (SIE)
Tass Times in Tonetown (ACT)
World Karate Championship (EPY)

OCTOBER
Advs in South America (PEN)
Make Your Own Murder Party (EA)
Moonmist (INF)
Movie Monster Game (EPY)
Radio Baseball (EA)

COMPANY CODES
ACC...Access
ACO...Accolade
ACT...Activision
AG...Avant Garde
AH...Avalon Hill
AT...Atari
BAN...Bantam
BAU...Baudville
BI...Batteries Included
BLU...Bluechip Software
BRO...Broderbund
COM...Commodore
COS...Cosmi
DE...Data East
DS...DataSoft
EA...Electronic Arts
ED...Electric Dreams
EPY...Epyx
ET...Electric Transit
FIR...Firebird
GAM...Gamestar
INF...Infocom
INT...INTV Inc
KON...Konami
MAS...Mastertronic
MDS...Master Designer Softw[...]
MIC...Microprose
MIS...Microsoft
MIN...Mindscape
NIN...Nintendo
ORI...Origin Systems
PCS...Personal Choice Softw[...]
PEN...Penguin/Polarware
SEG...Sega
SIE...Sierra
SIL...Silicon Beach Software
SIR...SirTech
SS...Simon & Schuster
SSG...Strategic Studies Group
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ST...Software Toolworks
SUB...Sublogic
TEL...Telarium
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ENTERTAINMENT

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