

## THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

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### A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman The Year In Review

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#### TOP 10 SELLERS

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#### COMING NEXT MONTH

##### REVIEWS

including  
Indiana Jones  
for C64  
Beyond Castle Wolfenstein  
for Atari

Our SPECIAL CES Issue  
An Index of Everything We've  
Reviewed in 1984

...and our usual surprises!

It's that time again when we take a look over the past year and capsulize it for our readers. It's been a "shake-out" year—again—as underfinanced companies have disappeared at a rapid rate. Unfortunately, there's still some settling to do as this Christmas will not be the magic potion that some companies are hoping it will. There's still a great deal of confusion on the consumer's part as various computers are being shoved at them in advertising. Many consumers are still asking "why do I need one?" Meanwhile, our gamers are saying "please don't forget me!"

#### January

Vectrex announces its 3-D games in what turns out to be one of their last announcements. Computer Entertainer first reports the possibility of a Commodore computer with built-in programs. (The Plus4 has just recently hit the market.) We start to report on the possibility of a new PCjr keyboard as everyone is complaining bitterly about the original keyboard. Interphase announces the first voice games for ColecoVision, and retailers are still wary of the problem-ridden ADAM. Major releases include Pitstop for ColecoVision, River Raid for Intellivision, and Ms Pac-Man for Atari computers

#### February

We report on the "massive introductions" by Coleco at the January CES including the ADAM disk drive and modem which are not destined to ship until October (reviews in this issue). (Most software introduced at that time has still not been released.) The PCjr begins shipment. Mattel introduces several new titles (NONE of which ever shipped), and Vectrex closes its doors forever. Major releases include Pitfall II for the 2600, Pac-Man for Intellivision, Sunrise's first games for ColecoVision, and Flight Simulator II for Apple

#### March

Roklan Software goes out of business. Nintendo reported to be considering a game console; however, nothing has been heard since. Atari and NV Phillips of the Netherlands talking regarding possible joint effort in laser disc technology. Mattel announces they are leaving the electronics business, with the division being sold to a group of investors who promise to continue releasing software for the Intellivision. Major releases include Boulder Dash for Atari computers, Dig Dug and Gateway to Apshai for C64, Dragonfire, Wing War, and Beamrider for Colecovision. Pitfall for Atari 5200.

#### April

Coleco picks up the license to Burgertime as well as Bump N Jump for ColecoVision. We receive the first indications that Atari is working on a new "state-of-the-art" chip which is going to greatly enhance future games. Parker Bros. announces they have the Mr Do's Castle license. We print a dismal reading on future third party availability for the ADAM datapack and a number of our readers take us to task for being "down on Coleco." We also report that Coleco is going for outside help to fix their datapack problems. Atari quietly closes down their APX division. Computer Entertainer divulges more facts on the closely guarded computer at Apple code-named ELF (to later be introduced as the IIc). Major releases include BC Quest for Tires for Apple, Microsurgeon for PCjr, Gateway to Apshai and Jumpman Jr. for ColecoVision.

#### May

Atari unveils Rescue On Fractalus! and Ballblazer from Lucasfilm. Reader excitement is high! Apple introduces its IIc. We learn that Amiga is working on a high performance personal computer for release later in the year. Major releases include Zaxxon, Pole Position, Flight Simulator II, and Dallas Quest for C64; James Bond 007 for several systems; Wargames for ColecoVision.

#### June

Major news hits! Atari introduces the 7800 ProSystem along with several state-of-the-art games. The Aquarius computer is bought by a company in Canada. Intellivision Inc. reports they are still "in transition" (translation: no product). Major releases include Summer Games and Pitfall for C64.

#### July

The future is here with the introduction of Halcyon, a complete interactive videodisc system. Still no third party software for ADAM. Coleco is very careful to not "over-announce" new product at the recent CES in response to the problems they had encountered in the past. Sirius Software goes out of business. Commodore plans another incompatible computer — this one the 16 which "replaces" the VIC20. Readers are champing at the bit waiting for the 7800 to ship. The phones ring off the hooks! Atari introduces several new products

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

### ATARI COMPUTERS

**STEALTH** (★★★★/★★★½) finds you on the surface of a strange planet in a Starfighter as you attempt to reach The Dark Tower which looms far on the horizon. Your mission is to reach and destroy that tower. Your fighter flies low to the ground to avoid the enemy's radar, maneuvering through negative energy fields, enemy scout planes, missiles, and tanks, and dangerous spewing volcanoes. As you avoid and, hopefully, destroy the enemy planes, you must also watch for positive energy fields. Run through those to increase the energy level of your ship. As you veer left and right, keep the tower in your sites on the horizon. As you come closer, the tower grows taller and taller until you reach it. The enemy fighters will swoop down from all directions, firing at you. There are several which you can take a hit from, although it will sap your energy; however, there are a few enemy forces which, if they hit you, you lose your ship.

#### Great 3-D Effect

As soon as this game was "booted up," we were very impressed with the colors and 3-dimensional graphics. Although it falls within the "shoot'em-up" genre, the swooping effect of the enemy ships, and the fluid feel of your ship takes it above the average game of this type. As we moved through the levels (a total of 5 levels available), we found the challenge was indeed a tough one. We truly enjoyed the fluid feel of our ship and the swooping enemy planes. We kept saying "just one more game" - always the sign of a good one! (one player; joystick; 48K disk; also available for C64)

Recommended (MSR \$29.95)



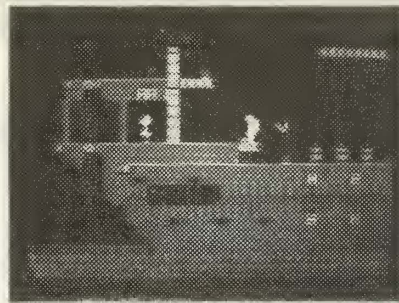
Stealth

**FIELD OF FIRE** (★★★/★★★) from SSI is a tactical game of WWII combat in which you command several types of forces on a variety of missions. It features 8 scenarios, each with its own tactical situations and each taken from a battle encountered by the 1st Infantry Division during WWII. You can play any scenario as a complete game or the entire 8 scenarios. Throughout the scenarios you direct your individual units orders where to fire, where to move, and direct assault orders to your infantry units. The various scenarios include Night Patrol; Forever Road; Omaha Beach as the leading edge of the largest amphibious invasion in history; D-DAY; Night of St Anne; Up From the Beach; For Aachen; Ardennes Dawn; and Roeher Crossing. Your units include rifle fire teams, weapons crews, combat engineer teams - a total of 32 units of varying capabilities.

#### Another Tactical Gem

SSI is known for its tactical recreations of battles and campaigns from early wars all the way up to the unknown battles of universes far away. The main thrust of this game is the planning and execution of your combat units. A great deal of strategy comes into play as you must weigh the strengths and weaknesses of your various units. It features maps of the various scenarios which help in its realism. For the strategy-minded of you, this is a good addition to your library. (one player; 48K disk)

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)



**WHISTLER'S BROTHER** (★★★/★★★) is a combination of arcade, strategy, and climbing game in which you must pilot two characters through thirteen screens. As the Whistler, you must negotiate various hazards on ships, caves, jungles, mountains, cliff docks, and more as you attempt to search out your brother's misplaced tools and research documents. Your brother, an absent-minded archaeologist, has left these various items all over the place in his recent expedition. As you look for and collect the items, you must keep your absent-minded brother close by - no easy task as he keeps wandering away. It's your whistling which keeps him in your sights. If you think that's easy, think again. He is constantly getting lost and you have to go back and retrieve him. Meanwhile, watch out for all sorts of hazards, including thunderstorm sequences in which you can be killed if hit by lightning. It will take every ounce of patience and cunning you've got to get both you and your brother through the thirteen scenes.

#### Not Easy!

We thought this adventure would be a snap but quickly found that the Whistler's Brother often has a mind of his own as he absconds and meanders all over. Picking up the items sometimes is not as easy as it is to keep the brother in tow. As you move up through the levels, the outside forces make things much more difficult. Although the graphics are nice and colorful with lots of scene changes throughout the thirteen chapters. Some players may find the problem of keeping the Professor in tow maddening. At times, we whistled (by pushing down the fire button) over and over with seemingly no response. All in all, it is a good arcade strategy game which will take several hours to make your way through. (one player; joystick; 48K disk; also available for C64)

(MSR \$29.95)

#### Update: PITFALL II

In last month's issue, we stated that the translation of PITFALL II for the Atari Computers is identical to the original version for the Atari 2600. We were wrong! Because reviewers are fallible humans (and often have large numbers of games to cover), we did not make our way through all the caverns to what we assumed was the end of the game. As a result, we did not learn that completion of the first set of caverns leads to a whole new set of underground passages, complete with new beasts to make Harry's mission difficult. Obviously, this feature gives the Atari computer version a very definite edge over the original for the 2600.

#### EXPLANATION OF RATING SYSTEM:

★★★★ - EXCELLENT

★★★ - GOOD First set of stars - Quality of Graphics

★★ - FAIR Second set of stars - Quality of Play Action

★ - POOR

N/A - Not Applicable (i.e. Adventure games are not rated for graphics)

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

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ADAM-COMPATIBLE

### The ADAM Disk Drive

It seems long ago and far away, that summer evening in Chicago when Coleco announced not only a computer for the home (soon to be Adam) but a myriad of software and peripherals. Those who have read Computer Entertainer know the long and difficult struggle Coleco experienced. Within six months, press conferences turned into yelling matches. The gist of those matches was equivalent to "here's the beef?" Turn your calendar over many, many pages, and suddenly the company that couldn't make a reliable CPU is now not only releasing them, but the rejection rate is as good as IBM, Apple, and the other guys.

Now, we experience something that was a dream only a few months ago: releases of many of those announcements! From the hardware/peripheral department, it's the Adam disk drive! And, it's looking trim-line style at that! As we try to do with all projects, the Coleco RFI-1 was challenged to be installed with very little guidance from the official Coleco owners manual. (WARNING: do NOT attempt to use your own system in this manner. The reference materials are vitally important.) Our attempt was to find out the relative "ease of operation" without volumes of books to read.

### The Unveiling of Drive 1

A slip of paper fell out from between two booklets, saying "Read Me First." That is usually a sign the manufacturer discovered something has been left out of the printed instructions. READ ME FIRST explains a strange set of what seem to be a group of "hair curlers," containing two pieces of heavy lead. Having never seen such gadgets, we were curious about them. When you open the plastic outer "curler" or "housing" as they call them, you see the two leaded liners which wrap around all cables of your Adam (and/or your ColecoVision Expansion Module 3). Wherever you plug something INTO another peripheral, these housings are attached to cables for what seems to be reinforcement. The fact that Coleco printed a separate flyer to explain these, and to call it READ ME FIRST, leads us to wonder if the housing may also be intended to prevent outside interference. The Computer Entertainer "lab" is located close to a 50,000-watt AM radio station, and we are very familiar with interference. If you are familiar with the Atari disk drive, even the Atari cassette drive, you're aware of the slight bleeping and chirping of a disk or cassette while loading. For us, we also hear "The Music of Your Life," courtesy of KMPC radio... like it or no. Our hair curler style liners were installed in a matter of moments with the aid of some instruction. Again, we must warn you to follow THEIR directions to the letter.

### Down to Disk Business

With drive in place and ready-to-go, we followed Coleco's boot-up procedure. Once again, if you're familiar with Atari, it's very similar, in that the empty drive is turned on first, then the Adam. Once the drive comes to a rest, you can insert your DISK MANAGER disk. Disk manager is the "DOS" disk that comes with your drive. It is the culprit that tells the Adam "Hi, I'm the Disk Operating System, you can call me DOS for short. Please forget most of what you know about the data pak for now, and just worry about me. And, by the way, DOS is pronounced like toss, not the Spanish word for two."

### So What's DOS?

Many people are very concerned as to what DOS is.. EXACTLY. To go back to the formal name, Disk Operating System, it is simply that: an operating system. Just as your Adam was BEFORE you got the drive. That operating system then was based on the data pak. DOS is something universal to all computers with a disk drive. Some DOS "formats" are fancier than others. Some are horribly designed. There are really only a few things to consider with DOS. Is it versatile? Can you move from one "area" to another with ease? And, is it fast or slow? (In some cases we wonder why a computer puts out a disk drive, only to have a DOS no faster than their cassette!) For Coleco's Adam disk drive, on-screen menus prompt you to do the right thing all the time. You can easily copy files, run files, save files, most features you can do with other popular computer systems. As for speed, we'll try to give you a comparison reference. If you've operated a mainframe from your office at work, you'll notice every time you ask for something, it's on your monitor within seconds. Due to massive storage capabilities of RAM, you can get information in a split second. With personal computers,

you're limited to what's in memory (RAM) right now, AND, the amount of memory you have stored on your disk. You want to be able to call up any file within seconds. Most personal computers fall short in this area. There are utility programs (software) for systems such as Apple (Diversi-DOS, PRONTO-DOS, etc.) which actually speed-up the process of SOME files. For instance, a binary back-up/copy program which might take 45 seconds to load on an Apple II, can be loaded in 8 to 10 seconds with one of the utility programs. Text files, which, for the sake of argument, only contain words for something like a word processor, are not any faster in loading.

The first function we performed is called "formatting" a blank disk. When you buy a blank disk, it has absolutely no data on it. Just the same way when you purchase a blank videocassette for TV. With the videocassette, the VCR is constantly telling the tape, "you are recording Beta...you are recording Beta," or "you are playing back VHS...you are playing back VHS." This is not the case with computer disks. Disks are "formatted" (usually only once) and that takes care of everything. Your disk drive KNOWS from that point on you are in ADAM DOS, Apple DOS, Atari DOS, or whatever. It will NOT accept anything for the other computer systems. (Note: some software programs on disk packaged with a program for one system on one side, and different system on the other side. But, you can't mix two systems on one side of a disk) Our first outing with "FORMATTING A DISK" for ADAM was basically typical. Our only complaint here is that you must choose what KIND of Adam disk THIS particular Adam disk will be. The two choices are System Disk, and Data Disk. To follow up on what we said earlier about TEXT files, you can choose to have the disk formatted to hold only text files, or actual programs (SmartLOGO, SmartWRITER are examples of programs). We do find the two kinds of formatting to be downright time consuming. True, you can always erase the disk and reformat. But, what if you have text files stored and want to keep them, and need a program disk? Coleco includes the main DISK MANAGER disk, and one blank disk to do whatever you want. If you make a back-up of the DISK MANAGER (which we recommend), then you don't really have another disk to play with, for which we simply ask Coleco. "why not include TWO blank disks?" In fairness to Coleco, certain other DOS systems are the same in this regard. In fact, CP/M requires the same kind of two-style formatted disks. If Coleco is going to go full-steam-ahead with their CP/M plans, this is not a bad idea. But it's still a slow one!

Our next chore was to write a program from scratch. Not being that well educated in SmartBASIC, we only wrote one line:

```
10 PRINT "HELLO" : END
```

After pressing all the buttons to "save" our program, it took a good two minutes to save it. Again, clumsy... and slow. A data pak would have done this particular trick faster. However, it's possible it takes about two minutes to save a program of ANY length. That, then, would be a pretty good feature. We'll have to wait for reader feedback to find out these kinds of things in detail. All-in-all we found the DISK MANAGER fast to load, but we wondered why, with all the sophisticated drives on the market, isn't Adam's DOS built-in?

We enjoyed the third booklet included with the disk. It's basically a "cheat sheet" to help guide you through all the commands you just learned in the instruction book. Chances are, after using the reference card for a while, you'll have all the DOS commands in your own memory bank soon. We began the article wondering about the ease of operation without lengthy paperwork. Coleco wins this point again!

### Nice Feature

Before we wrap up for this article, we'd like to compliment Coleco for something we have yet to see from any other popular system. You can run cassette (data pak) programs right along with your disk programs. While running a data pak program, you can type "SAVE SmartDATA,d5" and the disk will spin! Now, all you Adam programmers, here's the challenge: write a utility program to speed the reading and writing of programs to and from disk.

### Wait For Software

Overall, it's difficult to truly do justice to a review of the new disk drive at this point as there is no software available for the unit. We will continue to report on its ease of operation and reliability once software begins to be released for the unit.

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. ADAM-COMPATIBLE

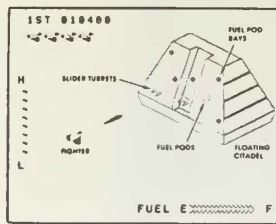


### Looking at the ADAMLINK Modem

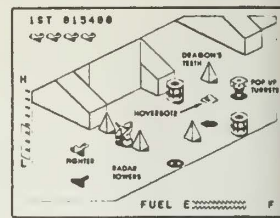
The box was opened, the contents emptied, a few things snapped into place, and within five minutes we were talking to The Source! Certainly, there was the edge of knowing how to use "a" modem, and having used them for some time. Coleco has made something that should be easy, even easier! And, the modem is a great new way to use your ADAM!

The software for Adalink is even easier than most similar products. By comparison, a Volksmodem for the Atari is a good bargain for the money. The software for it is really nothing to speak of. If you have an older model Atari (not XL) you'll need the interface. For IBM and Apple you need a serial interface (which can cost around \$100 to \$200), then a modem, then a good software package (which runs anywhere from \$100 to \$500). So what's wrong with it at this price? If you have no desire for a 1200 baud modem, and you don't care if it uses "pulse" dialing instead of tone dialing... nothing! The parameter menu allows the setting of duplex, parity, data bits, line feed, and word wrap. You can re-dial automatically, if you wish, save text to disk, send the text to your printer and with the pressing of the "reset" key, hang-up the phone. It's really that simple. Everything is generated from the SmartKeys. In addition, a feature we like a lot, often only found on more expensive modems, is the on-screen clock which tells you how long you are connected (very helpful if you are on a service such as Source during Primetime!) Additionally, Coleco has taken the time to teach you (in the instruction booklet) all you need to know about telecommunication. Odds are, you will not be able to have your modem connected to The Source within five minutes. We were prepared with all we needed to know. We did make a try at CompuServe (a trial version offered free with the modem) and had some difficulty, but given a choice, we'd be on The Source anyway. The difficulty was no doubt on our end, since this is a Grade "A" modem and software package. We do advise you read the instructions carefully. Coleco even has a clever way of connecting the phone line to the inside of the expansion module. The manual is well documented for the beginner, and even includes instructions on how to receive a call from another Adam owner. (We can see all the Adam User Groups cancelling the site of their next meeting, and having a gigantic conference call.. by modem!) Recommended

**SUPER ZAXXON** (★★★★/★★★★) is, by now a very familiar title, and it's been brought to the ADAM datapack format. Once again, you control your space fighter, climbing over fortress walls on the surface of an enemy asteroid and blast away at gun emplacements and fuel tanks. You must climb and bank to avoid the turret fire, missile base explosions, and missiles honing in on you. If you make it past the first asteroid, you will encounter a quadron of Zaxxon's fighter plans. Shoot them down if you can, avoid their fire and forge on to the Desert Asteroid. Mobots patrol the asteroid and destroy intruders. Because this asteroid has no gravity, you don't have to worry about refueling. A Zaxxon robot is stationed at the end of the Desert Asteroid. Invulnerable to your blasts, your only hope is to hit the missile enough times so you can destroy it before it destroys you. As you head back into space, the Floating Citadel appears which you must blast your way through. After that, it's on to the other various asteroids featured in the arcade game such as the Dragon's Teeth Asteroid, Spaceport Asteroid, Plateau Asteroid, Alien City Asteroid, and, finally, the Zaxxon High Command.



The Floating Citadel



The Dragon's Teeth Asteroid

### Best Yet

With the capability of the datapack memory, Coleco brings us all the screens of the arcade version. The 3-dimensional detail is great, as is the gameplay. This version has more fortresses, weapons, and complex game playing than we've yet to see on the ADAM. It even features a cartoon sequence at the end of the fight (if you get that far). By the way, we liked having the ability to continue play in spite of the fact that we lost all our ships! It's a great addition to the ADAM family of games. By the way, this version includes a Hall of Fame screen which allows you to record your performance if you are one of the game's high scorers.

Recommended

### RICHARD SCARRY'S BEST ELECTRONIC WORD BOOK EVER!



FIND THIS OBJECT



Skill Two: Town Environment

Lowly merely travels through the environment looking over the sights. When he lands on or near a red star closest to one of the objects on the screen, your child can press the fire button and the object comes to life while its name appears on the screen. In the second level, Lowly must find the object which appears in the far corner of the screen. Skill three requires the child to find an object which matches the word appearing in the corner of the screen. Skill four requires more skill yet as it is a scavenger hunt. A list of twelve words appear on the screen, the player must choose which items can be found in the environment which he is in, and the hunt is on. If the items are not all in that environment, the player can go back to the game map and enter another environment.

### Very Cute

The graphics are crisp and colorful, and the animation and sounds are very cute when activated. Reading skills can be improved with this enjoyable approach to learning. It is most appropriate for the pre-school level as older children would become bored with the program. All in all, however, it includes all the elements which a child can enjoy—colorful, fun graphics, varied sounds to depict the object or person highlighted, and subtle learning.

Recommended

### Coleco Boasts Several Books for ADAM!

Coleco has released a list of over thirty titles written by various authors relating to ADAM. The books cover everything from Beginning BASIC, ADAM Games, word processing, and more.

If you would like the listing, please send a self-addressed business size envelope to Computer Entertainer and we will send it right to you!

## BOOK REVIEW

### THE BOOK OF APPLE SOFTWARE '85; THE BOOK OF ATARI SOFTWARE '85; THE BOOK OF IBM SOFTWARE '85

These giant software listings give users of these three popular computer systems hours of fun just looking up different kinds of software. Additionally, there are cross-references, names and addresses of software manufacturers, a listing of all joysticks, and more.

We sat down with *The Book of Apple Software '85* to glance at the type of listings we would find, and much to our surprise, is very detailed. While somewhat opinionated (but who isn't?) was refreshing to see two or three paragraph explanations, and most software listed as follows:

Type: (Example, Entertainment)

Company: (Maker of Product)

Language: (How it was programmed)

Hardware Requirements: (Something we all need to know)

Suggested Retail: (Are they reading OUR paper?)

Availability: (1 to 10, 10 being easiest to find)

Disk or Tape

When the software is given an overall rating (A thru F) based on several OTHER factors averaged out. These include concept, creativity, depth, ease of use, "error handling" (an interesting topic), documentation rating, and value for the money. For types of software other than entertainment, other forms of ratings are given. The beginning of each section (such as word processors) tells you what to expect from that kind of software, and a brief description exactly that type of software. When applicable, there are comparison charts to show advantages (or lack thereof) of certain software items. The authors (one is Jeffrey Stanton, author of *Atari Graphics and Arcade Game Design*, reviewed this issue) have candidly admitted, on certain programs, the fact of not being able to find the program, or get a review copy. This we applaud, as we can personally identify with that problem! Although we basically stick to the Apple version of this book, it is a thorough publication by some very knowledgeable authors. It appears the authors have also tried everything in their power to make a program malfunction...short of giving the computer the axe.

If you have plans for buying software in 1985 (and our reader poll indicates most of you do) this could be one of the things you could get first. It's one thing to read the pros and cons of a program within the context of our pages, then the pages of the computer magazines, then the ultimate hype of advertising. It's quite another to actually compare, side-by-side, programs of the same type. This would make for excellent gift-giving, even to yourself! You're an IBM freak, and your best friend is hell-bent for Atari, this is what you need to compare notes. All versions highly recommended!

(NOTE: At press time, the only finished version was the Apple '85 book, with the Atari and IBM '85 expected shortly. These are all updated versions of 1983 and 1984 publications).

(Apple - MSR \$24.95; Atari & IBM - \$19.95)

### Adventure Construction Set Due

Electronic Arts is at it again! This time it's an ADVENTURE CONSTRUCTION SET which allows the player to design graphic and text adventures which can be played with one to four players. The program includes an adventure set in Egypt and the Near East during the Dawn of May; and Land of Aventuria, an adventuring tutorial for novices which contains seven mini-adventures. At a suggested retail of around \$50.00, it could turn out to be a real bargain for adventure fans! (See availability update - coming for C64 and Apple)

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

### APPLE-COMPATIBLE



**AMAZON** (★★★ 1/2 / ★★★ 1/2) is a Trillium adventure set in the jungles of South America. Written by Michael Crichton, best-selling author of *The Andromeda Strain*, *AMAZON* combines text and graphics in a game that is often amusing, frequently harrowing, and occasionally frustrating. The player is a field agent for NSRT (National Satellite Resources Technology), and the goal is to find the Lost City of Chak and its rare emeralds needed for the development of top secret materials for national defense. The player ventures into the jungle with a wisecracking parrot called Paco for company. Paco is the source of much advice, not all of it worthwhile. The materials accompanying the program include hints, word lists, a map, and other helpful information, but Paco's advice can provide a welcome bit of comic relief when the situation gets really tense. And it can get very tense, what with cannibal natives and the various animal inhabitants of the jungle. Contact with NSRT headquarters is maintained with a portable computer, but their only real help to the field agent is in being able to pinpoint the agent's location at all times. No magic, no mystical spells—just you and your wits against whatever the jungle has to offer! (Solo play; Keyboard; 2 double-sided, 64K disks for Apple II + /IIe/IIc; Blank disk required for game-saving.) (Also available for C-64 at \$32.95.)

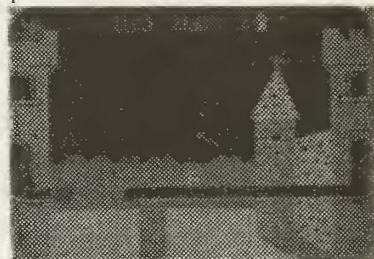
Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

**DRAGONFIRE** (★★★★ / ★★★★★) is a very pretty game that offers arcade-style play action. The player takes the role of a young prince who tries to recapture the royal treasures stolen by fire-breathing dragons. Starting with seven lives (you'll need them), the prince makes a mad dash across the bridge to the castle. In the early levels, he runs, ducks, and jumps to avoid the fireballs sent by the dragons to keep him out of the castle. At higher skill levels, the trip across the bridge is complicated by an archer who shoots arrows toward the bridge from the parapets above, along with a section of the bridge that opens and closes periodically. The prince splashes into the moat if he runs afoul of any of these obstacles.

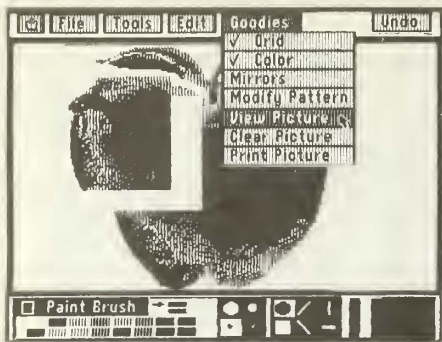
#### Fairy-Tale Setting

Getting the prince across the bridge is only the beginning. In the storerooms of the castle, the prince must collect the scattered treasures while avoiding the fiery breath of the pacing dragon and the sword of the magic troll. No sooner does the prince clear a storeroom than it's back to the bridge. A prince's work is never done 'til the last life is lost and a message appears on the screen: "Thou art finished!" Lavishly detailed graphics create a fairy-tale setting for a delightful contest that offers plenty of challenges. (Solo play; 2-Player alternating; Joystick or Keyboard; Double-sided disk for Apple II/II + /IIe/IIc, backed with C-64 version.) (Also available for VIC20, ColecoVision/Adam & Intellivision.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)



## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..APPLE-COMPATIBLE



### Bruderbund Software

**DAZZLE DRAW** is the newest entry into the world of drawing and painting programs and is indeed "dazzling." The first paint program to utilize 128K (IIC or revised IIE only), **DAZZLE DRAW** uses a mouse, graphics tablet, or joystick to control the various options available. Among the many effects are brush strokes in ten different shapes and sizes and 16 colors or 30 patterns; spray paint which allows you to use an airbrush effect; flood which allows an area contained by solid lines to be filled with color or a pattern by the touch of a button. The program features multiple windows and pull-down menus for ease of use with terms you may be familiar with in conjunction with word processing programs—that of cut, copy, and paste which allow you to mark a part of the drawing and move it to another part of the picture. There is a "zoom" feature which facilitates detail work extremely well, as you shade, edit, and draw pixel by pixel. The "undo" option works very easily as you can correct mistakes instantly. Other features included in the package include the ability to stretch various shapes; creating and storing standard files for use in other programs; full print capabilities; inverting colors; modifying patterns; etc. A feature which is not included in other drawing programs is the "Slide Show," which allows you to show off your masterpieces to friends and family. The program allows full control of the sequence of pictures and timing.

#### Indeed Dazzling!

When we first received this we figured it was "just another paint program." We were quickly proven wrong as we realized more detail, color, and options than in other programs available. Obviously, this is due in large part to the fact that this is a 128k program. For anyone who has a IIC or Revision B IIE with 128K, you can have a great deal of fun with Dazzle Draw. If you want a real treat, take a look at the short demo on Side 2 and you'll be amazed at the color and detail of a couple of the "slides." The program is written by David Snider, the author of the classic David's Midnight Magic. (requires 128K; mouse, graphics tablet, or joystick)

Recommended (MSR \$59.95)



**PARTY QUIZ (N/A/★★★ 1/2)** is the latest in the round of trivia-type computer programs cashing in on the popularity of Trivia Mania. The premise of this program is different in that it comes packaged with four "Quick Response Controllers" allowing up to four players to play in a party atmosphere. Included with the initial package are 2 disks, four controllers, and an interface box which plugs directly into the joystick port on your computer. (The controllers have simple telephone jack clips which snap into the interface box.) Once the program is loaded, you have several options including handicapping any of the four players who might be a little sharper, as well as choosing the response time for each question (3, 5, or 10 seconds), and the number of rounds. Rounds 4, 7, 11, 15, and 19 are Lightning Bonus Rounds where only one player plays at a time. The computer randomly selects a player who is given 20 seconds to answer up to ten questions. As soon as an answer is given, the computer moves to the next. Whatever points are gained during the Bonus Rounds are added to that player's score. After every two rounds, there is a report card which gives a rundown of each player's position. The game disk which comes with the program is a general knowledge trivia game which features over 2500 questions. Additional game disks are planned shortly,

including General Edition 2 and 3, Sports Editions, Entertainment Editions, Educational Editions, Bible Edition, etc. (These will retail at \$29.95 each for Apple version; \$24.95 each for C64 and Atari versions.)

#### Loads of Fun

The controllers make all the difference in flexibility of this program over the others available. The game goes at a lightning fast pace, and a wide range of questions are included. We had a great deal of fun and had a group of people over and played on a big-screen TV! A great time was had by all. (also available for C64 and Atari—MSR \$69.95; maximum of 2 players on version only)

Recommended (MSR \$74.95)



**MANAGING FOR SUCCESS: CAREER PLANNING** consists of four disks and a program guide which encompasses instructor worksheets, and references for further study. The program is very thorough in that it helps you examine your past and present experiences, identify skills you enjoy using, etc., as you work through the disks and analyze the importance of the various values and environmental factors which can effect your choices for a job or career change. The first disk is "Assessing Your Skills and Attitudes" in which you evaluate both past and present situations. "Writing a Career Plan" allows you to focus on what kinds of changes you are willing to make in your life. You can also explore ways to eliminate problems as you proceed with your plan. "Strategies for Career Change" is just that. You examine the success rates of various job hunting strategies while learning the techniques for writing effective resumes and cover letters. "The Art of the Interview" allows you the opportunity to work with typical interview questions, select responses, and receive feedback from the program regarding the appropriateness of the answers.

#### Very Useful

This is a highly useful program whether you are in the market for a new job or are happy where you are currently. It will help you understand more about yourself, what is important to you in a job environment, as well as the responsibilities of the job itself. You may discover that, with just a few changes, you could be extremely happy in the company you currently work for! We had several people try the program — some who are currently unhappy in their job as well as others who enjoy their jobs. In all cases they found themselves learning more about themselves and what is important to them in a job. Although this can't take the place of job counseling, it will go a long way for those who don't have that option available to them. Or, it can give you good basic information to use when you do seek a professional's help in your quest for a satisfying career! (also available for PC/PCjr)

Recommended (MSR \$79.95)

**FORTRESS OF THE WITCH KING (NA/★★★)** is a simple

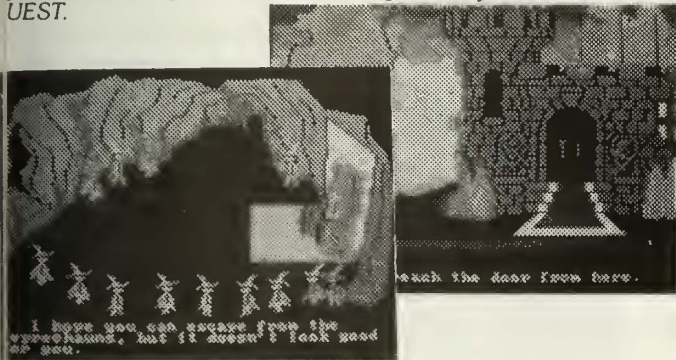


fantasy game best suited to the beginning adventurer. The goal is to find and defeat the Witch King, who dwells in a castle of sixteen rooms. To be strong enough to meet him, the player's band of scouts and warriors must acquire wealth and magic by exploring the countryside. Portions of a map are gradually revealed as they are explored, and the player's band may encounter various warring creatures at any time. The player may purchase items in the town or find them after vanquishing foes. Except for movement on the map, all choices are made from menus. There are twenty levels of difficulty and a very large number of randomly generated maps. The program asks the player if he or she wishes to save the game (onto the master game disk) after each series of moves. Because of its simplicity and variety, this game would be ideal for children or others quite new to adventure games. Those accustomed to more complex role-playing fantasies will find this one too easy. (Solo play 2 to 4-Player alternating; Keyboard; 48K disk for Apple II/II+ / IIx) (Also available for C-64.)

MSR \$25.00

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..APPLE-COMPATIBLE

**KING'S QUEST** (★★★★/★★★★) is the most visually dazzling adventure we've ever seen on an Apple computer. Playing the role of Sir Graham, the player's task is to recover the three lost treasures of the Kingdom of Daventry: the magic Mirror, the invincible Shield of titanium, and the magical Chest that cannot be emptied. These treasures were stolen away from King Edward, who will grant his noble knight the kingly crown if he can restore the treasures to Daventry. While the outline of this adventure's plot may sound typical for such a game, there is nothing ordinary about *KING'S QUEST*.



### Incredibly Beautiful Graphics

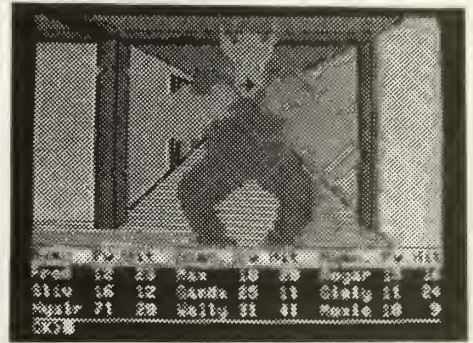
The incredibly beautiful, fully animated graphics are the first thing to grab your attention. The hero, Sir Graham, moves realistically within a three-dimensional environment—even to the point of disappearing partially when he walks behind trees or other objects. He can be controlled by joystick or keyboard, looking much like a cartoon character come to life as he walks, runs, swims, or attacks. The text portion of the game accepts much more than the usual two-word commands, again adding to the sense of realism. And there are multiple solutions to many of the puzzles within the game, so the program's usefulness isn't over when you've solved it once. Roberta Williams and her crew at Sierra are to be congratulated for a truly astounding piece of work that utilizes the Double Hires graphic capabilities of a 128K Apple to the maximum. If your Apple IIe still has only 64K of memory, this game is the perfect excuse to buy an expansion board! (Solo play; Joystick and/or keyboard; 2 128K disks for Apple IIe/IIc; blank disk required for game-saving.) (Also available for IBM PC/PCjr.)

Recommended. (MSR \$49.95)



**SHADOWKEEP** (★★★1/2/★★★1/2) is a fantasy-adventure game that is rich in possibilities for the player willing to devote many, many hours to its exploration. Unlike the other new games from Trillium, this one is not based on a science fiction novel. It was developed by Ultrasoft (well-known for *Mask of the Sun*, since licensed to Broderbund) and is the inspiration for a novel written by Alan Dean Foster. *Up to Nine Adventurers*

With the aid of beautifully animated graphics and an advanced text parser, the player becomes part of the world of *SHADOWKEEP*, where the demon, Dal'Brad has imprisoned the wizard, Nacomedon, in a crystal. The player leads a party of as many as nine adventurers through the dark mysteries of the Keep, encountering myriads of creatures and situations. The interiors of the Keep are rendered in three-dimensional perspective, with attacking creatures often materializing through the walls when least expected. And things sometimes aren't what they seem—we encountered doorways that seemingly couldn't be entered and then turned into blank walls as we approached! The game is loaded with magic: some will be used against your party, and some can be used by your adventurers in a tight spot. The amount of freedom in choosing and outfitting the adventuring party is much greater than is typical for such games, and it adds complexity to the task. Just remembering who has what can be difficult at times!



### An Enjoyable Encounter

We enjoyed our encounter with *Shadowkeep*, even though we were able to explore only a very small portion of its mysteries. The hints and word list included with the program were invaluable. You should be aware that preparing to embark on this adventure can take nearly as long as the adventure itself. It takes a while to set up your adventuring party of nine members, and you'll want to initialize a "save game" disk. Also, because playing the game makes permanent changes in the game disks, you must make copies of all four disk sides in the program before beginning. All this copying is accomplished from within the program—we hope you have two disk drives! (This does *not* mean that one purchased copy of the game can be easily shared with all your friends. Once the copies have been made, the original program disk is still required to actually boot the game.) Fortunately, all the preparation is well worth the effort. (Solo play; Keyboard; 2 double-sided, 64K disks for Apple II+ /IIe/IIc.) (Also available for C-64 at \$32.95.)

Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

### MasterLine Goes On-Line

In a test program we spoke of several months ago, Control Video Corporation is now up and running in four test markets (Los Angeles, Houston, Atlanta, and Washington DC) with MasterLine—Software By Phone. This is a subscription service which sends educational and entertainment software through the phone directly to home computers for a fee of less than \$20 per month. Owners of Apple and C64 computers have access to 20 selections per month which change each month. Currently the selections include *HARD HAT MACK* by Electronic Arts, *SILICON WARRIOR* by Epyx, *MASTER TYPE* by Scarborough, *SUCCESS WITH MATH* by CBS, to name a few. The \$20 fee includes all the equipment you need to access the software. Based on the success of this pilot program, additional markets will be added next year.

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

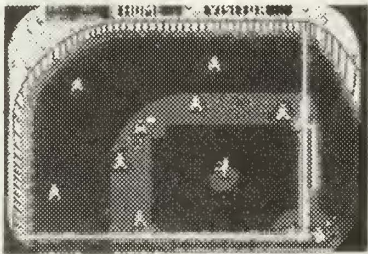
### IBM PCjr-COMPATIBLE

**GRAND SLAM BASEBALL (★★★<sup>1/2</sup>★★★)** is the first baseball game available for this system, and it's a winner! There's plenty of realism in the graphics, and the software even has speech synthesis built right in so you can hear the ump's calls. A full range of options lets you choose solo or competitive play or even watch the computer play itself in a demonstration game.



#### Play Ball!

After you choose your starting line-up, including the option of having right-handed players or southpaws at any of the positions, it's time to play ball. When your batter is up, your view of the field is from slightly above the catcher's position. Once your batter hits the ball, the perspective switches to a press-box view of the entire field. The fielder closest to the ball becomes operative, and you move him to the ball using one action button and the joystick. A combination of moves with the second action button and joystick let him throw the ball to the desired infielder. As with most computer baseball games, learning the controls is the biggest part of the battle, and it's more easily done in a two-player game than against the all-too-perfect computer opponent. If you're a sports fan looking for a good simulation for "junior," this is it. (Solo play; 2-Player simultaneous; Joystick; Disk.)



Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

### PCjr Turns Around

Early holiday season reports indicate that the earlier problems with PCjr have been forgotten and it's beginning to sell extremely well. The continued introduction of new software, as well as ambitious IBM advertising have been a major factor. Another aspect which has affected the PCjr's success is the fact that there is a severe shortage of the Apple IIe as Apple misfigured the demand for their mainstay. Apparently, Apple felt everyone would want a IIc and that is not necessarily happening. After all, without the capability to expand, and the fact that several programs do not run properly on the IIc, it's not surprising many consumers want the IIe with its library of thousands and peripherals, expansion cards, etc. which allow the Apple user to do most anything with his computer.

#### ADAM Picks Up Too

The scholarship and discount to dealers has begun to show positive effect on ADAM as many retailers report that ADAM is beginning to show strong signs of life. We've been surprised by the strong interest in the disk drive in light of the fact that there's no software for it yet. Undoubtedly, this Christmas season will prove crucial for ADAM's future.

### Second Adventure from Broderbund

THE SERPENT'S STAR is Broderbund's second adventure game after MASK OF THE SUN. This game (C64, Apple, and Atari) features full-color animated scenes in certain parts of the story in which you take on the role of world adventurer Mac Steele and travel to Tibet to find a \$25-million gem, known as the Serpent's Star.

*(Editor's Note: We have adopted the convention of reviewing all ColecoVision/Adam programs that are in cartridge format under the heading "ColecoVision-Compatible" in the Video Game Update section. Programs that are for Adam ONLY (data-pack format) are reviewed under the heading "Adam-Compatible" in the Computer Entertainer section.)*

## BOOK REVIEW

When explaining to someone dead set against buying a personal computer, how much fun he or she could have with on the general rule of thumb is to give them the freedom to know the don't have to PROGRAM the darn thing.. just play with it. Most probably somewhere in everyone's past, we've run across someone who designs computers, or designs computer software. Hence, the myth that everyone owning a computer must know what MS-DOS 6502, and all those related terms mean. For those of us into the hobby of computers, the hobby comes out in us when our store-bought software doesn't measure up to par. So, we learn to modify. Phase One is the purchase. Phase two is modify. Phase Three that "bug" to program. Now, certainly if you subscribe to some of the more expensive magazines, you'll be shown listings of how to write your own "Super Reno/Tahoe Blackjack 21." After hours of hours of copying several hundred lines, you find SYNTAX ERROR or OUT OF DATA or something equally distressing. For many, that's the time to put the computer in the closet for good. For those wanting to learn the discipline of true hacker, you must de-bug your program lines and find that the SYNTAX ERROR was a misspelled PRINT command, etc. But, magazines are usually providing programs which appeal to their mass readership. This requires you as a potential hacker, to start reading books on the subject. To which we offer **ATARI GRAPHICS AND ARCADE GAME DESIGN**. Not a software program, but a book detailing and showing examples of how to. Furthermore, if you DO run into a debugging problem, sending a check to the publishers for one of the areas of programming, will get you a program diskette with the real thing to play with (that's "play" as in fool around with). The four levels are BASIC program listings, Assembly program listings, ALL program listings, and playable games only.

#### Very Complete

Chapter One outlines Graphics Modes and Color Registers. If you can pass this one, we may have room on our staff for a resident genius. Seriously, this entails a very readable section of something we all have, up to now, considered very difficult. Other chapters include Display Lists, Character Set Graphics, Assembly Language applied to Game Design, Player Missile Graphics, Scrolling games, Sound, and many other features.. complete with ample programs from four-line loops to 28 pages of Advanced Arcade Techniques (with each line or section explained), plus sub-routines, flow charts.. the works! The brains behind the book are Jeffrey Stanton and Dan Pinal. The former loaded with college degrees, the latter a self taught hobbyist. And if you've wondered what could possibly be useful about poking and peeking, that's covered as well, along with Game Design Theory.

Quite a package for a MSR \$16.95 softbound book of over 400 pages. As with all reading material that can advance your level of computer understanding, this is a high recommendation.

### ADAM Printer Confusion

Many of you may have read in your local newspapers about Coleco cancelling its contract with the Japanese company which has been producing the ADAM printer. This, of course, led to all sorts of speculation regarding ADAM's future after Christmas. Was Coleco planning to discontinue ADAM leaving all current owners "up the creek without a paddle?" We went directly to Coleco for an answer as we, too, were highly concerned about this information. We have been assured by a spokesperson that there was an important piece of information which was left out of the story, which is that Coleco has printer contracts with other manufacturers and, in fact, this company was producing the smallest number of printers.

We'll keep our ear to the ground on this one and certainly hear if there are other companies making the printers!



## CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

**HAMPIONSHIP LODE RUNNER** (★★★/★★★★) offers a fiendishly difficult set of 50 more screens for Lode Runner fanatics. The power-hungry leaders of the Bungeling Empire are up to their old tricks, stealing gold and hiding it in treasury rooms for your Galactic Commando to scoop up. Nothing is ever easy when you're up against these Bungeling guards, and the trouble starts on the very first screen. A sticker on the outside of the game box reads, "WARNING: for Lode Runner experts only!" Believe it, fellow game players. The Bungeling Empire is out for your blood on this one.

### Superb Climbing Game

The basics of this game work just like the much-honored original *Lode Runner*. Your Galactic Commando must collect all the gold chests on each screen to advance to the next.

Guards pursue the Commando relentlessly, though they can be trapped by tricking them to fall into a pit your Commando digs in the bricks. Unfortunately, there are many more traps for your Commando, simply in the way the screens are laid out.

There are more dead ends and bottomless pits than you would believe. Should you be so lucky as to complete a screen or two, you will be rewarded by seeing titles for the rooms and hearing victory tunes. Anyone completing all 50 screens gets a personalized certificate from Broderbund. (Bet they won't be giving many of those away!) This is a superb climbing game, but it's not for the faint of heart. Be prepared for all the frustration you can handle—and then some. (Solo play; Pause; Joystick or Keyboard; Disk.) (Coming for Apple II and Atari computers.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

**STEALTH** (★★★★/★★★★½) is essentially the same game as the one available for Atari. (one player; joystick; disk; also available for Atari)

Recommended (MSR \$29.95)

**WHISTLER'S BROTHER** (★★★½/★★★★) is virtually the same as the Atari computer version (see review elsewhere in this issue); however, due to the C64 sound capabilities, there is charming music which plays throughout your adventure. (one player; joystick; disk; also available for Atari)

MSR \$29.95)

**NVA BLAST** (★★★½/★★★★) is a very pretty, arcade-style shooting game that scrolls horizontally. The player flies a spiffy little fighter, protecting the domed cities on the planet below from attack by waves of enemy ships and ground-based "Water Walkers."

### Good Shoot-Em-Up

Watching shield energy and keeping track of the enemies' progress on a radar scanner, the player uses both lasers and bombs to defend the home planet. Shield energy can be replenished by bombing up supplies from an Energy Depot. Shield energy can also be beamed down to repair damage to a city's protective dome. The game ends when the player's ship runs out of shield energy or all four domed cities are destroyed. The contest is fast-paced, especially at the highest skill level, and the enemies' attack styles vary from wave to wave. Although there is nothing especially unique about this game, it is a good little shoot-em-up at a very reasonable price. One complaint: loading instructions in the booklet gave us nothing but "file not found" errors. Try **LOAD** "8,1" instead, which worked for us. (Solo play; Joystick; Disk.) (Also available for Colecovision/Adam & Intellivision.)

Recommended. (MSR \$19.95)

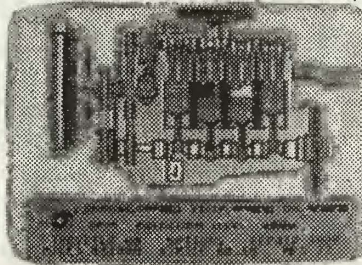
**MOONSWEeper** (★★★★/★★★½) is another Imagic adaptation, this time of a game done originally for the Atari 2600. It's



an outer space rescue and shooting game with an excellent simulation of three-dimensional flight over the surface of moons. First the player must choose one of four galaxies and then survive an orbital screen on which meteors, comets, alien vessels, and space debris whoosh by as they orbit a Saturn-like planet. Among all those things to avoid and/or shoot at are four different types of moons. Touching a moon during the orbital sequence takes the player's Moonsweeper to the lunar surface. Here the object is to rescue five stranded miners, but the task is complicated considerably by the scattered towers on the lunar surface, plus some very pesky enemy spacecraft. Orbital Launchers appear at the horizon, releasing Surface Destroyers. These vessels are real experts at tracking the Moonsweeper. On the most difficult moons, they have more fancy moves than Muhammad Ali in his prime! If the Moonsweeper survives the barrage and collects five miners, it must pass through a series of "accelerator rings" to escape lunar gravity and return to the orbital screen. Plenty of action, good sound effects, and superb graphics combine to make this one a "best buy" for the price. (Solo play; Joystick; Disk.) (Also available for TI 99/4A, VIC-20, Atari 2600 & Colecovision/Adam.)

Recommended. (MSR \$19.95)

**INJURED ENGINE** (★★★½/★★★½) is a simulation of a



4-cylinder engine that is both educational and entertaining for all ages, though it will appeal especially to young boys. With its cutaway view of an operating automobile engine, this program offers both "Normal Simulation" and "Troubleshooter Challenge" modes. The first helps you learn about the engine and its systems, while the second mode times your attempts to diagnose and solve a variety of computer-simulated engine problems. The program teaches the interrelationships of the engine systems and various dashboard indicators, such as temperature and oil gauges. True-to-life sound effects, such as the cough and sputter of an engine that doesn't quite want to start, add to its effectiveness. And taking your injured engine to the repair shop is a lesson in stark reality—just wait 'til junior sees how much it costs to replace that starter! This would be an excellent gift for the youngster taking a driver's education class in school. The program is well designed, fun to use, and it doesn't rely on gimmickry to get its points across. (Solo use; Joystick; Disk.) (Coming for Apple II series.)

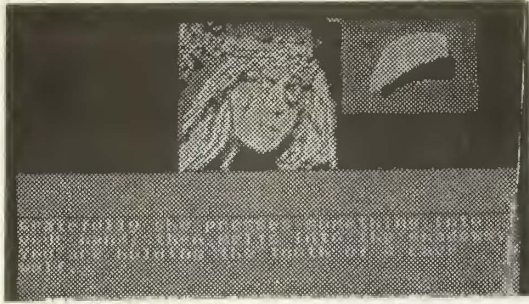
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

**DRAGONFIRE** (★★★½/★★★★) from Imagic is essentially the same as the version for Apple computers, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. (Solo play; 2-Player alternating; Joystick; Dual-sided disk backed with Apple version.) (Also available for VIC20, Colecovision/Adam & Intellivision.)

Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

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

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE



**DRAGONWORLD** (★★★★½/★★★★) is a totally charming fantasy game created as a sequel to the bestselling novel of the same name by Byron Preiss and Michael Reaves. (The game was developed by Byron Preiss Video Productions.) In the game, the player becomes Amsel of Fandora, who was a major character in the book. Together with his friend, Hawkwind, the monarch of Simbala, Amsel must try to rescue the Last Dragon, who has been kidnapped by the Duke of Darkness and taken to the Southland of Simbala. The two friends will journey far to help this creature who saved both their lands from the ravages of the Coldrakes. The player will encounter mysteries and dangers, and skills will be tested in several arcade sequences. When all else fails, the player can invoke the powers of the Dragonpearl (but only five times during the quest).

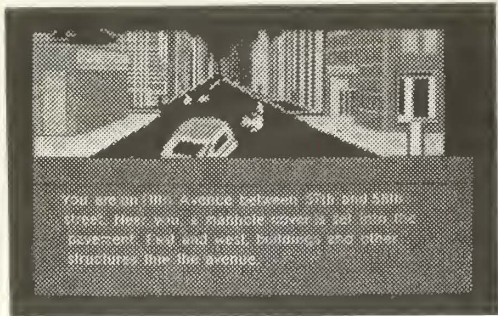
### Richly Descriptive Prose

Every scene in this game wraps the player in the fabric of the fantasy. An enchanting spell draws the player into the game with beautiful illustrations, music, and some of the most richly descriptive prose we've ever encountered in a game of this type. Although there are the inevitable moments of violence, there is an overwhelming gentleness to this captivating tale. Even when you try entering a command the parser doesn't recognize, you're never rebuked. "Try rephrasing this," the program suggests—almost as if it were whispering to you. We read the book and enjoyed it thoroughly, but we weren't prepared for our emotional response to its sequel in this game. If, as Trillium suggests, this is the future of fiction, we look forward to it eagerly. (Solo play; Keyboard only or keyboard & joystick; 3 Disks; blank disk required for game-saving.) (Also available for Apple II series at \$39.95.)

Recommended. (MSR \$32.95)

**FAHRENHEIT 451** (★★★★½/★★★★) is another of the new adventure games from Trillium. This futuristic quest to free human-

kind from the bondage of ignorance and fear is a sequel to the science fiction novel by Ray Bradbury, who collaborated with Byron Preiss



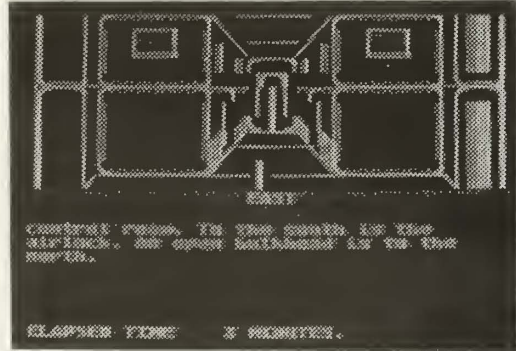
Video Productions in the development of the game. The player takes the role of Guy Montag, former Fireman and member of the 451 elite whose job was to burn books and save the people from the "dangerous knowledge" those books contained. Now he is a hunted fugitive, seeking contacts with members of the Underground who keep knowledge alive by memorizing the forbidden books. He roams the length of New York's Fifth Avenue, hoping to escape the terror of the Mechanical Hounds and find his young friend, Clarisse. Together with other members of the Underground, they have a mission of urgency: restore knowledge and freedom to the country.

### Unusual and Involving

This game sets just the right mood of eery watchfulness with its opening strains of futuristic music. The brilliance of the graphics adds to the mood, and Ray Bradbury's evocative text helps the player be Guy Montag. The game is an experience unlike any other adventure game we've played, with its dark view of a future without the sunshine of accessible knowledge. And speaking of knowledge, the player must be well-read to be prepared for some of Montag's encounters with members of the Underground. Quotations from literature are used for conveying messages, and they must be precise. (When was the last time you had to quote the first line from Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* to get needed information from a character you encountered in an adventure game?) **FAHRENHEIT 451** is superbly crafted—a most unusual and involving adventure game. (Solo play; Keyboard; 2 Double-sided disks; blank disk required for game-saving.) (Also available for Apple II series at \$39.95)

Recommended. (MSR \$32.95)

**RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA** (★★★/★★★★) is a Trillium



adventure based on the book by Arthur C. Clarke, who collaborated on the development of the game with Byron Preiss Video Productions. In the

game, as in the book, the small spaceship Endeavor encounters Rama, a huge cylindrical object hurtling through space toward the sun. As captain of the Endeavor, the player's task is to rendezvous with what appears to be an alien starship. Having docked with Rama, the captain and a small crew explore the interior of the alien cylinder, discovering a world created by an intelligence from outside our own solar system. Time is limited, yet Rama's wonders are limitless. The player's challenge is to discover Clarke's new ending to the story before that time runs out.

### Most Difficult of the Trillium Games

We found this the most difficult of the five Trillium games, perhaps because the player receives fewer hints. And we were frustrated initially by the first "action game" sequence, which occurs quite early in the adventure. It's a two-stage process of guiding a spaceship (Endeavor) through flying space debris to dock with one end of Rama. Each failure at the task leads to a lengthy process of loading first one side of a disk and then the other, only to try again. We were relieved when we finally managed to complete the docking sequence, promptly saving the game at that point to avoid having to face the task again! Action sequences aside, this is not a game for beginning adventurers. Also, we strongly suggest reading the book before tackling the game, because everything will make a lot more sense. The game is good, but we were not as overwhelmingly impressed by this one as we were by the other four from Trillium. (Solo play; Keyboard only or keyboard & joystick; 2 double sided disks; blank disk required for game-saving.) (Also available for Apple II series at \$39.95.)

MSR \$32.95

### Next Issue Packed

It's that time again — the Winter Consumer Electronics Show will be held the second weekend in January in Las Vegas and we'll be there. We'll be on the phones in the next few weeks talking with various manufacturers on and off the record and getting all the information as to what they will be introducing at the show. Watch our next issue as we fill you in on what's going on AS it's going on!

**SLURPY (★★/★★)** stars a hose-nosed little creature who looks like a relative of Q\*bert. Slurpy is a "Vacumus," one of the friendly inhabitants of Middle Earth whose very existence is threatened by the Cave Phantom and his hordes of evil mutants. Slurpy's job is to patrol the caverns above Middle Earth, slurping Glowbugs and avoiding the Cave Phantom and other nasty creatures. If Slurpy sucks in something poisonous, he can spit it out to avoid being killed. Contact with anything but Glowbugs is deadly. Each time Slurpy devours all the Glowbugs in a cave, he moves on to the next one. If he takes too long to clear a cavern, earthquakes will begin shaking the stalactites loose, and one of them will soon kill Slurpy.



**Simple-Minded Game**

This is a very simple-minded game that's good for only a few plays before complete boredom sets in. Slurpy himself is kind of cute, and sucking up Glowbugs through his vacuum-like snout is mildly entertaining at first. Even when the pace speeds up in later rounds, though, the repetitive quality of the action soon makes you look for something more substantial to play. Computer games have moved well past this level of unsophisticated design. Even at bargain prices, today's gamer demands more than this one has to offer. (Solo play; 2-Player alternating; Pause; Joystick; Disk.) Not recommended.

**IT'S ONLY ROCK'N'ROLL (★★/★)** is aimed squarely at a teenaged audience. The mostly text game lets the player guide a rock group along a path that may lead to stardom and hit records or the obscurity of the 99-cent rack at the discount store. The object is to build your group's popularity, money and ownership of status symbols by working with a manager, earning a recording contract, doing concerts and tours, and avoiding the dangers of burn-out and overspending.

**A Real Dud**

The concept has promise, but the game turns out to be a real dud. We felt that too much of what happens in the chase for fame is randomly determined by the program. This may be realistic in terms of what happens in the world of rock music, but it detracts from the player's sense of controlling the outcome of the game. The few pictorial sequences in this game involve "replays" of your group's performance in concert or on tours. These scenes have minimal animation and some of the most horrible sounds we've ever heard from a Commodore 64. If these sequences are supposed to represent a group in performance, at least they could have used something that sounds a little like music instead of just random noises. This game is a total waste of time. (Solo play; Keyboard; Disk.)

Not recommended.

**Indiana Jones for C64!**

Mindscape (we've known them up to now for their Sprout series of Tink Tonk characters) has been working very quietly with the creative people at Lucasfilm and have developed INDIANA JONES IN THE LOST KINGDOM for C64 due out shortly! The program will demand problem solving abilities and resourcefulness to solve a six-stage adventure. The objective will be to retrieve an artifact containing the complete history and knowledge of a lost, forgotten civilization. To do this, the player must find his way through six rooms, each time earning passage by solving that particular room's puzzle. We are eagerly awaiting our review copy so we can tell you more about it!

**Ghostbusters Take Over Europe!**

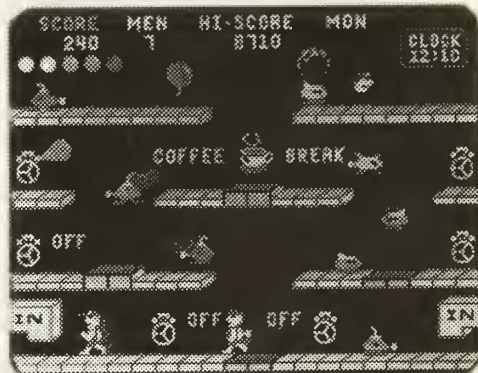
Activision's *Ghostbusters* is doing well in the United States but it's going crazy in Europe! A combination of the movie just opening there in addition to the fact that Europeans are still wild about games tells the story. By the way, the translations for Atari and Apple have been moved up to early January due to demand (now you know what to do with that Christmas check from Grandma!)

**TOY BIZARRE** will only be available for the C64. Activision does not have plans for versions in other formats.

**TOY BIZARRE (★★★/★★½)** casts the player in the role of Merton the Maintenance Man on the night shift at the Gizmo Automated Toy Works. The toys in this place are strange—they play with people, such as Merton, and they don't play nicely. Valves at the sides of the screens blow up balloons, and they release toys if they're not popped. The toys, such as cute little helicopters, turn out to be deadly to poor Merton unless he can hop over them, stunning them temporarily. (They are also stunned whenever Merton touches his cup during a Coffee Break.) Each hour of Merton's shift is further complicated by the Hefty Hilda Robot, who runs around turning balloon valves on just as fast as Merton can turn them off. Then there are the piston platforms. Merton can jump on an elevated one to freeze a toy that's resting on its mate, but Merton can lose a life if Hilda or one of the toys elevates *him* instead! Bonus points can be earned during the "Safety Check" round: the object is to turn off all the balloon valves without being caught by Hefty Hilda. As the night wears on, more and more toys test Merton's reflexes. Surely it's all a nightmare?

**Enjoyable But Without Lasting Appeal**

**TOY BIZARRE** is sort of a climbing game with a fiendish undertone. Merton runs and jumps from platform to platform, turning off valves and trying to eliminate the evil playthings that have gone berserk in the night. Graphics are cute and colorful—not at all evil in appearance—and the music between the "hours" of Merton's shift is very good. The game itself is challenging and fun to play, but there is nothing particularly original about it. Although we enjoyed the game, we doubt that it's one with lasting appeal. (Solo Play; 2-Player alternating; Joystick; Pause; Disk.) MSR \$31.95



**ZONE RANGER (★★★½/★★½)**, adapted for the C64, sends you on a mission in deep space where you must navigate a minefield of deadly enemies. There are mines all over this cosmos which you must blast away before running out of time. You can escape momentarily by escaping through one of the Warp Holes, or you can enter the Inner Sanctum, a strange weightless maze where you collect dots. Those dots can be used when returning to the cosmos and heading for

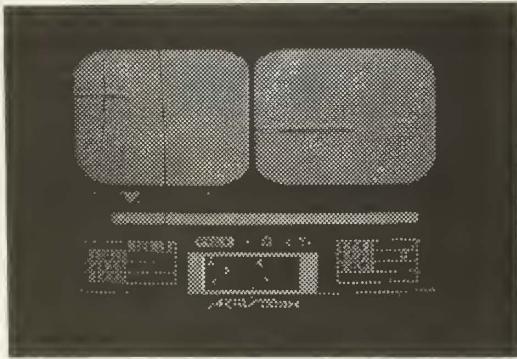


the Skyway Patrol who will knock off one enemy satellite for every dot you collected. Each level has a total of sixteen satellites which must be destroyed to move on.

**Still A Fancy Asteroids**

It's a very pretty game; however, it's still just a fancy "Asteroids." The one plus is that C64 owners do not currently have an Asteroids-type game to play. If you enjoy a fast-paced space "shoot'em-up" you may want to take a look at this one. Otherwise, it's a pass (one player; also available for Atari computer, 5200) MSR \$34.95)

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING.. COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE



### SPACE SHUTTLE: A JOURNEY INTO SPACE

(★★★★½/★★★★) from Activision can't be considered just another game, because it's a simulation of actual flight in the NASA Space Shuttle. There are no aliens to shoot, no flying saucers, nor any of the other things we associate with the typical space game. This is reality, not fantasy. Originally created as a labor of love by Steve Kitchen for the Atari 2600, the program requires the player to launch a Space Shuttle, dock with an orbiting satellite, re-enter the Earth's atmosphere, and land safely. Throughout the program's design, the most painstaking care was taken to capture every detail and to make the gamer's experience as close as possible to the "real thing."

#### Three Flights

Covering this program in detail could take up the entire newsletter, so we'll leave that for your discovery. The disk contains three flights: Autosimulator, a demo to familiarize you with the sequence of launch, docking and landing; Simulator, which is under your control but does not use fuel units; and the full-fledged Space Shuttle mission complete with fuel. From the vibrations as your Shuttle is launched through the dual sonic booms just before the Shuttle lands, you will experience what the astronauts do in the real Shuttle. Learn to complete the mission, and you will have gained knowledge about the NASA space program. The program can't be mastered in an hour or two, but nothing really good ever comes easily. This isn't a game; it's the experience of a lifetime. (Solo Play; Joystick; Disk.) (Also available for Atari computers, Atari 2600 & 5200; coming for Apple and IBM.)

Recommended. (MSR \$31.95)

### Coleco Shipping C64/Atari WarGames

Coleco is just beginning to ship their popular title, War Games, for C64 and Atari computers. Watch for a review shortly.

Meanwhile, Coleco has added a monitor cable to its ADAM accessory line which enables the ADAM user to hook his computer up to a computer TV monitor. Another new ADAM peripheral is the Address Book Filer and Autodialer. Planned for datapack and floppy disk, the program allows the user to create an electronic address book. It can be merged with SmartLetters and Forms to print personalized letters. The accompanying Autodialer hardware connects to your existing phone allowing you to make phone calls automatically.

### Another Magazine Folds

COMPUTER GAMES, one of the most honest and thorough of the "slick" magazines, has closed its operation and the issue which is in newsstands currently (Jan/Feb '85) is the last one. We're sorry to see this one go due to the fine editorial content of the magazine.

**MANCOPTER** (★★★★/★★★★½) is a whimsical game based

**DataSoft**

on the coin-op by Nichibutsu USA. It's a horizontally scrolling, timed race in a fanciful vehicle, the half-bicycle, half-helicopter, flying "Mancopter." The Mancopter's props are turned by pressing the firing button, thus controlling the vehicle's altitude above a choppy, blue sea. Other Mancopters in the race try to push the player's vehicle into the water—or you can knock them down with a splash. Further obstacles in the race are birds, squid, lightning bolts, and dodos. Your Mancopter can grab fish from some birds; others may take your fish, and some creatures can knock you into the sea. As long as you have a fish, though, a friendly whale will give you a start into the race again. If your Mancopter runs out of time, or if it's knocked into the sea and you have no more fish, a black shark swallows up the hapless Mancopter to signal the end of the game.

#### Comical Fun for the Family

This is one of those delightful games with a lot of silly elements that work very well together. Graphics are brilliantly colorful, music is cute, and the game itself is irresistible. We wore out a firing-button finger on this one! It's comical fun for the entire family. (Solo play; Pause; Joystick; Disk & Cassette packaged together.) (Coming for Apple II and Atari computers.)

Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

### More Avalon Hill Action

Several action strategy games are planned for release shortly by Avalon Hill including CLEAR FOR ACTION (Atari), a game of epic sea battles in the golden age of sailing ships; PANZERS EAST! (C64) where you command the Axis forces in the 1941 German invasion of Russia; RAM! (PC/PCjr), which recreates the naval clashes of the Peloponnesian War; RIPPER (C64), where you must catch Jack the Ripper in a role playing adventure; and THE QUEST OF THE SPAC BEAGLE (Atari), a sequel to Jupiter Mission 1999. Other programs being worked on include COMBAT CHESS (Atari and C64), a strategy wargame; INCUNABULA (PC/PCjr), a game of the rise and fall of kingdoms and tribes; PRO MANAGER (PC/PCjr), where you are a Major League Manager; COMPUTER TRIVIA (PC/PCjr), an Avalon Hill's entry into the crowded trivia arena; and COMPUTE CLASS STRUGGLE (Apple), a game of competition and alliances as players attempt to be the party in power.

### Graphics Library for Print Shop

Broderbund is enhancing their popular Print Shop package with THE PRINT SHOP GRAPHICS LIBRARY DISK 1, a disk containing 120 new designs, symbols, and pictures for use with the original program (review in last issue). The new package includes the 12 Zodiac signs, background patterns for typeset pieces, and more images for holidays such as Easter and Christmas. The Graphics Library (\$24.95) is coming immediately for Apple and C64 (C64 and Atari PRINT SHOP due before Christmas). This makes a good program even better!

### New From Broderbund

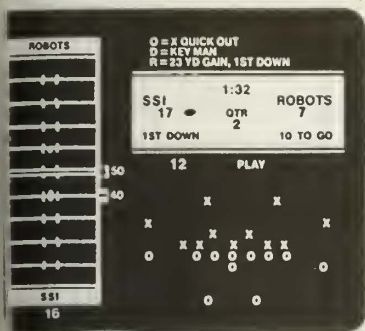
Broderbund will be introducing THE MUSIC SHOP, a two-pronged program, which serves as a music composition tool and music synthesizer. Initially available for C64, it will later be shipped for Apple and IBM PCjr.

#### For Wizardry Fanatics

SirTech is working on Scenario 4 for Apple owners and it's due out by the end of 1984.

## CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COMMODORE 64-COMPATIBLE

### COMPUTER QUARTERBACK (N/A/★★★) from SSI offers



the latest in statistical football games. Unlike many tactical-type games, you can, if you know football, sit right down with this one and begin play. Once you choose one or two-player, there is a toss of the coin and kick-off. In the semi-pro game, you have your choice of 18 offensive and 14 defensive plays, all depicted by the traditional "x's and o's" that coaches

round the league use. Once you choose your play, the screen shows the alignment, and the play is made. A reading at the top of the screen shows the previous offense, defense, and the result. Part of the screen is the playing field in which you can see the actual placement of the football. You can also play with teams that have unique characteristics. You can create the teams by drafting or use actual historical NFL teams with the use of "team disks" available from SSI. There is also a professional version in the game which adds three defensive alignments; double-teaming; 18 more offenses; 24 defenses; and creation of game films (you'll need a printer with at least 80 columns)

#### Very Realistic

SSI has packed a lot into this game with all the nuances which can happen in the real thing. This is a very realistic version of statistical football which has a great deal of depth. The only drawback in this version is the slow loading, both at the beginning and within the context of the game. We obviously cannot fault SSI for this as the C64 disk drive is notoriously slow and this game is very complex. If you've always wanted to call your own plays, this one is for you! (one player; two-player simultaneous; coming on Apple)

Recommended (MSR \$39.95)

**PITSTOP II (★★★/★★★½)** is a sequel to the original *PitStop* that incorporates several improvements in both graphics and playability. Like the original, the sequel is a timed road race on any of six internationally renowned tracks. Unlike other racing games, performance in the "pits," changing tires and refueling, can mean the difference between winning and losing a race. While on the track, your racer consumes fuel and can sustain tire damage by bumping into other cars or the side of the road. Skill in the race can keep you from needing too many pitstops, and speed in the pits can give you the competitive edge.



### Head-to-Head Competition

What sets *PITSTOP II* apart from both *PitStop* and other racing games is a split-screen treatment that lets two racers compete simultaneously. The result is a much more exciting and involving game because of true, head-to-head battles between players on the track and in the pits. Besides making the competition more personal, the split-screen treatment creates the possibility for a more strategic kind of race—most players will soon discover ways to force their opponent into the pits to gain the advantage. By the way, this game can also be played solo against the computer, although the "Epyx Robodriver" always seemed to get a faster car than we did when we played. We found the two-person game much more satisfying to play. Graphically, the sequel has a much better look than the original in the track sequences because of scenery on the horizon and better-defined road edges. But the major point in this game's favor is the split-screen, head-to-head excitement that comes closer to the thrills of a real race than the original *PitStop* did. (Solo play; 2-Player Simultaneous; Joystick; Disk.) (Coming soon for Apple II and Atari computers.)

Recommended. (MSR approx. \$40.00)

### MONTY PLAYS SCRABBLE Brand crossword game

(N/A/★★★) is a software version of the portable console game of *Monty Plays Scrabble*, which was developed by the Ritam Corporation and reviewed in the August, 1983 issue of this newsletter. The software version was created by **Leisure Genius** and is distributed exclusively by **Epyx**. (While we're mentioning credits, we should make it clear that this whole group of companies would have nothing on which to base a portable console or software game without Selchow & Righter, the company that introduced SCRABBLE over 30 years ago.)

#### SCRABBLE at 4 Skill Levels

MONTY can provide you with up to three computer opponents for a game of SCRABBLE on your TV screen, or MONTY can simply provide an opponent and keep score while you play on your own SCRABBLE board. The program has a playing vocabulary of over 12,000 words and can play at any of four skill levels. At Level 1, MONTY "thinks" quickly but is quite easy to beat. At Level 4, MONTY is a far more challenging opponent, tending toward a tighter, more strategy-oriented game. The "thinking" process takes longer, but not any longer than a typical human opponent might. One interesting option lets you watch MONTY's thinking process as he tries and scores different words. This helps pass the time and can offer help to beginning players. MONTY is a very polite opponent, congratulating your good moves and never challenging your words.

#### Good for Average Players

Just how good a player is MONTY? At level 4, MONTY provides more than enough challenge for the average player. However, the 12,000-word vocabulary is not enough to keep a very good SCRABBLE player from beating MONTY consistently, even at Level 4. Advanced players would be better advised to consider the portable console version from Ritam with one or two Advanced Vocabulary Modules (28,000 or 44,000 words, respectively). Of course, the cost involved must be a consideration, too. (The console retails for \$149.95 plus \$29.95 each for the Vocabulary Modules.) If you're a SCRABBLE fan who can't always find an opponent, either the software or console version offers a chance to play a favorite game and improve your strategy. (Solo play; 2 or 3 players alternating; keyboard; disk.)

Recommended. (MSR approx. \$35.00)



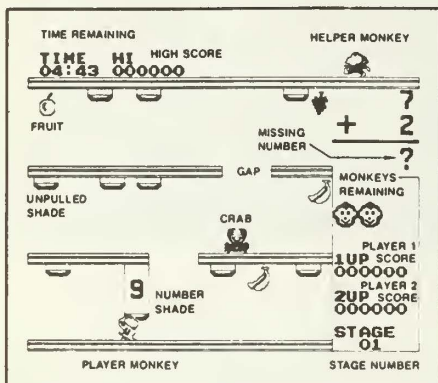
# THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

**MONKEY ACADEMY** (★★½/★★½) is a math game with a

**COLECO**



“Donkey Kong” feel to it. The scenario is simple. As you start the game, balloons rise up from the bottom of the screen and turn into balls. The helper monkey at the top of the screen dumps the balls into a math hopper. One number is missing from the problem (you can choose addition, subtraction, division, or multiplication). A timer allows you 15 seconds to think about the missing number before you start your search with the second monkey at the bottom of the screen. The missing number is hidden behind one of many shades which your monkey must pull down looking for the correct answer. If the answer isn't on the first level, you have to jump up to the next platform level and keep looking. When you think you've found the right answer, press the fire button. If you're right, a number bar comes down which you must get to the helper monkey at the top of the screen. Of course, there are several obstacles in the way. Once you successfully answer a problem and deliver the bar, it's on to the next level which has both more difficult game play and more difficult math problems.

## Nothing Special

The graphics are nothing special, again reminiscent of the monkeys in both Donkey Kong and Donkey Kong Jr. In fact, the sounds are very similar also. The gameplay is challenging, especially for the kids the game is geared for. In fact, it may be just a bit TOO tough for very young children who are the ones who could benefit from some of the earlier math problems which are used. The packaging indicates ages 8-adult (Would an adult want to play this math game??)

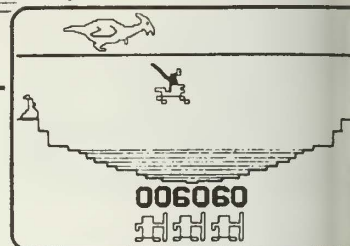
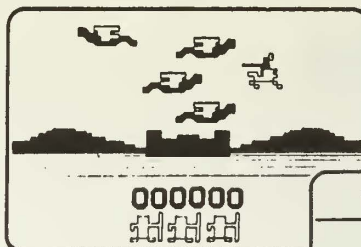
CRITICALLY SPEAKING..

ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE

**SIR LANCELOT** (★★½/★★★) is a multi-screen quest from **Xonox** (a division of K-Tel Software). The player controls Sir Lancelot astride the great winged horse, Pegasus, in an attempt to rescue a series of fair maidens from an increasingly angry succession of fire-breathing dragons. To reach each dragon, Sir Lancelot must first eliminate a screenful of flying creatures by spearing them with his lance. The player keeps Pegasus' wings flapping by pressing the firing button repeatedly and then plans collisions with the flying creatures. (This portion of the game is a little reminiscent of *Joust* in that the victor must be in a higher position to win the clash.) Clearing this screen leads to confrontation with the first dragon, which moves slowly across the screen spewing breaths of fire which can stun Pegasus and send Sir Lancelot into the lava pool. The dragon must be speared in the belly to save the maiden. Success leads to the next round of flying creatures and a nastier dragon. The difficulty continues to escalate until the flying creatures are invisible except for their glowing eyes, and the dragon is a regular speed demon.

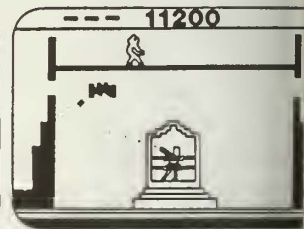
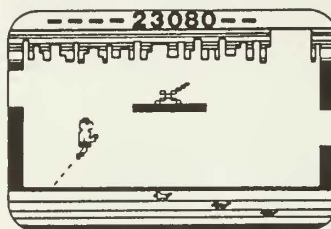
## Challenging and Interesting

The graphics in this game are quite colorful but not long on detail. The shapes of the characters give only a general representation, but they work well enough. The game itself is a challenging and interesting application of the flight mode first seen in *Joust*. With the variety of moves made by the flying creatures and the different



dragons, it should be quite a while before most players can master the game completely. Especially with the current shortage of new games for this system, **SIR LANCELOT** would make a nice addition to any Atari 2600 owner's collection. (Solo play)

Recommended.



**TOMARC THE BARBARIAN** (★★/★★★) is also from **Xonox** and gives the player the opportunity to control two characters in succession. Tomarc searches a maze of underground caves for his lost sword while avoiding the bites of dead monster rats. When he finds the sword, he can use it to free Senta from her magical cage in a prison above the caves. While Tomarc looks for the sword, though, Senta is attacked periodically by vampire bats. A sound cue warns the player of Senta's danger and signals that a switch should be made to the prison. The player then helps Senta defend herself from the bats by hurling energy spheres at them. Once again, a sound cue may warn that Tomarc is in danger of being bitten by a monster rat, and the player must switch characters to avoid disaster in the caves below.

## Lots of Leaps

While it may sound a bit confusing to control two characters in the same game, it turns out to be fairly easy to manage with the sound cues. The most difficult task facing the player in this game is learning to control Tomarc's leaps, and this is the key to success or failure in the game. Tomarc can make long leaps and short ones, straight jumps and arched ones. Sometimes he must jump straight up into a cave above him. At other times he must plan just the right leap to land in a cave entrance that is halfway up a wall. Once leaping is mastered, the game is fairly easy until the player reaches the higher skill levels where everything happens much faster. Although the graphics are extremely basic, the game is enjoyable to play because of the trading of roles. (Solo Play)

## Something Brewing at Lucasfilm??

We have it on pretty good authority that Lucasfilm is extremely upset that *Rescue on Fractalus* and *BallBlazer* never saw the light of day with the ownership change at Atari. Well, it appears that Lucasfilm is going to do something about it! We understand that they may be actually IMPROVING both games (WOW!) for release within the next month or two for all the original systems announced (Atari 5200 and computer and probably C64 and Apple). We believe they may be in the process of working out a marketing deal with a software company who would distribute the titles for them. We'll watch this development and let you know what happens!

# YEAR IN REVIEW

Contd from Page 1

cluding MindLink and the "Superchip" which we leaked several months earlier. Right as we go to press we get the word that Jack Tramiel, former owner of Commodore, has purchased Atari. The reverberations from that announcement will be felt for a long time to come! Major releases include Beachhead and HesGames for C64, Beyond Castle Wolfenstein for Apple, Super Action Football for ColecoVision.

## August

The phones ring off the hooks again as Jack Tramiel puts a stop to EVERYTHING as he takes over Atari. Tremendous lay-offs and rumors abound as to what will and won't make it to market. The first leaks from the inside tell us that he will work on a new high-end personal computer, as well as continuing the 800XL. Everything else is in limbo. Meanwhile, many third party software suppliers put a halt to Atari-compatibles until they learn more. IBM realizes its mistakes and announces a keyboard and memory upgrade for its floundering Cjr. Major releases include Boulder Dash for C64, Dukes of Hazard for ColecoVision.

## September

Atari makes its first official statement since the sale which only addresses their intention to develop a 16 and 32-bit computer. They had talked with and made a tentative agreement with Amiga for the computer they had been developing; however, Commodore moved in and acquired Amiga! Our phones ring non-stop as worried readers ask about the future of the 7800 and the Lucasfilm games. We urge all readers to write directly to Atari and express their feelings. Activision announces its intention to release a game based on Ghostbusters in time for Christmas. The first third party software appears for ADAM from Victory Software, while Sunrise indicates they, too, will release software on datapack. Meanwhile, we're putting our ADAM through the rigors of testing and find that the "new" ADAM works well, without the flaws of the early models. Still nothing from Intellivision Inc. Could be too late? Major releases include Julius Irving & Larry Bird One and Two and Summer Games for Atari, Adventure 1 and 2 for ADAM, Roger II for C64, Summer Games for Apple, Mountain King for Colecovision

## October

Still apparent turmoil at Atari with no products shipping, although we've learned that many products are in their warehouses (including the 7800 and software). MicroLearn decides against developing software for ADAM while ADAM owners search frantically for ANYTHING in software. Coleco finally schedules Dragon's Lair for the ADAM. We feature a "Sneak Preview" of BC II: Grog's Revenge. Major releases include Flight Simulator II and Archon II for Atari, Mr. Do's Castle for multiple systems, Robots of Dawn and Raid Over Moscow for C64, Boulder Dash for Apple, disk drive for ADAM.

## November

In an attempt to bolster sales of ADAM, Coleco announces the lowering of the price. Datasoft picks up licenses for several former Atari titles including Pac-Man which they will release for the various computers. We learn that a well-known Japanese manufacturer is thinking about developing software for the 5200. Activision plans entry into the popular arena of text adventures. Major releases include Ghostbusters for C64, Pitfall II for 5200.

## December

And, so, here we are at the end of the year and many questions still have not been answered. The 7800 is STILL up in the air, although time passes, it becomes more and more unlikely that it will ever be released. All the other important events of the month are included within this month's pages of Computer Entertainer.

As the year comes to a close, all of us at Computer Entertainer want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support because, without you, we don't exist! We wish you peace, health, happiness, and Happy Gaming this Holiday season. Here's hoping you get all the games and gadgets you want this Christmas!

## Update: PITFALL II

In last month's issue, we stated that the translation of PITFALL II for the Atari 5200 is identical to the original version for the Atari 2600. We were wrong! Because reviewers are fallible humans (and often have large numbers of games to cover), we did not make our way through all the caverns to what we assumed was the end of the game. As a result, we did not learn that completion of the first set of caverns leads to a whole new set of underground passages, complete with new beasts to make Harry's mission difficult. Obviously, this feature gives the 5200 version a very definite edge over the original for the 2600.

## Something's Up at Atari

We've been talking with our spies again trying to find out what's happening up in Sunnyvale. First, we should tell you that there is still no news on the release of the 7800—looks dead to us. We do understand that Tramiel has made a commitment to the Atarisoft line of software for competing systems. We do not have word on what title(s) are being planned. It's also not news that the 800XL is now selling for under \$120. It's a great deal—as long as Atari doesn't dump it for a non-compatible machine. That's where our spies come in. It seems that Atari just may be working on a new home computer which would be compatible with all the existing Atari computer software, as well as featuring a slot for 2600 cartridges! We believe Atari may unveil two new computers at the January show.

Also, watch for Atari, Inc. to go public in 1985 as they work to raise millions of dollars to finance their development of new product. The 16-bit computer may be shown at CES, while the much-rumored 32-bit machine may be unveiled in time for a second quarter release.

## BOOK REVIEW

**KIDS, BASIC & THE COLECO ADAM** by Pat Cassidy and Jim Close, is one of the newest books on ADAM available; however, it is really more a tutorial on BASIC as opposed to something specifically geared towards the ADAM. It is easy to read, and begins with the most basic of programs, moving up through flowcharts, arrays, documentation, etc. There is a chapter on graphics which allows you to program some very simple colored lines, etc., for your ADAM.

The book is simple and can be of value to help you understand BASIC; however, it will not unlock any secrets about your ADAM. There are many books on the market which address BASIC which are at least as good as this one.

(MSR \$11.95)

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# AVAILABILITY UPDATE

## ATARI 2600

### FOURTH QUARTER

Circus Charlie (PB)  
Mr Do's Castle (PB)

### COLECOVISION

#### FOURTH QUARTER

Boulder Dash (MF)  
Cabbage Patch Pix Show (COL)  
Choplifter (COL)  
Circus Charlie (PB)  
Crisis Mountain (MF)  
Lunar Leeper (SOL)  
Number Bumper (SUN)  
Short Circuit (MF)  
Spy Hunter (COL)  
Stunt Flyer (SOL)  
Tapper (COL)  
Tournament Tennis (IMGC)

#### DECEMBER

Summer Games (EPYX)

#### JANUARY

Pastfinder (ACT)

## ATARI 5200

### FOURTH QUARTER

Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)

## ATARI COMPUTERS

### NOVEMBER

B.C. Grog Revenge (SOL)  
Beyond Castle Wolfenstein (MUSE)  
Breakthrough in Ardennes (SSI)  
Broadsides (SSI)  
Conan (DS)  
x-Field of Fire (SSI)  
x-Free Trader (AH)  
x-Gulf Strike (AH)  
Hitchhiker's Guide (INF)  
x-Imperium Galactum (SSI)  
Impossible Mission (EPYX)  
Jet Boot Black (DM)  
London Blitz (AH)  
Lost Tomb (DS)  
x-Mancopter (DS)  
Mr Do (DS)  
Mychess II (DM)  
Pitstop II (EPYX)  
Polar Pierre (DM)  
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)  
Rock N' Rhythm (SPN)  
Short Circuit (MF)  
Space Cowboy (AH)  
x-Stealth (BRO)  
Suspect (INF)  
Tarzan (COL)  
x-Whistler's Brother (BRO)

### FOURTH QUARTER

Barbie (EPYX)  
Computer Ambush (SSI)  
Dunzhin (SCRN)  
G.I. Joe (EPYX)  
Grammar Examiner (DES)  
Hot Wheels (EPYX)  
Kaiv (SCRN)  
Reforger 88 (SSI)  
Seti (TRAP)  
x-Spelunker (BRO)  
Super Music Box (PPI)  
Twisted (TRAP)  
U.S. Adventure (FS)  
Wargames (COL)  
Wylde (SCRN)

#### DECEMBER

Breakdance (EPYX)  
Designer Pencil (ACT)  
Dig Dug (DS)  
Pac Man (DS)  
Pole Position (DS)  
Print Shop (BRO)  
Serpent Star (BRO)

#### JANUARY

Ghostbusters (ACT)  
Moreta: Dragonlady of Pern (EPYX)

### FIRST QUARTER

Raid Over Moscow (ACC)

## COMMODORE 64

### FOURTH QUARTER

Ankh (DM)  
Baltic 85 (SSI)  
B.C. Grog's Revenge (SOL)  
Chopper Hunt (IMGC)  
Circus Charlie (PB)  
Demon Attack (IMGC)  
Dracula (IMGC)

Dunzhin (SCRN)  
Hitchhiker's Guide (INF)  
Jet Boot Black (DM)  
Kaiv (SCRN)  
Mabel's Mansion (DM)  
Miner 2049er II (MF)  
Mychess II (DM)  
On Field Football (ACT)  
On Court Tennis (ACT)  
Polar Pierre (DM)  
Rock N'Rhythm (SPN)  
Seti (TRAP)  
Short Circuit (MF)  
Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)  
x-Spelunker (BRO)  
Stress Manager (BI)  
Stunt Flyer (SOL)  
Super Music Box (PPI)  
Super Pipeline (INT)  
Suspect (INF)  
Tarzan (COL)  
Twisted (TRAP)  
U.S. Adventure (FS)  
Viking Raider (INT)  
Wargames (COL)  
Wylde (SCRN)  
Your Personal Net Worth (SCR)

### NOVEMBER

x-Breakthrough the Ardennes (SSI)  
x-Championship Lode Runner (BRO)  
Conan (DS)  
Field of Fire (SSI)  
x-Fortress of Witch King (AH)  
Heathcliff (DS)  
Imperium Galactum (SSI)  
x-Injured Engine (IMGC)  
x-It's Only Rock & Roll (KTEL)  
Karateka (BRO)  
x-London Blitz (AH)  
Lost Tomb (DS)  
x-Mancopter (DS)  
Mindshadow (ACT)  
x-Monty Plays Scrabble (EPYX)  
Mr Do (DS)  
x-Stealth (BRO)  
Tracer Sanction (ACT)  
x-Whistler's Bros (BRO)

### DECEMBER

Adventure Construction Set (EA)  
Breakdance (EPYX)  
Dig Dug (DS)  
Fast Load (EPYX)  
G.I. Joe (EPYX)  
Hot Wheels (EPYX)  
Indiana Jones/Lost Kingdom (MIND)  
Pac Man (DS)  
x-Pitstop II (EPYX)  
Pole Position (DS)  
Print Shop (BRO)  
Serpents Star (BRO)  
Time Machine (IMGC)

## APPLE II/III

### FOURTH QUARTER

Ankh (DM)  
B.C. Grog's Revenge (SOL)  
Beamrider (ACT)  
Breakdance (EPYX)  
Computer Baseball (SSI)  
Computer Quarterback (SSI)  
Crime & Punishment (IMGC)  
x-Cutthroat (INF)  
Dunzhin (SCRN)  
Earthly Delights (DM)  
Graphics Exhibitor (KOALA)  
Hitchhiker's Guide (INF)  
Kaiv (DM)  
Mabel's Mansion (DM)  
Miner 2049er II (MF)  
Mychess II (DM)  
President's Choice (SPN)  
x-Print Shop Graphics Lib (BRO)  
Robot Odyssey I (LC)  
Seti (TRAP)  
Short Circuit (MF)  
Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)  
Spy Vs. Spy (FS)  
Station 5 (MF)  
Suspect (INF)  
Twisted (TRAP)  
U.S. Adventure (FS)  
Your Personal Net Worth (SCR)  
War in Russia (SSI)  
Wylde (SCRN)

### NOVEMBER

Championship Lode Runner (BRO)  
Conan (DS)  
x-Imperium Galactum (SSI)  
Karateka (BRO)  
Letter Wizard Combo (DS)  
Mindshadow (ACT)  
Tracer Sanction (ACT)  
**DECEMBER**  
Another Bow (IMGC)  
Barbie (EPYX)  
Designer Pencil (ACT)  
Dig Dug (DS)  
G.I. Joe (EPYX)  
H.E.R.O. (ACT)  
Hot Wheels (EPYX)  
Injured Engine (IMGC)  
Pac Man (DS)  
Pitfall II (ACT)  
Pitstop II (EPYX)  
Stunt Flyer (SOL)  
Wizardry Scenario 4 (SIR)

### FIRST QUARTER

Adventure Construction Set (EA)  
Damiano (IMGC)  
Kings Quest II (SOL)  
Mr Do (DS)  
Pole Position (DS)  
Raid Over Moscow (ACC)  
**FEBRUARY**  
Ghostbusters (ACT)  
Space Shuttle (ACT)

## IBM PCjr

### FOURTH QUARTER

Barbie (EPYX)  
BC Grog's Revenge (SOL)  
Bruce Lee (DS)  
Conan (DS)  
Decathlon (ACT)  
Earthly Delights (DM)  
G.I. Joe (EPYX)  
Hot Wheels (EPYX)  
In The Chips (CS)  
Lost Tomb (DS)  
Match Wits (CBS)  
Miner 2049er II (MF)  
Murder by the Dozen (CBS)  
Pipes (CS)  
x-President's Choice (SPN)  
River Raid (ACT)  
Short Circuit (MF)  
Sierra Championship Boxing (SOL)  
Stress Manager (BI)  
Stunt Flyer (SOL)  
Summer Games (EPYX)  
x-Trivia Mania (PS)

### DECEMBER

Dig Dug (DS)  
Mindshadow (ACT)  
Pac Man (DS)  
Print Shop (BRO)  
Tracer Sanction (ACT)

### FIRST QUARTER

Mr Do (DS)  
Pole Position (DS)  
**JANUARY**  
Designer's Pencil (ACT)

## ADAM

### FOURTH QUARTER

ADAMCalc (COL)  
Address Book Filer (COL) \*  
Best of Broderbund (COL)  
Cabbage Patch Adv in Park (COL) \*  
CPM 2.2 (COL)  
CPM 2.2 (COL) \*  
Dragons Lair (COL)  
Dragons Lair (COL) \*  
Expertype (COL) \*  
Home Software Library (COL)  
Recipe Filer (COL)  
Recipe Filer (COL) \*  
Smart Filer (COL) \*  
Smart Letters/Forms (COL) \*  
Sub Roc (COL)

\* floppy disk format

## COMPANY NAME CODES:

ACTV - Activision  
AH - Avalon Hill  
ART - Artwork  
AT - Atari  
BI - Batteries Included  
BRO - Broderbund  
CBS - CBS Electronics  
COL - Coleco  
COMM - Commodore  
CS - Creative Software  
DES - DesignWare  
DM - DataMost  
DS - DataSoft  
EA - Electronic Arts  
ELE - Electra Concepts  
EPYX - Epyx  
FS - First Star  
II - Intellivision Inc  
IMGC - Imagic  
INAC - Interactive  
INF - Infocom  
INT - Interphase  
LC - Learning Co.  
MF - Microfun  
MIPC - Microprose  
MMG - MMG Micro Software  
PB - Parker Bros.  
PDI - Program Design Inc  
PS - Professional Software  
SCR - Scarborough  
SCRN - Screenplay  
SOL - Sierra  
SPN - Spinnaker  
SSI - Strategic Simulations  
ST - SirTech  
STRSIM - Strategic Simulations  
SUB - SubLogic  
SUN - Sunrise  
SYN - Synapse  
TRAP - Trapeze  
TRO - Tronix  
TS - TechSketch  
TYM - Tymac  
XON - Xonox  
VIC - Victory Software

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(x - indicates shelves by our purveyors, may not be in distribution, however, Editor's Note: Where some cases, dates by the manufacturer simply not realistic, however, we feel it is our responsibility to give you the projected release dates are given to us, with alteration.)