

THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

INCLUDES

Computer Entertainer

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A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman

TOP 10 SELLERS

Game Systems

1. Quest for Tires (SOL/COL)
2. Nova Blast (IMGC/COL)
3. Defender (AT/COL)
4. Mario Bros (AT/2600)
5. Front Line (COL/COL)
6. Pengo (AT/5200)
7. Space Shuttle (ACTV/2600)
8. Frenzy (COL/COL)
9. Pinball (MAT/INT)
10. Popeye (PB/5200)

TOP 10 SELLERS

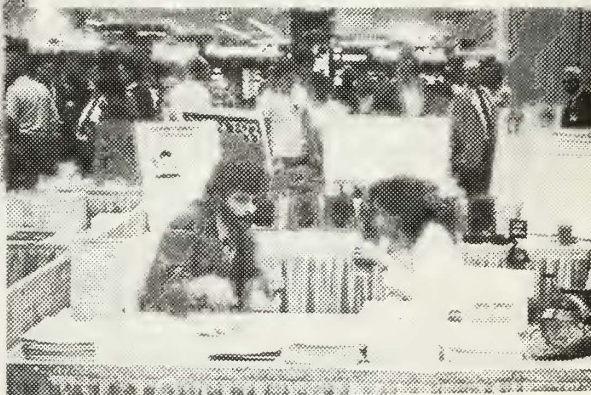
Computer Entertainment

1. Lode Runner (BRO/AP)
2. Pinball Construction (EA/AT)
3. Choplifter (BRO/C64)
4. Zaxxon (DS/AT)
5. Q*Bert (PB/AT)
6. Sargon II (Hayden/AP)
7. Pitstop (EPYX/AT)
8. Robotron (AT/AP)
9. Lode Runner (BRO/AT)
10. Zork I (INF/C64)

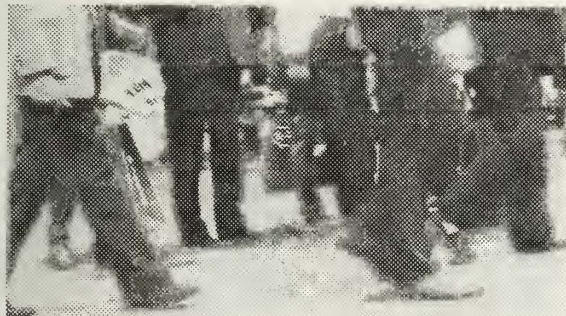
(Top 10's are compiled from a panel of retail outlets, chain stores, and distributors)



Over 90,000 people come to C.E.S.!



Video Game Update staffers at our Publication booth



Over 7 miles of walking!!

Photos by Andre Miller

NOTES FROM THE C.E.S. FLOOR

We've now been back in our offices a couple of weeks from the most recent C.E.S. which has given us time to reflect on the show and the general feeling of the show. We certainly did not see the huge number of software companies at this show; however, for those who came, they generally felt positive about the show and what 1984 will hold for them. There is no question that we saw more quality than ever before—it makes a difference when companies don't try to design 25 new games a month!

The mood around Atari was extremely high. They feel they are truly on the right track for the future. The Atarisoft line was being shown to tremendously positive reaction. Many dealers had not even been aware of its existence before! A few notes from the Atarisoft line. It appears there is an excellent chance that Atarisoft will produce many of its most popular titles for the PCjr. A spokesperson told us they plan to watch the TI99-4/A market very closely before deciding what their continued support of that system will be. One thing is certain—the Atarisoft line is very popular and you will see more and more titles for systems such as Coleco, Apple, and C64.

Meanwhile, over at Commodore, they were getting big crowds as dealers and distributors took a look at the new 264/364 (article elsewhere in this issue). There was a good deal of puzzlement from the people who visited the booth as they tried to figure out how this computer would fit into their customer's needs. Just as the C64 has really taken off due to software support, Commodore decides to move in another direction. Meanwhile, we spoke with some people who are close to designers inside Commodore and learned that they may very well be working on another new computer!! We understand it would be C64-compatible and would be portable with a fold-down L.E.D. screen! It sounds very interesting and may be introduced at the Summer C.E.S.

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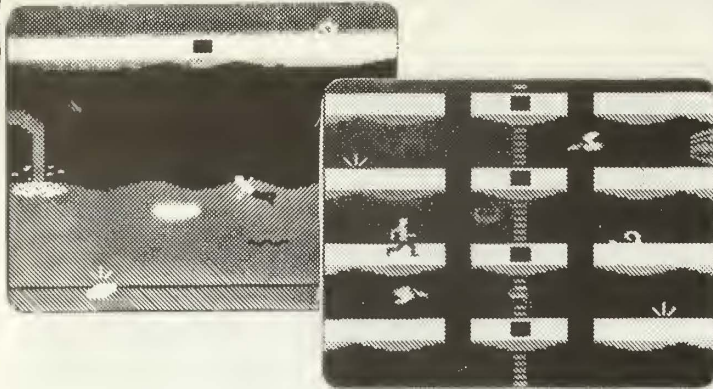
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REVIEWS, REVIEWS, REVIEWS!

CRITICALLY SPEAKING...ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE



PITFALL II (★★★★/★★★★) is a sequel to the original *Pitfall* by David Crane that has now sold over three million units world wide. David and the rest of the Activision team have absolutely outdone themselves this time. The continuing adventures of Pitfall Harry have taken on a whole new dimension, since Harry now has the run of an Incan cavern that is eight screens wide and twenty-eight levels deep. In this adventure, Harry has traveled to the mountains of Peru along with his niece, Rhonda, and Quickclaw, the cowardly mountain cat. They intended to find the fabled Raj Diamond, but the group was somehow separated, and the player must help Harry find his party, the diamond, and as many gold bars as possible. Unlike the original *Pitfall*, the sequel has no time limit, and Harry never loses a life. Scattered throughout the Lost Caverns of the Incas are red, mystical healing crosses. Whenever Harry runs afoul of a nasty creature, he is transported back to the last healing cross he touched.

Elaborate Musical Score

The game begins at the edge of the caverns, and the player catches a glimpse of the cowardly Quickclaw trembling in fear, but Harry cannot reach him just now. The musical score (it's much too elaborate to call it an accompaniment) immediately calls attention to itself—three musical tracks plus percussion, no less! Harry is immediately beset by flying pests, a bat and a condor. We had no trouble with the bat, but the condor gave us fits, so we just had Harry drop through a hole into the underground river. Here Harry swims along, avoiding the electric eels and bobbing with the current. The watchful player will pick up some underwater treasures before jumping onto a handy ledge. (points are earned for every piece of treasure found, but the points are easily lost when Harry runs into an electric eel, albino scorpions, poisonous frogs, bats and condors.) There are lots of ladders in this game, but they just keep going and going! Not only does Harry run and swim and climb in this game, but he also flies over the chasms between cliffs—with the aid of a balloon.

More Exciting Than the Original

We could have spent hours playing this game, which we found much more exciting than the original *Pitfall*. We especially liked the fact that Harry never dies, giving the player plenty of time to explore the many screens. The proprietary chip designed especially for this game allows for more screens than we've ever seen in a game for this system, and it enhances the unit's ability to reproduce polyphonic music with rhythm accompaniment. (is there no end to the feats that can be coaxed from the modest, little Atari 2600 by talented designers?) The graphics are beautiful, the sound magnificent, and the play action is thoroughly engrossing. We have the opportunity to play and review hundreds of games every year, and there are very few that we feel *must* become part of your personal collection. *PITFALL II* is one of those. (Solo Play) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

PRIVATE EYE (★★½/★★½) is an amusingly charming game suitable for kids of all ages—even grown-up ones. The player takes the role of investigator Pierre Touche in his quest to capture and book the international criminal, Henri Le Fiend. Just like any good investigator, Touche must first establish reasonable cause by finding the evidence and stolen goods and returning them to their

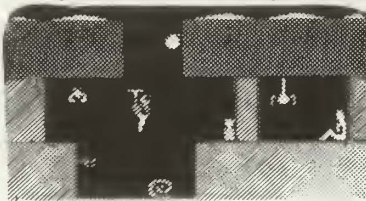
owners for verification. Aided with a partial map of the city, the player must guide Touche in his 1935 Model A as he explores the streets, alleys, parks and secret passages of the city. Touche bounces comically along, jumping over potholes and sewer rats, dodging falling bricks and flower pots, and avoiding pigeons. When questionable characters appear in windows, Touche must jump up to see if they're hiding one of the items he seeks. If he locates a piece of evidence, he must return it to its rightful owner. (For example, the gun must be returned to the gun shop, the money bag to the bank.) After the first item is returned, criminals lurk behind bushes and steps, throwing stilettos at Touche. When all the stolen goods have been recovered and returned, Le Fiend can then be apprehended and booked at the police station. There are five different cases with "statutes of limitations" ranging from three to twenty minutes; each case has different pieces of evidence to be found.

Challenging Little Adventure Game

Before we had a chance to play *PRIVATE EYE*, we were not too enthusiastic about its possibilities. However, there turned out to be more to the game than was apparent on first inspection. Under the whimsical humor lies a challenging little adventure game that requires good memory and a sense of direction. The instruction booklet starts the player out with a partial map of the city, but those who would do well in the game will want to make complete maps of the city. More than once we became thoroughly lost or had the feeling we were going around in circles as we kept running into roadblocks, detours and short-cuts. And it can be very frustrating to find the money bag and waste the rest of the limited time looking for the bank you *know* you passed only a few moments before! *PRIVATE EYE* would be a great introduction to adventure gaming for young children, and many adults will enjoy the light-hearted fun, too. (Solo Play)

Recommended. (MSR \$22.95)

H.E.R.O. (★★★/★★½) is a multi-screen rescue game set in the caverns of a volcanic mine. The player is R. Hero, founder of H.E.R.O. (Helicopter Emergency Rescue Operations), who is strapped into a helicopter Prop Pack to descend into the mine and rescue trapped miners. R. Hero has two tools in addition to the Prop Pack that allows him to fly and hover: a Laser Helmet which can shoot lethal beams at deadly creatures or bore through granite, and quick-fuse dynamite charges that can help him blast through impassable walls. Points are earned for rescuing miners and dispatching shaft bats, spiders, snakes and mine moths in the deadly depths. While R. Hero flies and hovers, shoots and blasts, rescues and dodges, the power supplying his Prop Pack gradually decreases.



Under the pressure of a time limit, he must rescue as many miners as possible while avoiding the dangers, including a tentacled beast in a boiling river deep within the volcanic caverns. Sometimes he must even work in the dark after a wall lantern is destroyed. There are five variations, each successive one allowing the player to start at a more difficult skill level.

The more difficult the level, the more creatures R. Hero encounters. Even the cavern walls become deadly in the deeper sections of the mine.

Action Game with Lots of Challenge

R. Hero is quite a sight in his backpack-mounted Prop Pack, and it takes some practice to steer him skillfully through the dangers of the mine. As the screen scrolls into the next section of the mine, nasty surprises often await him. The game combines elements of a search-and-rescue adventure with the quick action of a shooting game requiring quick reflexes. As if all the dreadful creatures weren't enough of a challenge, most players will find themselves blowing up R. Hero with dynamite charges until they get the feel of setting the charge quickly and moving out of the way. Although the graphics bear a superficial resemblance to the underground setting of *Pitfall II*, the games are not at all alike. Graphics in H.E.R.O. are colorful, and we especially liked the way the rescued miners greet R. Hero with a wave of the hand. Those who like action games with lots of challenge will enjoy this one. (Solo Play) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE

TAZ (★★★ / ★★½) is a game designed around the Warner Bros. cartoon character, The Tasmanian Devil. The title screen shows the familiar character, but Taz is represented by a whirling tornado in the game itself. Taz the tornado eats everything in sight along the horizontal tracks of the playing field, and the player must see to it that Taz doesn't get a monumental bellyache

by swallowing a stick of dynamite. A series of three unbalanced meals will be served to Taz, so long as the player can keep Taz alive. Each meal consists of eight courses, fifty of the same food item per course. The courses are hamburgers, root beer, ice cream cones, fudgesicles, apple cores, turnips, tomatoes, and sundaes. (On that diet, who needs dynamite to get a bellyache?!) The food items and dynamite sticks march randomly across the tracks on the screen, entering from both the left and right sides of the screen. After the fudgesicle course in the first meal, the words "Crazed Wave" appear on the screen, signalling that the food will be coming faster and faster. For the player with the stamina and coordination to keep Taz alive through all twenty-four courses of the three meals (twelve hundred food items!), there is a special surprise "dessert."

Test of Eye-Hand Coordination

The graphics in TAZ are cute and colorful. All the food items are definitely recognizable. Play action boils down to a pretty straightforward test of eye-hand coordination as the food and dynamite march faster and faster across the screen. Especially for less experienced players, it's fortunate that there are no time limits. The player is not penalized for waiting patiently, rather than madly running all over the screen to catch every food item as quickly as possible. However, there is nothing to prevent the player from taking the daring approach! After playing TAZ for numerous rounds, we had mixed emotions about it. Taz reminded us a little of two other games—TigerVision's *Jawbreaker* and Telesys' *Fast Food*—both of which we've enjoyed playing. However, we just couldn't become really excited about TAZ. It's fun to play, but not particularly outstanding. We would suggest you try this one before buying. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating)
MSR \$30.00

DICE PUZZLE (★★ / ★★) is a mind-game from Panda Software that may appeal to those who like puzzles such as Rubik's Cube. The screen displays a matrix of 16 squares, each representing the face of a die. Pushing the reset button on the game console causes all the dice to change numbers randomly. The object in playing the game is to change all die faces to six spots in the shortest amount of time, and in the least number of moves. The player can move a cursor around the left and top sides of the matrix, changing an entire vertical, horizontal or diagonal row of dice at one time. Each push of the joystick firing button causes every die in the chosen row to add one spot. The challenge is in determining just the right combination of moves to accomplish the feat of changing all the dice to display six spots before the 60-minute timer runs out. The display is different each time the game is played, and the instructions assure the player that the game is always solvable.

Plain Graphics

While DICE PUZZLE is obviously not a highly visual game, we found the graphics plainer than necessary. The display also flickers quite a lot, so we assume that the designer(s) were working with a bare minimum of memory in the cartridge. DICE PUZZLE is definitely not for fans of action games, but those who enjoy solving puzzles may enjoy this one. (Solo Play)

SEAHAWK (★½ / ★½) is a game of air and sea warfare from Panda Software in which the player controls a plane capable of firing a machine gun straight ahead or torpedoes downward. The enemies are black helicopters and ships which fire at the player's plane. The object is to destroy enemy craft while avoiding their shots. Points are earned for shooting the enemy, while points are lost if the player shoots the friendly ship. Whenever the player's plane is shot down by the enemy, the pilot's parachute will float toward the ocean. If the player can maneuver the parachuting pilot to land on a friendly ship, the pilot will be saved.

SEAHAWK is a very simple game that won't appeal to any but the least sophisticated of game players. Graphics are plain and dull, and the game is boring to play. This is unadorned dodging and shooting of the most basic kind. (Solo Play)
Not recommended.

SCUBA DIVER (★ / ★★) is a two-screen underwater contest. In the first phase, the player must choose the right moment to have the scuba diver jump into the water, which is inhabited by man-eating fish. Watching the diver's limited oxygen supply, the player must harpoon all the fish and then enter the sunken ship at the bottom of the screen. Inside the ship, the second stage of the game involves avoiding three sea monsters and the sticky walls of the ship to retrieve the sunken treasure chest.

As in the other games from Panda, graphics are very primitive. In this one, there is the added problem of scale, which detracts from the believability of the game. The diver seems much too large in relation to the boat from which he dives, and the fish are much larger yet. SCUBA DIVER is a simple-minded game that might have been acceptable three years ago, but it's much too basic to appeal to today's gamer. (Solo Play)
Not recommended.

EXOCET (★ / ★) is a very basic, space-themed shoot-em-up from Panda Software. The player controls a UFO that is restricted to the upper third of the screen during the first portion of the game. Flying the UFO from left to right, the player must shoot out two types of cannon towers that fire on the UFO. The lower cannon towers can be avoided by flying over them, but the higher ones must be hit squarely and cannot be avoided. After ten towers have been destroyed, an opening appears into the underground tunnel that occupies the lower two-thirds of the screen. The underground portion of the contest is more of the same: fire on cannon towers that shoot at the UFO. The tunnel gradually narrows during the game, and the cannon towers fire more rapidly.

EXOCET looks like something from the dark ages of video games. Graphics are blocky and primitive, and game play is totally unimaginative. It's difficult to believe that anyone could expect this game to sell in today's demanding software market. Pass this one up, even if you find it in a \$4.95 bargain bin. (Sol Play)
Not recommended.

STUNTMAN (★★ / ★★) is the best of the action games from Panda. The player as stuntman must climb moving "magic ropes" to reach a rescue helicopter at the top of the screen during a limited time period. There are nine slight variations of the same basic screen, all of which have a deadly snake to be avoided at the bottom of the screen. In some variations, there are birds which knock the stuntman to the ground. They don't kill him, but the falls use up time. In other variations, there are devilfaces, which must be beaten with a stick until they turn into birds. Other variations have balloons which the stuntman must jump to and catch, then ride them to the ground. The balloons then become devilfaces. The rest of the variations simply present different quantities of birds, devilfaces or balloons.

STUNTMAN is not really a bad game, particularly if it can be found at a very low price. Though the graphics aren't especially exciting, at least they're colorful. The game is fairly challenging, even at lower skill levels, as the player attempts to guide the stuntman's progress up the constantly shifting magic ropes. This one won't set experienced gamers' hearts a-flutter, but neophytes may enjoy it. (Solo Play)

VECTREX CLOSES ITS DOORS

We have learned that Milton Bradley, the parent company of GCE Vectrex, has shuttered its videogame operation, effective immediately. The last product which reached dealer's shelves, in extremely small quantities, was the 3-D Imager. Unfortunately, even if you found that item, you would only end up with 3-D Mine Storm as we understand that was packaged with the Imager. None of the other 3-D titles will be produced. It's a shame as it was a good system, with some excellent software. Those of you who own a Vectrex will have to be content with whatever software has already been manufactured, as there will not be any made available from any third party companies.

EXPLANATION OF RATING SYSTEM:

★★★★—EXCELLENT

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

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

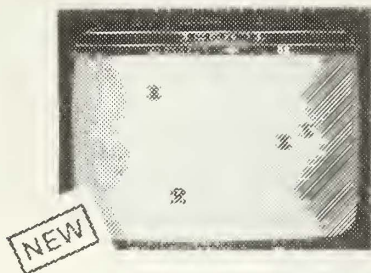
★—POOR

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...ATARI 2600-COMPATIBLE BUMP'N'JUMP (★ ★ / ★ ★ 1/2) is based on the Data East road

Intellivision



racing arcade game. Much like the bump-cars at an amusement park, the object for the player is to keep his/her car on the road while bumping and bashing other vehicles out of the way. The player's car can also be coaxed into aerial leaps over vehicles and other obstacles, provided the car is moving fast enough. Traveling up the

screen on varying roadways, the player's car must deal with a number of computer-controlled vehicles: a skull-and-crossbones car that follows aggressively and is difficult to bump, a heavy tractor that can't be bumped very far, a dump truck that drops exploding debris, and lightweight race cars that are easy to bump. While the player attempts to make the computer cars crash for points, the computer cars are out to get the player's car too. Periodically, a beeping sound warns the player that the car is approaching a water hazard that must be jumped. Whenever the beeping sound occurs, the player's car must be moving fast enough to jump, or else the player will lose a car in the water. At the end of each roadway, a scoring screen appears with the number of cars crashed, bonus points earned, and number and season of the next roadway.

Blocky Graphics

Graphics are quite blocky, and the flickering effects typical of multiple-moving objects on the screen are definitely present in this game. BUMP'N'JUMP is not a bad game to play, though, particularly for younger players who get a kick out of all the bashing and crashing. However, experienced game players are likely to become bored after a few rounds. The musical accompaniment is constant in this game. Fortunately for those who are annoyed easily, the music can be turned off with the Color/BW switch on the console. (Solo Play) Not Recommended

SHUTTLE ORBITER (★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is a Space shuttle mission, the object of which is to complete the construction of a Space Station as quickly as possible. The initial screen is not part of actual game play, but it shows the skill level chosen, along with the lift-off of the space shuttle Challenger. The second screen, the Orbital Display,



shows the earth being orbited by several objects: the shuttle Challenger, the Space Station under construction, a Space Factory, and a Fuel Depot. The bottom of the screen shows elapsed time since entering orbit, remaining fuel on board the shuttle and the relative altitudes of the four orbiting objects. The player's first task is to cause the shuttle to rendezvous with one of the other objects, usually the Factory. Using the principle that objects in distant orbits travel more slowly relative to each other than objects in close orbits (and vice versa), the player adjusts Challenger's orbit until the desired object is nearby and at the same altitude. This takes careful maneuvering while watching both the Orbital Display and the Altitude Indicator. When the shuttle nears the rendezvous point, the display automatically changes to a close-up view of the shuttle and the other object.

Hazards of Construction in Space

If the Factory was chosen for rendezvous, the last bit of maneuvering must be accomplished so that the astronaut can move from the shuttle to the Factory door. One or two pieces for the Space Station can be carried aboard the Challenger at one time. (It takes ten pieces to complete the Space Station.) On the way back to the Orbital Display, Challenger must successfully navigate through a field of debris from the tail of a comet. Collisions carry the risk of damaging the pieces needed for construction of the Space Station. Assuming that Challenger makes it safely back to the Orbital Display—a big assumption until the player is reasonably proficient at the game—the next rendezvous is with the rotating Space Station. Here the player finds that the astronaut can't just shove the pieces in any old handy spot. Each piece must be placed in exactly the right place, or else it will be broken, making another trip to the Factory necessary. All this maneuvering consumes fuel, so there are times when Challenger will have to rendezvous with the Depot. Until the player

has a lot of experience with this game, there will be numerous refuelings and many trips to the Factory to replace broken pieces.

For Painstaking Perfectionists

The personality of a company's design team begins to show after a few releases hit the market. The group at Avalon Hill obviously doesn't believe in ordinary video games that are relatively easy to learn and master. They also don't believe the world needs another dodge-and-shoot game. (They're probably right.) In SHUTTLE ORBITER we have another example of their idea of a good game: make the gamer think, make the gamer really work for a good score—and throw in a measure of guaranteed frustration, just so he/she won't think every game can be beaten with thirty minutes or so of practice! We liked this game very much, but we feel the designer would agree with us that it's not for everyone. SHUTTLE ORBITER is a good game for the painstaking perfectionist capable of some very delicate joystick handling. Graphics are pretty but simple—all emphasis here is on the intricacies of the game itself. If you want to blast aliens, look elsewhere, but if you want a terrific challenge to mind and coordination skills, you'll find it in SHUTTLE ORBITER. (Solo Play; Pause) Recommended. (MSR \$30.00)

CBS SOFTWARE HAS AMBITIOUS RELEASE SCHEDULE

CBS Software had many new educational programs to show at C.E.S. (see systems and availability in our Availability Update). For ages 3-6, DUCKS AHOY; SEAHORSE HIDE 'N' SEEK, which teaches shape and color discrimination; ERNIE'S MAGIC SHAPES; and BIG BIRD'S SPECIAL DELIVERY, a Sesame Street game. For ages 6-up, MATH MILEAGE teaches arithmetic; PEANUT BUTTER PANIC is a 2-player game in which success depends on cooperation; COCO-NUTS allows you collaborate on musical compositions with the computer; HALFTIME BATTLING BANDS teaches music style and awareness; MOVIE MUSICAL MADNESS, allowing you to make your own movies from sets, soundtracking, and casting.

CBS Entertainment Division Defunct??

Meanwhile, over in the entertainment section of the CBS booth, we noticed that only "old" games were being displayed with no one even wandering about. In talking with several people at the show, it appears that, although there has been no official announcement, CBS has bowed out of the home entertainment arena effective immediately. If true, titles such as the much publicized WINGS will never see the light of day.

GYRUSS DEBUTS FROM PARKER BROS

Parker Bros. debuted their home translation of GYRUSS, the hit arcade game. Although not all formats were completed and ready to show, what we did see looked like Parker Bros. may have another hit on their hands! They plan versions for 2600, 5200, ColecoVision, C64, and Atari computers. Meanwhile, they worked faster than expected on the brand new version of JAMES BOND 007 and will start shipping in various formats as soon as this month! The tie-in with Octopussy is totally gone. Segments included in this new version include "The Spy Who Loved Me", "For Your Eyes Only", "Moonraker", "Diamonds Are Forever", and "Live and Let Die". Only after the player has successfully negotiated all five adventures can he be awarded the opportunity of attaining the 007 rating. In order to inherit the Bond number, players must decode a diabolical puzzle designed by Dr. No to test the intuitive skills of Bond.

VARIOUS COMPANIES ANNOUNCE INTENTIONS TO PRODUCE TI 99/4A SOFTWARE

As TI leaves the software business, they have made arrangements for third party software firms to take over marketing and distribution on previously announced titles. First, Imagic will take over and release five titles: DEMON ATTACK, MICROSURGEON (already out), FATHOM, WING WAR and MOONSWEEPER. Sierra On-Line plans release of five educational programs which feature a number of Walt Disney characters. Among those characters to be used are Peter Pan, Pinocchio, Winnie the Pooh, and Professor Ludwig Von Drake. TI has indicated they plan to continue to discuss software with third party firms to encourage a continued flow of product for the system.

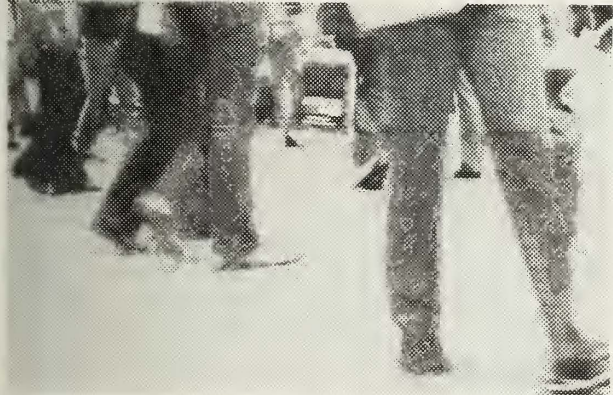
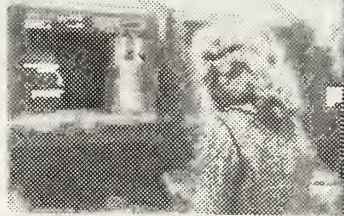
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Coleco's obvious thrust was ADAM and had several demonstrators working the word processing program, BASIC, and BUCK ROGERS; however, no one was allowed "hands on" with the computer and its features. As the show wore on, more and more game screens went "dark" as they either removed them or had problems with VICTORY, DESTRUCTOR, DUKES OF HAZZARD, BASEBALL, and others! In speaking with dealers and buyers wandering around the Coleco booth, it was apparent that several of them are somewhat disallusioned with the ADAM—in reliability, availability, and announcements of ADAM products vs. delivery of those products.

Mattel was there and, much to our surprise, had their full-size booth with several new software products showing. The representatives were far more friendly and helpful than we had ever experienced in the past and we sensed a new "we will survive" attitude from them. Unfortunately, most of the new software being previewed was in various unfinished forms and will not be available until the Spring or Summer, at the earliest so we will have to wait and see if the product ever sees the light of day.

Apple was at the show for the first time to show support for the home computer market and all the software companies who produce software for the Apple line. IBM was not there; however, due to the heavy introductions of PCjr software by several third party companies, there were plenty of PCjrs around demonstrating the various games and programs which gave everyone a chance to have a little "hands-on" time with the computer (what a strange little keyboard!)

Our heads swam with the large amount of "educational" software being announced for the various home computers. This has become the new "in" area to produce for so look for a glut in this area. We talked with some very knowledgeable people about entertainment vs. educational vs. home productivity and we're working on an in-depth article on SOFTWARE FOR THE HOME which we plan to feature next month. We had the opportunity to spend time with Philip Orbanes, Vice President of Research and Development at Parker Bros., Tim Mott, Designer at Electronic Arts, and John Victor, President of Program Design Inc. who has a BS degree in Psychology and has some very pertinent comments to make.



Feet—Don't fail me now!!



This is what the show looks like by the last day!

Photos by Andre Miller

AVAILABILITY UPDATE NOTES

Based on updated availability dates we have been given by various manufacturers, and the fact that we have mentioned many new titles in various articles in this issue, we felt we should list the expected release dates on the back page. This is in spite of the fact that many dates are so far off that it is hard to imagine the dates will hold true. You may note that many more companies have turned to release dates by "quarter" as they have found, time and time again, the dates, when given by specific month, were impossible to live up to. Once you start listing programs for the third and fourth quarter, we must hold those dates highly suspect—especially in light of the fact that many of those titles have not even begun development yet! But, as always, we feel we are not in a position to edit dates given us by the manufacturers. (You might find it interesting to keep count of how many programs actually make their release dates).



Atari's David Ruckert, Senior Vice President in charge of Atan Products accepts the award for Game of the Year—5200 for SPACE DUNGEON from Marylou Badeaux and Celeste Dolan of Video Game Update

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI 5200-COMPATIBLE

MARIO BROTHERS (★ ★ ★ 1/2 / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is an adaptation of the Nintendo arcade game, the sequel to *Donkey Kong* and *Donkey Kong Jr.* Mario the carpenter from the first two games is joined by his brother, Luigi, in a battle against the crawly creatures that are infesting the pipes in their house. In the single-player game, you control Mario; in the two-player version, one person controls Mario while the other takes the role of Luigi. The crawling pests are deadly creatures that cannot be touched without losing a life unless they have been stunned. One or both of the brothers must move below a pest, and then punch the floor directly beneath it to knock the creature onto its back. (Some pests have to be punched twice to flip them over.) Next, one of the brothers must jump up to the floor and kick the pest off before it recovers. Kicking the pest off the floor causes a bonus wafer to appear. (The easy way to eliminate all pests on the screen is to punch the POW switch, but this can only be done three times.) Mario and Luigi also must avoid bouncing fireballs that move around between floors. At higher levels of play, Slipice the evil iceman appears and makes things slippery for our heroes. He can also be punched from below and then kicked. Periodically, all pests disappear, and a Coin Wave begins. During this wave, the object is to collect as many coins as possible in fifteen seconds.

Graphics are nicely detailed—quite close to the arcade original. Game play is lively, especially in the two-player game where friends can compete or cooperate. The single-player version for this system is much better than the one for the 2600 reviewed in December, but we still prefer the two-player game. (Solo Play; 2-Player Simultaneous; Pause.) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

CHOPLIFTER (★ ★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ 1/2) is a licensed adaptation of the game originally designed by Broderbund for Apple and Atari computers. This version for the 5200 is from Atari, and very little is lost in the translation from computer disk to cartridge for a game system. This game still holds up as a unique contest in which the player controls a very realistic helicopter on a mission to rescue sixty-four hostages behind enemy lines. There are three sorties allowed, and the chopper can carry up to sixteen passengers at a time. While the player's chopper is on its rescue mission, tanks fire from below, and jet fighters attack from the air. While the player must fire on the enemy in self-defense and to protect the hostages, no points are awarded for destroying enemy craft. The only totals displayed on the screen are the numbers of hostages lost, those inside the helicopter, and the number of hostages saved.

The incredible animation of helicopter and hostages is what distinguished the original computer versions of this game, and that animation survives in this adaptation. The helicopter is the most realistic rendering seen in any home video game, especially in the way it handles. The hostages are also very believable as they run toward the helicopter and wave as it lifts off. Game play is challenging, and the lack of emphasis on destruction is refreshing. There's nothing else quite like **CHOPLIFTER**. (Solo Play; Pause) Recommended. (MSR \$39.95)

IMAGIC DAZZLES!

As we reported last month, Imagic is introducing several dazzling titles for various systems. Listings of the coming titles can be found in our Availability Update; however, we must mention that Baseball, Football, and the conversion of *Demon Attack* (all for the IBM PCjr) look breathtaking!

Star Wars Details

We have more details for you on the Star Wars development deal Imagic has with Parker Bros. Planned as a multiple screen game, **STAR WARS** puts you in a X-wing Fighter of Luke Skywalker as he seeks and penetrates the Death Star, maneuvering through its narrow passageways at high speeds while fighting Empire war craft. Imagic is putting "the works" into the game, including vectors. Planned formats include the 2600 VCS, Atari computers, VIC 20, and ColecoVision.

Agreement With Amiga

Meanwhile, Imagic has reached an agreement with Amiga which will allow Amiga to include several Imagic titles in their Power Play Arcade system (combining three or four titles on an "album" for the VCS). Initial licensing includes *Demon Attack*, *Cosmic Ark*, *Dragonfire*, *Atlantis*, and *Star Voyager*.

MASTERPLAY 5200 INTERFACE from Electra Concepts



is a very clever solution to the problem most players have with the original controllers on their Atari 5200's. Masterplay allows you to plug in both the original 5200 analog controller and any 9-pin digital joystick (basically anything that works with the Atari 2600). Switches on the unit allow the use of either joystick, depending on your preference for a particular game. If the digital stick is chosen, only the joystick of the original 5200 controller is disabled. Its keypad, firing buttons, start, pause and reset will still operate. Another setting of the switches allows the firing button on the digital joystick to operate as a "start" button on games which do not require firing, such as *Pac-Man*.

What about games that require two firing buttons? Easy! "Auxiliary Fire Control" allows you to plug in a second micro-switch firing button (supplied), which is attached to a long cord. With the aid of a double-stick pad (supplied), this firing button can be attached to your digital joystick in a position that's most comfortable for you. While there are some games for the Atari 5200 that are more easily played with the original analog controller, such as *Missile Command*, the standard digital joystick is far better on many games. Maze games are the best example, and we were so delighted to be able to play *Pac-Man* and *Ms. Pac-Man* with a standard joystick! The arrangement with the Masterplay Interface installed gave us the freedom to choose the best joystick for each game, and at less cost than purchasing a new joystick.

Recommended. (MSR \$19.95)

ATARI EXCITEMENT

There was a lot of excitement around the Atari booth regarding their Atarisoft line. Several titles were being shown for various systems (C64, ColecoVision, TI99-4/A, VIC-20, etc) such as **DEFENDER**, **ROBOTRON**, **CENTPEDE**, **JOUST**, **BATTLEZONE**, **MOON PATROL**, **GALAXIAN**, **JUNGLE HUNT**, **MS PAC MAN**, and **POLE POSITION**. Not all titles will be available for all systems but we were told, confidentially, that many more titles are being prepared and, although you may not see them listed in our Availability Update yet, Atarisoft will announce more titles within the next 2-3 months (there may be 5-6 more ColecoVision titles announced soon). Intellivision owners may be among those who will not benefit from the additional titles as Atari is under a "wait and see" posture waiting for Mattel to take the lead. Atari appears to be concerned about the viability of the Intellivision system's longevity.

Computer Peripherals

We had an opportunity to work with the announced Touch Tablet (retail \$89.95) and the software which will be packaged with it. AtariArtist software combines traditional sketching, erasing, choice of brush width, and style—with those of computer graphics—patterned colors, automatic circles and squares, and mirror images. AtariArtist allows you to choose from 128 colors and 12 pre-designed patterns. The **LIGHT PEN** comes packaged with AtariGraphics (list \$99.95) and will allow you to access all 128 colors available on the Atari computer system.

AtariLab Announced

AtariLab is the first in a series of electronic science kits available through Atari Learning Systems. The AtariLab starter kit with temperature module (89.95) will feature various probes and sensors which connect to the home computer via the AtariLab interface. Data is collected and automatically analyzed and displayed, so complex theories and experiments become understandable. The AtariLab Light Module will be available later at a price of \$49.95.

Game Adventures

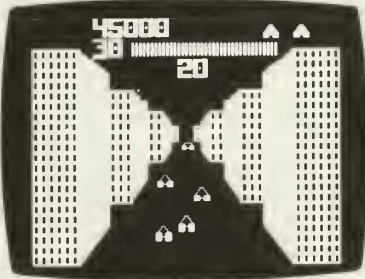
CAPTAIN HOOK'S REVENGE is a two-part computer game which is designed to teach map reading (longitude, latitude, and points of the compass). There are two adventures on this 32K disk (44.95). **THE LEGACY**, an original game designed by Atari for the computer and 5200 takes place in a world decimated by nuclear war. The player's mission is to pilot a technologically advanced ship in a mission to destroy nuclear missile silos. It will include four separate and interactive game modes. **TAZ**, based on the Looney Tunes license, is designed for 7-12 year olds for the VCS. The starving Tasmanian Devil spins like a tornado, eating everything in sight. Other familiar titles planned for release include **MILLIPEDE** and **CHOPLIFTER** (see Availability Update for systems and shipping dates).

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..INTELLIVISION-COMPATIBLE

TURBO (★ 1/2 / ★) is the long-awaited translation for Intellivision owners and, unfortunately, this version has some serious flaws. By now, most of you know the object of **TURBO**. You begin on city streets, avoiding and passing other cars, moving into the country, and the beach (Palisades). In the Intellivision version, the disc works as your steering wheel, while the side buttons act as your gear shift for low and high gear. You must pass 30 cars to gain more time on the clock to continue racing.

Disc Impossible to Steer With

Perhaps Coleco should have shelved this version if they could do no better on the steering control of the disc. Try as we may, the steering was totally unresponsive making it impossible for us to avoid crashes (we tried with one of the add-on sticks available also). Finally, just so we could get further into the various screens, we stayed in low gear so we could anticipate the other cars—it was still incredibly difficult to get the response we needed to maneuver through traffic. Add to that, many times we found ourselves able to pass through other cars, or they through us—especially if we were going very slow. This is a flaw in the program which should never have been allowed out of quality control. We did find the change in scenery pretty good, the oil slicks and snow were there, and the ambulance even shows up in this version; however, this version was truly a disappointment due to the problems with it. We are avid ColecoVision **TURBO** players who have spent hours becoming highly proficient at the game and had looked forward to playing this one. (one player)
Not Recommended



PAC-MAN (★★★★ / ★★★★★) from **Atarisoft** is a superb translation of the familiar Bally-Midway arcade game. This is the classic maze game in all its glory—original theme music, bright yellow Pac-Man, four ghosts, energy pills to make the ghosts vulnerable, and fruit prizes. Graphics are very crisp and clear, and the game is just as much fun as ever. A must for your library! (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause)
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)



CENTIPEDE (★★★★ / ★★★★★) is another excellent Atarisoft translation of an arcade hit. The player controls a magic shooting wand to battle the dreaded Centipede snaking through the mushrooms of the enchanted forest. Other pests include the bouncing Spider, the Flea that plummets straight down, and the Scorpion that poisons mushrooms. The Intellivision disc controller works surprisingly well on a game that was designed for a trackball in the arcades. And the designers have even given us "auto fire" to save on cramped hands from continuous firing! Graphics are beautifully bright and colorful, and the mushrooms even look like mushrooms. Game play is as close to the coin-op original as possible on this system. A winner! (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause)
Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)



A double for Activision as Steve Kitchen accepts an award for Most Innovative Game for **SPACE SHUTTLE** from Celeste Dolan, and Carol Shaw accepts the award for Game of the Year—2600 for **RIVER RAID**.



Bruce Davis, President of IMAGIC, accepts the award for Game of the Year—Intellivision: **SWORDS & SERPENTS** (l-r) Jon Badaeux, Marylou Badaeux (Video Game Update), Bruce Davis, Celese Dolan (VGU)

MATTEL SHOWS NEW TITLES

Mattel showed eight new titles for Intellivision which are under development for 1984. With a greatly pared down staff, the representatives we spent time with appeared to feel good about the company and their planned survival for 1984 (since the show, however, there have been additional layoffs which could indicate the much rumored closing of the electronics division). Titles being shown included the third **Dungeons & Dragons** game, "TOWER OF MYSTERY"; **ALL-STAR MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL** (one-player baseball); **GO FOR THE GOLD**, Mattel's Olympic game featuring two winter games and two summer games; **ILLUSIONS** (not programmed at all at this point); **PARTY LINE**, 3 games in one; **SUPER NASL SOCCER**; **THUNDER CASTLE**, formerly known as **Mystic Castle**; and **HOVER FORCE 3D**, a game which will be packaged with 3-D glasses and puts you in control of a helicopter over a major metropolis where your goal is to rid your city of terrorists. We had a chance to try the glasses on the completed game and were not "overwhelmed" by the effect; however, we want to wait until we have it in our test facility for extensive playing.

Mattel for ColecoVision!

Mattel surprised us with software introductions for ColecoVision owners on some of their most popular titles! Among those planned for summer are **BURGERTIME** (we had a chance to play this one for awhile and it was terrific—difficult from the first level), **MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE**; **BUMP 'N JUMP**, and the upcoming **ILLUSIONS**. Planned 2600 games (under the Mattel name—M Network does not exist anymore) include **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS TREASURE OF TARMIN** and **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS TOWER OF MYSTERY**. Titles planned for Apple include **PIRATES OF THE NILE** and **HEAVY ARTILLERY**.

Dealer Terms May Be Problem

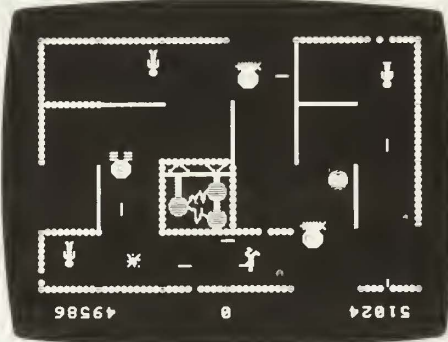
In talking with several retailers at the show, the cash sales terms that Mattel is insisting upon (again due to their recent financial problems) may be the major stumbling block in product reaching your dealer's shelves. Add to that, third party software manufacturers are still **VERY** wary of the Intellivision system and you will still find software extremely difficult to find. All new titles which were shown will not be ready until the Spring, at the earliest (we have listed several titles in the Availability Update). Mattel is still banking on their ECS (Entertainment Computer System) for its future thrust (we saw the recently released **WORLD SERIES MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL** which is a terrific voice 3-D game).

Fate of Aquarius

Just as a closing note on Mattel's Aquarius computer, they have returned the rights of the system to its designer and original manufacturer.

COLECO TALKIES

As we reported last month, Interphase Technologies is bringing voice to ColecoVision via software generated speech algorithms complete with inflection and intonation. It was a bit hard to "hear" the games at C.E.S. due to background noise, but in **SQUISH 'EM SAM**, there appeared to be several words built-in which worked in conjunction with the gameplay adding another dimension to the titles involved. (see Availability Update for planned release dates)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING...COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE**FRENZY (★★★ 1/2 / ★★★ 1/2)** is based on the arcade game by Stern, which was a sequel to Stern's *Berzerk*. This is a multi-maze game in which the player becomes a Commando to do battle against an assortment of robots and skeletons plus Evil Otto, the malevolent bouncing ball disguised as a yellow, happy face. As in the original *Berzerk*, the first group of robots and skeletons will not fire at the player's Commando. Unlike *Berzerk*, however, the maze walls in *FRENZY* are not electrified and can be safely touched. The maze walls are of three different types: dot walls that can be penetrated by Commando or robot bullets, reflecting walls that cause shots to be ricocheted, and absorbing walls. Contact with any of the maze creatures (or their bullets) will cause the loss of a Commando. Most players will want to stay a while in the relatively safe first maze, because bonus points are easily earned for knocking off a number of robots equal to the number that first appeared in the maze. Linger too long in any maze will guarantee the appearance of Evil Otto, however, and he can only be eliminated for a short period by shooting him several times. An eliminated Otto is immediately replaced by a faster, nastier one!

Hard to Put Away

FRENZY is a constantly escalating contest with more variations than its predecessor, *Berzerk*. Depending on the skill level chosen, the player will encounter special feature mazes every second, third, fourth or fifth maze. Extra points can be earned by disabling and freezing the feature at the center of the maze. Features include Big Otto (watch for a surprise when this one is disabled), the Power Plant, the Computer, and the Robot Factory. We found *FRENZY* to be one of those addictive games that's hard to put away. The graphics are very nicely done, and no two mazes are ever exactly alike. We played this one happily for hours, but we found ourselves wishing that Coleco's designers had added voice to this cartridge, now that we know it's possible to do with this system. We're not criticizing the lack of voice, but it certainly would have been a terrific addition to this game. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause.) Recommended.

RIVER RAID (★★★★ / ★★★★★) is an exciting search-and-destroy mission up a river that snakes through enemy-infested territory, and it's a definite upgrade from the original Atari 2600 version in both graphics and game play. The player flies a plane over a the river canyon, shooting at enemy ships, helicopters, jets and fuel tanks. The deeper you move into enemy territory, the fiercer the battle and the narrower the passageway. The sense of realism is excellent, with tanks rolling across bridges, finally moving into position to shoot at your plane. Like the version for Atari computers (reviewed Sept., 1983), this one allows you to start at the first, fifth, twentieth or fiftieth bridge across the river, creating a challenge for players of any skill level. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Pause) Recommended. (MSR \$34.95)



PITFALL (★★ 1/2 / ★★) is the familiar game first designed for the Atari 2600 in which Pitfall Harry, jungle adventurer, moves through various scenes to find treasures before the twenty-minute time-limit runs out. Harry runs past trees, catches swinging vines to clear tar pits, crocodiles and quicksand, and jumps over scorpions, fires, snakes and rolling logs in his quest for treasure both above and below ground. This version for ColecoVision plays exactly like the original in every way, which will be a big disappointment to those who were looking for an enhanced version. Granted, there are improvements in the graphics (we compared them side-by-side), but that is not enough for gamers who already own the 2600 version. ColecoVision is a more advanced game system, and players have a right to expect a more advanced version of the game. This one is worthwhile only for the gamer who doesn't have the original game. (Solo Play; Pause) Not recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

SPECTRON (★★★ / ★) is a blatant clone of *Space Invaders* with the addition of some attractive, but nonessential scenery along the bottom and right

side of the screen. The player controls the mandatory little ship along the bottom of the screen, but the "Spectron Fighter" cannot move within the right third of the screen because of the mountain which occupies that area. The familiar-looking phalanx of Shalix attackers is composed of Hobbits (no relation to the heroes of J.R.R. Tolkien's enchanting works) and Sinkers. There's also a Mother Transport that scoots across the top of the screen periodically. The only real difference we could find between *SPECTRON* and the original *Space Invaders* is the laying of bombs by Sinkers in the Spectron Fighter's base after the third wave of attackers. This does increase the difficulty of the game, but it's not enough to make *SPECTRON* a worthwhile variation on an over-used theme.

Pretty But Predictable

The designers at Spectravideo have produced a very pretty, but totally predictable video game. At this stage in the development of electronic gaming, we ought to see something more original than an obvious copy of a classic game. Even if you're a fan of *Space Invaders*, we can't recommend this one. *Gorf* by Coleco offers the same play action, but at least you get three other mini-games to play on the same cartridge. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating) Not Recommended.

SUPER CROSS FORCE (★★★ / ★★★★★) is an attractively drawn space game with good play action—definitely the best of the three ColecoVision-compatible games from Spectravideo. The same background screen is used in all game variations at all skill levels: black space with a few colorful planets for decoration. The player controls a pair of Spectron Lasers, each of which can be moved horizontally along the top or bottom edge of the playing area. In the solo and two-player alternating versions of the game, both Spectron Lasers are controlled simultaneously with one joystick. The player has a choice of parallel or diagonal movement of the Spectron Lasers. In parallel movement, the two Spectrons are lined up vertically at all times, moving in lockstep. With diagonal movement, the player's joystick controls the horizontal positioning of the bottom Spectron; the one at the top of the screen always moves in a direction diagonally opposite to the one on the bottom. The "Cross Force" occurs when the player hits the joystick firing button, causing a solid stream of laser fire to connect the two Spectrons. The attacking aliens, the evil Morpuls, are destroyed when caught in this "Holographic Dual Laser Blast."

Moving and Firing Patterns Vary

Each wave of Morpuls moves and fires in a different manner. Some Morpuls fire only downward, some shoot toward the upper Spectron, and some shoot in both directions at once. There are even some Morpuls that can fire smart bombs which seek out the player's Spectron to destroy it. In addition to ridding the solar system of Morpuls, the player must be mindful of the energy level of the Spectron Lasers. Whenever energy levels are low, a Mother Ship conveniently appears and drops an energy packet. It's not always easy to intercept this packet, however, when the Morpuls are attacking heavily.

Good Gaming Fun

SUPER CROSS FORCE offers an interesting variation on the usual outer-space shooting games with its provision for simultaneous two-player action. In the dual-control mode, each player is responsible for one of the Spectron Lasers. Playing the game this way requires cooperation, which can be an interesting change of pace from the usual shoot-em-ups. Whether played by one or two gamers, *SUPER CROSS FORCE* is not outstandingly innovative, but it is good gaming fun for those who delight in destroying aliens. The graphics are quite pretty, but we question the advisability of using the same brilliant white for both alien bombs and the player's laser fire. In the heat of battle, it can be a little too easy to miss seeing the oncoming alien fire. Several times we confused the alien's bombs with our own laser fire. As a result, we lost a Spectron Laser unnecessarily. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; 2-Player Simultaneous.) (MSR \$29.95)

MORE SPORTS IN DEVELOPMENT

Gamestar, who brought you *Star League Baseball* for the Atari computers, is hard at work on more sports games for the same system. While no dates are available, their programmers are developing *ON FIELD TENNIS*; *ON FIELD FOOTBALL*; and *BOWLING*.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..COLECOVISION-COMPATIBLE

FRANTIC FREDDY (★★ / ★★ 1/2) is a shooting and climbing game from Spectravideo in which the player as Frantic Freddy must fight fires in a high-rise apartment building while saving mewling cats. On the initial screen, Freddy must move back and forth along the bottom of the screen, shooting water bullets to extinguish the flames burning in various apartment windows. Freddy must also dodge the burning embers which fall from the fires. The second screen presents the challenge of moving fires, which can travel vertically and horizontally among the floors of the building. (At this stage of play, Freddy can move both horizontally along the ledges of the building and vertically up or down the pipes at the side of the structure.) If this level is successfully completed, play continues to alternate between these two basic scenarios. As the game progresses, some flames may reignite after being extinguished, and mewling cats must be saved from the fire. Freddy can enter flashing secret doors to escape the flames temporarily.

No Better Than Average

As a shooting and climbing game, FRANTIC FREDDY is no better than average. Graphics are fairly colorful, but the characters of Freddy and the cats are not as well drawn as we've come to expect from this system. (Freddy himself is a rather strange-looking creature—sort of a four-legged spider.) While the game becomes challenging quite quickly, the repetitive nature of the contest is likely to cause this cartridge to be shelved after a few plays. (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating)
Not Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

CAMPAIGN '84 (★★★/★★★ 1/2) is a truly original game from a new company, and it's a timely game in an election year. In CAMPAIGN '84, the player becomes a candidate for the presidency. On the initial screen, the player chooses his/her stand on eight issues, all of them whimsical. (Examples: Make oysters the national food; Prohibit plaid socks; Lower pet rock employment; Ban video games (!); Establish two hour lunches.) Then the player chooses to align himself with the party of either Reggie the Elephant or Derrick the Donkey and hits the campaign trail. The screen displays a map of the continental U.S. with all states outlined in black, but not identified by name. Moving the chosen elephant or donkey characters around the perimeters of the states, the player must avoid bad press (spinning red mini-cams) and try to encounter fund-raisers (rolling white dinner plates). There is a limited amount of time constantly counting down to Election Day; running into fund-raisers will add time, and bad press takes time away. (There are amusing comments every time the player's character runs into a plate or mini-cam, such as "You inherited Ft. Knox and sold it for scrap" and "Your son campaigned for the opponent.")

Gathering Votes

When the player's character hits the right spot on a state's border, the scene changes to the State Campaign screen, a representation of Old Glory composed of myriads of waving constituents. The state name and number of electoral votes are indicated at the top of the screen. The player's character is moved around to shake hands with as many people as possible, increasing the candidate's popularity rating. Numbers float around the flag, too, representing the issues. Colliding with issues the player-candidate agrees with will increase his/her popularity rating, while bumping into the others will cause a loss of popularity. When the candidate's popularity rating passes 50%, the state will be in that candidate's pool of electoral votes on Election Day. The gathering of votes continues until timers run down on Election Day. Then it's nail-biting time as the election results are reported from east to west, and the electoral votes accumulate for each candidate. The states on the U.S. map are filled in with red for one candidate, blue for the other, just as they are on the election night TV reports. A flag waves behind the winning candidate's character, and the new president hears "Hail to the Chief."

Gameplay Is the Star Attraction

The graphic and music in CAMPAIGN '84 are good, but gameplay is the star attraction. The game requires thought, planning and strategy along with the more typical video game skills. No one can play this game for long without becoming aware of the importance of the states with large

numbers of electoral votes in an election. Because these states are not identified by name on the U.S. map, the players must learn which ones are the most crucial by experience. The game is fun to play, but it also offers the player an understanding of the electoral process. (In connection with the 1984 presidential election, Sunrise is sponsoring a contest for this game. Players must send pictures of the final two screens—Reggie Elephant and Derrick Donkey—showing the states carried and electoral votes. The player coming closest to the outcome of the actual election will win a trip to Washington, D.C. and will attend the presidential inauguration by special invitation.) (Solo Play; 2-Player Simultaneous)
Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

QUEST FOR QUINTANA ROO (★★★/★★★) from Sunrise Software is just what many ColecoVision owners have been pining for—an adventure game for their system. The player takes the role of Yucatan Sam to search the mystical temple of the Myan God, Quintana Roo, for treasures and surprises. The game begins outside the temple, where Sam must scale one of the pyramid's outside walls while avoiding poisonous snakes and the moon god's wrath. When he reaches a portal near the top, he can enter the temple rooms by sliding down a chute. Each side of the temple has a whole series of interconnected rooms, the last of which leads Sam to the temple exterior. While Sam explores the temple rooms, the player must watch the time—Sam has but a minute and a half of breathable air when he's inside the temple. The rooms are full of dangers: snakes, spiders, even mummies. But there are hidden treasures to be found, magic herbs to heal a snake or spider bite, and map rocks used to open the map vault. This is one of the few games to make full use of the controller's keypad, with separate keys causing Sam to draw his gun, hold a flask of acid, grasp his chisel, read his Geiger counter, drop whatever he's carrying, or pick up a map rock. Bullets for Sam's gun and flasks of acid, both used for defense against adversaries, are in limited supply. Sam can use his chisel to open vault doors, and the Geiger counter lets him know if there are any objects of value in the room. At the first skill level, the only one accessible until the player is quite familiar with the game, there are five rooms on each side of the temple. With the time limits involved, the player must learn to move quickly and surely to avoid losing a life. Once the secret codes are learned that give access to the second and third skill levels, more rooms are added on each side of the temple, making the task all the more difficult.

First Adventure Game for ColecoVision

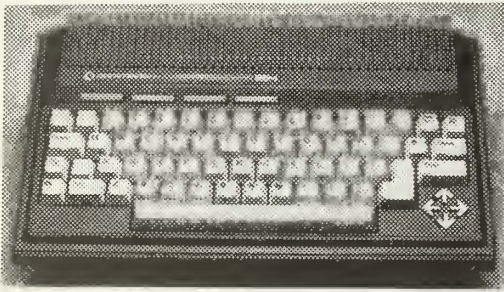
QUEST FOR QUINTANA ROO is a serious adventure game of the type usually seen only for computers. There are random elements, requiring a different solution for each time the game is played. Unlike some other games of this type for dedicated game systems, there are virtually no clues in the instructions. Everything in this game must be discovered by the player, because there aren't any pictures of the various treasures and special objects in the instruction booklet! Graphics are quite good, with bright colors and well-animated characters. The graphics are not as dazzling as some other games for this system, but that's because the designers have devoted as much memory as possible to gameplay rather than window-dressing. This system has lacked an adventure game until now, and we expect this one to be a big seller if it is widely available. (Sunrise Software is sponsoring a contest for this one with a prize of a \$5,000.00 scholarship to the college of the winner's choice. The object of the contest is to determine the precise location in the Yucatan Peninsula of an actual Quintana Roo treasure chest. Clues are contained in the video game.) (Solo Play; Pause)
Recommended. (MSR \$29.95)

AT YOUR SERVICE

If you want more information about anything we talk about in an issue, or can't find a program or company, just send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope and we will send you the information you request. Just one more way we are at your service! A complete listing of all computer software can be obtained from Video Take-Out. Ask for the Computer Software Menu.

NEW & INCOMPATIBLE COMMODORE

As we speculated last month, Commodore has, indeed, introduced a new and overall incompatible computer to the C64 which is due for release this spring (Commodore indicated that much of the C64 software can be made compatible with a "relatively" small



amount of programming; however, in speaking with programmers from software houses, they indicate it would be a major task to transform the software and, therefore, im-

practical. The introduction of the 264 is baffling as it is both better and worse than the C64. Let us try and explain yet another computer coming on the market. The 264 features 64K and features 60K of usable RAM (vs. approximately 40K of usable RAM in the 64); 128 colors (vs. 16 on the 64); 67 key keyboard with 4 programmed (reprogrammable) keys and 4 dedicated cursor control keys. The 264 (and 364 which will debut later with a built-in numeric keypad and voice synthesizer) will not be good game machines at all due to the fact that they have inferior graphics and sound. The computer's chip can't generate sprites (independently programmable graphics characters which enhance the graphics on computers). Another feature which is not necessarily a good one is the built-in software on ROM. The problem here is that there are several potential packages including a combination spreadsheet word processing package; Financial Advisor system; Pilot language; Logo; etc. How do you decide which software package you want? Assumably, many of the software programs will also be available on cartridge for expansion capabilities.

Originally Designed for \$80 Computer?

There has been a great deal of speculation that the 264/364 chip was originally designed for a planned \$80 computer which was to go head-on with the TI-99/4A. When TI announced their exit from the business, the chip was retargeted for a more expensive machine (rumored to retail around \$500 for an April delivery). That could explain the problems with the graphics and sound. There is no question that this introduction already has retailers and third party software manufacturers confused and angry—so much so that there are rumors that more than one software manufacturer is contemplating the exit from C64 support. Commodore says they never have discontinued a computer and continue to support all computers; however, we have certainly seen no Commodore support for the VIC-20 in quite some time (and saw none up and running at their booth), not to mention PET! Add to that, Chairman Jack Tramiel's resignation (most people will tell you he has been the driving force behind Commodore's success) and the resultant shake-ups in the higher management levels of the company, and you can understand why many third party manufacturers are very nervous about Commodore's direction and what their ongoing commitment to the C64 will be!

FLASH AS WE GO TO PRESS... Could Commodore be abandoning the 264/364 before it even reaches the market due to negative reaction??? We learned that Commodore is "reexamining the product" and will introduce it "when there is a need for it." The debut "could come before the end of 1984, we'll just have to watch carefully." It would be interesting if they are FINALLY paying attention to others, instead of just what they think others want! Stay tuned for more information.

SYNAPSE SHOWS DIMENSION X

After several delays, DIMENSION X is finally finished for Atari computers and getting ready to ship. Synapse had it set-up on a large screen TV and the 3-D effect looked terrific. Also showing was SLAMBALL, a scrolling pinball game for C64. By the way, DRELBBS will shortly become available for Apple and NECROMANCER has begun shipment for C64.

PCjr BEGINS SHIPMENT AMID CONCERN

IBM PCjr has begun to ship in several areas; however, IBM has seen fit to leave the controversial "chicklet" keyboard as is. Other facts are coming to light about the machine in that many programs will not run as quickly on Junior as on the PC. Because of the way Jr's RAM works in a dual role of storing programs as well as remembering what images to create on the computer's screen, the computer must pause every few seconds in order to do its tasks. Several software companies who are developing software for the computer have found some games virtually unplayable; however, anything in cartridge form appears to work without a problem.

Expandable

Meanwhile, contrary to what some critics felt, the PCjr does appear to be very expandable through attachments to the side of the computer. Junior can be given many of the powers of the PC including additional disk drives and up to 640K main memory (about 200 typewritten pages). And, although Junior won't play as many musical notes as some other home computers on the market, the unit may be very adept at making very realistic musical sounds. With the ability to regulate down to a thousandth of a second, programmers could write music which plays while images are moving on the screen giving a terrific dimension to games programmed for the system. In fact, based on what we saw at the show, although the Junior is certainly not to be considered a game machine, it may turn out to be an outstanding one!

SCREENPLAY MAKES IMPACT

We were drawn into the booth of Screenplay Software by some pretty interesting packaging and ended up spending quite a bit of time with them. Once we had a chance to see POGO JOE (review elsewhere in this issue), we were anxious to see more, and see more we did! In addition to their adventure game, ASYLUM (also known as THE INSTITUTE) which features full sentence input, they were premiering PLAYFUL PROFESSOR, a series which begins with MATH (the animated stick of chalk and some of the things the program did were fascinating). They have one marketing "hook" which will make dealers and consumers alike love them! Beginning next month, they will package their games with a disk and cassette for BOTH Atari and C64 computers in one package at a suggested list of \$29.95!! Now, that's a great idea.

SPECTRAVIDEO SHOWS FIRST MSX

Spectravideo is the first company to actually show the MSX computer which has been developed by the Japanese as a "low-cost" family computer. The SVI-728, planned for April rollout, is a CP/M based computer, with an 87-key full stroke keyboard. The MSX features a z80A microprocessor, TI graphics chip, and MSX BASIC built into the ROM of the machine; 32K ROM expandable to 96K; 80K RAM expandable to 144K. The planned retail is \$349.00.

Package to Compete with Adam

Spectravideo plans to go "head-on" against the ADAM with their "Family Pak Plus" configuration. With a suggested retail of \$599.00, the package will include the basic computer, high speed data storage device, 3 software programs, a single slot expander, dot matrix printer with parallel interface, two joystick controllers, and a word processing cartridge!

Third Party Software Outlook

We spoke with several software manufacturers regarding possible software for this and other MSX computers which will come in from Japan (Sony, Toshiba, among others are already producing the MSX for overseas) and, although only Activision was showing a couple of titles, it appears that it is relatively easy to write for this system. Because the operating ColecoVision is so similar to the MSX, programming for both is relatively simple. You may see more companies who program for ColecoVision program for MSX, especially if it becomes popular in the U.S.

COMPUTER COMPARISON

If you're even *thinking* about purchasing a home computer, we would strongly recommend you go out and purchase the current issue of CONSUMERS REPORT. They have published an in-depth and thoughtful article on several systems, including the Coleco Adam, Commodore 64, Atari, etc. It's well worth your time!

MASSIVE "INTRODUCTIONS" BY COLECO

In a press conference product introduction which required us to use a tape recorder to follow all that was being introduced, Coleco's Vice President of Marketing, Al Kahn, told us "ADAM peripherals for 1984 make Adam more versatile, more flexible, and more powerful and are the result of careful planning to effectively deliver on our promise of last year that the abilities of the power of Adam to expand would be met. In fact, during 1984 Adam will even become compatible with the IBM PC and its extensive library of software through the use of a plug-in IBM PC compatible module....the powers of Adam will continue to make good these promises for you." *Editor's note: when later asked to give details about the PC Compatibility Module in a question and answer session, Al Greenberg, resident, indicated, "we could but we choose not to at this time because its introduction will be much later in the year. It would be too early to comment on details at this time."*

Kahn continued, "...it's a large software program. As 1984 unfolds, more and more software will become available for Adam. In fact, before the year is out, there should be more than 170 new programs available including our own introductions of quality software made by leading manufacturers. We're introducing about 100; so I guess there's about 70 third parties." He further added, "...unlike other computers, ADAM is ready to accept up to a dozen additional peripherals." *(Editor's note: this is not an unusually great number of peripherals for a personal computer. For example, one of our Apple II's is currently hooked up to thirteen peripherals. Any desired number of peripherals for Atari computers can be daisy-chained, including the simultaneous use of up to four disk drives. Similar multi-peripheral systems can be built around any personal computer.)*

What They Said

Many peripherals for ADAM were introduced, including the following: second Digital Data Drive (MSR approx \$200); 64K RAM card or additional memory (MSR approx \$200); 5 1/4" Double-Sided, Double-Density Disk Drive (MSR approx \$400) packaged with a formatter (Coleco indicates you can use up to 3 drives simultaneously); ADAMLINK 1200/300 smartmodem which includes two hours of "on-line" time on their new "ADAM ON-LINE" service accessible through CompuServe (MSR approx \$250). The ADAM Accessory Kit will include three replacement daisy wheels (Emphasis Courier 72, and Pica 10); a multi-strike carbon ribbon cartridge; blank digital data pack; and tape head cleaner with applicator. Coming later the printer is a Printer Tractor Feed accessory which will allow the use of continuous form paper.

Software Announcements Abound

Software introductions were mind-boggling, both from Coleco and third party software houses. For the purpose of this article, we will only mention highlights. (If you would like to have a COMPLETE listing of planned software, send a self-addressed, stamped business envelope and we will send you a photo-copy of the entire 4-page list!!) Several programs for word processing, information processing, and family learning are planned, in addition to the "Best Of" series. For instance, the Best of Broderbund will include A.E. and Choplifter; Best of Electronic Arts will include Pinball Construction Set and Hard Hat Mack. Over a half dozen game shows will also add their way to ADAM via digital data pack and/or disk. Included titles are Password, Wheel of Fortune, \$25,000 Pyramid and others. In entertainment, Dragon's Lair will be released as a digital data pack. Coleco's Kahn said, "We will follow this up with a video disk version sometime in 1984 but we can't talk about that yet." Later, in answer to a question by a member of the press, Kahn indicated, "we didn't say we were marketing a Laser or CED but obviously if we're marketing a disk, we'll have to market some kind of player which we will be doing—latter part of 84. We're not yet going to announce it."

What It Really Means

The availability dates really tell the story on the heavy announcements. If they hold true to their release dates (and we know they, as well as several other companies, do not), you can look for the second Digital Data Drive and 64K RAM card in March. The Disk Drive and Modem are scheduled for the second quarter. The software story is even bleaker. There are a few Super Games which are scheduled to release shortly (see Availability Update), but these had originally been planned for December...there is NO additional software for the ADAM on the market as this is written! Of all the other software announced, the following are slotted for a March release: Personal CP/M and SuperCalc 2. SmartLogo is planned for April. Then, according to a representative for Coleco, there are 3 programs scheduled for the second quarter. All the rest (80+)

will not be released before the third or fourth quarter!! What Coleco is telling us is that approximately 20 programs will be released in the first half of 1984 with the remaining 140+ in the second half! Think about that one!! Meanwhile, they are touting the fact that so many third party software companies are producing for ADAM. We reiterate what we found last month in speaking directly with several of the major software houses—although a few are looking at and will undoubtedly program for ADAM via data pack and/or disk, the vast majority are producing cartridges for ColecoVision (which, of course, do work with ADAM) due to its installed base—not because of any great rush to program for ADAM.

Expansion Module 3 Mystery Solved

The question and answer session answered the mystery of "whatever happened to Expansion Module 3." (Remember how we held up our February issue last year for the "Big Announcement" from Coleco about the fabulous Module 3 which would retail around \$125 and play the new super games??). Well, a reporter asked about the difficulty in finding the ADAM add-on computer (the \$550-\$600 retail module for people who already own a ColecoVision) and the fact that he couldn't find one. Mr. Kahn responded, "...the Coleco Expansion Module 3 is currently being offered and is in the market...we haven't shipped a whole lot of them to satisfy the demand of the ColecoVision owners but that production is geared up and we'll be in full swing this First Quarter." Well, folks, that answers your questions as to whether there will ever be an Expansion Module 3. There already is and it will cost you more than \$125—but you DO get the ADAM computer.

So What's New for ColecoVision??

With all the razzle-dazzle surrounding ADAM, we were becoming more and more concerned about what is in the future for the ColecoVision owner. In that light we asked, "Is Coleco introducing any new ROM cartridges?" Mr. Kahn assured us that "at the booth you'll see 20 or 25 additional new Coleco ROM cartridges." Well, we hurried over to the booth the next morning and looked for all that wonderful new stuff. Try as we might, we couldn't come up with anywhere near 20-25 new ROM cartridge titles. We did see Super Action Football, Destructor, Dukes of Hazzard, Buck Rogers, Star Trek, Congo Bongo, Frenzy and Wargames. And, we did see title screens (little or no programming done yet) for Tunnels and Trolls (the same title screen we've seen before, but we now understand this title, when it sees the light of day, will ONLY be for ADAM as a digital data pack and/or disk); Tarzan; Roc 'N Rope, Cabbage Patch Kids and a film of the arcade version of Mr. Do's Castle. There were also films of a few of the announced third party software titles such as Necromancer, Jawbreaker, etc. but films hardly qualify in our book. (Note: we did learn that both Dracula and Sword and Sorcerer have been dropped from development)

A Few Other Notes

Coleco is working on a revised ADAM manual. If you already own an ADAM, you can call the 800 number listed in your paperwork, give them the serial number of your computer, and Coleco will send a new manual as soon as it's ready. As far as the blank data packs go, they may not be available at retail until the Spring or summer; however, you may purchase them directly from Coleco for \$6.00 each (\$1.50 postage/handling per pack).

Personal CP/M

Coleco has signed an agreement with Digital Research whereby Digital will provide the Personal CP/M operating system for ADAM. While we have been assured that CP/M-based programs will run on the upcoming ADAM disk drive, the personal CP/M will be designed to use the built-in SMART Keys, for even more ease in using CP/M. By the way, Coleco has dropped all reference to "Apple-compatible" and/or "Applesoft-compatible" which is indicative of the fact that we, among many others, found that the ADAM is not truly compatible with Apple software.

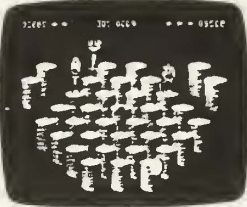
SEGA UNVEILS STAR TREK III PLANS

Sega is working on STAR TREK III THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK in a top secret project with Paramount! While no details are available, release of a home version and laser disc arcade version of the newest sequel in the Star Trek series will be concurrent with the movie's release this summer.

Back issues are available for most issues THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE (none left of Vol 1, #1,2, and 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

POGO JOE (★★★★ / ★★★½) is a very good variation on the currently popular theme of hopping diagonally around a playing field, but it offers a few additional elements not found in other games with this type of movement. The player is Pogo Joe, a character who rides his pogo stick around sixty-four different screens with varying configurations of cylinders. The object, as one might expect, is to change the colors of the tops of the cylinders while avoiding the creatures that chase Joe. He can only move diagonally under control of the joystick, one cylinder top at a time. However, if the player presses the firing button while pushing the joystick, Joe will jump two cylinders at once. (This is often necessary when the cylinders on some screens are isolated in empty space with no adjacent platform from which to jump.)



Eggs and Toy Monsters

The adversaries in this game explode onto the screen as eggs. If Joe is very quick, he can catch them at this stage for points. Usually the eggs will hatch into various toy monsters before Joe can reach them, though, and he has to know which ones to chase and which to avoid. The animated toy monsters which chase Joe will cause him to explode if they catch him. Other toy monsters will run from him, changing cylinder tops back to their original color as they move around the screen. The toy monsters that run away can be caught for points. In addition to the standard cylinders, there are also some with black tops that cause Joe to be transported to another such tube and back. Jumping Joe onto a cylinder with a flashing, green top will cause all toy monsters on the screen to be vaporized. The game may be made as easy or difficult as desired, because there are seven selectable speeds available independently for Pogo Joe and the monsters. Highly skilled players may want to try setting Joe's speed at the slowest setting, the monsters' pace at the fastest, and allow the monsters to jump two cylinders at once. These settings make the computer-controlled monsters very tough opponents!

Just Plain Fun to Play

While this type of contest is now familiar to all game players, we found POGO JOE to be a particularly delightful example of a diagonal jumping game. The three-dimensional effects of all the screens are excellent, as is the animation of the toy monsters—spinning tops and the like. Even the music is charming. Game players will also like the fact that they can get a preview of all sixty-four screens with the "Screen Tour" option at the beginning of the game. Best of all, POGO JOE is just plain fun to play. It's a very easy game to learn, but it's difficult to put it away once you start! POGO JOE is very attractively priced, too, especially when you consider that the cassette and disk versions for both Commodore 64 and Atari computers are sold in the same package. (Commodore and Atari versions are virtually identical.) (Solo Play; 2-Player Alternating; Joystick; Pause.) (48K Disk & Cassette for BOTH Commodore 64 and Atari Computers packaged together.) Recommended. (MSR \$24.95)

DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN (★★★★½ / ★★★½) transports the player into the fantasy world of the popular novels of Anne McCaffrey. The people of the planet Pern are once again threatened by the approach of the Red Star, because the deadly silver Thread will soon fall. After first choosing the desired length of game to be played, the player takes the role of one of the Weyrleaders in this contest of strategy and action. In the Standard Game, the player(s) enter the negotiation and intrigue portion of the drama first. The object is for each player to make his/her Weyr the strongest one on Pern by forming alliances with Lord Holders and Craftmasters. The skillful negotiator must know the strongest supporters of his/her Weyr, plus be aware of the random events occurring elsewhere on Pern. It pays to study the personality characteristics of any prospective ally, for it makes little sense to attempt an alliance with a lord who "despises you and the dragon you rode in on." The Weyrleader also has a choice of attitudes, from pleading to amiable to threatening, when negotiating or attempting an alliance. Sometimes it helps to invite a prospective ally to a wedding or a dragon hatching, though the Weyrleader must occasionally resort to a duel.

EPYX

Thread Fighting

At the end of each Turn in the Standard Game (about ten to fifteen minutes), the Thread Fighting phase begins. This is the action portion of the game in which the player controls a fire-breathing, flying dragon in an attempt to char all the falling Thread before it reaches the surface of Pern. This is an interesting and unusual battle in which the player's dragon may go "Between" (a timeless zone that is black and cold) if a falling Thread comes too close. The results of Thread Fighting may add or detract from the Weyrleader's victory points. The game ends when twenty or more Holds are thread-infested, a player receives twenty victory points, or the time is up. A partial game can be saved to disk.

Totally Engrossing Game to Play

Fans of Anne McCaffrey's novels should find this a totally engrossing game to play. There's plenty of opportunity for involved strategy in the first phase of the game, and the characters and situations will be familiar to McCaffrey's readers. The Thread Fighting portion, with its beautifully-colored graphics, adds a nice action sequence for a change of pace. We liked the fact that these two segments of the game can be practiced independently, just in case the player prefers or needs practice with one or the other. DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN is a great addition to the already excellent line of strategy games from Epyx. (Solo Play; 2 to 4-Player Simultaneous; Keyboard and/or Joystick; Pause.) (48K Disk; also available for Atari computers) Recommended. (MSR \$40.00)

UPDATE ON SCRAPER CAPER

For the many fans of that intrepid adventurer, Bounty Bob, the wait for the sequel to *Miner 2049er* is not over yet! Those who attended CES were teased with videotaped excerpts from the upcoming game by Big 5 Software for the Atari computers and Atari 5200 game system. What we saw looked terrific, but no one except the designer has seen the entire game. Bill Hogue, the creator of *Miner 2049er*, is known to be an absolute perfectionist, and he is still working and re-working *Scraper Caper* until he's completely satisfied with it. Bill and everyone else at Big 5 Software realize that *Miner 2049er* is quite an act to follow, so it's very important to them that *Scraper Caper* be an outstanding game. Meantime, Bounty Bob's gaming fans will just have to wait a little longer.

Speaking of *Scraper Caper*, in our January issue we referred to Mike Livesay of MicroFun as the designer of *Scraper Caper*. The original designer of both *Miner 2049er* and *Scraper Caper* is Bill Hogue of Big 5 Software. Mike Livesay designed the adaptations of *Miner 2049er* for the Apple computer and ColecoVision game system, and he will be doing the adaptations of *Scraper Caper* for the same systems. While we're correcting errors, we must also note that the year-end index appearing in both the December '83 issue and the CES edition of the January '84 issue incorrectly credited the Atari computer version of *Miner 2049er* to Atari. That game was designed for Atari computers, but it was published by Big 5 Software. (Our eagle-eyed readers seem to catch every mistake!)

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..TI 99/4A

HOPPER (★★★ / ★★★) from TEXAS INSTRUMENTS is reminiscent of the arcade favorite PENGU in gameplay. As Chadly the Kangaroo, you are surrounded by crates in the hold of an ocean freighter. Three circus trainers attempt to capture you while you kick and destroy the crates. You can destroy the trainers either by kicking a crate into him, or by rearranging the crates to trap him. If you manage to destroy all three trainers, it's on to the next screen, additional crates, and three more trainers. There are ten levels of difficulty and in the beginning levels, the trainers search randomly for Chadly among the crates. As you reach higher levels, the trainers increase their speed and become more intense in their search. In level 10 the crates are invisible (the crates appear briefly each time you break a crate).

Cute Game

This game becomes very frantic in pace as you try and maneuver Chadly and push crates around, trapping the trainers. We did see a definite resemblance to PENGU, but that happens to be one our favorite games and, as Pengo is not available for the TI99/4A, HOPPER can be an excellent substitute. Graphics are cute with the kangaroo figure very identifiable. You have the option of using either the keyboard or the joystick. (Solo Player; Two Player Alternating; Pause)

Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

BOOKS PEOPLE READ

If publishing video games and computer software is big business, so is writing books. In case you didn't know, DATAMOST, INC. publishes books as well as computer software. Some are very, very technical; however, a number of their books are very good and "reader friendly". *THE ELEMENTARY APPLE* has been with us a while, and is an EXCELLENT substitute for an Apple Owners Manual. *THE ELEMENTARY COMMODORE 64* is equally brilliant. William Saunders has defined the C64 so easily that anyone interested could pick up the book, turn on the computer and begin to write simple programs. It's especially good to KEEP in your library, too, since one day you may need to "brush up" on BASIC. The reason the books are specifically for Apple or Commodore (or Atari) is not so much the differences in the computers, although those do exist—it's primarily the differences in the uses of BASIC language.

Recommended (MSR 14.95)

COMPUTER PLAYGROUND for COMMODORE 64/VIC-20 was written by Mary Jane Winter, Ph.D., professor of Mathematics at Michigan State University, who also teaches at computer camps for kids 10 to 16. This seems to be the targeted group in this simple guide to help youngsters become familiar with computers with easy (and fun) lessons.

Recommended (MSR \$9.95)

THE COMMODORE 64 EXPERIENCE is another step-by-step, "write some programs by copying" book. The programs are very good, instilling confidence after a few pages that you CAN program these computers after all. Some examples range from recipe programs to budget programs for the home, educational programs, to business programs. Probably the best way to learn is by re-writing and understanding one of the utility programs!

Recommended (MSR \$14.95)

GAMES ATARIS PLAY is a magnificent ego booster if you're trying to learn BASIC on the Atari—and it's fun! There are 200-plus pages of easy-to-copy programs. Naturally, after you've done a few, you can begin to improvise. The description of the computer in the book is really good. In essence, the authors let you know YOU are the smart one, and the machine is merely an efficient idiot. Don't be afraid...TRY IT! With a blank disk or cassette, there is nothing you can type to hurt anything. This reviewer is reminded that it's a darn good thing 'RUIN' is not a command! Otherwise, when my fingers slip, I would do quite the opposite of "RUN." Additionally, if you're like many others, you have trouble copying to the keyboard (especially when you don't know what you're doing at first). Datamost is offering readers of the book two disks with all programs from the book, already written for you to purchase on disk at \$24.95 with self-enclosed coupon. It's copyable, changeable, and credit card-able.

Recommended (MSR \$14.95)

COMPUMATH MAGIC (M. J. Winter) is designed to work with any home computer, for those who understand BASIC on an intermediate basis. All that's required from you is a working knowledge of 6th grade math. The book is for ages 12 years through adult. First glance gives an impression of something you would need for a computer magic show. However, it's more of a drill on various commands and what they do. This, too, has a coupon in back to purchase the disk for \$15.95 plus shipping (available for Commodore 64, Apple or Atari.)

Recommended for Intermediate students (MSR \$7.95)

A Couple of Rough Ones for Apple

P-SOURCE (Randall Hyde) is a guide to Apple Pascal and includes programming, internal operation, and modification of Apple Pascal. Chapter One is written in Greek, Chapter Two in Swahili, and so forth if you're a basically BASIC person. If you have advanced to Pascal, then this is for you. We assume this is for Harvard Professors and graduate students in Computer Science. GIVE A LOOK BEFORE YOU BUY (MSR \$24.95)

THE APPLE ALMANAC aka 1001 USEFUL THINGS AND ASTOUNDING FACTS OF PEEK, POKES, CALLS, ETC. (Eric Goetz/William Saunders). This reviewer considers himself intermediate, as I know the terms used here, but that's the extent of it! I was hoping to learn the exact nature of PEEK, POKE and CALLS, however this publication is full of those charts where the top line reads left to right, "DEC HEX TXT MNEMON ADDRESSING MODEOPCODE OPRND CYC, etc. The

columns are filled with terms such as "ora zero page x," "asl absolute x," "bit," "and," "plp," "bmi," ad nauseam. It DOES include the charts on the 6502 microprocessor, Apple //e monitor comparisons, ASCII table generation, hi-res tri-line charts, notes on assembly language, track bit map chart, vtoc chart, dos index error chart, plus various "shape" tables such as the ASCII shape table generation program.

While my first inclination was to say "pass" on this one, it really is a handy reference guide for programmers, especially for assembly language. In fact, it would probably be a handy thing for some designers such as Steve Kitchen who uses an Apple Computer and who understands all these charts and graphs. And this is one of those books where the authors request a note from you as to how the next version could be better...and they give the address to write to!

Recommended for experienced Apple Programmers (MSR \$19.95)

For The Young Ones

KIDS TO KIDS (Billy Sanders, Ph.D./Sam Edge; illustrated by Martin Cannon) is designed for those 11 to 17-year-olds with the Radio Shack Color Computer. Chapter One is called "Getting Set" and describes how to hook the computer to the TV. The last chapter (15) is Extended Color Basic with a glossary of terms. This is a magnificent introduction for kids with little or no knowledge of "Computerese." There are several mini-programs to help get to know various routines in BASIC. When you pop for your first computer for the kids, this book is a must. And, it's now being rewritten for Apple II, II+, //e and C64.

Recommended (MSR \$9.95)

KIDS AND THE IBM-PC/PCjr (Edward H. Carlson) is another book similar to *KIDS TO KIDS*, except it's also for adults! The preface has a page of notes: "To The Kids," "To The Parents," and "To The Teacher!" This book was designed to ease anyone (age 10-plus) gently, yet easily into the world of IBM BASIC. If you have an IBM PC or PCjr and have it plugged in with no understanding of what to do next, this book will help you learn how to do simple program writing almost at once! Author Edward Carlson has been a physics professor at Michigan State University since 1965, yet his interest in computers has been with him for almost 25 years. His ability to write about the subject makes learning very pleasant.

Recommended (MSR \$19.95)

The Ultimate Guide for Would-Be Designers

SOFTWARE AUTHOR'S GUIDE (Mildred A. Heiney) is the most comprehensive guide to software publishers we have ever seen. It's a "what do I do if I've written a good program" book! It's an alphabetical listing of all computer software manufacturers/publishers. Provided are names of each company, along with their address and usually a phone number (supposedly to find out where and how to send your idea). The better listings include the name of the person in charge of software development. Then, the publication lists what system(s) each company writes software for, the type of software, whether or not documentation is necessary, disk or cassette needed, the type of software which has done best for them, royalty agreements (some don't discuss this matter, although most are the same), whether or not advance royalties are available for development on your part, do they acknowledge receipt of your idea, is there a standard form for submissions and how the company distributes their product (distributors, retailers, mail order, direct mail, etc.). Best of all, there are some companies which will elaborate on helpful hints, such as "try to develop your programs for more than one system," "never send anything unless completely debugged," "do/do not use compiler," "do not simply re-do an existing idea—be original," "test, re-test, and re-re-test for error-free before you submit." Many companies offer an "Author's Kit," consisting of all proper forms to fill out before submitting anything. In fact, one of the most common requests is not to use BASIC on any program since it is too slow. If you have a good idea and a way to execute it in a real program, this book will help you find potential publishers of your work.

Recommended (MSR \$19.95)

HARDWARE OVERVIEW

A lot of news from C.E.S. and in general, and we figure by now you have already heard a great deal of it. If you read any kind of entertainment news, electronic news, business news or computer news, you know there has been a ton of new hardware hitting the streets. At the end of January, Apple Computers had introduced a big, splashy new Macintosh for home and small business. Big Mac has a hefty price tag of around \$2,500 (monitor and new 3.5 inch drive included). Bigger news was the \$400,000 commercial scheduled to run once during the Superbowl. The ad was to let you all know about the big announcement by Apple on January 24th. One oddity worth note...IBM has displayed the PC at C.E.S. in the past. This year, when the PCjr is their big push, they were nowhere to be found. Meanwhile, Apple, which hasn't displayed in quite some time, was at the show with their //e line. To the onlookers who grumbled "We thought Apple was going to show Macintosh," Apple replied, "that's what everybody thought." Their presence at the show was just presence, nothing more. The rumors of Elf are still just rumors for the time being. There are reports the //e is piled from floor to ceiling at warehouses across the land, but it's still VERY difficult to buy the CPU and nothing more.

Also, for those interested in the Lisa, Lisa 2 debuted with The Mac. Many people have the attitude of "Lisa is just a slow 2-drive system, with the mouse as an only advantage, so why go beyond that?" Good point! However, there is something you should know about the Apple Computer Company. In the case of Lisa, they simply do not bury their heads in shame and pretend the problems don't exist. If you have Lisa #1, at NO CHARGE TO YOU, take it to an authorized service center and they will take out the two "slow" 5.25 inch disk drives, and install two speedy (and extremely more knowledgeable) 400K, 3.5-inch Sony drives (same as Macintosh). How's that for standing behind your product!?

Not to elaborate on the Apple systems, but we would be remiss not to mention just how loyal the company is to consumers. We had an incident recently during the review of an Apple II game. We heard the snap, crackle and pop of "something(s)" on the motherboard going on the fritz. The estimate to have our Apple repaired was in the Twilight Zone. The technician asked if we knew anything about computers and how they work. They would ask US that question! Yielding to a yes answer, he informed us that rather than check each and every chip on the board (at least 75), not to mention those hair-line fractures on the motherboard itself, we could buy a brand new motherboard complete with everything except the 24 RAM chips for a mere \$62 and install it ourselves! We also found out the same applies to the keyboard (we believe he said \$30 to \$40 somewhere), the power supply (about \$35) and chassis (approx. \$35). In other words, should a disaster strike your Apple, a little knowledge will fix it right for, basically, cost of parts. The one hitch (for those who now think they can build an Apple from scratch) is that you must EXCHANGE the bad parts for the good ones. So, to reiterate the point, you can always feel safe with an Apple. Their primary interest is YOU!

Apple is also working on what is called "Networking" where two or more Apple computers in one office (or even remote via modem) will handshake and allow all to work with separate keyboards and monitors, with the one CPU. An example of this would be an office with a Macintosh and two or more //e's. Loaded into the Mac would be SEVERAL software programs (such as General Ledger, Mailing List, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Payroll, Invoicing, Order Taking, etc). While one person balances the books, another could be taking orders, each having access to all functions. A MOUSE could be employed to select items from a Master Menu. While it is currently easy to list menu items numerically or alphabetically, the mouse allows small pictures of each function in a montage of "windows". The MOUSE, flat on the desk, would be rolled around, as a cursor, to the appropriate window to select, say, a picture of a filing cabinet (for a file search), a mini-floppy disk (to save data to disk) and so forth.

Next, we look around to Commodore which is "not abandoning" the Com-64, nor the VIC-20, but instead, introducing a DOWNGRADED 264—more like a VIC-20+ or a VIC-20e. Add to that a Commodore 364. Naturally, these will NOT be compatible with current Commodore computers. Supposedly what will be compatible with the C64 is the new portable computer from Commodore. (Did you honestly think these companies would let you try to get to know their industry overnight?)

With IBM's PCjr being released, we wonder what would have happened if Mattel or Radio Shack had released this as a new keyboard. Aquarius II, compatible with the IBM PC? TRS-80jr? Apparently, we were not the only people who thought this way. Standing at the Imagic booth, we noticed several people walk up to the "Junior" and see one of Imagic's games hooked into it. There were several people who felt the need to touch the keyboard as if to say "is this thing real?"

Atari was also very visible, displaying their high-end 1400XL (not its permanent name) to indicate their intention to enter the "high-end" market. (For some reason, one of our many C.E.S. reporters had the feeling they were only there to put up a good front. BUT...read on.

Coleco was busy announcing. After all, it took almost the 4 days of C.E.S. to announce everything coming for Adam. Meanwhile, we are seeing a "mini-trend" from our readers who have either purchased an ADAM and had problems or become tired of waiting for software, and those who haven't purchased one yet for the same or similar reasons. In the past five days, we have received no fewer than two dozen calls from these readers who have *all* purchased an Atari 600XL or 800XL system! We decided to take closer look at Atari's packages. Right now, at a good department store chain (discount) you can buy an Atari 600XL, cassette storage device, printer, and word processing software for less money than the advertised price for ADAM! Granted, with the 600XL you're going to add memory modules soon, but let's be practical. There are a couple of thousand software pieces for the Atari system, either in cassette, disk, or ROM cartridge form. The new XL's have built-in basic. There is no digital data-pack to worry about buying direct from the manufacturer at \$6 plus shipping each. You can buy a much more powerful data disk blank for most systems for around \$3-\$4. Notice in our reviews of software that we often say "available for Apple II, //e, Commodore 64 (not VIC-20), and Atari." That covers the entire line of Atari computers from the early 400 to the current crop of XL's. THAT'S pretty impressive!

There is so much mystique surrounding Coleco. We observed their director of Marketing standing before a crowded press conference with announcement after announcement after announcement. Let's be honest—some of the very best game titles have been on ColecoVision (not to mention how well they did with Cabbage Patch dolls). With less than a fistful of ADAM's in homes, and even less of them working, Coleco is announcing numbers of promised peripherals and software for that system which are so large that they would make an efficiency expert's brain go into a tailspin.

So, we now ask if the home personal computer market might be growing too fast as far as latecomers are concerned. Everyone has seen the ad on TV about the guy who walks into a store trying to buy a \$1200 computer which costs \$5900. The ad says there's only one \$1400 computer that costs \$1400. But does anyone know who it's for? Ever heard of KAYPRO?

We couldn't help noticing two very significant things at CES. (Keep in mind that CES covers almost everything electronic, and the first observation is only used as a reference and doesn't apply to the computer industry). First, every one of those companies who said, "we'll never give in to video cassettes," are now into video—Polaroid, Canon, Kodak, and more. Secondly, just how many computer companies are out there—new ones—with new models, not even compatible amongst themselves? And, how many of those will stay around and have extensive software libraries?

What we're saying is to look beyond the price of the computer you are thinking about purchasing. What is its actual expandability (vs. *promised* expandability)? What kind of software library is available? Who is the company standing behind it AND what type of warranty? Of course, price is an important factor—learning on a very inexpensive computer to find out if you enjoy computers makes a lot of sense. Buying the least expensive on the market just to save money does not necessarily make sense.

And, finally, READ, READ, READ and talk with the experts in your local computer specialty store—they are trained to help you fit into the computer that makes sense for you!

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

CRITICALLY SPEAKING..ATARI COMPUTERS

CRITICALLY SPEAKING. APPLE-COMPATIBLE

RAINBOW WALKER (★★★★/★★★★½) is another in the genre of Q*Bert-type games, but is original in its execution. You control Cedrick as he jumps in any of eight directions on the rainbow. As you jump on the grey squares, you turn them into various colors of the rainbow, but you must avoid falling into a hole. Meanwhile, there are all sorts of creatures you must avoid and keep from changing your rainbow squares back to grey. In addition, a demon bird hovers in the clouds ready to carry away any trespasser who gets too close. You'll also have to contend with the shooting stars which, if you touch them, they carry you off helplessly and then drop you off the edge. The rainbow is sixteen rows deep and you can scroll off the bottom or the top of the screen. Once you fill in the entire rainbow, you move on to the next round. After coloring approximately eight rounds, you move to a bonus round. Synapse promises a surprise if you manage to get through all twenty rounds of play!

We Couldn't Put It Down

This is one of those games that you put in and say, "I'm just going to play this a little while" and resurface hours later. There is something addictive about the hopping games, going square to square, trying to outwit and out-color the bad guys. The premise is very simple but the graphics are really gorgeous, especially as the rainbow scrolls and you can see far off in the distance what you've already managed to color. The graphics are pretty and it's fun game to play! (Solo Play; 32K disk) Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

ENCOUNTER (★★★★/★★★★) takes you to a planetary surface where you must fight two adversaries—a flying saucer and a drone. You roll over the landscape with a first person perspective (ala "Capture The Flag"). The flying saucer hovers above the ground and moves randomly over the battlefield firing at you. You are warned of the saucer's presence by a yellow indicator on your instrument panel. A blue light flashes when the saucer fires a shot. There are pylons throughout the battlefield and you can dart behind one to avoid the saucer's fire. The drone is a low-flying missile which homes in on you and cannot be stopped by obstacles. Its pattern becomes more complex as the game progresses. After all the enemies have been destroyed on a level, a gate will appear on your radar. Upon approaching, it you will see it as a black hole. Line up with it and pass through. At that point, you are propelled at a high speed to the next level and a more complex battle.

Good First Person Perspective

The perspective in this game is one which has become more and more popular in recent games with the feeling of the cockpit around you and sitting low in the landscape. The graphics are bright and crisp. The first time a saucer comes on your ship, you will be startled by its realism. Overall, this is a good three-dimensional strategic action game which can be enjoyed for hours. (Solo Play; Joystick) Recommended (MSR \$34.95)

PITFALL (★★★★½/★★★★½) offers the same play action as the version for ColecoVision, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Our quarrel with this version for the Atari computers is the same: the game plays exactly like the original version for the Atari 2600 in every way. Graphics have been enhanced, but game play has not. This version is not strong enough to hold up well against other computer games of the type. (Solo Play) Not recommended. (MSR \$34.95)

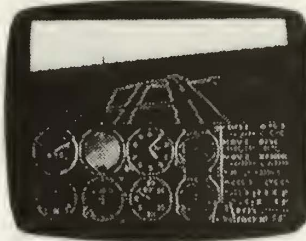
POGO JOE (★★★★/★★★★½) is reviewed under Commodore 64.

DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN (★★★★½/★★★★½) is reviewed under Commodore 64.

CALLING ALL DESIGNERS!

First Star is aggressively looking for new product and design expertise via coupons in their product, as well as a submission/recruitment campaign. So, if you think you've got something First Star would be interested in, send your ideas to them at 22 East 41st St., New York, NY 10017.

FLIGHT SIMULATOR II (★★★★/★★★★) from SubLogic



takes simulated flying "one step beyond". Your flight begins on the runway of Meigs Field in Chicago. You control nine viewing angles from your pilot's seat, defaulting to the front view. Keeping an eye on the front and back as well as the instrument panel (always displayed) is critical to take-off. The display screen has the top third devoted to the nine angles from front, front-left, back-right, below, etc.

The bottom two-thirds is dedicated to a flight console panel with forty-eight instruments to keep in precise control. Once in the air, the escape key will produce the on-board computer where you can adjust your flight parameters. This computer menu contains two pages of approximately forty parameters to adjust! (Page 12 of the manual is dedicated to getting you in the air immediately, allowing time to learn the rest of the instructions at a later date.) You can choose to fly in any of the four seasons; choose the type of weather (flying through clouds, clear day, night, cloudy, and so on); adjust the wind factor; adjust type of flight (realistic, easy, WWI Ace aerial battle, etc). In fact, an editor allows you to change various flight and environmental parameters and then save any mode to a blank disk so you can use that mode over and over.

88 Page Manual

The package includes a very detailed 88-page manual and, at that, an additional instruction book is being worked on and will be sent to any purchaser upon registration of your warranty. Several local area charts are also included (New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Seattle) as you venture past Chicago. Also included is a "cheat sheet" Flight Reference Card with easy to find commands for flight controls, engine, radios, views, and miscellaneous.

Flight School a Plus!

To be honest, we would need the ability to speak on the level of a novice flight instructor to relay the benefits of this game. It's a genuinely excellent program for strategy, logic, and closet-pilots. Unlike many other programs, this can be played very well on a b&w, green, or orange monitor, but it does look stunning on a color monitor. The set-up even asks if you're using monochrome or color and then adjusts for your needs. A Wico Apple-analog joystick is ideal for non-self centering up/down, with self-centering right/left; however, it's best to learn on the keyboard, then play with a joystick, trackball, or paddle. The overall pace is slow, but the controls are very demanding. In fact, unlike many other "games" which the player becomes bored with after a relatively short period of time, this program, due to its complexity, will provide enjoyment for a long, long time. It would be easy to just say, if you liked Flight Simulator I, you'll love Flight Simulator II. The fact that SubLogic has programmed a game which automatically adjusts much of the program from 48K to 64K depending on the capacity of your Apple is mind boggling. To be really honest, a few days at a flight school wouldn't hurt! And, several additional publications are recommended for the novice. Designer Bruce Artwick has taken a good idea light years forward. (coming for Atari and C64) Recommended (MSR \$49.95)

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ATARI 2600

JANUARY

x-Boing (FS)
River Patrol (TGV)

FEBRUARY

Oscar's Trash Race (AT)
Out of Control (AH)
Pitfall II (ACTV)
Private Eye (ACTV)
Shuttle Orbiter (AH)

MARCH

Berenstein Bear (COL)
Front Line (COL)
H.E.R.O. (ACTV)

FIRST QUARTER

Taz (AT)

SECOND QUARTER

Beamrider (ACTV)
Changes (TGV)
Choplifter (AT)
Espial (TGV)
Millipede (AT)
Rock N Rope (COL)
Scraper Caper (TGV)
Sky Lancer (TGV)
Star Wars (PB)
Super Crush (TGV)
Tarzan (COL)
Tower of Mystery (MAT)
Treasure of Tarkin (MAT)

THIRD QUARTER

Mr Do's Castle (COL)

INTELLIVISION

FIRST QUARTER

Glacier Patrol (SUNR)
Snowplow (SUNR)
x-Turbo (COL)

SECOND QUARTER

Baseball (MAT)
Flintstones ★ (MAT)
Game Factory ★ (MAT)
Go For The Gold (MAT)
Number Jumble ★ (MAT)
Thunder Castle (MAT)

THIRD QUARTER

D&D Tower of Mystery (MAT)
Football ★ (MAT)
Hover 3-D (MAT)
Illusions (MAT)
Party Line (MAT)
Soccer (MAT)
Soccer ★ (MAT)

★ for use in ECS

COLECOVISION

FEBRUARY

Campaign 84 (SUNR)
x-Frenzy (COL)
Gust Buster (SUNR)
Heist (MF)
Jumpman Jr (EPYX)
x-Pitfall (ACTV)
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUNR)
River Raid (ACTV)
Rolloverture (SUNR)
Squish 'Em Sam (INT)
Super Cobra (PB)
x-Tutankham (PB)

MARCH

Aquatron (INT)
Beamrider (ACTV)
Blockade Runner (INT)
Buck Rogers (COL)
Destructor (COL) ★ ★ ★ ★
Dukes of Hazard (COL) ★ ★ ★ ★
Galaxian (AT)
Gateway to Apshei (EPYX)
Joust (AT)
Joy Sensor (SUN)
Jungle Hunt (AT)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Mountain King (SUNR)
Pole Position (AT)
Sewer Sam (INT)
Super Action Football (COL) ★ ★
Wargames (COL)

FIRST QUARTER

Dino Eggs (MF)
Dragonfire (IMGC)
Fathom (IMGC)
Lunar Leeper (SOL)
Moonsweeper (IMGC)
Oil's Well (SOL)
Threshold (SOL)
Wing War (IMGC)

SECOND QUARTER

Brainstrainers (COL)/ed
Bump N Jump (MAT)
Burgertime (MAT)

Congo Bongo (COL)
Fix-Up the Mix-Up Puzzle (COL)/ed
Fortune Builder (COL)/ed
Keystone Kapers (ACTV)
Rock N Rope (COL)
Smurf Paint & Play (COL)/ed
Star Trek (COL)
Star Wars (PB)
Tarzan (COL)
Telly Turtle (COL)/ed

THIRD QUARTER

Illusions (MAT)
Masters of the Universe (MAT)
Mr Do's Castle (COL)

FOURTH QUARTER!

A.E. (COL)
Cabbage Patch (COL)
Capture the Flag (COL)
Choplifter (COL)
Necromancer (COL)
Rainbow Walker (COL)

★★ for use with Super

Action Controllers

★★★ for use with

Roller Controller

★★★★ for use with

Expansion Module 2

/ed - educational

ATARI 5200

FEBRUARY

Berzerk (Voice) (AT)
Bristles (FS)
x-Deathstar Battle (PB)
Flip and Flop (FS)
Jawbreaker (SOL)
x-Mario Bros (AT)
x-Megamania (ACTV)
Robotron (AT)
Super Cobra (PB)
Xevious (AT)

FIRST QUARTER

Scraper Caper (BIG5)

Tutankham (PB)

SECOND QUARTER

Choplifter (AT)
Dreadnaught Factor (ACTV)
Legacy (AT)
Millipede (AT)
Star Wars (PB)
Warp Wars (ACTV)

ATARI COMPUTERS

FEBRUARY

Bilestoad (DM)
Boulder Dash (FS)
Campaign 84 (SUN)
Creepy Corridors (SOL)
Dimension X (DM)
Donkey Kong Jr (AT)
Football (AT)
Genesis (DS)
x-Gunfight/Seawolf (EPYX)
Gust Buster (SON)
Mario Bros (AT)
Martial Arts Master (DS)
Megamania (ACTV)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Quest for Quintana Roo (SUN)
Robotron (AT)
Rolloverture (SUN)
Scraper Caper (BIG5)
Snokie (SOL)
Tutankham (PB)
Xevious (AT)

MARCH

Adventure Creator (SPN)
Aegean Voyage (SPN)
Flight Simulator II (SUB)
Grandma's House (SPN)
Pitfall (ACTV)
Sorcerer (INF)
Spare Change (BRO)
APRIL
Dreadnaught Factor (ACTV)
Puzzlemania (EPYX)
Zenji (ACTV)

SECOND QUARTER

Big Bird Special Delivery (CBS)
Coco Notes (CBS)
Ducks Ahoy (CBS)
Ernie's Magic Shapes (CBS)
Half-time Battling Bands (CBS)
Keystone Kapers (ACTV)
Laser Gates (IMGC)
Legacy (AT)
Millipede (AT)
Movie Musical Madness (CBS)
Peanut Butter Panic (CBS)
Quick Step (IMGC)
Sea Horse Hide N Seek (CBS)

Star Wars (PB)

Timebound (CBS)
Warp Wars (ACTV)
Webster: the Word Game (CBS)
Wing War (IMGC)

VIC-20

FEBRUARY

x-Donkey Kong (AT)
x-Robotron (AT)
Sammy Lightfoot (SOL)

FIRST QUARTER

Galaxian (AT)
Joust (AT)
Jungle Hunt (AT)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Ms Pac-Man (AT)
Pole Position (AT)

COMMODORE 64

FEBRUARY

x-Bank St Writer (BRO)
Battle of Normandy (STRSIM)
Bilestoad (DM)
Boulder Dash (FS)
x-Crisis Mountain (CS)
Dallas Quest 8DS)
x-Dino Eggs (MF)
Death in Caribbean (MIF)
Donkey Kong (AT)
Drebls (SYN)
Flight Simulator II (SUB)
Floyd of the Jungle (MIPC)
x-Gateway to Apshei (EPYX)
Gust Buster (SUN)
x-In The Chips (CS)
Juno First (DS)
Liberator (THORN)
Lost Tomb (DS)
Lunar Outpost (EPYX)
x-Matchboxes (BRO)
Minnesota Fats Pool (HES)
Monster Smash (DM)
x-Necromancer (SYN)
Nightraiders (DM)
Oil Barons (EPYX)
PacMan (AT)
Paintbrush (HES)
Popeye (PB)
Rolloverture (SUN)
Roundabout (DM)
Scraper Caper (MF)
Sentinel (SYN)
Slamball (SYN)
Stargate (AT)
Submarine Commander (THORN)
World's Greatest Baseball Game (EPYX)
Zaxxon (SYN)
Zepplin (SYN)

MARCH

Campaign 84 (SUNR)
Ducks Ahoy (CBS)
Ernie's Magic Shapes (CBS)
Grandma's House (SPN)
Math Mileage (CBS)
Quest for Quintana (SUNR)
Sea Horse Hide N Seek (CBS)
Sorcerer (INF)

FIRST QUARTER

Battlezone (AT)
Galaxian (AT)
Joust (AT)
Jungle Hunt (AT)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Ms Pac-Man (AT)
Pole Position (AT)
Stargate (AT)

SECOND QUARTER

Argos Expedition (CBS)
Balloony Bin (ACTV)
Big Bird Special Delivery (CBS)
Coast-to-Coast America (CBS)
Coco Notes (CBS)
Dinosaur Dig (CBS)
Half-time Battling Bands (CBS)
Light Waves (CBS)
Mission Impossible (EPYX)
Movie Musical Madness (CBS)
Star Wars (PB)
Summer Games (EPYX)
Weather Tamers (CBS)

TI 99/4A

APRIL
Buck Rogers (TI)
Congo Bongo (TI)
David's Midnight Magic (TI)
Dig Dug (AT)
M*A*S*H (TI)
Moonmme (TI)
Popeye (PB)
x-Protector (AT)
Sneggit (TI)

FIRST QUARTER

Battlezone (AT)
Galaxian (AT)
Joust (AT)
Jungle Hunt (AT)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Ms Pac-Man (AT)
Pole Position (AT)

SECOND QUARTER

Argos Expedition (CBS)
Balloony Bin (ACTV)
Big Bird Special Delivery (CBS)
Coast-to-Coast America (CBS)
Coco Notes (CBS)
Dinosaur Dig (CBS)
Half-time Battling Bands (CBS)
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Mission Impossible (EPYX)
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Dig Dug (AT)
M*A*S*H (TI)
Moonmme (TI)
Popeye (PB)
x-Protector (AT)
Sneggit (TI)

FIRST QUARTER

Fathom (IMGC)
Moonsweeper (IMGC)
Wing War (IMGC)

APPLE II/IIe

FEBRUARY

Ankh (DM)
Dreadnoughts (AH)
Drebls (SYN)
x-Flight Simulator II (SUB)
Genesis (DS)
Liberator (THORN)
Mr. Robot (DM)
Nibbler (DS)
Oil's Well (SOL)
Pooyan (DS)
Quest for Tires (SOL)
Scraper Caper (MF)
Space Ark (DM)
Submarine Commander (THORN)
Under Southern Skies (AH)

MARCH

Coast-to-Coast America (CBS)
Dinosaur Dig (CBS)
People Development (CBS)
Personal Development (CBS)
Sorcerer (INF)
APRIL
Webster: the Word Game (CBS)

FIRST QUARTER

Battlezone (AT)
Galaxian (AT)
Joust (AT)
Jungle Hunt (AT)
Moon Patrol (AT)
Ms Pac-Man (AT)
Pole Position (AT)
Stargate (AT)

IBM PCjr

JANUARY

Demon Attack (IMGC)
x-Facemaker (SPN)
x-Fraction Fever (SPN)
x-Kindercomp (SPN)

FIRST QUARTER

Baseball (IMGC)
Football (IMGC)
Microsurgeon (IMGC)

SECOND QUARTER

Big Bird Special Delivery (CBS)
Coast-to-Coast America (CBS)
Dinosaur Dig (CBS)
Ernie's Magic Shapes (CBS)
In The Chips (CS)
Match Wits (CBS)
Murder by the Dozen (CBS)
Pipes (CS)
Save New York (CS)
Timebound (CBS)

ADAM

FEBRUARY

Donkey Kong (COL)
Donkey Kong Jr (COL)
Zaxxon (COL)

SECOND QUARTER

Sub Roc (COL)

THIRD QUARTER

Family Feud (COL)
Frontline (COL)
Jeopardy (COL)
Joker's Wild (COL)
Password (COL)
Price is Right (COL)
Star Trek (COL)
Tic Tac Dough (COL)
25,000 Pyramid (COL)
Wheel of Fortune (COL)

FOURTH QUARTER

Capture Flag/Gruds/Type Attack (SIR)
Choplifter/A.E. (BRO)
Jawbreaker/Trolls Tale (SOL)
Necromancer/Rainbow Walker (SYN)
Pinball Const/Hard Hat Mack (EA)
Smurf Rescue (COL)
Tunnels and Trolls (COL)
Wargames (COL)

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