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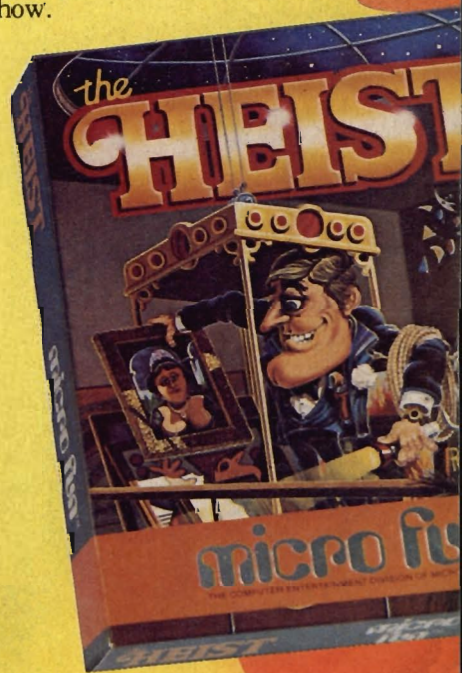
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electronic GAMES

January, 1985



About Our Cover

The prestigious Arkie award, given to 27 winners for design excellence.

Photo by Vittorio Sartor



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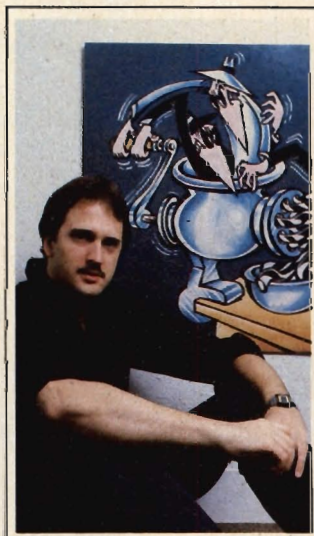
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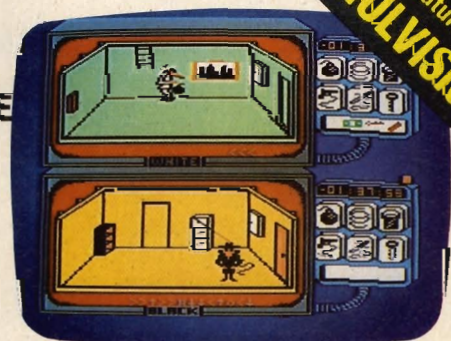


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By ARNIE KATZ

The Secret Life Of Ms. Pac-Man

First, a special welcome to everyone who, thanks to my provocative headline, is reading "Switch On!" for the first time. I'll get to the Inside Lowdown on Bally's celebrated character in a few minutes, but first, I want to discuss something that's been on my mind for awhile.

It's software piracy. I sympathize with gamers who want to run a back-up disk in case the original crashes. And there's also food for thought—and further investigation—in reports from respected experts, EG's own super-techie Henry B. Cohen among them, that complex protection schemes cause disk drives to go out of alignment.

Yet even conceding those points, the case against software piracy looks stronger to me. Piracy is stealing. It robs artists of their just rewards. It depresses research by limiting publishers' return on investment. It inflates software prices by shortening the sales-life of new titles and denying manufacturers and distributors economies-of-scale from higher above-the-counter sales. It hurts quality by removing the incentive to excel, because the

real stick-out programs are the most likely to fall to pirate code-breakers.

So weighing the pros and cons, it looks like a lot of people justify unethical behavior because it's a little more convenient. I mean, most of the folks who illegally copy the latest hit games wouldn't dream of stealing books or paintings.

What's bugging me is that I can't figure out how so many honest people can get involved with something as smelly as software piracy.

After a lot of thinking, I've come to the conclusion that many people become pirates because they don't see the Human Factor. Most pirates think of knocking off a program as a mental exercise, a game. They don't mean to hurt anyone, really. So let me tell you a little story about how software piracy affected one individual electronic gamer.

His name doesn't matter. Let's call him Bill K. Bill is a writer by profession and an ardent electronic gamer. When Bill's Apple-owning friend got *One on One*, Bill was a tiny bit jealous, but he figured an Atari edition must be just around the corner. He commenced to wait.

Well, he waited and he waited. Each morning, he checked his mail to see if this was the day that, finally, finally Electronic Arts would release *One on One* for the Atari. Then came the Commodore 64 version. Bill saw that, if anything, it was even better than the Apple disk. Bill's little heart almost burst with anguish. Finally, after more than a solid year of waiting, Bill K. found happiness with his very own Atari-compatible *One on One*.

And why did Bill K. have to wait like a kid expecting a premium from Captain Video (for two candy bar wrappers and 15 cents for "postage and handling")? EA held back the Atari version of *One on One* because there's a copy program that's so deadly the publisher feared pirates would destroy the entire market for all editions of the game by distributing hot dupes.

So before you rip off the latest computer game, think about Bill K. Don't hurt your fellow gamer.

Oops, looks like I'm out of space for this month. I guess Ms. Pac-Man's secret will have to remain just that—a secret.



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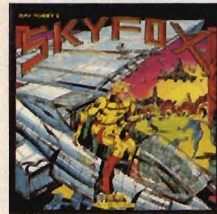
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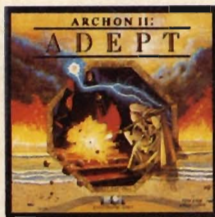
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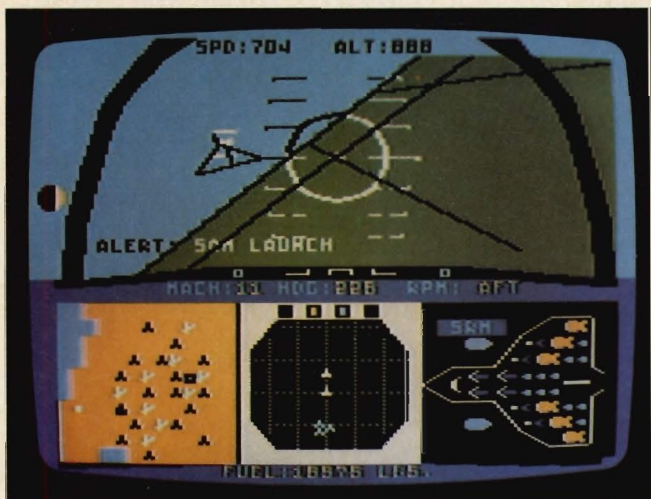
HOTLINE

Edited By JOYCE WORLEY

SOFTWARE BEAT

Sergeant Duffy is back for the third time in Infocom's latest text thriller, **Suspect** (most systems). The Sarge helped gamers in **The Witness** and **Deadline**, but in **Suspect**, he's ready to put you in handcuffs. The gamer, playing the role of

teractive adventures. Assume the role of the hero or heroine, then "live" the adventure, complete with graphics, sound effects, and music, as you decide how to find Oz, or how to survive on a desert island. There are six



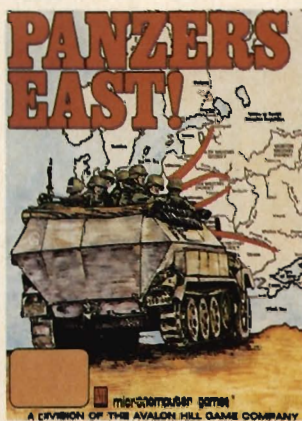
F-15 STRIKE EAGLE (MICROPROSE)

a newspaper reporter, must make a convincing show of innocence to avoid arrest, as well as figure out who committed the crime. . . **F-15 Strike Eagle** (MicroProse/Atari, C-64) puts gamers in the seat of an Eagle, in a simulation of modern air warfare. Three-dimensional graphics, computer-assisted targeting, radar, air-to-air missiles, ground target bombing, aerobatics and multiple combat scenarios make this a hot action game for armchair pilots with the print stuff. . . Windham Classics, a new line from Spinnaker Software (Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM) turn classics of literature like "The Wizard of Oz" and "Swiss Family Robinson" into in-

masterpieces on the drawing board, including **Gulliver's Travels**, **Treasure Island**, **The**



BELOW THE ROOT (SPINNAKER)



Wind in the Willows, and **Below The Root** (based on the Green Sky trilogy). . . **Panzers East!** (Avalon Hill/C-64) recreates the eastern front during WW II. The gamer takes the role of the German commander to direct the Axis invasion force in the 24-week limit, while trying to block partisan activity, conduct an air war, and fight Mother Russia's mud and snow. . . **Robots of Dawn** (Epyx/Apple, Atari, C-64) stars Elijah Bailey, the famous detective from Isaac Asimov's novel, seeking to find the murderer. The player and on-screen characters interact through conversation

as 'Lije' Bailey probes and questions, trying to solve the crime. Every game is different, due to built-in plot twists that vary each investigation. . . **MillionWare**, by BrainBank (Apple) has more than 1200 questions in over 40 categories, each with odds to choose from. Players start the game with \$10,000, then wager any amount and get monetary returns for correct answers. The disk is completely self-tutoring, with all instructions on screen. The trivia game was developed by the same people who created **Murder By The Dozen** for CBS. . .

MAD JOINS FIRST STAR FOR SPY VS SPY PROMO

First Star is going Mad (Mad magazine, that is) over its promotion for **Spy Vs Spy**, a national grand prize drawing. To register, mail in an entry blank (available at software dealers) before December 31, 1984. A drawing on Jan. 31, 1985, will select the winner of a trip for two for three days and two nights in the Big Apple, where they'll meet the staff of Mad Magazine and have their caricature drawn to appear in Mad. In addition, the first 1000 customers sending warranty cards will get free subscriptions to Mad magazine.

EARLY ARKIE CONTENDERS

By general consensus the electronic gaming year starts with the annual flood of holiday season releases and ends on the eligibility deadline for Arkie nominations at the end of September. A feature else-

BENFORD NAMED TOP TECHIE

Tom Benford, whose written and photographic contributions have graced the pages of *Electronic Games* for several years, has joined the staff as Technical Director. As part of his duties, Tom will be authoring the monthly "Test Lab" column, producing a range of hardware-oriented features and providing a little technical back-up for the always harried Game Doctor.

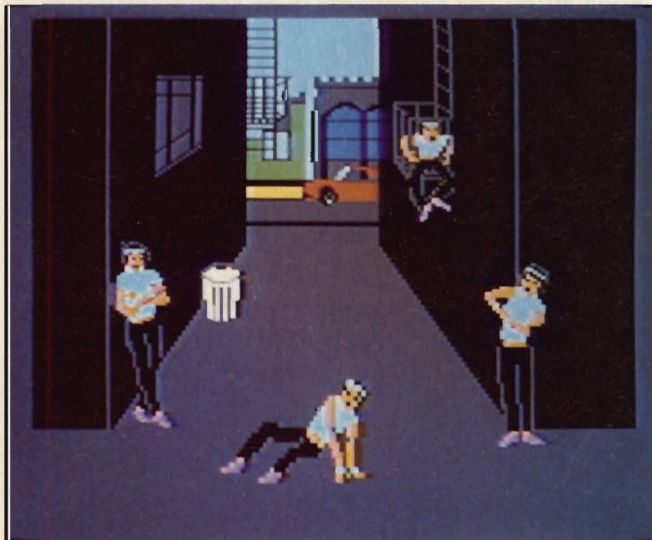
SEMICONDUCTOR SALES UP

According to the Semiconductor Industry Association, world sales of semiconductors will total roughly \$26.3 billion in 1984, up 48% from 1983.

WHAT'S HOT

From the steamin' streets of the big city to the air-conditioned cool world of home computing comes electronic breakdancing! By booting up *Breakdance* (Epyx/C-64) or *Break Street* (Creative Software/C-64), even a lackadaisical layabout can thrill to the vicarious experience of whirling around like a modern-day dervish.

Breakdance, created by Beck-Tech, is an action-strategy game in which the player or players enters dance moves with the joystick. *Break Street*, the invention of 3-2-1 Software, gets more



BREAK STREET (CREATIVE)

HOTLINE

physical, testing the gamer's ability to make smooth transitions between the moves.

And now that we've got video breakin', can computer bellydancing be far behind?

CBS SIGNS FRAGGLE ROCK

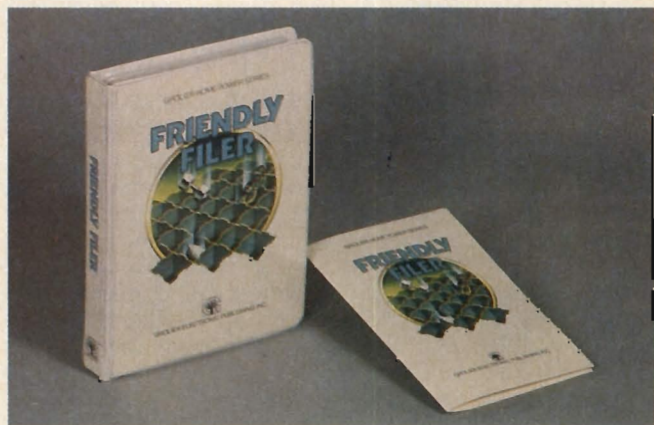
CBS has been granted exclusive world-wide rights for home computer programs based on Jim Henson's "Fraggle Rock." The children's television series, seen in the US and Canada, will be the basis of a series of entertainment/educational software titles for kids 7-12 years old, to be released this year.

The Fraggles are Muppet characters who get by on their wits, singing, dancing and in general living it up, while their neighbors, the Doozers, build edible crystalline structures. A family of giants living nearby, the Gorgs, provide the spark for Fragglish adventures by trying to capture the fun-loving Muppets.

EDU-BEAT

Dr. Seuss Fix-Up The Mix-Up Puzzler (Coleco/Adam, ColecoVision) uses Dr. Seuss

characters in an electronic jigsaw puzzle. Players choose from five levels of complexity, starting at a level easy enough for pre-schoolers, then mix and match puzzle pieces to create scenes... The *Electronic Flashcard Maker* (Coleco/Adam) lets computerists make up to 30 decks of flashcards, each with a maximum of 200 cards with 25 words per side. Use it for learning



any lesson, or to create trivia games. The computer keeps track of wrong answers, making this a good study tool... *9-5 Typing* (Epyx/Apple, Atari, Adam, Commodore, and IBM) is a typing tutor especially for women. It takes basic typing skill drills (over 49 in all), then combines them with sequences from the movie, as typists help Doralee escape from the foul-minded Hart... *Survey Taker* (Scholastic/Apple) lets kids 9 and over take surveys and print out the results on bar and table graphs, as they learn research and planning skills, and get facility in handling simple statistics...

GROLIER PREMIERS EDUCATIONAL GAMES

Grolier Inc., the world's largest encyclopedia publisher, has formed a subsidiary dedicated to publishing computer software. The first titles, which will run on the Apple IIc and IBM-PC, are *Friendly Filer*, an introduction to data-

base management for children; *Easy Graph*, an educational aid; and a series of book-and-program packages themed to adventure games.

Each of Grolier Electronic Publishing's *Adventures In Knowledge* programs encourages children to read in order to solve the adventure. In *Secrets of Science Island*, kids use the enclosed science-fact book to answer questions that help them continue on their journey, while *Treasure Hunter* is a quest for buried treasure. To solve it, the child must refer to the enclosed fact book about historical explorers.

All four programs were developed by Intentional Educations, Inc., which co-developed the easy-to-use *Bank Street Writer* for Broderbund.

The four new titles will retail for \$39.95. The software is aimed at both schools and the home market.

SUPER APPLE COMMERCIAL PREMIERS

The latest Apple TV commercial, filmed in London by British director Tony ("The Hunger") Scott, will be unveiled during the Super Bowl. Unlike the previous "1984" Orwellian-styled Apple ad, this one carries a corporate theme rather than focusing in on any specific product.

As part of the ad blitz planned for Super Bowl Sunday (Jan. 20), the company will distribute free seat cushions with the famous Apple logo to the 85,000 fans in attendance, marking the first time that the NFL has permitted such a corporate giveaway at a game.

"The machine works in a trouble-free manner, and is really a pleasure to use."

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Michael DiJulio—Chicago, Illinois

"You have an excellent machine for the home user. Smart LOGO and Smart Filer are excellent...Smart Keys make it very easy to use the software, even before you read the instructions completely."

Wayne Motel—Dyer, Indiana

"Your keyboard is better than the Apple.*"

Donald Prohaska—San Diego, California

"I find the word processor and the basic programming language to be very user friendly."

Gordon R. Franke—Kirksville, Missouri

"I am more than pleased with the operation of the machine, and not having any experience with computers, I am happy that finally someone has produced a machine not only at a reasonable cost, but one that you can nearly sit down and start using without any training period."

Frederick A. Tripodi—New York, New York

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DESIGNWARE GOES TO THE PEACHES

Management Science America (MSA), the parent company of Peachtree Software, has acquired DesignWare. DesignWare products will continue to be marketed under that name, through MSA's Peachtree Division.

Designware was founded in 1980 by Jim Schuyler, and has eleven educational titles

HOTLINE

in its catalog. All products are available for Apple, Atari, C-64, IBM-PC and PCjr computers, including the two hits **Spellicopter** and **Crypto-Cube**.

dicator. . . . The Commodore 16, an entry-level computer with 16K RAM and 32K ROM, comes with an educa-

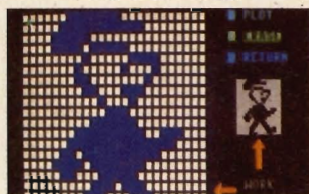
tional cartridge to show users what the machine can do and how it works, all for around \$100. BASIC is built in, as are two joystick ports, and a cartridge slot. The computer also has its own family of peripherals, including both cassette and disk drives and printer. The C-16 is not software-compatible with other Commodore computers.

HARDWARE BEAT



Officials at Samsung Electronics America (Secaucus, NJ) describe their new 14" high-res color monitor (model CD-1451D) as "ideal for use with videogames." It's said to have infinite range color display capacity, as well as 1,000 character display, video/audio input jacks, and built-in sound system. The monitor retails for about \$300, and is compatible with Apple IIe, IBM-PC, PC-XT, and PCjr computers. . . . The Smartboard by WICO Corp. is a combination keyboard/trackball for Apple and IBM-PC computer systems. The function keys are fully programmable, and each can hold up to 126 characters of information. The keyboard uses both QWERTY and DVORAK layouts, in a Selectric-style design. The trackball can be programmed with up to eight characters in four directions, and has two memory banks. A special key swap feature aids in mouse emulation. Key clip, type ahead buffer and auto repeat functions toggle off and on, and expansion ports provide for additional control devices to be attached. . . . Using the Tech-Sketch light pen and the Lite-Sprite software, C-64 compu-artists can draw in an 8-power magnification mode,

modify the character's position, and store poses in frames to create animation sequences up to 128 frames. While drawing the image on-screen, the program automatically converts the graphics into computer code, then displays the code on screen, all without the user knowing how to program. . . . Video Peripherals' HS-15 Tournament Master Joystick features dual,



LITE SPRITE (TECH SKETCH)

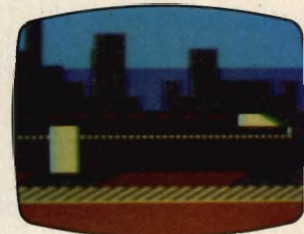
independently wired, arcade-sized fire buttons 6 inches apart, and a regulation joystick with ridged gripper ball. The controller works with Atari, Commodore 64 and ColecoVision systems and a left/right switch allows for operation with either hand. An input port on the side accepts a Coleco numeric controller, so the HS-15 never has to be unplugged. Atari users get an added feature — an auto-fire control knob, with an LED auto fire rate in-



CONSUMER BEAT

Scholastic's award-winning geography game, **Agent USA**, is now available for most popular computers, including Apple, Atari, Commodore, and (most recently) IBM-PC and PCjr. Designed by Tom Snyder Productions, players

on data modems by 14% to 25%. The new price for Model UDS 103LP, a 300 bps modem powered from the phone line and requiring no AC power, is \$125. . . . CBS Software has reduced prices for seven pre-school kideo



AGENT USA (SCHOLASTIC)



SEAHORSE HIDE 'N' SEEK (CBS)

must learn time zones, location, capital cities, and names of states to beat the Fuzz-Bomb menace threatening the land. . . . Universal Data Systems has reduced the price

thrillers, including **Ducks Ahoy**, **Sea Horse Hide 'N Seek**, **Big Bird's Funhouse**, and other Sesame Street titles, and for seven learning and amusement games, including **TimeBound**, **Math Mileage**, **Movie Musical Madness**, and **Halftime Battling Bands**. . . . K-tel International has filed for reorganization under Chapter 11 of Federal Bankruptcy Code, but the good news is that K-tel Software is unaffected by this move by its parent company. . . . Future Computing, a research analysis firm, projects that the personal robot industry will grow more than 100% an-



The HS-15 Tournament Master from Video Peripherals.

nually for the next six years, to a total of \$2.2 billion by 1990 . . . the computer version of **Monty Plays Scrabble** has a new home. A version of the world's most popular word game will be distributed exclusively by Epyx. The game, formerly marketed by Ritam, provides a computerized opponent in four skill levels, with a playing vocabulary of over 12,000 words. . . The International Computer Orphanage wants to help orphan microprocessors find computer-less homes. The company will find new homes for unwanted computers, then the former owners receive cash and credits when their old machine is "adopted." People seeking machines can try them out for a few days, weeks or months on a low per-diem cost basis, or opt to make the adoption permanent. An international communications network and database matches homeless computers with persons seeking equipment. The company also has openings for Computer Orphan Agents, people licensed by ICO to locate and help place an orphan computer in a new home, who then receive a fee for services. Give them a call at 1-800-387-8244, if you've got a machine you don't want anymore, or if you'd like to offer a good home to an orphan computer.

APPLE, SCHOLASTIC SEARCH FOR STORYTELLERS

Scholastic and Apple Computer Corp. are jointly sponsoring a contest for students, based on the **StoryTree** writing program designed by George Brackett. Writers must submit a story composed with *StoryTree*, using the program's branching feature. The companies will award prizes in Elementary (grades 4-6), Junior (grades



STORYTREE (SCHOLASTIC)

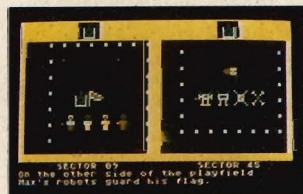
7-9) and Senior (grades 10-12) categories. The grand prize in each category is a \$1000 scholarship or an Apple IIc computer, and the winning student's classroom will receive an Apple IIe computer. Additional prizes of \$500, \$250 and \$100 will be awarded in each category. Entries must be received by April 1, and the winners, selected by a panel of educators and authors, will be announced in May.

SCHOLASTIC CONTESTS OFFER IRON HORSE, METAL MEN

Scholastic has a couple of unique prizes for the company's contests this winter. One features a trip by train, while the other promises to present a team of winners with a team of robots.

In the **Agent USA** contest, gamers have to locate the FuzzBomb and read the message that appears on the screen when the menace is defused. Winners send Scholastic this message, and the time it took to find and disarm the bomb, to participate in a drawing. The Grand Prize Winner, accompanied by two family members, gets to ride the iron horse to Washington, D.C., for an official tour of intelligence headquarters and the White House.

Gamers finding a special



BANNERCATCH (SCHOLASTIC)

stamp inside the **Agent USA** package can get prizes by submitting the Instant Winner stamps along with a letter telling what they like about the game. The company will award 500 **Agent USA** knapsacks to the best writers.

In a second contest, Scholastic is hunting for a team of gamers to defeat Max and five levels of robots in **Bannercatch**. Those unmasking Max will be eligible for a national drawing, and the winners will receive a set of

programmable, talking robots.

Both contests are restricted to gamers under age 18, and

end on March 15. Entries must be received before March 31 in order to participate in the drawing.

COIN-OP BEAT

Bally has acquired the Sente Arcade Computer interchangeable game system "because the company believes the interchangeable game system is the way of the future," according to Bally Sente President Robert Lundquist. The company is working on a library of SAC games,

It translates roughly 4000 English words into the target language, and the same number of foreign words and phrases into their English equivalents. Punch in the first two letters, and use search keys to electronically scan the dictionary and locate the word. Then touch a button for



From the left: Brad Marsoobian, arcade manager; Kipp Howard, the winner; and Dave Anderson and Ken Wagener of Bally Sente.

so arcade owners can turn an old game into a new one by changing a cartridge, control and graphics panels. One familiar person working on the project is Dennis Koble, who won design awards while with Imagic and was recently named Director of Software... Over 200 gamers competed in a **Snakepit** videogame contest at Fashion Fair Mall in Fresno, Ca., on August 2. The contest was sponsored by Bally Sente and radio station Y94 FM. Kipp Howard won \$940, amassing 262,325 points. Ron Fox and Jim Standow, second and third placers, won tours of Yosemite Valley. Seven other **Snakepit** survivors were treated to dinners for their high scores.

PARLEZ-VOUS COMPUTER?

Planning to go abroad this year? What you'll need while strolling through the streets of Paris (or Berlin, or Madrid) is a Langenscheidt Translator 8000 (\$69.95 in most stores.)

the correct translation. There's an option to store up to 16 sets of your own special words—this will make it easy for arcaders to locate the nearest gaming parlor.

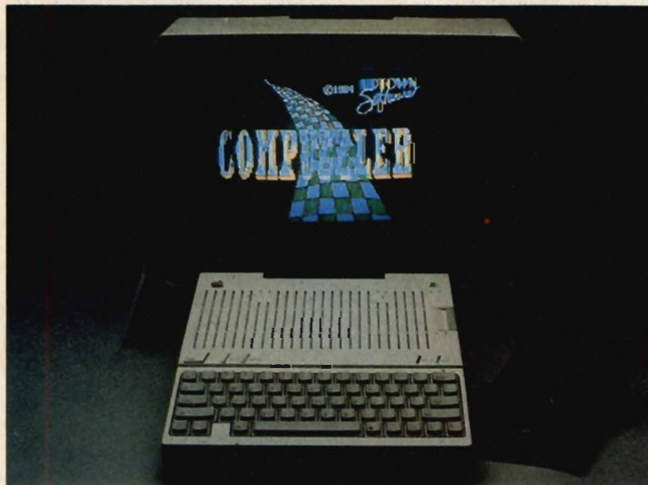
The vest-pocket wonder contains a 48K memory, and, to help travelers convert their dollars to francs or marks, a four-function calculator. It currently comes in Spanish, French and German versions, with more languages planned.



The Langenscheidt translator.

UPTOWN SOFTWARE WANTS TO THROW A PARTY

Uptown Software, founded by two party-loving women, is concentrating on the social scene for its line of computer games. After surveying the action game market, Sheila Dubman and Dominika Spetsman decided to produce software especially for adult gatherings. Although the games can be played solitaire, they're designed for group play in party-like settings.



The first triad of games from the new firm include **Compuzzler**, a game of strategy based on an enhanced interactive crossword puzzle. One to four teams build word chains and attempt to block each other's progress as the clock counts down. There's even a way to cheat by peeking at any square's letter, but the computer deducts points for this in tallying the score.

Double Crostics lets the players use isolated clues to find words. The jumbled letters form a familiar quotation when sorted and the computer keeps track of wrong letters on a running error count, in what the company calls the ultimate crossword puzzle challenge.

Uptown is also introducing a trivia game with a multiple choice answer format. Teams spin a wheel to pick one of six categories, and the team with the fewest errors wins.

SMITHSONIAN GETS VIDEOGAMES

The Smithsonian National

HOTLINE

Museum of American History has accepted a video jukebox and four coin-operated electronic games for its collection. The machines, donated by their makers to mark "High Tech Week," were **Startime**, by Video Music International (the first video jukebox, 1978); **Pong** by Nolan Bush-

thus closing a chapter of gaming history. David Gottlieb introduced the first successful coin-operated pinball game, "Baffle Ball," in 1930. His son, Alvin Gottlieb, pioneered the incentive of winning a free game for high scores in 1960. The advent of high-tech gaming brought the introduction of many top-grossing Gottlieb/Mylstar machines into arcades, including last year's mega-hit, **Q*Bert**. However, more recently, the company's laserdisc game **M.A.C.H. 3** won critical acclaim, but failed to win the distribution needed to make it a financial success in the arcades.

Explaining the company's decision, Francis Vincent, Jr. said, "After a careful review of the industry, we have determined that the coin-operated amusement games business does not offer us appropriate growth opportunities without substantial

additional risk capital." Mr. Vincent went on to praise the efforts of the Mylstar management and employees, saying, "Our decision not to continue there is the result principally of adverse market conditions and the persistent deterioration of the markets for our products."

ACORN SPROUTS AMERICAN BRANCHES

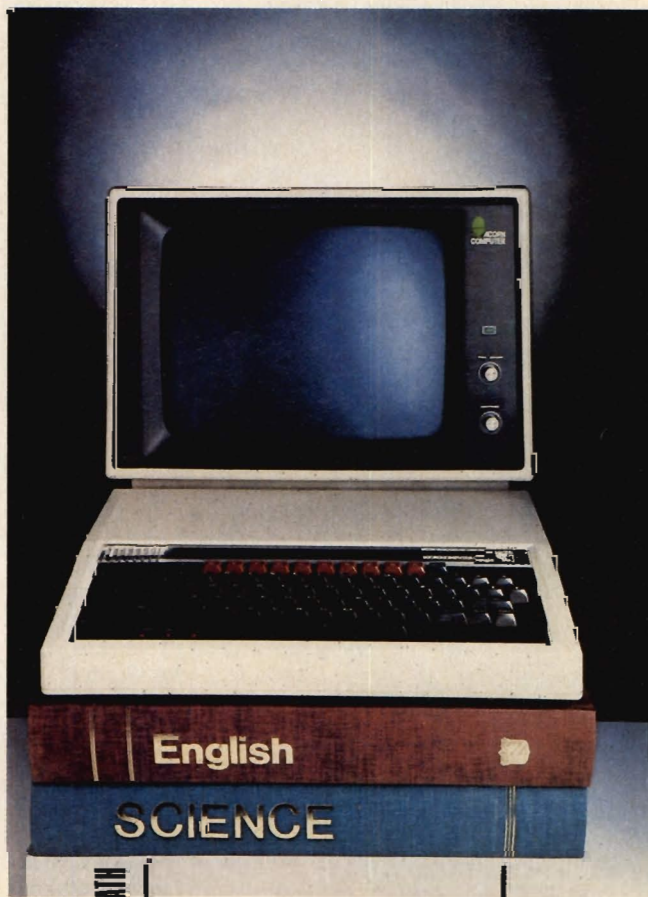
Acorn Computer Corp., which currently accounts for 85% of the British educational computer market, has started distribution of machines on this side of the Atlantic. The company is currently shipping about 2000 Acorn BBC model micros in the US per week, and estimates its American market share at 1%. Acorn sold over 180,000 computers in England and currently boasts more than 300 educational software titles. Additionally, Acorn has agreements with over 30 U.S. software companies for new programs to be distributed through its new U.S. branch in Woburn, Massachusetts.

nell (the first electronic videogame, 1972); **Pac-Man** by Bally/Midway (the most popular videogame to date 1980); **Sharpshooter II** by Game Plan (a solid-state pinball game, 1983); and **Dragon's Lair** by Starcom (the first laserdisc game, 1983).

Other machines in the museum's collection include a Jennings Sportsman pinball game (1931), a 1946 Wurlitzer jukebox, and an Edison Kinetoscope (1893). The museum also houses several antique slot and vending machines, a penny scale, and several models of pay telephones.

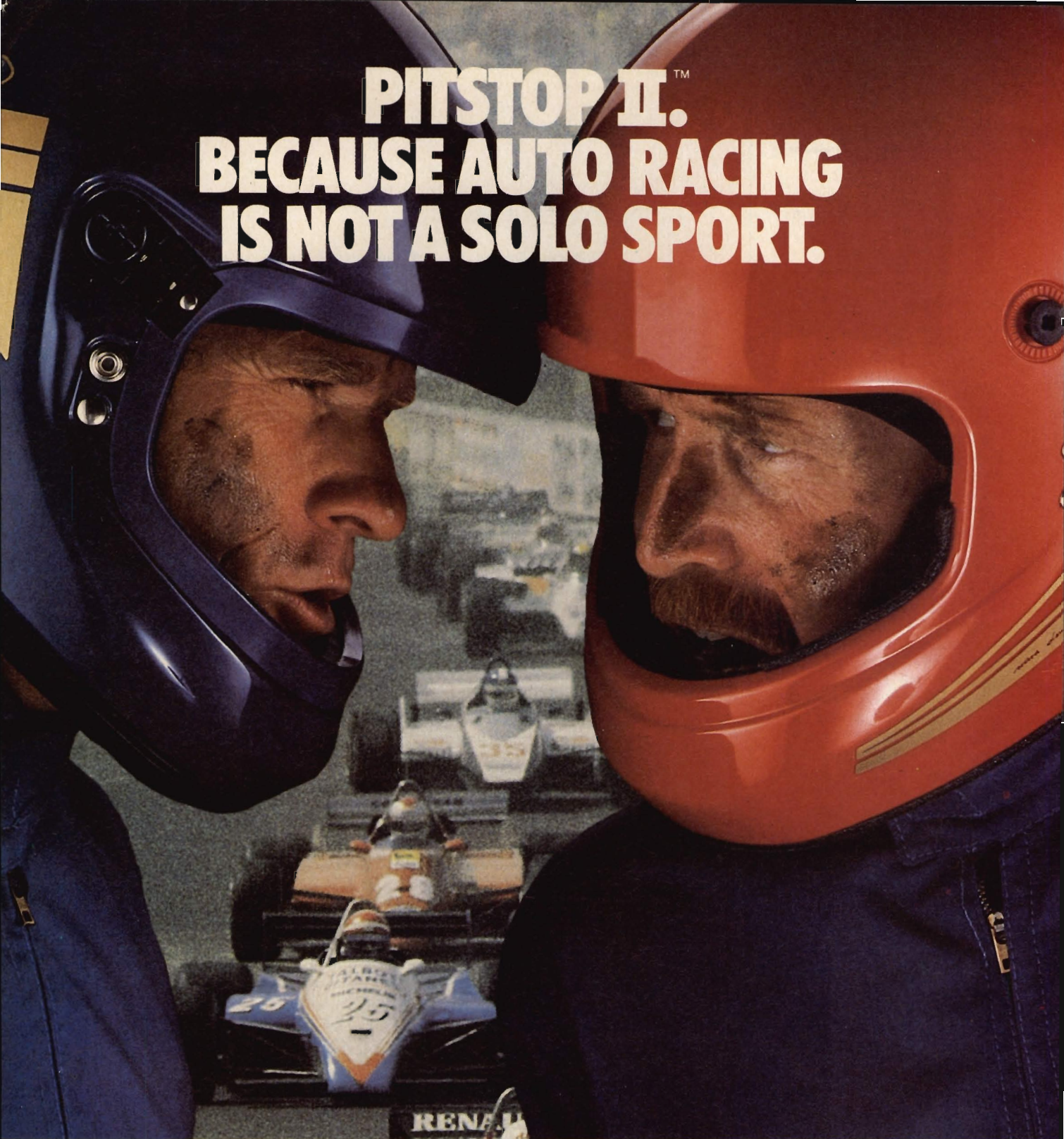
GOODBYE Q*BERT—MYLSTAR CEASES OPERATION

Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. closed the doors of Mylstar Electronics (formerly Gottlieb & Co.) at the end of September, and ceased design and manufacture of coin-operated amusement games,



PITSTOP II.™

BECAUSE AUTO RACING IS NOT A SOLO SPORT.



of speed and competition as you battle your opponent in a race against the clock. Now, more than ever, the strategy of when you make a pit stop and your pit crew's speed and performance, combined with your skill on the track, will determine the winner.

A split screen shows you your position and that of your

When we introduced Pitstop, we created action in the pits. Now, with PITSTOP II, EPYX introduces true competitive auto racing, both on the track and in the pits. Auto racing is not a one man sport. With PITSTOP II, you can now experience the thrill

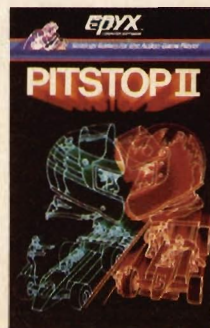
of speed and competition as you battle your opponent in a race against the clock. Now, more than ever, the strategy of when you make a pit stop and your pit crew's speed and performance, combined with your skill on the track, will determine the winner.

One or two players: joystick controlled.



EPYX
COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Strategy Games for the Action-Game Player



COMING EVENTS

COMPU-CRUISE; Dec. 15-22. This computer conference at sea sails to the Western Caribbean. The seven-day event features several computer rooms, instructive seminars, product demonstrations, and hands-on experience. Prices for the cruise aboard the ms Nieuw Amsterdam of the Holland American Cruise Lines start at \$1195, including all meals, accommodations, entertainment, and round-trip air fare from 80 U.S. gateway cities. Write Compu-Cruise, 1500 Valley River Dr., Suite 315, Eugene, Or. 97401, or call 503-341-1032 for more information.

INTERNATIONAL SOFTWARE UPDATE, Feb. 16-20, 1985, Waiohai Resort Hotel, Kauai, Hawaii. For information, contact Raging Bear Productions, 21 Tamal Vista Dr., #175, Corte Madera, CA 94925, or call 415-924-1194.

MARYLAND COMPUTER SHOW & SOFTWARE EXPO; March 22-24, 1985, Convention Center, Baltimore, MD. Write to CompuShow, Box 3315, Annapolis, MD 21403.

NYC PERSONAL COMPUTER SHOW #5; March 29-31, Madison Square Garden, New York City. Open to the public, the show features exhibits of hardware and software. Write Ken Gordon Productions, PO Box 13, Franklin Park, NJ 08823; or call 201-297-2526 for information.

INTERNATIONAL PERSONAL ROBOT CONGRESS & EXPO; May 15-19, 1985, Albuquerque, NM. For more information about this show for robot enthusiasts, write Robotic Industries Assn., P.O. Box 1366, Dearborn, MI 48121, or call 313-271-7800.

NEW YORK COMPUTER SHOW & SOFTWARE EXPO; April 25-28, 1985, Nassau County Coliseum, Long Island, NY. Write to CompuShow, Box 3315, Annapolis, MD 21403.

VIRGINIA COMPUTER SHOW & SOFTWARE EXPO; April 25-28, 1985, Pavilion, Virginia Beach, VA. Write CompuShow, address above.

EG Readers Pick Their Favorite Games

Most Popular Computer Games

| Position | Position | | Times on List | Game | System | Manufacturer |
|----------|------------|------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| | This Month | Last Month | | | | |
| 1 | 9 | 15 | 15 | Miner 2049er | Most Systems | MicroFun |
| 2 | — | 2 | 2 | Donkey Kong | Adam | Coleco |
| 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | Buck Rogers | Most Systems | Coleco/Sega |
| 4 | — | 15 | 15 | Choplifter | Most Systems | Broderbund |
| 5 | 11 | 5 | 5 | Flight Simulator | Most Systems | SubLogic |
| 6 | 5 | 2 | 2 | Q*bert | Most Systems | Parker Brothers |
| 7 | — | 5 | 5 | Lode Runner | Most Systems | Broderbund |
| 8 | 1 | 4 | 4 | Zork I | Most Systems | Infocom |
| 9 | — | New | New | Summer Games | Atari, C-64 | Epyx |
| 10 | — | New | New | Zaxxon | Most Systems | Datasoft/Synapse |
| 11 | — | 2 | 2 | Pole Position | Atari, C-64 | Atari |
| 12 | 4 | 2 | 2 | Donkey Kong Jr. | Adam | Coleco |
| 13 | — | New | New | Ultima III | Most Systems | Origin Systems |
| 14 | — | New | New | Ms. Pac Man | Atari, C-64 | Atari |
| 15 | — | New | New | Frogger | Most Systems | Parker Bros./Sierra |



Most Popular Videogame Cartridges

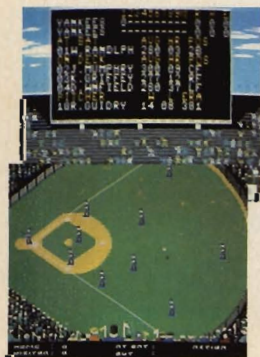
| Position | Position | | Times on List | Game Title | System | Manufacturer |
|----------|------------|------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | This Month | Last Month | | | | |
| 1 | 6 | 5 | 5 | Pitfall II | Atari 2600 | Activision |
| 2 | — | 4 | 4 | Q*bert | Most Systems | Parker Bros |
| 3 | — | 2 | 2 | Super Action Baseball | ColecoVision | Coleco |
| 4 | 2 | 7 | 7 | Joust | Atari 5200 | Atari |
| 5 | — | 7 | 7 | Miner 2049er | Atari 5200 | Micro Fun |
| 6 | 15 | 6 | 6 | Decathlon | Atari 2600 | Activision |
| 7 | — | 5 | 5 | Mr. Do! | ColecoVision | Coleco |
| 8 | — | 4 | 4 | Space Shuttle | Atari 2600 | Activision |
| 9 | — | New | New | War Games | ColecoVision | Coleco |
| 10 | — | 14 | 14 | River Raid | Atari 2600 | Activision |



Most Popular Coin-Op Videogames

| Position | Position | | Times On List | Game | Manufacturer |
|----------|------------|------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| | This Month | Last Month | | | |
| 1 | 6 | 9 | 9 | Star Wars | Atari |
| 2 | — | 7 | 7 | Dragon's Lair | Starcom |
| 3 | 9 | 11 | 11 | M.A.C.H. 3 | Mylstar |
| 4 | — | 4 | 4 | Pole Position II | Atari |
| 5 | — | 2 | 2 | Space Ace | Starcom |
| 6 | 2 | 8 | 8 | Track & Field | Konami |
| 7 | 3 | 4 | 4 | Crossbow | Exidy |
| 8 | 1 | 7 | 7 | Spy Hunter | Bally/Midway |
| 9 | — | 2 | 2 | Crystal Castle | Atari |
| 10 | 5 | 2 | 2 | Punch Out | Nintendo |

THE WORLD'S GREATEST BASEBALL GAME. THERE'S MUCH MORE TO WINNING THAN JUST PITCHING, HITTING & FIELDING.



Real baseball is more than just hitting, pitching and fielding. It's also your favorite major league teams, the great stars of today and the All-stars of yesteryear. It's statistics and coaching, and it's managing your own game strategy. With the World's Greatest Baseball Game, you have it all. Pick your major league line-up using the actual player and team stats. Then watch the action unfold against an opponent or the computer.

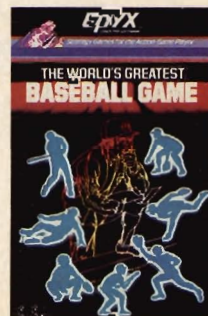
Two modes let you choose between managing and controlling your team or managing only. The World's Greatest Baseball Game—everything you could ever want except the hot dogs and peanuts.

One or two players; joystick controlled.



EPYX
COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Strategy Games for the Action-Game Player





BREAKING IN COMPUTER GAMES

I am a proud owner of an Apple IIe computer, but I'm desperate because my father thinks that games for the computer can break it, so he doesn't get me any. Can you please convince him that a game won't hurt the computer?

Dower Chin
New York, NY

Ed: Tell your father that computer games can no more harm a computer than rock and roll records can harm a stereo. A computer game is a program, just like Lotus 1-2-3 or Bank Street Writer. Once a program has been booted, the only parts of the computer that players generally touch are joysticks, other controllers or the key board. And Mr. Chin, computer games provide at least some educational value, whether they reinforce hand-eye skills, logic and problem-solving, or even just provide your son with the incentive to read (as in text adventure games).

COMPARING APPLES AND ORANGES (OR C-64's)

A big congratulations for the Translations section. I purchased Avalon Hill's **Computer Football Strategy** for my Commodore 64, expecting to play my own Super Bowl tournament. Surprise! The 16 teams are only on the Atari computer version. Someday I'll learn!

Dennis R. Schliebener
Mt. Washington, Ky.

Ed: Slight differences from one version of a game to another were the reason we started including a section

on translations, Dennis. Although in your case it didn't help in time, thanks for the pat on the back. Some days we really need it!

ERRATA

The November issue's Game of the Month, **Bruce Lee**, was mistakenly attributed to DataSoft, when in fact the



BRUCE LEE (DATASOFT)

game is manufactured by DataSoft. Neither publisher is related to the other, and Electronic Games regrets the error.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HE-MAN

In your September 1984 issue and 1984 Software Encyclopedia, it was obvious that you either didn't have or didn't read the instructions. The bombing sequence is only the first part of Mattel's **He-Man**. You're supposed to fly to the right until the mileage counter, which starts at 30, reaches 0. He-Man then hops out of his vehicle and engages in a different contest with Skeletor.

In this sequence, you must maneuver He-Man to the right of the screen, avoiding fireballs (and at later levels, spears) launched by Skeletor. You can

also catch a sword which can be used to block missiles. If you don't reach Skeletor within the time limit, he launches a spell that carries you back to the start of the game. If you reach him, you have a sword fight.

I think you should write an apology and re-write the review.

Gary Robinson
San Diego, CA

Ed: Your first sentence said it all: as often happens with pre-release review copies, our reviewer did not have the instructions for the game. Your letter provided a great explanation of the second-screen events, though. Thanks for writing and setting us straight.

QUIRK OF THE MONTH

Here's a way to send Q*bert into space without a disc, and hopping on "invisible squares": On the Atari 5200 version, on the first screen, hop down four squares on the right side. Then, hop on the spinning disc. As soon as it turns yellow from Q*bert's touch, pause the game and start over. Keeping pressing the hop button. When he's just about to appear, aim the joystick to the right. When Q*bert jumps two squares down the right side, immediately move him back to the first square he landed on (not the one he appeared on). Then, jump to the middle square and change the colors of the other squares opposite the right side. Then, hop up to the top square and jump off the left side into "space." If you've done this right and kept your finger on the button at all times, you should land on the "invisible pyramid."

After you've learned to do this, you

ROBOTS OF DAWN.™

BOOK BY ISAAC ASIMOV.

COMPUTER GAME BY EPYX.



YOU ARE DRIVEN AN AIRBORN, THE ROBOT
 SAYS, "WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?"
 TO THE ROBOTIC INSTITUTE.
 THE GARAGE LIGHTS OFFEN, AND THE AIRBORN
 HELMS ON ITS SETS OF LOMBERED AND
 AND MEATS A BIT FOR JUST A MOMENT.
 YOU FEEL A GRABBY EXCITATION IN THE PIT
 OF YOUR STOMACH AND THEN THE CAR MOVES
 FORWARD SMOOTHLY AND YOU ARE POWERFUL
 HATED AGAINST THE DEAT. YOU TRAVEL FOR
 SOME TIME BEFORE THE CAR STOPS IN
 FRONT OF A LARGE BUILDING. YOU SMIRK
 DRINK, FEELING YOUR FEARS OF OPEN
 SPACES.
 THIS IS AN ANTWERM, TO THE SOUTH AN
 FBI TRAPDOOR. TO THE NORTH IS A
 TALL REEF. DRINK, TO HERE.
 "DRINK," SAYS, "THINK I SHOULD BE
 CAREFUL. THERE IS A SINGLE FILE IN
 THAT DIRECTION."
 DRINK.

Now, for the first time, you can become Earth's most famous science fiction detective, Elijah Baley. In this text adventure, you're the hero of Isaac Asimov's top-selling novel, *Robots of Dawn*.™

Travel to Asimov's world of the future in an epic quest to discover the answer to the eternal question... Who done it? On a planet where robots outnumber people, try to learn who is lying, who is telling the truth and, most important of all, who is the murderer.

The victim is a friend of yours, a famous scientist who invented history's most advanced robot, more

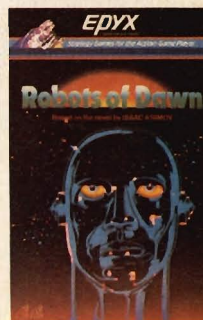
human than machine. With this sophisticated robot at your side, you piece together elusive clues scattered across a hostile planet whose government is determined to do you in. Can you stay on the case? Can you solve the mystery? Who do you trust? Your success depends on the answer.

Asimov created the story. We created the game. Now you can live it.

One player. Keyboard controlled; disk or cassette.



Strategy Games for the Action-Game Player



ROBOTS OF DAWN is a trademark of Doubleday & Co.

READER REPLAY

can see strange things happening on the real pyramid. While hopping on the invisible pyramid, Coily will chase an invisible, alternate Q*bert on the real pyramid! There are several more secrets waiting on the "invisible pyramid"!

Bill James
Ahwahnee, CA

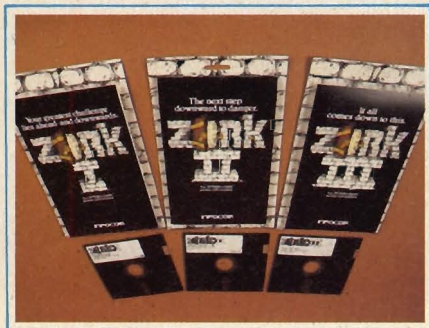
Ed: That's a great, if somewhat complicated, quirk there, Bill! Start checking your mailbox for your Paxxon Pac-Man wall clock, courtesy of the Paxxon company in Texas. And the rest of your readers, keep those quirks and glitches coming! Who knows? The next Paxxon Pac-Man wall clock could be yours!

THINKERS VERSUS SLASHERS

I enjoy your magazine very much, and read it every month. However, I have a pet peeve I would like you to know about:

I think you should redefine the term "adventure game." To me, there are two types of adventure games: the first type are "hack and slash" adventures, where players wander around a dungeon and kill all the monsters, then take their treasures. Examples of this are **Gateway to Apschai** and **Wizardry**.

I call the second type "thinking" adventures. In this type of game, you must outwit your opponents, not overpower them, and solve puzzles



THE ZORK SERIES (INFOCOM)

and mysteries to reach a final goal. Examples are the famous **Zork** series, and the Scott Adams Adventure series. Please give this suggestion a little thought.

John J. Miller
Coral Springs, FL

*Ed: In what category would we put a game like **Ultima III**, where players must use both their brains and their brawn to win the game? We already*

call joystick-oriented games "action adventures," while Infocom-type games are called "text adventures." "Illustrated adventures" are similar in style to text adventures, but they feature illustrations of various places.

While your reasoning is sound (there are, after all, many different adventure game genres), splitting all the genres off into their own subsections would leave the majority of our readers quite confused. The best way to decide if an adventure mentioned in the Passport to Adventure section is your kind of game is to read the review, which should mention relevant play mechanics.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

I've just finished reading my October issue of Electronic Games Magazine, which I subscribed to last year. I think I made the right choice with your publication.

We are the proud owners of an Adam Family Computer System. Adam has been very good to our family and we have no regrets for having chosen it as our family computer. The rate at which software is being released by Coleco is giving us the opportunity to fully explore what's available now. For a family just starting with a computer, this is working to our advantage.

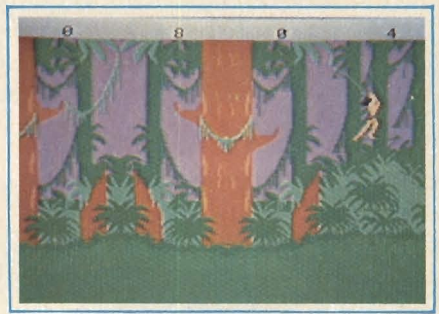
I'm surprised that in your October issue you haven't said anything about Coleco's new releases, cartridges such as **The Dukes of Hazzard**, **War Games**, **Star Trek**, and **Tarzan**.

My question is, how long does it take for your magazine to get to publication after all your news is gathered? I should think that **Tarzan**, which I bought two months ago, could have been mentioned. The graphics in this game are beautiful, and the fluid movements make this game more fun to watch than to play!

I have heard talk that games are not reviewed in some magazines if they are not supplied free by the manufacturer. Please explain this and, if this is the case I'll help bug Coleco to see why you are not sent new releases.

Alan L. Taylor
Stewartsville, MN

Ed: Coleco, like all hardware and software producers, sends material for review to publications like Electronic



TARZAN (COLECO)

Games free of charge. This is the only way a magazine like this can afford to cover the field so thoroughly. Can you imagine the bill for all the stuff mentioned in a typical issue of EG?

We feel that since all manufacturers supply review copies, no single company can hope to curry favor by giving us gratis software. Our usual procedure is to collect products at our offices and then parcel them out to our various reviewers and article writers.

As you surmise, lead-time can be a crucial factor in determining what gets editorial coverage in any given issue. We must allow at least 90 days between the time the bulk of the pages are signed off for the printer and the appearance of that issue on the newsstand. Since each EG reviewer is required to test any game for many hours before putting words on paper, we must allow an extra two-to-four weeks for this field testing.

Some of our now-defunct competitors found an easy way to shave this time: They wrote "reviews" of some products without having the material at hand. We believe that EG's readers would rather wait an issue for an authoritative critique than settle for a hastily written piece based on nothing more than a press release about the game.

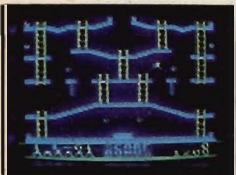
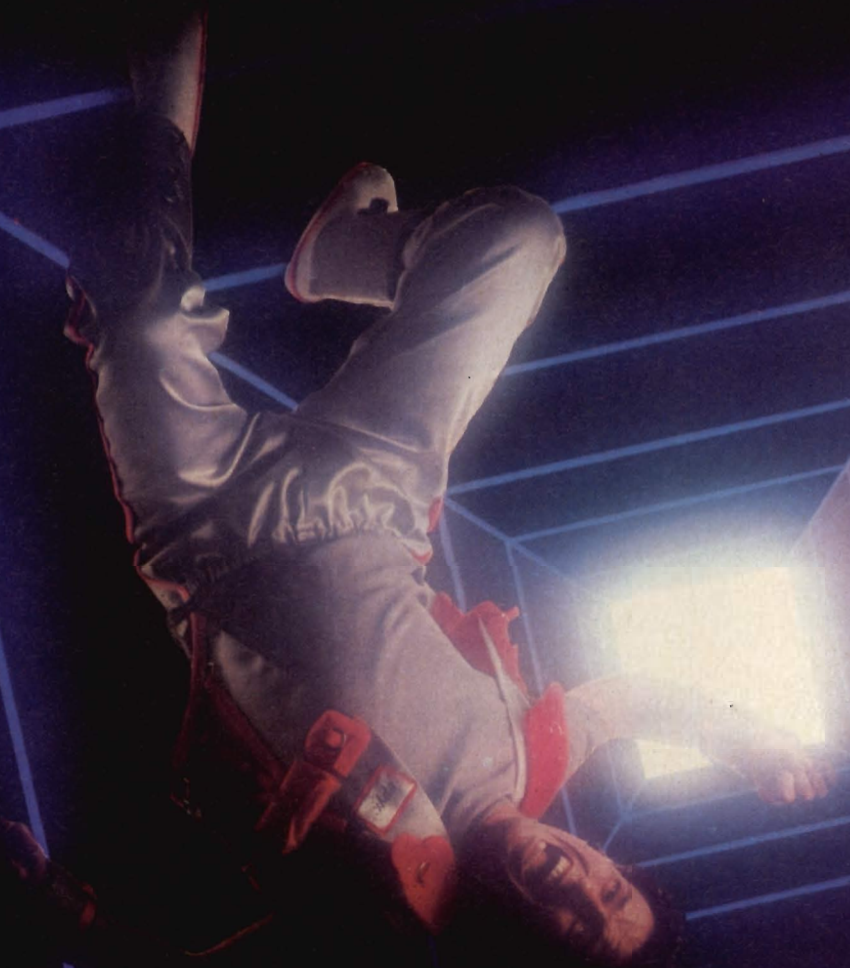
Another reason why some titles don't get covered as quickly as fans would like is that we haven't yet found a way to elasticize the magazine's pages. Software tends to arrive in huge batches, and it just takes a little time to work through it all.

But don't fear that we've abandoned the ColecoVision or Adam. There are plenty of reviews aimed at both systems currently in the works.

We read every letter we get, so please keep 'em coming!



JUMPMAN'S A GREAT GAME. BUT YOU'VE GOT TO WATCH YOUR STEP.



Meet the Alienators. A fiendish bunch who've planted bombs throughout your Jupiter Command Headquarters.

Your job? Use your lightning speed to scale ladders, scurry across girders, climb ropes and race

through 30 levels to defuse the bombs before they go off.

That's the kind of hot, non-stop action we've packed into the award-winning* best-selling Jumpman,™ and into Jumpman Jr.,™ our new cartridge version with 12 all-new, different and exciting screens.

Both games force you to make tough choices.

Should you avoid that Alienator, climb to the top

and try to work your way down, or try to hurdle him and defuse the bombs closest to you before they go off?

If you move fast you'll earn extra lives. But if you're not careful, it's a long way down.

So jump to it. And find out why Jumpman and Jumpman Jr. are on a level all their own.

One to four players; 8 speeds; joystick control. Jumpman has 30 screens. Jumpman Jr. has 12 screens.



EPYX
COMPUTER SOFTWARE

STRATEGY GAMES FOR THE ACTION-GAME PLAYER.



*1983 C.E.S. award winner.

1985 ARKIE

The Players Pick Their Favorites

It's tough to beat Julius Erving and Larry Bird on the basketball court, and it's not much easier on the gaming screen, either. *One on One* (Electronic Arts) slam-dunked all rivals to emerge as the 1985 Electronic Game of the

Year in the sixth annual Electronic Games Design Awards (Arkies) voting.

Gamers returned more than 5,000 of the official ballots distributed in the October ELECTRONIC GAMES, making

ELECTRONIC GAME OF THE YEAR

ONE ON ONE

(Electronic Arts/Most computer systems)

This sophisticated real-time simulation of half-court basketball won praise from action fans and armchair strategists alike for its blend of mental and physical challenge. Fluidly animated line graphics reproduce the physical feats of two great athletes.

COMPUTER GAME OF THE YEAR

ULTIMA III

(Origin Systems/Most computer systems)

This is the third — and so far greatest — installment in the gaming epic created by Lord British. *Ultima* combines features of both text and illustrated adventures in a unique way to produce one of the most distinctive play-systems in the computer software field.

BEST COMPUTER SPORTS GAME

SUMMER GAMES

(Epyx/Atari, C-64)

Eight taxing events await the would-be Olympian in this clever and attractive program. Platform diving, in particular, weds aesthetics and competition perfectly.

Summer Games grabs the gold as both a head-to-head competition and a solitaire delight.

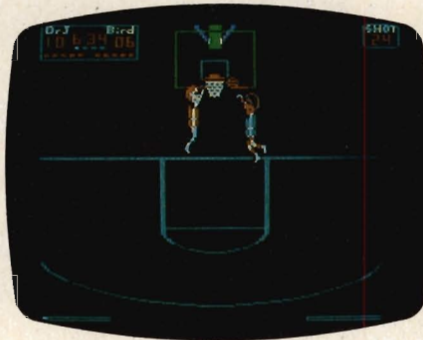
BEST COMPUTER ACTION GAME

BLUE MAX

(Synapse/Atari, C-64)

The pilot cruises the unfriendly skies in a powerful fighter/bomber in this diagonal scroller. Only a steady hand on the throttle and pinpoint marksmanship can bring the warbird through the enemy gauntlet.

Its diagonal scrolling adds depth and realism to the program.



ONE ON ONE (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

BEST COMPUTER ADVENTURE

GATEWAY TO APSHAI

(Epyx/Atari, C-64)

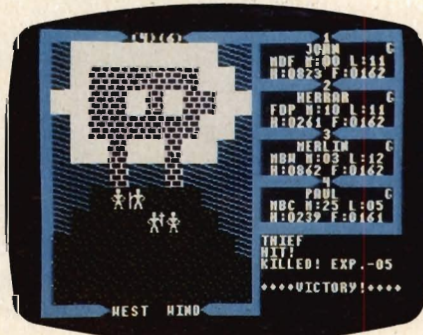
Several disk programs have taken players through parts of Apschai, but this action-adventure cartridge brings the excitement to a mass audience in streamlined form. The well-conceived command scheme provides many options while keeping play fast and simple.

BEST COMPUTER GAME AUDIO-VISUAL EFFECTS

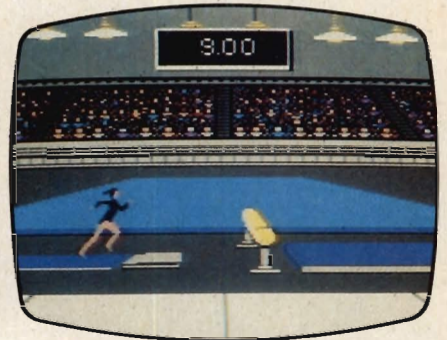
DEMON ATTACK

(Imagic/PCjr)

Demon Attack won the "Videogame of the Year" Arkie in its original form and



ULTIMA III (ORIGIN)



SUMMER GAMES (EPYX)

voters agreed that this multi-phase invasion contest looks even more beautiful as a computer program. It's unquestionably the best-looking PCjr disk so far.

VIDEOGAME DIVISION

VIDEOGAME OF THE YEAR

SPACE SHUTTLE

(Activision/Atari 2600)

This brilliant simulation of space light proves that talented designers can still work wonders with the 2600 system. This one's so good schools are even using it to teach concepts and provide a little vicarious experience.



BLUE MAX (SYNAPSE)

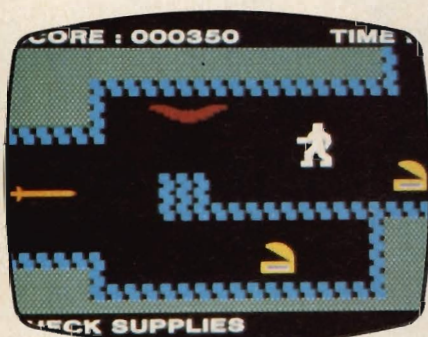
AWARDS

By THE EDITORS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

this the hobby's largest and most prestigious popular election. Besides the 27 Arkie-winners, more than 50 titles have won Certificates of Merit, symbolic of overall excellence. Sponsored by Reese Communications, the

awards salute outstanding design achievement from September 30, 1983 to October 1, 1984.

And here are the 1985 Arkie winners — the year's greatest games:



GATEWAY TO APSHAI (EPYX)

BEST ACTION VIDEOGAME

BUCK ROGERS

(Sega-Coleco/Most videogame systems)

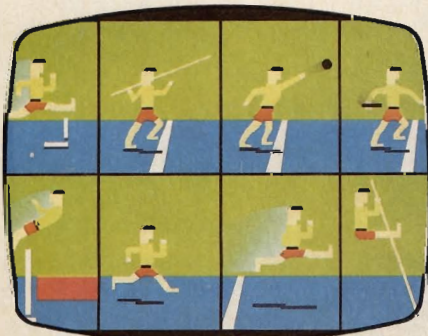
This multi-phase shoot-out puts the player in the cockpit of Buck Rogers' own spacefighter. As the op-art landscape moves down the screen, the ship must fire and maneuver to blast enemy ships and avoid collisions with the deadly pylons which crisscross the surface.

BEST SPORTS VIDEOGAME

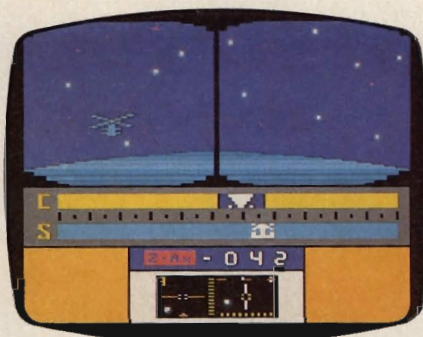
DECATHLON

(Activision/2600)

How did they get all 10 events of the Olympic decathlon into a single



DECATHLON (ACTIVISION)



SPACE SHUTTLE (ACTIVISION)

videogame cartridge? It may look like sorcery, but fans of sports videogames aren't complaining — they're too busy trying to set world records!

BEST ADVENTURE VIDEOGAME

PITFALL! II

(Activision/Atari 2600)

Designer David Crane adds another notch to his belt with this superb sequel to the 1983 Arkie winner, *Pitfall!* This program sends the hero, Pitfall Harry, on an even more varied — and dangerous — set of adventures than the much-honored original.

Many gamers consider *Pitfall! II* a videogame landmark which bridges the gap to computer software.



BUCK ROGERS (SEGA)

BEST VIDEOGAME AUDIO-VISUAL EFFECTS

CONGO BONGO

(Sega/Most videogame systems)

This jumping-and-climbing contest brings new life to this game-format by picturing the action in three-quarter perspective. Well-detailed illustrations, good animation and a sensitive coloring job further enhance its visual appeal.

COMPUTER VIDEOGAME DIVISION

SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY VIDEO COMPUTER GAME OF THE YEAR

STAR WARS

(Parker Brothers/Most systems)

This first-person, multi-screen shoot-out may run somewhat counter to the current trend toward "think tank" software, but it shows there's always an avid audience for a slickly programmed action game. *Star Wars* is especially notable for the fine imitation of vector graphics.

ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

MOVIEMAKER

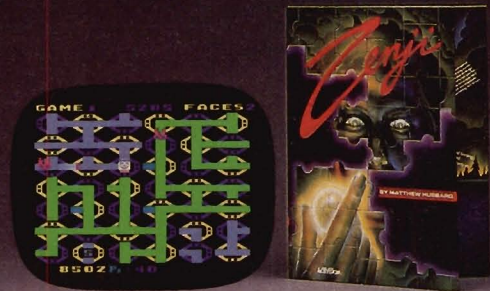
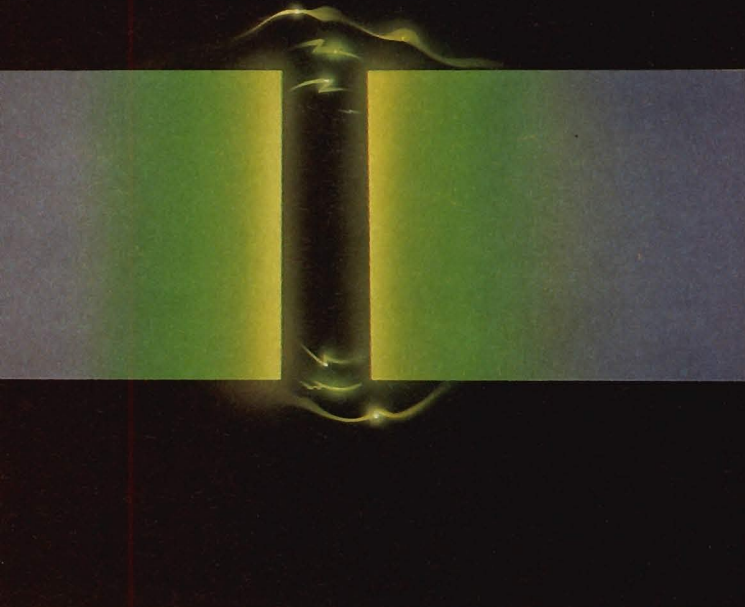
(Reston Software/Atari, C-64)

This program practically created a new sub-hobby within the field of electronic entertainment by making it possible for anyone to create their own sequences on the home computer. IPS, the design house which created it, has greatly enlarged the horizons of computer recreation.

Perhaps the real genius of *Movie-Maker* is that it makes it so easy to perform these 'cinematic' miracles.

CONNECT.

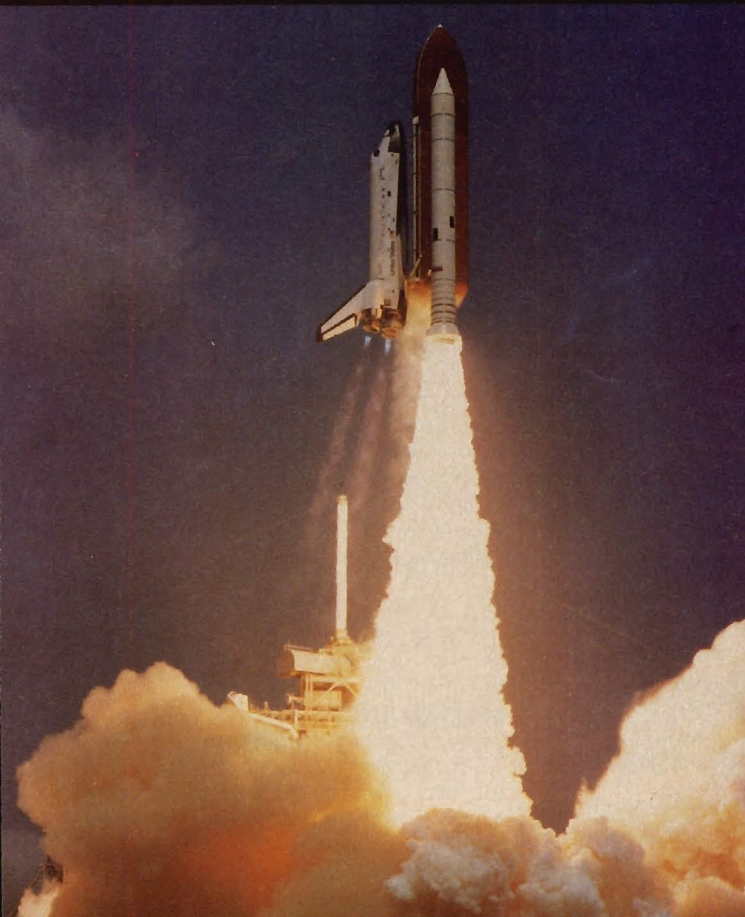
THE MAZE BECKONS. THE FLAMES THREATEN. MASTER YOUR LOGIC AND INTUITION, AND ALL PATHS WILL CONNECT IN A FLASH OF REVELATION.



Designed by Matthew Hubbard.

LIFT-OFF.

YOU BEGIN AN UNPRECEDENTED SPACE FLIGHT SIMULATION. CALCULATE THRUST, TRAJECTORY, PITCH AND YAW. THE CHALLENGE IS YOURS. TAKE IT.



Designed by Steve Kitchen.

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RESCUE.

TRAPPED MINERS. BLOCKED SHAFTS INFESTED WITH VILE CREATURES. YOUR AIR RUNS LOW... YOU HESITATE... BUT THEIR FATE IS IN YOUR HANDS.

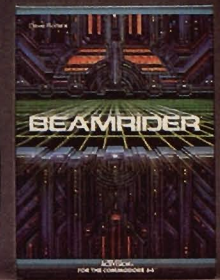


Designed by Jon Van Ryzin.



SOLO.

CAUGHT ON A WEB OF INFINITE BEAMS. INSTANT REFLEXES ARE YOUR ONLY HOPE, YET THE HURLING LASERS BLIND YOU. THIS IS NO JOYRIDE.

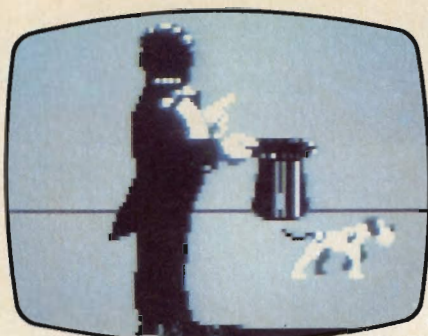


Designed by Dave Rolfe.

COMMODORE 64, ATARI, ADAM AND APPLE II.

ALSO AVAILABLE FOR MAJOR GAME SYSTEMS: ATARI 2600, ATARI 5200 AND COLECOVISION.

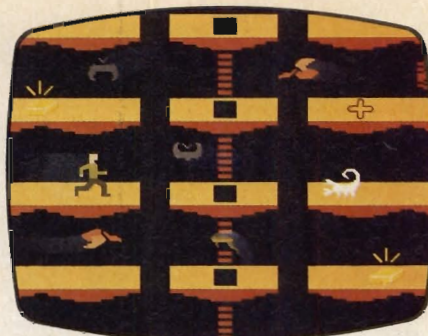
 **ACTIVISION**®



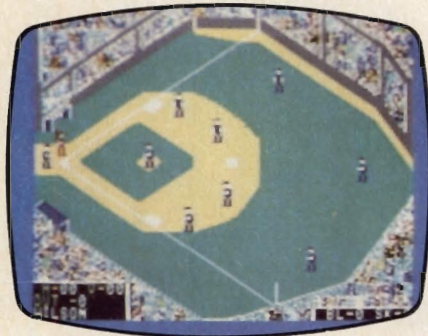
MOVIEMAKER (RESTON)



PITSTOP II (EPYX)



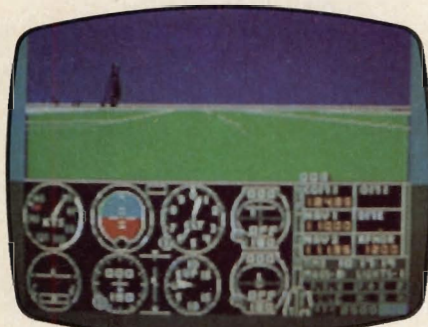
PITFALL II (ACTIVISION)



WORLD'S GREATEST BASEBALL GAME (EPYX)



B.C.'S QUEST FOR TIRES (SIERRA)



FLIGHT SIMULATOR II (SUBLOGIC)



MURDER ON THE ZINDERNEUF
(ELECTRONIC ARTS)

1985 ARKIE AWARDS



MOST INNOVATIVE SOFTWARE OF THE YEAR

WORLD'S GREATEST BASEBALL GAME

(Epyx/C-64)

This is the first title to offer sports gamers a choice of action contest or statistical replay on the same disk. The strategy-oriented version gives living room managers a chance to pilot some of the great teams of the recent and distant past as well as several all-star squads. And watching the intricately animated fielders execute each play is a gaming highpoint.

MOST HUMOROUS VIDEO/COMPUTER GAME

QUEST FOR TIRES

(Sierra/Most systems)

The world of the comic strip "B.C." comes alive in this action-adventure featuring Thor's efforts to free the Cute Chick from the dastardly dinosaur. Humorous touches heighten the connection with the strip and add a special dimension to the course of play.

BEST ARCADE-TO-HOME TRANSLATION

JOUST

(Atari/Atari, C-64)

Top-notch visuals in both editions faithfully mimic the look of the coin-op. The two-player option is right in tune with the current trend toward multi-player com-

puter programs, and the fantasy combat premise has classic appeal.

BEST ELECTRONIC ACTION-STRATEGY GAME

FLIGHT SIMULATOR II

(SubLogic/Apple, Atari, C-64)

This is probably the closest most computerists will ever get to taking throttle in hand and setting a course for the wild blue yonder. This exquisitely detailed simulation by Bruce Artwick represents the last word in first-person flying programs.

BEST ELECTRONIC STRATEGY GAME

MURDER ON THE ZINDERNEUF

(Electronic Arts/Atari, C-64)

The computerist, as one of eight fictional detectives, must solve a murder on a transoceanic dirigible before the vast airship docks in New York. Clever design produces a different murder, with attendant clues and suspects, every time the game is booted.

BEST MULTI-PLAYER VIDEO/COMPUTER GAME

PITSTOP II

(Epyx/C-64)

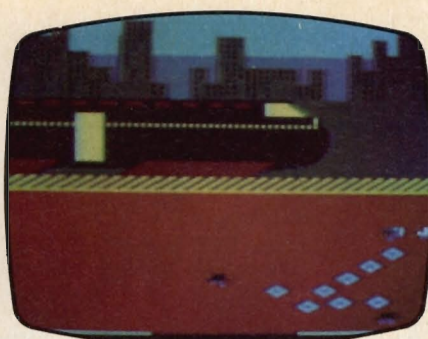
This sequel to *Pitstop*, winner of a Certificate of Merit in the Videogame Division, adds the excitement of head-to-head competition to the original racing concept. Solid graphics and an easy-to-use control set-up don't hurt, either.



CONGO BONGO (SEGA)



DEMON ATTACK (IMAGIC)



AGENT U.S.A. (SCHOLASTIC)

BEST ELECTRONIC MONEY GAME

MILLIONAIRE

(Blue Chip Software/Most systems)

Ever wondered whether you could make a million on Wall Street? This comprehensive stock market simulation gives computerists the chance to find out — and without risking the bank account. Investors buy and sell stocks and warrants, trying to gauge the turns of the economy.

ELECTRONIC WARGAME OF THE YEAR

T.A.C.

(Avalon Hill Game Co./Most systems)

The clash of armies gets most of the ink in history books, but the interplay between small units offers at least as much scope for tactics and strategy. High-resolution graphics greatly enliven an enjoyable group of scenarios.

ELECTRONIC EDUCATIONAL GAME OF THE YEAR

AGENT USA

(Scholastic/Atari)

Here's painless — in fact, a highly enjoyable way — to learn more about the geography of the United States. Players race back and forth across the country, trying to thwart an alien invasion (and learning the state capitals in the process).

STAND-ALONE GAMES DIVISION

STAND-ALONE GAME OF THE YEAR

ZAXXON

(Coleco)

Many predicted that the renowned scrolling shoot-out would never appear in table top format, but Coleco proved the cynics wrong with this sturdy and colorful unit.

MINI-ARCADE GAME OF THE YEAR

MINER 2049er

(Tiger Electronics)

Last year, *Miner 2049er* won gaming's highest honor, the Electronic Game of the Year Arkie. This pint-sized device puts much of the original's charm in the palm of your hand.

COIN-OP GAME DIVISION

COIN-OP GAME OF THE YEAR

STAR WARS

(Atari)

Winning Arkies in two different divisions in the same year proves that this multi-screen blastathon is a hit wherever players encounter it. The color vector graphics give the machine a distinctive and arresting look.

MOST INNOVATIVE COIN-OP GAME

PUNCH-OUT

(Nintendo)

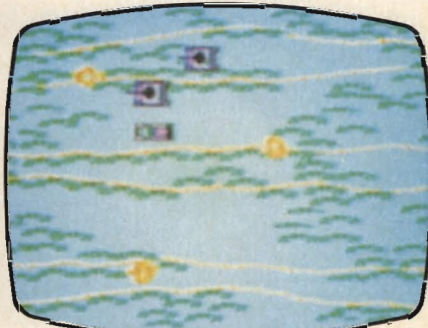
This exciting boxing simulation earned its Arkie by introducing a fresh new perspective. Instead of watching the boxers from ringside, the arcader actually becomes one of the fighters and squares off against a foe, toe-to-toe.

BEST COIN-OP AUDIO-VISUAL EFFECTS

TX-1

(Atari)

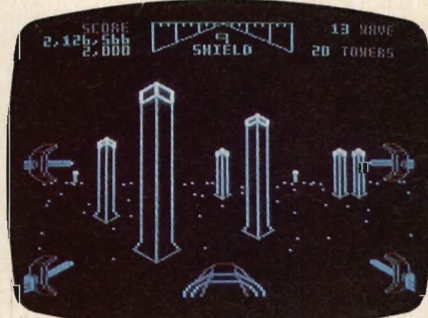
This superb racing contest goes even beyond Atari's own *Pole Position* and *Pole Position II*. It lets the gamer race over a selection of courses and uses multiple monitors to present the motor sports action.



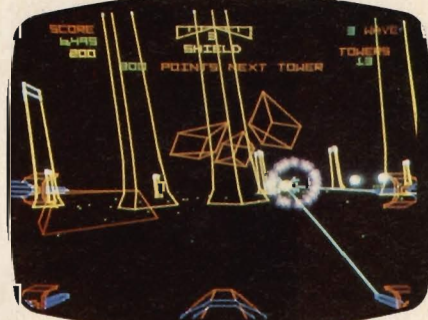
T.A.C. (AVALON HILL)



PUNCH-OUT (NINTENDO)



STAR WARS (PARKER BROTHERS)



STAR WARS (ATARI)

1985 ARKIE AWARDS

MORE PRIZE-WINNING ELECTRONIC GAMES

Only 27 games, out of the hundreds upon hundreds released each year, can hope to take home an Electronic Games Design Award. Yet many of

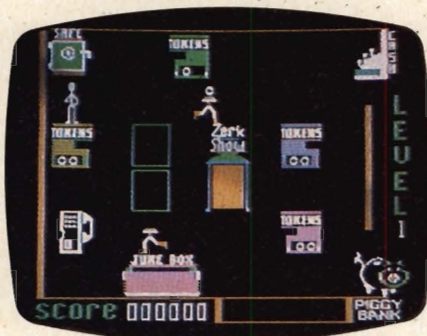
the runners-up are easily good enough to have won a statuette in another year. That's why the EGDA Judging Committee annually salutes

the upper crust of gameware by awarding Certificates of Merit.

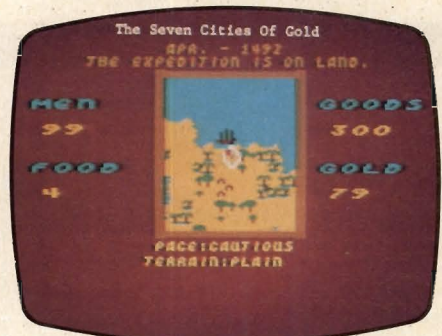
The following games, grouped by division, have won certificates:



FLIP & FLOP (FIRST STAR)



SPARE CHANGE (BRODERBUND)



SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

1985 Electronic Games Design Awards Certificates of Merit

COMPUTER SOFTWARE DIVISION

Aerobics (Spinnaker)
 Amazon (Trillium)
 Bannercatch (Scholastic)
 Beyond Castle Wolfenstein (Muse Software)
 Bruce Lee (DataSoft)
 Campaign '84 (Sunrise Software)
 Carrier Force (Strategic Simulations)
 Dragonriders of Pern (Epyx)
 Drol (Broderbund)
 Enchanter (Infocom)
 Flip & Flop (First Star)
 Fortress of the Witch King (The Avalon Hill Game Co.)
 In the Chips (Creative Software)
 Infidel (Infocom)
 M-ss-ng L-nks (Sunburst)
 MIG Alley Ace (MicroProse)
 Murder by the Dozen (CBS Software)
 Oil's Well (Sierra)
 Operation Whirlwind (Broderbund)
 Parthian Kings (The Avalon Hill Game Co.)

Pharaoh's Pyramid (Master Control)
 Pole Position (Atari)
 Rally Speedway (Adventure International)
 RDF 1985 (Strategic Simulations)
 Run for the Money (Scarborough)
 Seven Cities of Gold (Electronic Arts)
 Spare Change (Broderbund)
 Star League Baseball (Gamestar)
 The Heist (MicroLab)
 The Spy Strikes Back (Penguin)
 Time Bound (CBS Software)
 Windows to the Galaxy (Commodore)
 Wizardry III: Legacy of Llylgamyn (Sir-Tech)
 Zaxxon (Synapse)
 Zeppelin (Synapse)

H.E.R.O. (Activision)
 Montezuma's Revenge (Parker Brothers)
 Pitstop (Epyx)
 RealSports Baseball (Atari)
 Rescue on Fractalus (Atari)
 Robot Tank (Activision)
 Robotron (Atari)

STAND-ALONE GAMES DIVISION

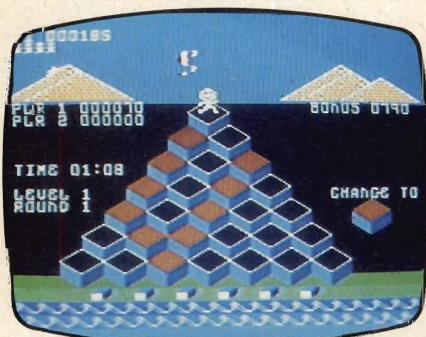
Donkey Kong II (Nintendo)
 Mario Bros. Cement Factory (Nintendo)
 Reversi Master (VZ Tech)

VIDEOGAME DIVISION

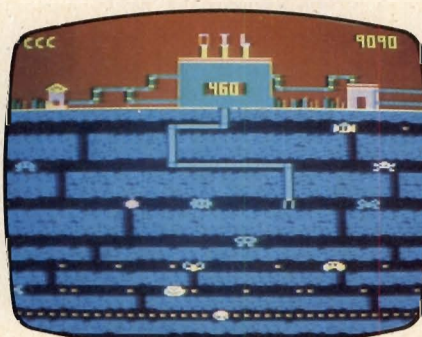
Ballblazer (Atari)
 Baseball (Coleco)
 Battlezone (Atari)
 Bump 'n Jump (Sega)
 Dragonfire (Imagic)
 Frogger II (Parker Brothers)

COIN-OP GAMES DIVISION

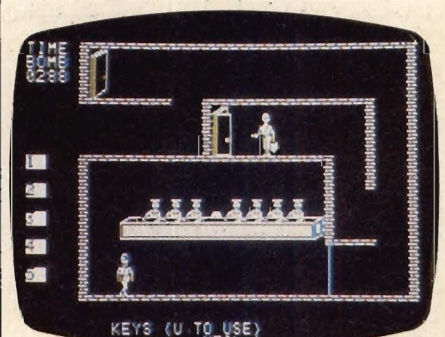
Crossbow (Exidy)
 Crystal Castles (Atari)
 Elevator Action (Taito)
 M.A.C.H. 3 (Mylstar)
 Tag Team Wrestling (Data East)
 Track and Field (Konami)



PHARAOH'S PYRAMID (MASTER CONTROL)



OIL'S WELL (SIERRA)

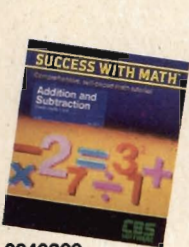
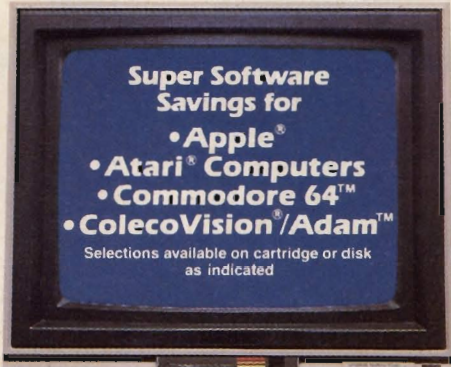


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8111092
ColecoVision/Adam, C-64, Atari H.C.: *cart*; Apple: *disk*.



8172052
C-64, Atari H.C.: *disk and cart*; Apple: *disk*.



8122062
ColecoVision/Adam, Atari H.C.: *cart*; C-64: *disk and cart*.



8100022
C-64, Atari H.C.: *disk and cart*; Apple: *disk*.



8159022
ColecoVision/Adam: *cart*.



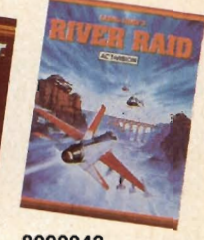
8123052
C-64, Atari H.C. and Apple: *disk*.



8216032
C-64, Atari H.C. and Apple: *disk*.



8101012
C-64, Atari H.C.: *disk and cart*; Apple: *disk*.



8090042
ColecoVision/Adam, Atari H.C.: *cart*; C-64: *disk and cart*.



8120082
ColecoVision/Adam: *cart*.



8124042
ColecoVision/Adam: *cart*.



8150012
C-64, Atari H.C. and Apple: *disk*.



8149052
ColecoVision/Adam: *cart*.



8102002
C-64, Atari H.C. and Apple: *disk*.



8215042
C-64, Atari H.C.: *disk*.



8103092
C-64, Atari H.C.: *cart*.

8229082
C-64, Atari H.C. and Apple: *disk*.

Here's a great selection of sensational software for every member of the family—at super savings! You've seen these software selections in stores anywhere from \$19.95 and up—yet, now, you can have any two for the fantastic low price of only \$4.95 each, plus shipping and handling! That's our way of introducing you to the Columbia Software Club—a brand-new service that delivers the best software for Atari® Home Computers, Apple®, Commodore 64™, Adam™ and ColecoVision® systems...right to your home, and at great savings!

How the Club works: about every 6 weeks (up to 9 times a year) you will receive the Columbia Software Club Magazine. In it you'll find out about an exciting variety of the newest software available: simple shoot-em-up adventures, more challenging strategy software, learning software to help the entire family acquire new skills—how to type, master basic math, budget your finances, and much more.

In addition, each issue of the magazine announces the "Pick-Hit Selection"—an outstanding software selection specifically for your system. If you want only this Selection, you need do nothing—it will be sent to you automatically. If you want one of the alternate selections—or

nothing at all—just tell us so on the response card always provided, and mail it by the date indicated. You'll always have ten days to make your decision. If you ever receive a selection without having had ten days to decide, you may return it at our expense.

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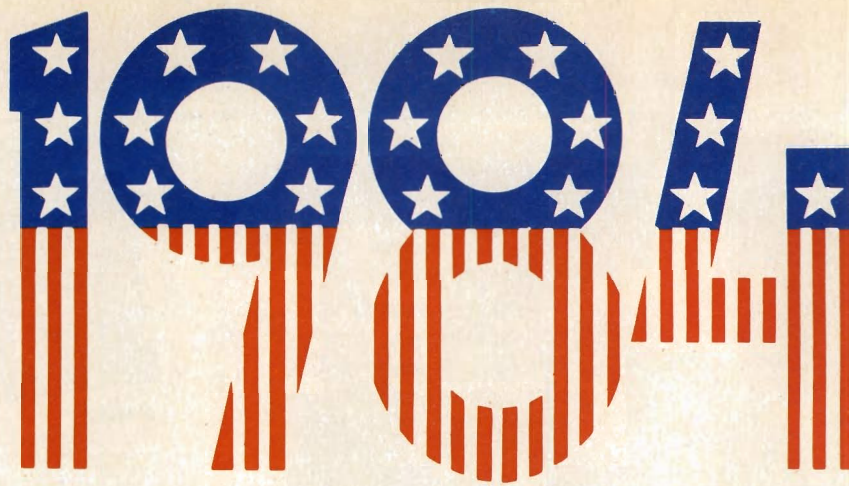
City/State _____ Zip _____

Do you have a telephone? (check one) Yes No

Parent's Signature _____ if under 18 _____

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The Year That Shook Electronic Gaming

The Videogame Shake-out of 1983 put some misguided manufacturers out of their corporate misery, but it hardly cured all — or even most — of electronic gaming's problems. If the survivors expected to live happily (and profitably) ever after once the storm of Chapter 11 filings passed, the events of the last 12 months demonstrate that such carefree endings only happen in fairy tales.

Electronic gaming as a whole grew rapidly last year, but that prosperity wasn't evenly spread throughout the industry. The rapidly changing and hotly competitive marketplace took its toll in 1984. Numerous companies either sharply curtailed their activities or fled the field entirely. The timely infusion of venture capital saved more than one doom-bound outfit, while others like Trapeze Software faltered before introducing even one title to the gaming public.

The most important happening of 1984 was that computers replaced videogames as the cutting edge of electronic entertainment. Aggressive marketing, cheap hardware and sophisticated software have moved computers out of the hacker/techie ghetto into the era of mass-market acceptance. So, while 1984 sales of videogame hardware and software slid alarmingly from previous record levels, millions of Americans took the plunge and bought their first computer.

How far did computers come last year? As of January 1, 1985, micros had found a place in 15% of the country's households. That's about the same degree of penetration videogames had achieved by the first

By ARNIE KATZ

day of 1983. The prediction that more than half of all American homes will have a computer by the end of this decade is looking more and more realistic.

Computer software sales rose just as dramatically. As recently as 1983, publishers considered a game that sold 50,000 copies a major hit. These days, each title is offered for a whole range of systems, and software houses are hoping to sell more than 150,000 copies of their major releases. At this rate, look for the first Platinum Disk (one million copies sold) before the end of 1986.



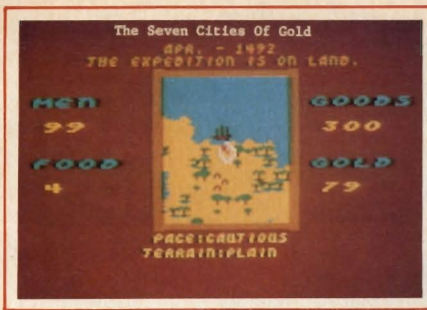
STAR WARS (PARKER BROS.)

Jack Tramiel's take-over of Atari — definitely the year's biggest headline — symbolizes the changes which are hitting electronic gaming. Once the home gaming champ, Atari saw its commanding position erode during 1984 as dedicated consoles and cartridges lost favor. Atari had hoped its 5200 would bridge the chasm between videogames and computers, but the switch happened a lot faster than anyone predicted. The price differential between the two types of systems evaporated, so most consumers have had no trouble making the leap directly to a micro without an intermediate step.

Similarly, Atari's software publishing was geared to the production of coin-op translations and original action games along the same lines. Shoot-'em-ups and the like are still big, but computers have made other genres, such as adventure and strategy contests, much more popular than was formerly the case.

The specifics of Atari's 1985 strategy are yet to be revealed as EG goes to press with this issue, but you can count on the company stressing computers rather than videogames. And it's worth noting that Atari's new boss amassed the loot to buy the Sunnysvale, Ca., company by doing a bang-up job of selling micros to the masses.

The Commodore 64, though available in second-half 1983, came into its own last year. Many software houses started doing primary design work on the C-64 instead of just translating programs from other systems, and this greatly improved the quality of games and entertainments available to own-



SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

ers of Commodore's low-priced powerhouse. The C-64 became the first micro to sell in quantities comparable to the videogame consoles in 1984 — and 1985 shapes up as a strong year, too.

The 48K standard for commercial game software programs finally gave way in late 1984 after holding at that level for nearly two years. Thanks to the C-64, Atari 800 XL and Apple IIe, 64K has now virtually replaced 48K as the typical program size.

Actually, memory size has only paused at the 64K plateau en route to a new 128K standard. The Apple IIc and IBM PCjr, both of which premiered in 1984, can handle the 128K titles, and games like *King's Quest* (Sierra) show the benefits of this larger design "canvas".

One on One (Electronic Arts/Apple, Atari, C-64) was the most significant computer game introduced last year. No other disk proved as influential as this statistically based action-strategy contest. It made superb use of machine intelligence and ushered in a new vogue for two-player programs. And its blend of sports strategy and

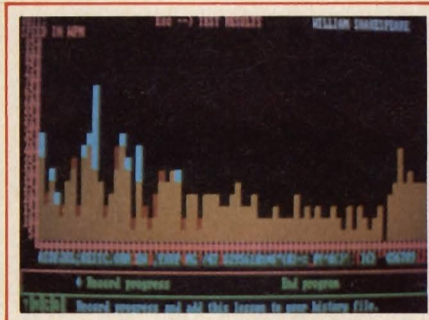
joystick pacing made a statement about how computer entertainment software was moving beyond the videogame's limitations.

Inter-computer software compatibility remained a dream, but publishers devoted considerable effort to getting each of their major designs into as many formats as possible. Even Atari and Commodore, which previously made software only for their own computers, began producing editions of top titles like *Centipede*, *Dig Dug* and *Jack Attack* for other systems.

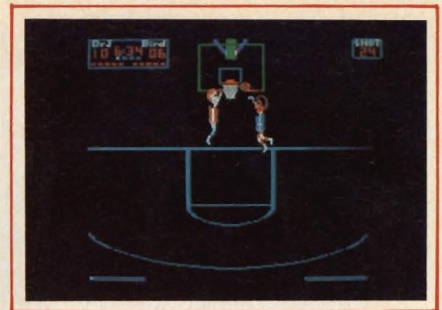
The year 1984 will also go down in gaming history as the one in which designers got the stars out of their



KING'S QUEST (SIERRA)




TYPING TUTOR II (S&S)



ONE ON ONE (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

eyes. Science fiction games didn't completely disappear — *Rescue on Fractalus* (Atari) and *Star Wars* (Parker Brothers) are obvious exceptions to the trend — but many designers found their game concepts elsewhere. Greater memory size makes it possible to game out situations as complex as exploring the Americas in the time of Columbus (*Seven Cities of Gold*/Electronic Arts) or leading a rock band to super-stardom (*It's Only Rock 'n' Roll*/K-tel).

Educational games and computer entertainment burst into prominence last year. Programs which use games to teach everything from typing (*MasterType*, *Typing Tutor*) to U.S. history (*Timebound*, *USAventure*) reached market during 1984. Video colorforms-type programs dominated the computer entertainment field, though there were also plenty of music and art programs. The public has shown interest in both categories, but it's too early to make predictions.

One thing we *do* know, however, is that computers have now turned the corner in the United States to become a mass market item. 



The Commodore 64.

TOPS 'N' FLOPS

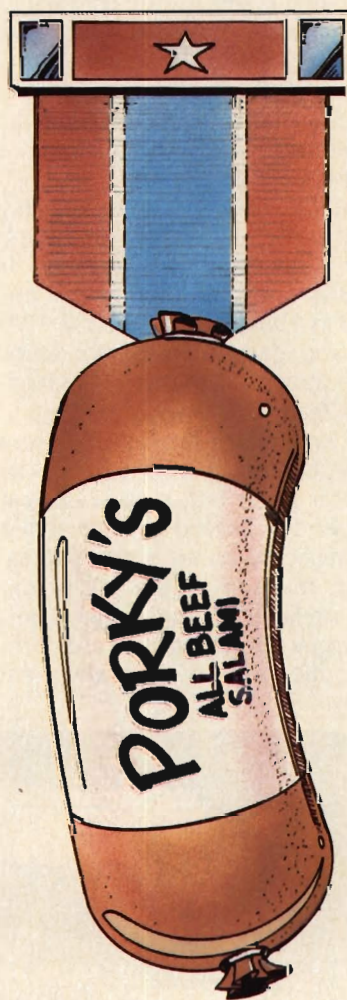
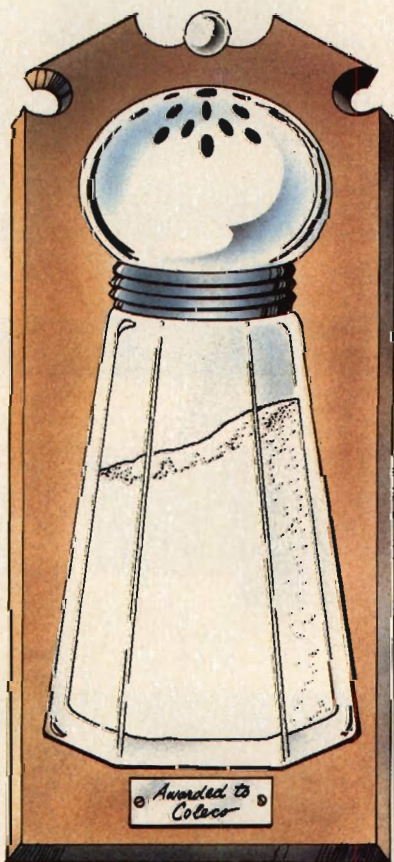


The Dale Carnegie Cup

To former Atari President J.J. Morgan, who sent personal letters to many industry and media figures explaining why he wasn't going to be able to attend the summer Consumer Electronics Show. The gesture might've been more appreciated if these warm, personal communications weren't obvious photocopies. Maybe if he'd generated multiple copies by using an Atari 800XL and printer. . . .

The Take-It-with-a-Shaker-of-Salt Plaque

To Coleco, which responded to criticism about non-delivery of promised Adam hardware and software by announcing a couple of hundred additional new products.



The Not-Quite-Kosher Medallion

To Fox Video Games, which turned a sophomoric teen movie into a dull non-action game called *Porky's*. But look on the bright side, Fox's videogame fold-up probably saved us from *Porky's II*.

of 1984

EG Salutes Gaming's Winners and Losers

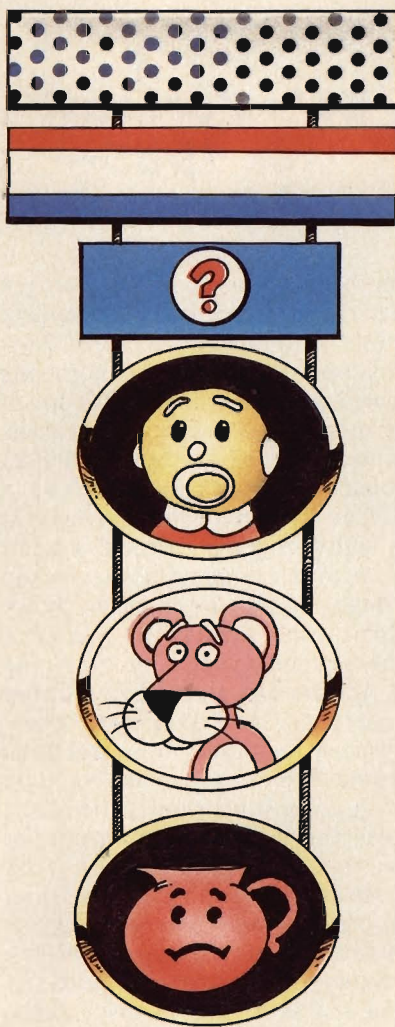
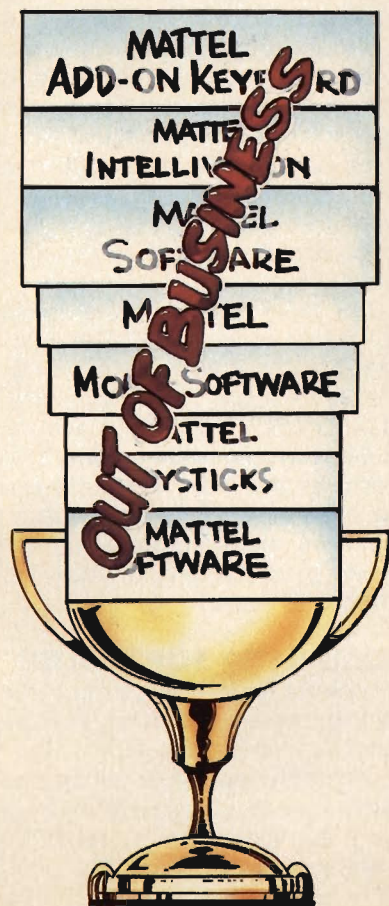
This month, two all-time great electronic games entered the Hall of Fame. We also call the roll of 1985 Arkie winners in this issue.

These awards, however, are something just a little different. When our editors reviewed the electronic gaming events of 1984, we spotted some achievements which positively screamed for recognition.

So with tongues planted firmly in our cheeks, we present our selections:

The All-Good-Things-Come-to-He-Who-Waits Trophy

To Mattel, which finally released the add-on keyboard for the Intellivision, ending a three-year wait. The company immediately celebrated the debut of this long-anticipated artifact by getting completely out of the electronics business.

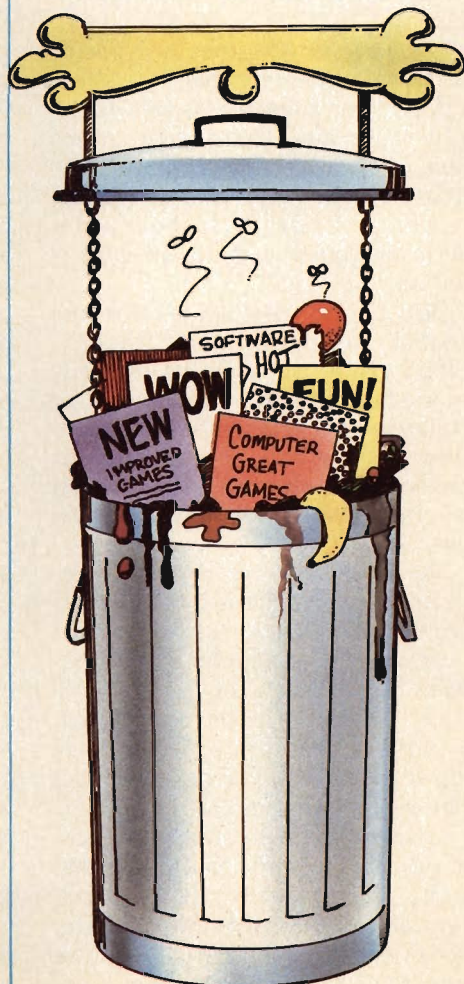


The Whatever-Happened-to? Medal

To Mr. Bill, the Pink Panther and Mr. Kool-Aid, all of whom were set to star in their own videogames before the Big Shake-out did its deadly work.

The It's-Better-to-Be-a-Has-Been-Than-a-Never-Was Award

To all the software publishers who roared into the field like lions — and then slunk off into the night without producing a single title.



What's Next For Electronic Gaming?

By ARNIE KATZ

Here's EG's Forecast for 1985— and Beyond!

amers began to get bored with programmable videogame systems sometime in 1983. It was no coincidence that 1984 computer sales approached videogame volume for the first time. And if our crystal ball hasn't developed a warp, 1985 could be the year that leisure software fully reflects the upheavals in the hardware field.

This may be the Computer Age, but games haven't really changed much since the heyday of cartridges. Many computer games published in the last two years are little more than souped-up refinements of the type of action contests which once thrilled owners of the 2600, *Odyssey*², *Astrocade* and *Intellivision*.

Of course, mind games have been a computer software staple since Wozniak soldered together his first Apple. Adventure and strategy programs have grown steadily in popularity. What *has* changed is that it's getting harder and harder to bowl over electronic gamers with the latest blast-em'-up.

Don't hold any wakes for the joystick-and-button titles, though. Action games still show up regularly on the best seller list and account for the largest single segment of software sales. But the majority of computer gamers are clearly more anxious to test their mental, rather than physical, abilities.

The lure of more diverse play-experiences and the inescapable fact that computer users, being somewhat older, usually lack lightning quick reflexes helped foster the rise of "think tank" software. The main spur, though, is that computerists have higher expectations about new titles than videogamers did.

Knowing that computers are technologically superior to videogames, many software consumers understandably feel that computer games should display a comparable superiority. This is no small point. Con-

sider the reception *Space Invaders* got when Taito stormed the amusement centers with it back in 1978. Now think how you'd react if someone showed you *Space Invaders* as one of this month's new computer games. Plainly, yesterday's state-of-the-art has become today's big yawn.

Action computer games, as much as any software genre, mirror this major change in consumer taste. Dressing up an engaging play-mechanic in showy graphics isn't enough to guarantee home market success any more. The big action hits like *Lode Runner* (Broderbund/Most computers) down-play manic joysticking in favor of quick thinking. Even an action ace won't do well in *Lode Runner* unless he or she solves the program's mini-puzzles with some creative thinking.

Even as action games get more cerebral, brain games—adventures, sports simulations and strategy contests, primarily—are becoming more detailed and satisfying. In many cases, programmers "borrow" action game elements for use in brain-busters. Action-strategy and action-adventure are relatively new game categories which are showing enormous sales growth at the present time. Their dominance can only become more marked in the year ahead.

What about the other areas of electronic gaming? Since the crystal ball is already warmed up and running,

let's look at what we can expect in 1985 and beyond...

COMPUTER HARDWARE

If you've been wondering where the new computers are, rest easy. This is shaping up as a big year for hardware. Atari and Commodore are on a collision course, and their struggle for supremacy in the under-\$1,000 microcomputer market figures to make many headlines in 1985. Both manufacturers will have new machines, though litigation surrounding the set of chips developed by Amiga may slow introduction of the new systems.

Apple's IIc, an overnight hit, should become even more popular in 1985 as software which capitalizes on its 128K resident memory gets through the pipeline and into the retail stores. IBM is gradually upgrading its PCjr to make it more competitive with the IIc. The enhancements correct most of the PCjr's faults, so this system could come on strong in its \$1,000 niche. The Apple Macintosh is pricey at around \$1,500, but a new color monitor could make it a legitimate choice by mid-1985.

The MSX computers are coming, but who knows when? The idea of inter-brand software compatibility is mighty attractive. The high visibility of MSX producers like Sony and Panasonic won't hurt, either. Current MSX machines aren't technologically exciting, but it's a safe bet that this group of Japanese manufacturers will offer flashier models when they finally tackle the U.S. market.

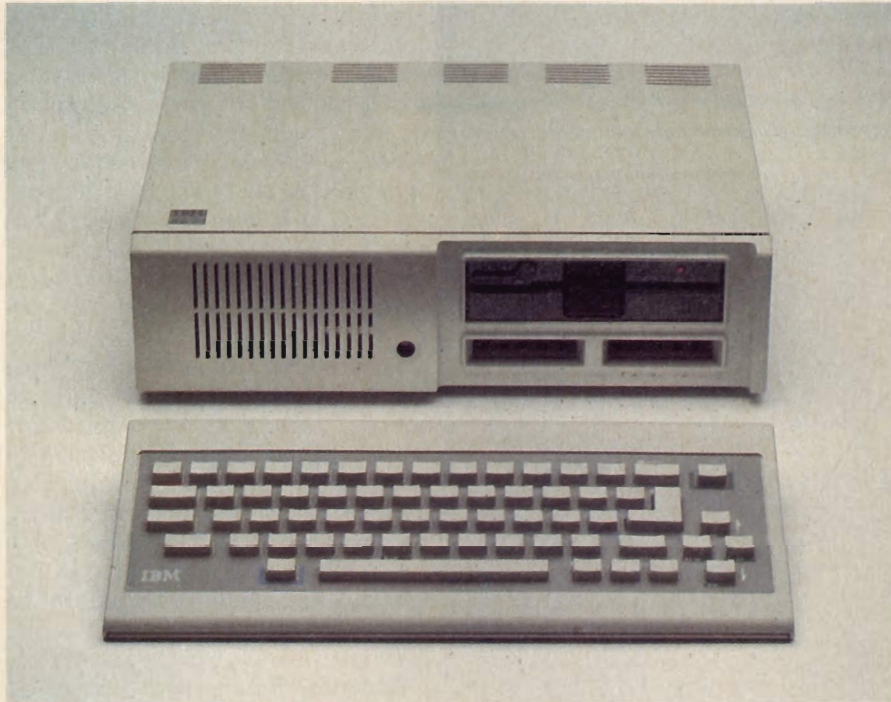
COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Look for lower prices as publishers try to boost sales by making their products more affordable. Piracy still prevents massive price cuts, but too many software houses are covetously eyeing the mass market for games to stay \$40-\$50 each.

The quality and variety of leisure



The Atari 800XL home computer.



The Apple IIc with peripherals.

software will hit new highs, but quantity could shrink. Retailers are lashing back at too many ho-hum, slow-selling programs. Most software houses will promote a smaller number of games with greater intensity to cut down on the number of duds.

The next shake-out could occur among manufacturers of educational software. Product duplication will

undo more than one company in this field before we ring in 1986.

COIN-OPS

Something's got to give in pay-for-play land eventually, but the current cycle may have to work through a little further before the coin machine business is ready to embrace the next series of radical changes. The gradual

shift away from pure shoot-'em-ups has reduced player traffic at the nation's amusement centers, yet the conventional arcade ambience is inappropriate for adventures and strategy contests. (They're too complex to learn quickly and take too long to play to allow the arcade operator to earn a profit at 25¢ or even 50¢ per play.)

The laserdisc game phenomenon is virtually ended. Gamers resist the 50¢ cost, operators complain about return-on-investment and most titles have proven less durable money-earners than was hoped. It may take a totally revamped amusement center format to provide the right showcase for the laser machines.

STAND-ALONES

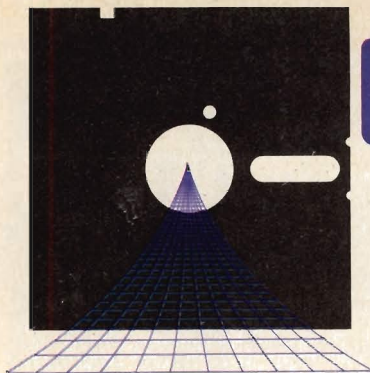
Obviously, the market for handheld, tabletop and pocket games isn't nearly as vigorous as it was in 1982 or 1983. A deluge of cut-price products has swamped the stores, blunting consumer demand for newer and more innovative designs. Don't expect to see anything like the number of mini-arcades in 1985 that came onto the market in either of the last two years.

On the other hand, there'll be more emphasis on producing fancier-looking mini-games aimed at the executive toy and gift market. That also means that the contests these machines play will probably veer away from straight-ahead action. Miniatured action-strategy and action-adventure games could gain popularity in this format.

THE SUM-UP

Obviously, many things await the gaming world in 1985 that have yet to show up on the EG crystal ball. In a fast-paced field like this one, unexpected developments are, well...expected. But electronic gamers enjoy challenges, so 1985 should emerge as an enjoyable, if somewhat hectic, year of growth and maturation for gamers.

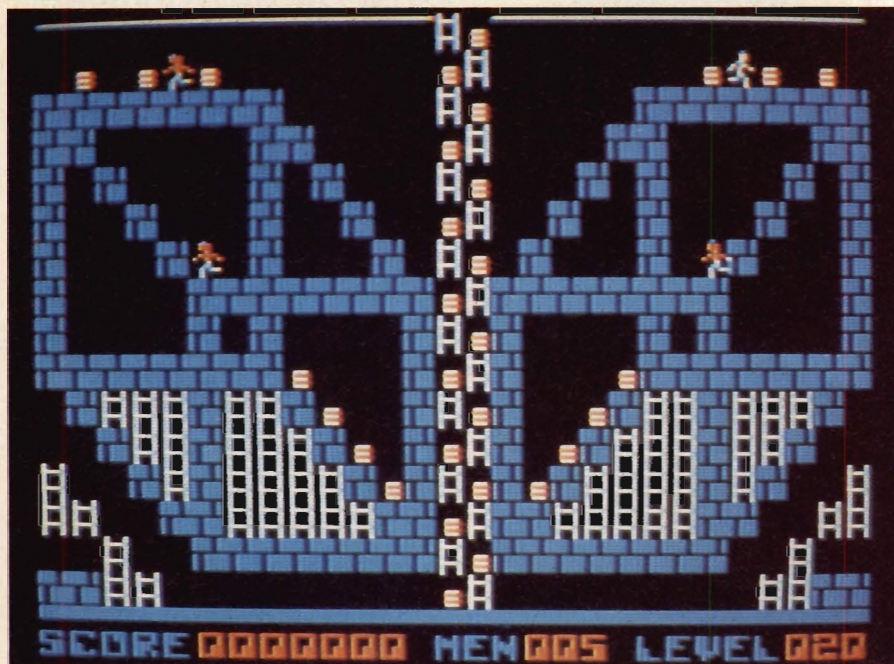




COMPUTER GAMING

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ACTION ARENA



CHAMPIONSHIP LODE RUNNER (BRODERBUND)

CHAMPIONSHIP LODE RUNNER

Designed by Doug Smith
Broderbund/Apple/48K Disk

Give those super siblings who own this publisher a gold star for truth in advertising. A big red-and-white sticker on the package says, "For **Lode Runner** Experts only!" and the disk inside more than lives up to this advance billing.

Doug Smith, who gave us last year's Computer Game of the Year, is at the controls once more, but this time he's brought a crew of 10 helpers. This *Lode Runner* braintrust has created 50 playfields in the style of the original, except that these are *much* tougher. Though the designers estimate that each one will take an average of two

weeks to solve may sound like bragging, it's probably not that far off the mark. The first, dubbed "Hello and Welcome," isn't appreciably more challenging than the hardest screens in *Lode Runner*, but from there the difficulty shoots upward.

Visuals are slightly improved. Smith and cohorts have gone to some trouble to make the completed screens look better by working secret messages into the design of the playfield. Complete a level successfully and the computer plays a little victory tune. The Apple isn't exactly the Ultimate Sound Machine, but a little music is a good segue to the next screen.

In any case, the Apple edition is obviously the definitive version of this climbing, jumping and digging game.

Lode Runner makes a genius out of whoever decided that Apple joysticks should have two action buttons instead of one. The control scheme, which lets the player dig a pit in front or behind the on-screen hero depending upon which button is pressed, lets even those with average dexterity execute some fairly complicated maneuvers.

Of course, it's the strategic element which makes **Championship Lode Runner** so special. It's not quite an action-strategy game in the same sense as **Seven Cities of Gold**, but it's a long, long way from shoot-'em-up territory. Facility with the controller is a necessity, but you'll never see the payoff after the 50th screen or get that special certificate from Broderbund unless you can think your way through these puzzles.

And now for the first superfluous summing-up of 1985: *Championship Lode Runner* is a must-buy if you enjoyed the 1984 hit.

(Arnie Katz)

BATTLE ZONE

Atarisoft/VIC-20/Cartridge

The first law of videogame adaptation has always been: "Games with vector-scan graphics don't translate well to raster scan computer systems." That doesn't mean that a manufacturer can't try. Atari has bucked convention by attempting to give this version of its arcade hit **Battle Zone** a vector-scan look. Fans of the arcade original may be surprised with the results.

This is a first-person tank combat stripped down to its bare essentials. Although the game's difficulty increases with each tank destroyed, there are no "waves," and no chance for a breather between tanks. They just keep coming, faster, smarter, more aggressive, and more prone to fire behind your back (a nasty rule that

caused a lot of controversy in arcades, but, as they say, "all's fair. . .").

The spare, vector-like graphics that accompany the action complement *Battle Zone's* no-frills nature very well. True, no one is going to be fooled into thinking that they're looking at a real vector game. Animation, for the most part, is a bit too jerky, and there are times when the laying on of elements is so thick that the screen just becomes a morass of lines. Even so, anyone familiar with the arcade game will immediately recognize the terrain, and let his or her imagination take it from there.

The VIC is not an easy machine to program graphics for. It took guts for Atari to attempt to imitate the look of the arcade *Battle Zone* on such a limited machine. The result is not a 100% success, but is good enough to merit serious consideration by fans of the original. With good graphics, and good gameplay, *Battle Zone* is a tough, no-nonsense shoot-'em-up.

(Dan Persons)

HIDEOUS BILL AND THE GI-GANTS

Designed by Steve Lee
Virgin Games/Commodore 64/Disk

The temptation to lash out at this inoffensive, even charming, three-screen maze-chase opus is powerful. However, in hopes that its datedness stems more from delays in bringing the game from Britain to the U.S. than ignorance about current state-of-the-art, we'll hold the tirades for later.

Hideous Bill adds flourishes such as character animation and jaunty music to a play-mechanic that offers little advance over *Pac-Man*. On the first screen, for example, the gamer uses the joystick or keyboard to steer Bill around a maze in which he must destroy the eggs which line the corridors while avoiding the deadly touch of the giant ants. By touching the spears dotted around the ants' nest, Bill gets temporary power to destroy ants on contact.

Hideous Bill and the Gi-Gants is essentially a videogame design "enhanced" to make it palatable to computer gamers. And that's what it is, palatable but rather bland.

(Steve Davidson)

SUPER PIPELINE

Interphase/C-64/Disk

In this action offering, the player controls a plumber whose job is to

keep water flowing from its source through a snaking network of pipeline, where it pours into a bin. Of course, union rules being what they are, the plumber can't actually *fix* the pipe, but must rely on an assistant for the dirty work.

But this is no ordinary pipeline. Vandals and bugs climb a ladder at the far right of the screen, and must be shot before they reach the top, where the vandals drop breakers onto the pipe. This stops the flow right at the break, so the plumber must lead his assistant over to it. When the assistant is finished, he must be picked up and led to the next task.

But this is no ordinary pipeline. . .

Bugs drop from the top of the screen and wander around the pipeline. Their sting is fatal, though the plumber's assistant can hammer them to death if he isn't already working on a project.

The graphics are colorful, and background music, which changes with each new screen, is excellent. But the game itself is a little too simple, especially for those with a little sharpshooting skill. Once you figure out that picking vandals off the ladder is easier than scrambling all over the pipeline trying to fix the damage, there isn't much suspense left in the game, even when the quick and deadly Superbug appears. It's a nice try that really needs a few more play elements.

(Tracie Forman)

LASER GATES/ WING WAR/ QUICK STEP

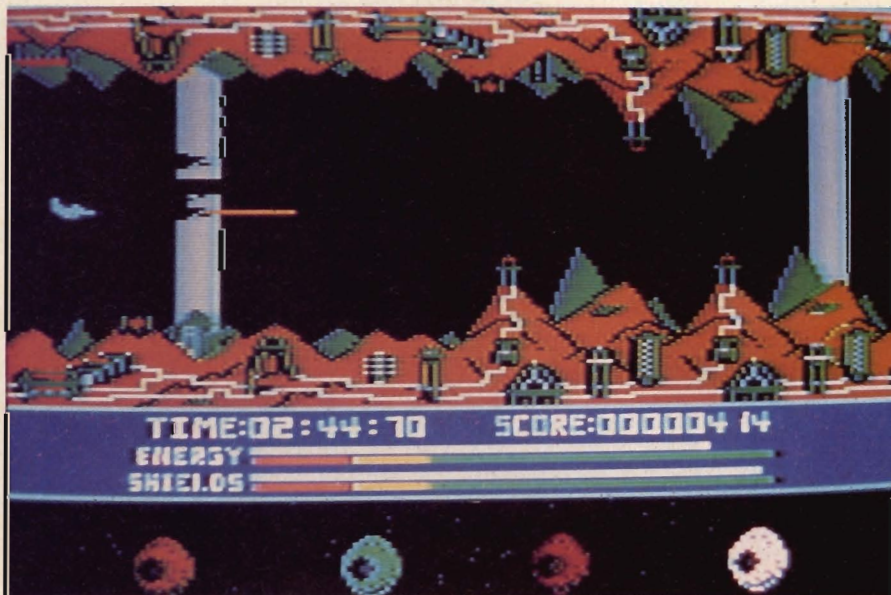
Imagic/Atari Computers/32K Disk

There's a growing trend among game publishers to put two or more older or otherwise less marketable games together in one package to make up in quantity for what might be lacking in state-of-the-art quality. This disk, a perfect example, handles several average games. This disk is for people who enjoy getting more bang for the buck even though none of these three games stand up well on its own.

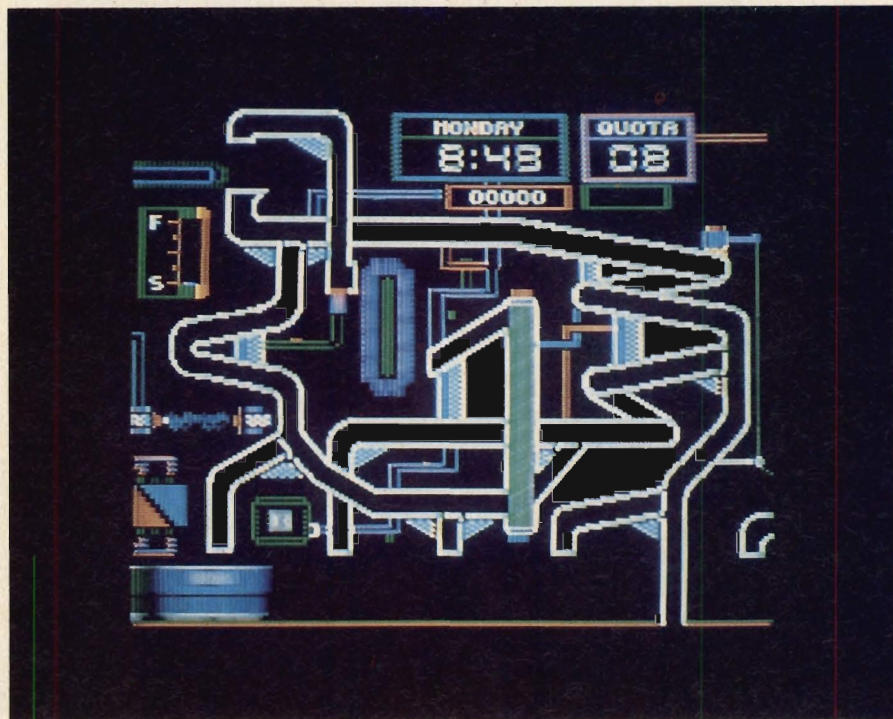
Laser Gates, like the other titles, originally premiered as a videogame. It's a pretty standard scrolling shoot-out. *Wing War*, last seen as a pretty good ColecoVision cart, lets gamers become a flying dragon, which must battle airborne enemies while picking up valuable treasures. *Quick Step's* graphics have been dressed up considerably from its 2600 version. In this unusual color-changing contest, gamers take the role of a kangaroo, which hops back and forth across various foods which scroll up the screen. A competing creature tries to turn the food its own color, while the kangaroo's job is to keep claimed territory its own hue.

Considering the range of outstanding game software still available to Atari computer owners, none of these games really stacks up to the competition. This threesome might appeal to serious game collectors and those looking for a three-for-one sale. But as far as serious play value is concerned, there's not enough here to concern average gamers.

(Tracie Forman)



LASER GATES (IMAGIC)



GUMBALL (BRODERBUND)

GUMBALL

Broderbund/C64/Disk

Life isn't always sweet at the gumball factory. Players guide gumballs through the proper gates so that they ultimately land in the bin of the corresponding color. Each day, the worker must meet a new quota by 5:00, quitting time.

The player uses the joystick to move gumball bins back and forth across the bottom of the screen. Pressing the action button causes all the on-screen gates to flip in the opposite direction, and it takes a good eye and quick reflexes to open and shut the gates for the gumballs. Pressing the joystick up speeds up the assembly line, while pulling it down slows the appearance of new candies.

The gumballs and their guiding corridors are drawn in colorful detail, and the action is absorbing. When you catch a gumball in the wrong colored bin, a supervisor comes out, shakes his fist, and dumps the entire bin over.

The intermission screens provide great incentive for doing the job right. After each successful workday, the factory worker is shown returning home. At the worker level, the house is a mere hut, while each promotion brings a successively larger, and better appointed, home.

Gumball is a difficult game to categorize. The real emphasis is on accurately timing the gate movements, though strategy plays a strong role in deciding which gates to open or shut. Since the speed is partially controlled by the player, the suspense level is relatively low. Still, those intermission screens are wonderful — and reaching them is a lot of fun.

(Tracie Forman)

BLOCKADE RUNNER

Interphase/C-64/Disk

Blockade Runner is a rarity in computer software: a game that made the transition from videogame to computer and ended up the worse for the move. The Intellivision original was a difficult, frustrating game that a two-player option made fun to play. This edition has no two-player option.

Gamers have a first-person perspective of space through the main screen of one of four freighters on the way to Earth with needed supplies. A control panel indicating fuel consumption, shield strength and the presence of mines and ice runs across the bottom of the screen. Nothing is ever easy in space, so it will come as no surprise that there are unfriendly aliens out there interfering with interplanetary trade. Just to liven things up, the aliens

have forced the convoy out of the main trade route and into a hyperactive asteroid belt. While the player is worrying about fuel levels, alien ships and mines come along to make things really interesting.

Wait! That's not all by a long shot. The ship's missiles have no effect on the asteroids hurtling towards it, but the asteroids overheat the deflector shields each time they hit the ship — which is constantly. Running into a handy formation of ice crystals — which look something like a miniature Crab Nebula and are announced by ship's sonar — will boost shields to full power, and restore limited fuel at the same time. Or given enough time, the shields will cool off by themselves. Unfortunately, time is in even shorter supply than the elusive ice. And once the shields overheat, the ship self-destructs.

Obviously only a lot of defensive maneuvering and fancy rocket-work helps here. This is where things start getting frustrating. While the ships are maneuverable, it isn't easy to see which direction they're actually headed in. The only things visible to the player are the thruster rockets to left, right and center of (and presumably under) the viewscreen. The ship moves in the opposite direction to the firing rocket. However, since the starry backdrop never changes, players must keep their eyes on the rockets rather than the viewscreen. This takes a lot of getting used to and gives the feel of being immobile in the middle of a rockslide.

No matter how adept commanders get at ducking and dodging space debris, it won't be enough when the alien hardware starts showing up. Now players at least have the chance to fight back, and missiles come into play. In the middle of the screen is a gun-sight. If the mine or alien ship is lined up in the crosshairs when a missile is fired, the missile will track down the enemy anywhere on the screen. This sounds easier than it is in practice, as it takes a lot of ship movement to get the mine in the sights. Occasionally, the sonar announces a mine ahead, when it's actually under. If it isn't found quickly the ship is destroyed by something its commander can't even see.

As any dedicated space jockey can tell, the pace can get frenetic around

COMPUTER GAMING

this point. And to top it off, the game increases in difficulty automatically as the player's skill improves. This is where the two-player mode made a difference: it allowed one player to concentrate on maneuvering and the other on firing, which simplified things a bit.

It may well be that with the reflexes of an Olympic athlete and the patience of Job, *Blockade Runner* could become a challenging and entertaining game to play. It seems an awful lot of work, though, for such an essentially small return.

(Louise Kohl)

MOONSWEeper

Atarisoft/TI 99-4a/Cartridge

Red Alert, red alert! Calling USS Moonsweeper. The moons in Star Quadrant Jupiter 2 have been invaded and its miners captured. The miners have escaped but are stranded on the moons of Jupiter. Your mission is to proceed to each moon, rescue its miners and destroy any enemies you may encounter.

As the action begins, the gamer pilots one of five moonsweeper ships in Jupiter's orbits. The ship's flight is threatened by photon torches and satellites. These obstacles must be destroyed before they track the position of the ship and demolish it. If the Moonsweeper flies over any of the orbiting moons that whiz past, the craft enters that moon's gravity field and automatically descends to the surface.

While the ship cruises on the lunar surface, miners anxiously awaiting rescue come into view. The Moonsweeper must fly over the miners in order to transport them safely to the ship. While the rescues are being attempted, enemy launcher ships circling overhead drop surface destroyers that can fire space bullets at all angles. Tall enemy towers also appear at random, and a collision with one of these is fatal.

When a moonsweeper has rescued six miners on a moon, accelerator rings appear. The player can gain speed by flying through these rings and blasting off into orbit.

The gamer has the advantage of both long-range and short-range missiles.

are long-range and can destroy all enemies. When fighting on the lunar surface, short-range missiles can be used to demolish surface destroyers and towers, while long-range missiles can be used to destroy launcher ships.

The moons appear in four different colors, indicating difficulty levels ranging from blue moons for beginners to red moons for the supreme challenge. Blue and green moons appear in all orbits, while yellow and red moons only appear in later orbits.

An instrument panel at the bottom of the screen allows the player to monitor the speed of the moonsweepers, and to see the location of the stranded miners. The control panel also displays the number of remaining moonsweepers, the amount of fuel remaining, and the score so far.

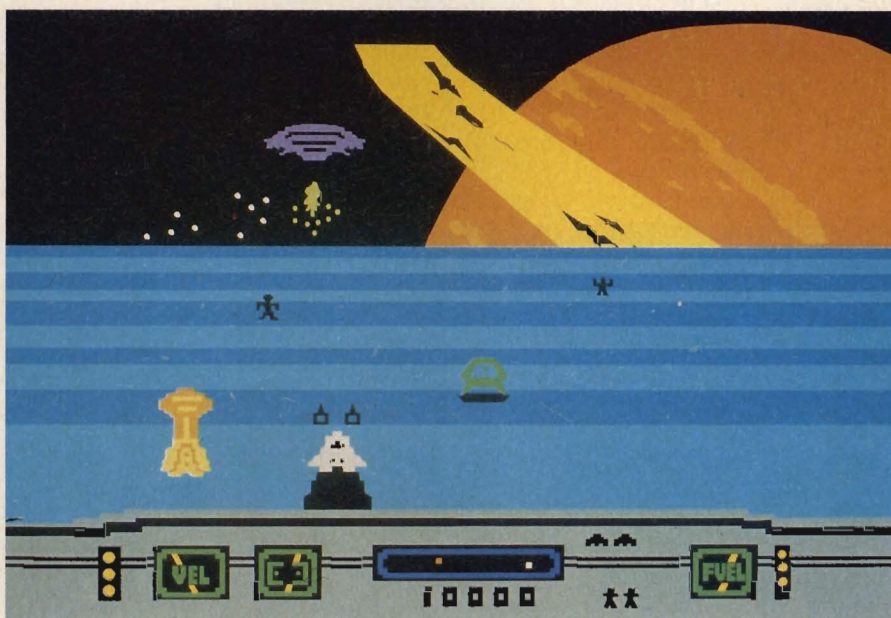
Two convenient advantages of this

WIZARD

Progressive Peripherals and Software/C-64/Disk

The first thing you need to know about *Wizard* is that it may give you a galloping case of *deja vu*—it's practically "Name that Game." However, it has a few interesting twists all its own and ends up as a pretty good example of the action/adventure genre. It's a lot of fun to play and is often challenging.

The on-screen character is, not surprisingly, a wizard who goes by the name of Wilfred and moves around like a colorful Gandalf doing a Mr. Natural imitation, especially when ducking. His job is to get the key(s) and any treasures along the way, and hightail it to a keyhole and the next of 40 screens. Keys and keyholes are not always convenient to each other,



MOONSWEeper (ATARISOFT)

program are the pause key and the redo function. The action in space or on the moons can be temporarily stopped by pressing the P key. If several ships are blown away early in the game, the redo function can be used to give frustrated players another chance.

Moonsweeper seems simple at first but develops into a fast-moving and challenging game. The graphics and sound effects are good, and *Moon-sweeper* is as much fun for observers as for players!

(Joseph Pedreiro)
(Siobhan Stevens)

naturally, and Wilfred must deal with combinations of fireballs, arrows, sword-wielding maniacs and worse. Getting around in one piece requires a judicious combination of ducking, climbing, jumping and beating a hasty retreat. When unsuccessful, Wilfred falls to his doom of a la *Jumpman Jr.*, complete with stars and bird calls.

Wilfred is not entirely at the mercy of his athletic prowess. True to his sorcerous nature, he usually has spells to help out in sticky situations, which he gets upon picking up the key. Using the spells is sometimes awkward. For

COMPUTER GAMING

example, when Wilfred is invisible, his enemies aren't the only ones who can't see him—the gamer may lose him for a while, too. Spells which require aiming are cast by pointing the joystick in the right direction and pressing the space bar. (Rosemary Woods would be good at this game.) Other spells are invoked by the space bar alone or by pressing the fire button while holding the joystick all the way back. There are also teleportation booths on many levels, but be warned: they don't always send Wilfred into healthy territory.

Keep an eye on the bottom of the screen for a running status report, including number of wizards left, points and available spells. Each level is timed and there are bonus points (up to 1200) for speed, so it doesn't always pay to go after superfluous treasures. On the other hand, some treasures affect more than just the point total and are worth discovering. You'll get another wizard for every 10,000 points and two extra for every 10 screens completed.

In many ways, *Wizard* is a typical climbing and jumping game, but it has enough extra features to give it appeal for gamers who don't generally like programs of that type. And it has very good play value. Gamers have the option of six levels of difficulty and nine speeds. There's a mystery option that

throws the screens at you at random, and if that isn't enough, you can also design your own fiendish playfields and save them to disk to amaze and frustrate fellow gamers. All in all, a game that should more than pay for itself in hours of gaming pleasure.

(Louise Kohl)

S.S. ACHILLES - RED ALERT!

Beyond Software/
Atari computers/48K Disk.

The British are coming! The British are coming, only this time through a software invasion for Atari computers with 48K RAM.

One of the better English-designed games is Beyond's *S.S. Achilles - Red Alert!* This five-level (user-selectable) game offers arcaders command of an artifact-laden starship that's been penetrated by a deadly life form similar to earthly fungi.

Computerists must find and store as many relics as possible in the shuttlecraft before using it to escape. Only defensive measures can be taken, as the alien being is indestructible.

Because contact is fatal, the joystick-controlled alter ego operates from a research droid. Since it is a mechanical device, it naturally consumes power. Run out, and it's curtains!

To avoid immobilization and subse-

quent madness, starvation, or other unpleasantness, power packs must be gathered and stored in the shuttle.

Bumping into anything lessens the droid's defense. It can be increased by finding and putting items (integrity packs) in the escape craft.

Fancy footwork in the mazes is not the only means of thwarting the blob. A sealant gun can be picked up and pressed into service, making passages more resistant—but not impervious—to the biological onslaught.

There are 72 objects in all, but luckily, four different ones can be carried simultaneously!

Besides the primary infection, fast-breeding seeds are randomly created. Spinning spores, generally more of a nuisance than a real threat, travel about attaching themselves to the android's casing—with the same detrimental effects as the fungus. Evasion or trickery are the only means of handling it.

In addition to the scrolling, maze-like corridors of the ship, an overhead view of the entire vessel is available. This is particularly useful in determining safe passageways. Be prepared, as joystick control is extremely sensitive. The corridors can be very narrow, and the fungus growth acts as if it ate a cargo hold full of Wheaties.

The title screen shows a tremendous view of the Achilles while outrageous organ-like music plays. The graphics, audio effects and colors used for gameplay are of a more standard fare.

S.S. Achilles—Red Alert! is challenging fun nonetheless. An interesting, well-executed concept, it blends a little "2001: A Space Odyssey" with a lot of "Alien."

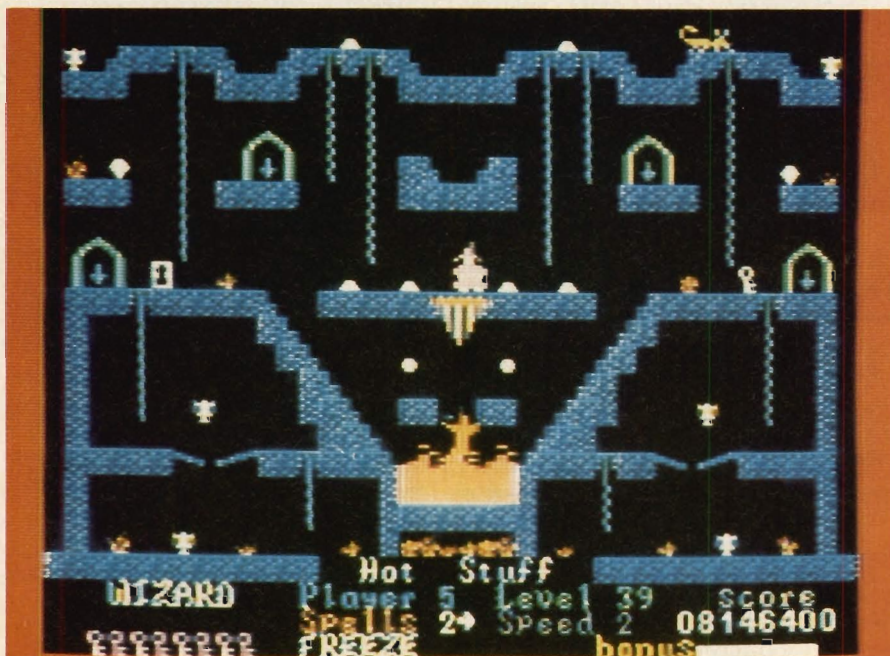
(Ted Salamone)

HAZARD RUN

Artworx/Atari computers/
24K Disk, 16K Cassette

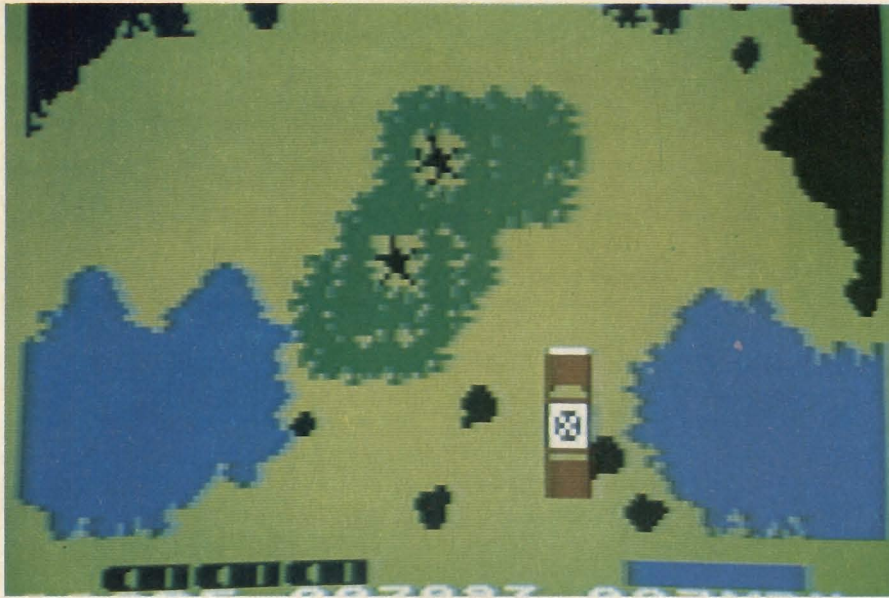
Mix liberal amounts of "The Dukes of Hazzard," the country's number one spectator sport (auto racing, natch), and the home computer phenomenon, and what have you got? A great concept for a computer game!

After all, good ole boys, fast cars, and PC's all have large followings. It stands to reason (according to my flowchart, anyway) that combining all three would be successful.



WIZARD (PROGRESSIVE PERIPHERALS)

COMPUTER GAMING



HAZARD RUN (ARTWORX)

This is where **Hazard Run** comes in. It provides gamers with the opportunity to perform joystick jumps and stunts with a video representation of the "General Lee." Though well conceived, it is poorly executed.

While escaping from the crooked sheriff, players must avoid chickens, trees, rocks, fences, and water obstacles. Not only can rampaging fowl foul up the score (-500 points), but some—and there's no way of telling which ones—wreck the freewheeling Charger.

Escape velocity must be reached for the car to jump ponds, lakes, and rivers. Otherwise it's a quick trip down, and my, the water sure is cold.

Sideswiping anything puts the auto on two wheels. While great for tight spots, it's not recommended for long-haul duty on any of the user selectable runs (five skill levels) in this one-player game. Moving the stick correctly rights the General before it flips over completely, thereby necessitating a replacement.

The controller's action button acts as a brake, while the shaft handles directional input.

Musical accompaniment consists of a few bars of "Dixie" at the game start and before a jump; sound effects are limited almost entirely to crashes and occasional police sirens.

Graphics finish in first and last place. Some (the overhead view of a car and trees) are done well, while others

(the auto's side view when jumping water) look like a sixth grader's first art project.

Even more disconcerting is the sloppy play action. After a successful jump (no matter what the speed), the car moves at close to light speed directly into oblivion. Depressing the action button (brakes) in midair remedies this most of the time.

Getting free from a hangup can be a problem. Wiggling the car off obsta-

cles near water is tricky. Many times the car is unavoidably lost when it falls back into the water cleared moments before. Since you can't drive in reverse, that shouldn't happen.

Also, it's possible to fall into the drink at 0 mph. How can the car go if it isn't even moving?!

Even a "guest appearance" by the Dukes can't save *Hazard Run* from itself. This is one race not worth entering.

(Ted Salamone)

ZETA-7

Designed by Bruce Robinson
Victory Software/C-64/Disk

This is perfect for gamers still looking for the quintessential space shoot-'em-up. **Zeta-7** isn't a faultless game, but it's still worth taking a look at while the search continues. Along with some very nice music and good graphics and gameplay, it has the virtue of a nice sense of humor.

The player has the task of protecting Zeta-Class Defense Sphere #7 (a metallic-looking sphere) from an unseen pod. The pod is heavily armed with a solar-powered positron accelerator, which appears to have an unlimited supply of ammunition. This is just as well, since all the enemy ships have high-energy plasma



ZETA 7 (VICTORY)

COMPUTER GAMING

capabilities and a lot of attack vehicles. There are some friendly, or at least neutral, satellites around, too. The enemy ships are the ones that look like a cross between the space sequence in **Zaxxon** and the Starship Enterprise.

Using the joystick, the player moves a firing-sight around the screen on what is essentially a search-and-destroy mission. The action button releases friendly fire, but it's slow—there is no rapid-fire option—which is sometimes a pity. Enemy fire appears as huge (and increasingly huger) orange fireballs. These can be stopped in their tracks with gamers' positron guns, and are much easier to hit than their ships of origin. All the enemy ships have amazing dogfight maneuvers; you kind of have to aim where they're *not*, but *might* be. Most enemy ships also seem to have the ability to clone at will, and some turn into different—and larger—ships altogether.

Across the bottom of the screen is the pod's status board. The most important thing to watch on this is the Zeta status on the far right. When Zeta status is red, overload and self-destruction are imminent.

If the pod is dilatory in protecting the quadrant, Zeta-7 explodes with some rather nice graphic effects. There is a series of minor explosions on its surface, then one huge blow-out that lights up the whole screen. The next thing in view is a dead planetoid. The computer will then inform the unsuccessful protector that the quadrant has been lost "along with 8,000,000 lives." If this isn't depressing enough, it goes on to comment that "a promotion is unlikely." If the pod goes first, there seem to be considerably fewer civilian casualties, but chances for promotion are equally dim.

Gameplay is good, once the player adjusts to the problems of aiming at dancing spaceships and to the lag time between positron shots. **Zeta-7** can be quite challenging, especially as enemy numbers increase and fireballs seem to come out of thin air.

The graphics are quite good, of their kind; the stars are colorful and actually sparkle and the fireballs are pretty awesome. The game takes in a comparatively small sector of space, so there's not vast variation in the scenery. The music accompanying the opening screen is very good—appropriately

spacey, a little ominous and almost classical in tone.

There's no great call for space games these days, so almost all of them seem to have an old-fashioned air to them. But for gamers who still

have an itch to roam around the universe and take on intergalactic villains, **Zeta-7** should be a real hit. It's almost worth having just to listen to that opening music.

(Louise Kohl)

TRANSLATIONS

STELLAR 7

Designed by Damon Slye
Penguin Software/Apple,
Commodore 64/48K Disk

This multi-screen, first-person-perspective tank combat game isn't new, but it has just been re-issued by a major publisher. Undoubtedly, this will make it much easier for gamers to track down.

The player uses joystick or keyboard to command The Raven, a super-weapon which has the power to become invisible for a limited period of time. This fighting machine must beat back an interstellar invasion by warping from planet to planet and defeating alien forces at each stopping point. The visuals are a clever imitation of vector graphics.

The only major change from the original is for the better. The documentation is much more comprehensive. Presenting the rules as a military briefing reinforces the theme, thus helping the player get in the proper mood for fast-action fighting.

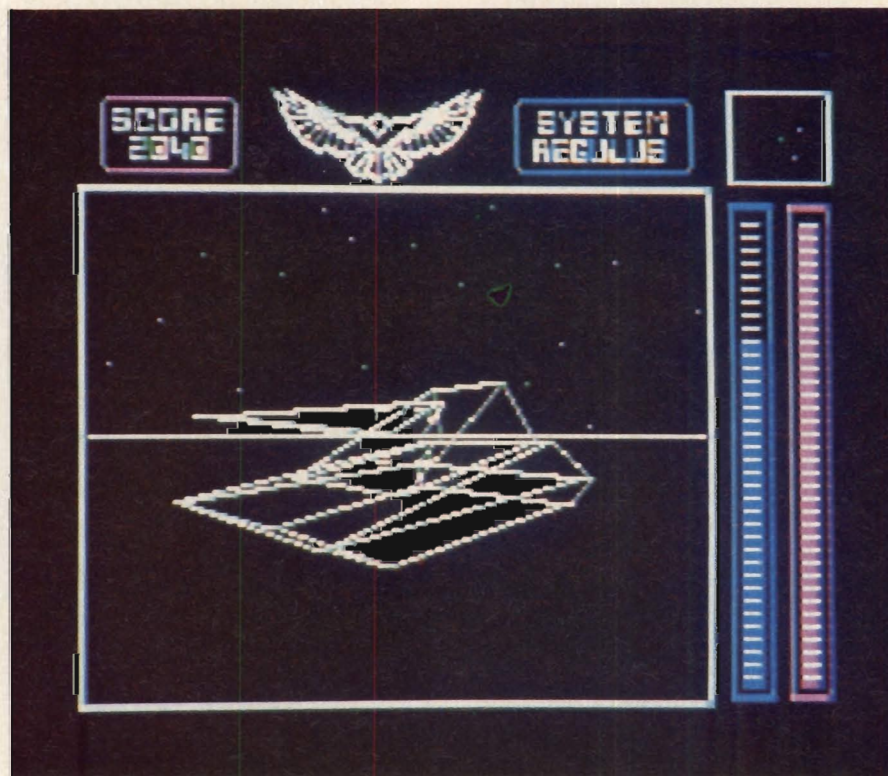
The game disk contains the Apple program on one side with the C-64 code on the reverse.

(Steve Davidson)

QUESTRON

SSI/Commodore 64/Disk

This translation of **Questron** is just as playable, pretty, and easy to learn as its Apple-compatible cousin, recently reviewed in *EG*. Veterans of the **Ultima** series will find the play-mechanic familiar, since **Questron** is built on the



COMPUTER GAMING

game system licensed from Lord British. The effect is kind of like playing non-electronic "Dungeons & Dragons" with two different Games Masters: the basic rules are the same, but the creative juices behind the games vary widely. *Questron* is definitely the easier game, though it still offers plenty of challenge.

Unlike the *Ultima* series, players can use either keyboard or joystick to maneuver their on-screen persona through the lands. The entire program is menu-driven, displaying all possible actions on the leftmost portion of the screen. This eliminates the frustration of having to figure out exactly what can be done in any given situation, saving the character's time and possibly skin as well.

The player assumes the role of a lowly serf from Geraldton, entrusted with saving the land from an evil wizard's forces. Armor, weapons, food, and transport are available in towns, and strategically placed casinos and banks offer different options for financial planning. Cathedrals house clerics capable of restoring lost hit points, so give generously for the best results. These churches also provide the opportunity to raise the character's ability points in such areas as strength, intelligence, and dexterity. . . for a hefty price, that is. And wise players will visit the Castle often, to discover the many secrets it holds (clues can be obtained by bribing prison guards to let you talk to the inmates).

All in all, *Questron* is an exceptional game, ideal for first-time players. It's much easier to learn than *Ultima*, since the player doesn't have to memorize the key-commands for different functions. Clues are also more plentiful, and the smart player writes down everything he or she hears from prisoners and wandering monks or Naga pilgrims. If you liked *Ultima*, you'll also like *Questron*.

(Tracie Forman)

FROGGER

Sierra/Macintosh/Disk

Frogger needs a joystick. That's essentially the problem with the Mac version of *Frogger* — no joystick control. A fast-action game such as this needs control flexibility, and the mouse and keyboard simply don't cut

the mustard. One isn't sturdy enough while the other is just plain inconvenient.

In the life and death struggle to get a frog safely from soft shoulder to home base, the player wants a controller that can be abused. As your anxiety level rises, you want to be able to transfer that to the controller. You can't really do that with the mouse. While it is breathtakingly efficient for correcting editorial errors in copy, it doesn't do nearly as well directing frogs.

The keyboard is tougher and therefore permits faster reflex action; however, you only get to use four keys (i,j,k and 1). This is a small area which, in the scuffle of play, can be easily

misplaced. Before you know it, you find yourself pressing "u" for all its worth and not moving anywhere. This is inconvenient and the mode of correcting your mistake — looking down — wastes precious time. However, of the two forms of control, the keyboard is better.

The graphics are very clear, with resolution as good as the coin-op game. However, they are black and white and something is lost in the absence of color. A black frog is a bit too macabre. In truth, avid game players are likely to find that this *Frogger* loses something in translation. The Mac was simply not made with this purpose in mind.

(Randi Hacker)

ARTICLES OF WAR

WAR OF THE WORLDS

Designed by Joseph A. Delinski
Task Force/Commodore 64/Disk

H.G. Wells' novel of interplanetary imperialism shocked the Victorians no less than Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre radio broadcast panicked pre-World War II Americans. We've all become a bit jaded with such notions in this Star Wars era, but the idea that inhabitants of another world could

Wargamers may find this game simple compared to other military simulations.

travel across space to lay siege to our globe can still keep impressionable readers up nights.

The situation outlined in this game is that the Martians have decided to invade Earth because their own world is, literally, choking on its dust. Unfortunately for the folk from the fourth planet, they can only get one Launcher ready in time, and it can only send a dozen Cylinders (with three mobile tri-

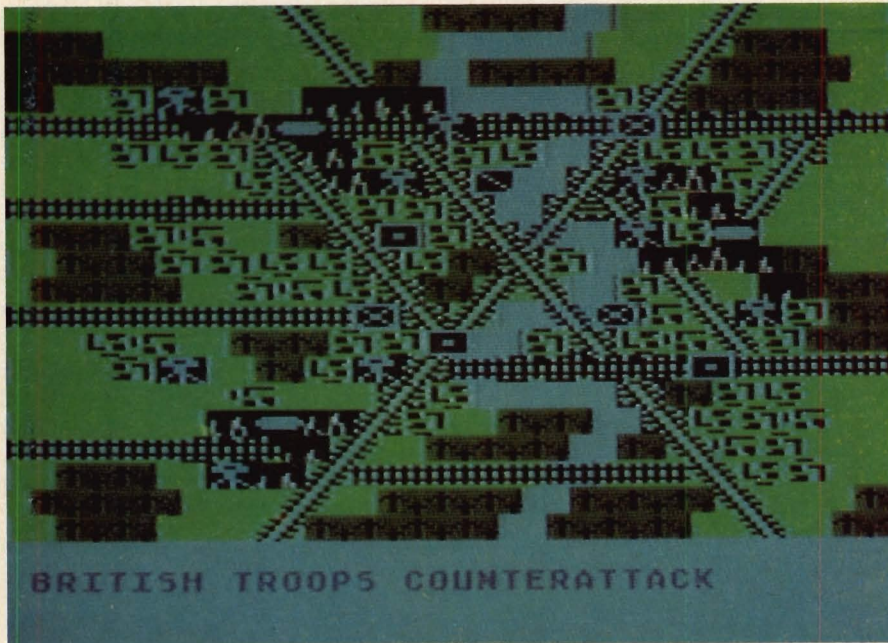
pods) to this planet. As a point of strategy, the Martians have targeted Great Britain — the leader of Western Civilization at the time the novel appeared — as the invasion site.

The player in this solo wargame commands the British defenders — consisting of infantry, cavalry and artillery — against the Martian forces, which can land one cylinder per turn in the London area. Once a cylinder touches down safely, it disgorges the deadly tripods. These tanklike weapons fan out through the area, destroying the city block by block as they go.

The armchair general must try to destroy the landing craft before the tripods get moving; or if this proves impossible, organize a delaying defense which preserves as much of the city as possible. Performance is rated by the computer at the end of the game, based on the number of city spaces still intact.

Wargamers may find **War of the Worlds** somewhat simple compared to a full-blooded military simulation. Although there are several types of terrain and three varieties of human troops, the designer has opted to minimize these factors. Terrain has only two noticeable effects: artillery units move at half speed through woods and parks, and all human units

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WAR OF THE WORLDS (TASK FORCE)

travel much faster on railroads than they do overland.

Units are differentiated in only one respect. Prior to the start of the game, the computer randomly determines which type is the most powerful, middling and weakest. It generally takes several engagements to figure out which sort of troops will be most effective this time.

Combat is fairly abstract. Martians and humans attack by moving onto an occupied space. Attacks are resolved as they occur during the course of movement, so more than one human force can attack the same cylinder or tripod in the same turn. Each engagement, however, is treated separately, so you can't use three units in an encircling assault on one foe. Artillery units cannot execute ranged fire, which seems to remove the reason for having field guns present in the first place.

The keyboard control system is simple and works beautifully. When a unit flashes on the mapscreen, the player can elect to move it by pressing "F7". A keyboard rosette allows movement in any of six directions. The computerist can move to the next unit by hitting F5. Pressing F3 before inputting the move command ends the human player's turn.

The tension in *War of the Worlds* comes from the fact that the defender's units are much weaker than the

Martians. Particularly at higher skill levels, the cylinders and tripods are bound to make headway in one or more sectors. The digital commander must learn to delay the tripods' advance while saving enough powerful units for periodic counterattacks.

The programming isn't quite up to the concept in places. The wait between turns seems unusually long, and the terrain symbols are neither attractive nor eye-catching. It also seems like too much of a shortcut to use wargame-type symbols for the human troops even though there is little noticeable difference between artillery and infantry. The simple combat system cries out for a more imaginative visual treatment. This is the first game EG has reviewed by this publisher, best-known for its non-electronic science fiction strategy games. Task Force Games is miles ahead of most competitors when it comes to concept, but the publisher will have to develop a better feel for the added dimension which the computer brings to strategy games. Still, *War of the Worlds* is a promising beginning.

The flaws notwithstanding, *War of the Worlds* is a quick-playing strategy game that should appeal even to those gamers who normally don't enjoy military simulations. The situation is unusual, and seven skill settings let the game's challenge increase as the computerist's skill grows.

(Arnie Katz)

PASSPORT TO ADVENTURE

GOTHMOG'S LAIR

Progressive Peripherals &
Software/Commodore 64/Disk

Its manufacturer bills *Gothmog's Lair* as the first installment in its Pro-Adventure series for the Commodore 64. It features audio effects, colorful animated visuals, and real time play action. The program understands commands up to nine words long, though abbreviations are accepted. Adventure buffs searching for something different, take note!

Success depends on ingenuity, deftness, and determination, not on playing word games. A list of recognized words, including their uses and consequences is enclosed. So are gaming tips, a fold-out map, and a dossier on the enemies lurking this universe.

Games in progress can be saved to disk. This is a necessity due to the size and complexity of *Gothmog*. The score in this one-player, two-level (novice and veteran) game is based entirely on treasure values. No points are awarded for slaying monsters!

While trying to find the infamous Baron Ahriman's rarities and to clear your good name by returning them to the sheriff of Raster City, many puzzles have to be solved, objects uncovered and used, and creatures battled. When stuck for a solution, pressing F1 calls up Sam, a shoulder-straddling, advice-offering gnome. He's right most of the time.

Beware of the thief and cutthroat above all else! They wander about freely, causing trouble, taking trea-

COMPUTER GAMING

tures and ambushing unsuspecting adventurers. Caution and quick wits are needed to survive, even at the so-called novice level.

Though not the most polished work of its type, *Gothmog's Lair* is unique enough to provide many hours of thought-provoking challenge and entertainment.

(Ted Salamone)

EXPEDITION AMAZON

Penguin/Apple II/48K Disk

On first inspection, **Expedition Amazon** seems to be a fairly run-of-the-mill adventure game. There is a hungry-looking vulture perched on one of the title's letters. A couple of deadly snakes and a threatening spider menace the four canoe-bound members of the expedition.

A closer inspection reveals a sense of humor: piranhas at the bottom of the river with a table cloth and a picnic basket, a hippopotamus with a bib, an alligator with hand drill and an electric eel with an electric saw plugged into his body.

The scenario starts in 1981 when Thomas Tarsand has oil discovered on his armadillo ranch, making him an instant millionaire. As a tax dodge, Tarsand founds Flint University, which has a one-man archaeology department with professor Jonathon Arrowhead. Arrowhead's only goal is to find the fabled lost city of Ka.

It is now your goal also, as the field assistant, to hire a medic, a radio operator and a guard. Then the whole crew must fly to Iquitos to purchase needed equipment at the trading post and then ride the side-wheel paddle boat up the Amazon to base camp.

Your first job is to map each of 10 sectors of the jungle, covering enough of each to make the sector's outline a permanent part of your portfolio. There are treasures along the way, but it's necessary to go back to Iquitos to sell them and buy more supplies.

After the team members have grown strong enough, the group can

begin to explore the tunnels beneath the pyramid. A hidden tunnel maze is supposed to lead to the lost city, depending on how crazy we think the professor to be.

Expedition Amazon has nine difficulty levels and some stunning graphics. The game can be saved during play and the expedition can be reviewed at any time to show a "find value" of the accumulated treasure. An ER factor tells how well everything is going in general. Good luck and don't let the Indian with the suction cup arrows shoot you. It's too embarrassing.

(Rick Teverbaugh)

THINK TANK

ARCHON II: THE ADEPT

Designed by Free Fall Associates
Electronic Arts/Atari, C-64/32K Disk

The team behind **Archon** (Arkie winner, Most Innovative Computer Game of 1984) and **Murder on the Zinderneuf** (nominated for a 1985 Arkie, Best Electronic Strategy Game) adds another feather to its cap with **Archon II: The Adept**. This sword-and-sorcery strategy contest features the most popular elements from *Archon*, including the struggle for possession

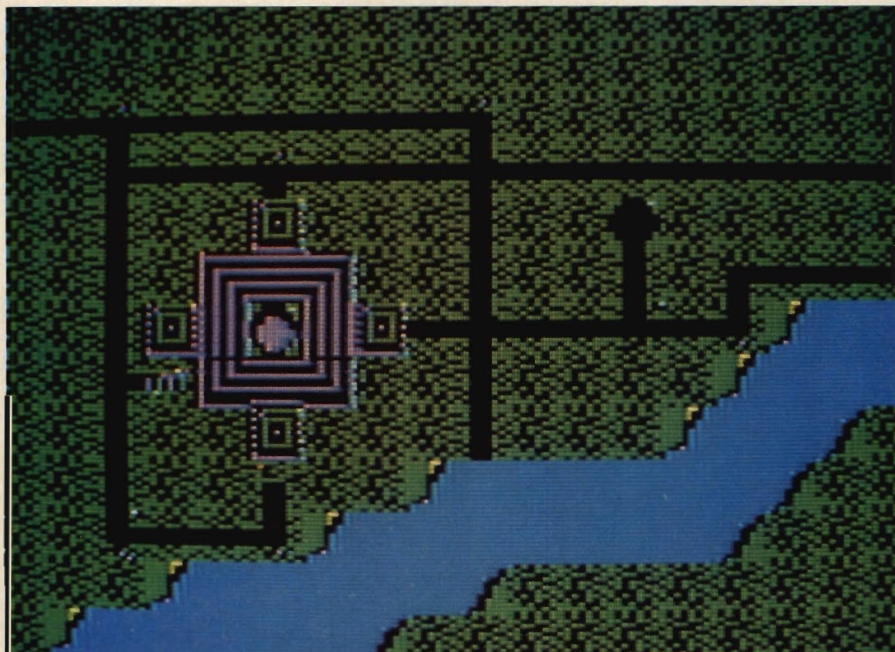
of power points, different characters with unique abilities, and two-player head-to-head combat modes.

Adepts representing the forces of Order and Chaos square off on a play-field representing the four elements: earth, water, air and fire. The first moves are to position one Adept in each of the elements, since a wizard can only summon magical beings to an element he or she occupies. Each turn, the Adept can either move or cast a spell. One spell, "Summon", lets the mage choose either an elemental or a demon to add to the growing army.

Elementals are most at home in their natural surroundings. Moving a fire elemental to a water square is possible, but weakens the icon in battle. Demons, on the other hand, are equally at home in any of the elements, or in one of the two Void zones. The Adept's total magic strength is decreased according to the strength of the character summoned.

To earn more magic strength, each Force must try to occupy as many flashing power points as possible. These shift from the corners of the different elements to neighboring elements each turn, though the Void points remain stable. The object is to occupy all the power points on the board — or completely vanquish the enemy Force.

Spells available to each Adept include the aforementioned "Summon,"



GOTHMOG'S LAIR (PROGRESSIVE PERIPHERALS)

OUR ARCADE GAMES WE BROUGHT



Bally Midway's *Spy Hunter* puts you in the driver's seat of the hottest machine on four wheels. You're after enemy spies. The situation is life and death. You'll need every weapon you've got – machine guns, and guided missiles, oil slicks and smoke screens. But the enemy is everywhere. On the road, in the water, even in the air. So you'll have to be more than fast to stay alive in *Spy Hunter*. You'll need brains and guts, too.

Do you have what it takes?



Bally Midway's *Tapper* would like to welcome you to the fastest game in the universe.

You're serving up drinks in some of the craziest places you've ever seen. And the service better be good, or else. You'll work your way through the wild Western Saloon to the Sports Bar. From there to the slam dancing Punk Bar and on into the Space Bar full of customers who are, literally, out of this world!

Are you fast enough to play *Tapper*? If you have to ask, you probably already know the answer.



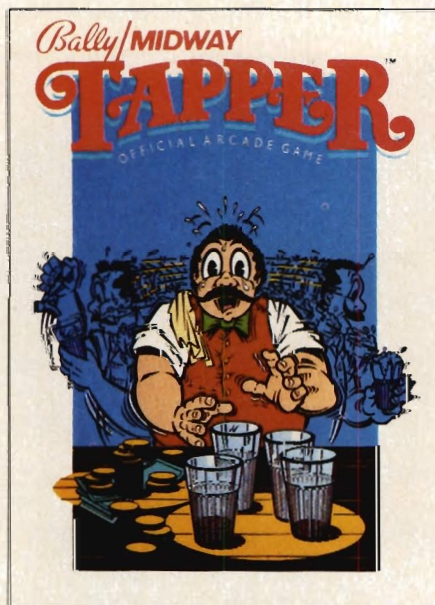
Bally Midway's *Up 'N Down* by Sega. In this game, a crash is no accident.

In fact, it's the whole object of the game. You'll race your baja bug over some of the worst roads south of any border. Leap dead ends, gaping canyons and oncoming traffic in a single bound. And if anyone gets in your way, crush 'em.

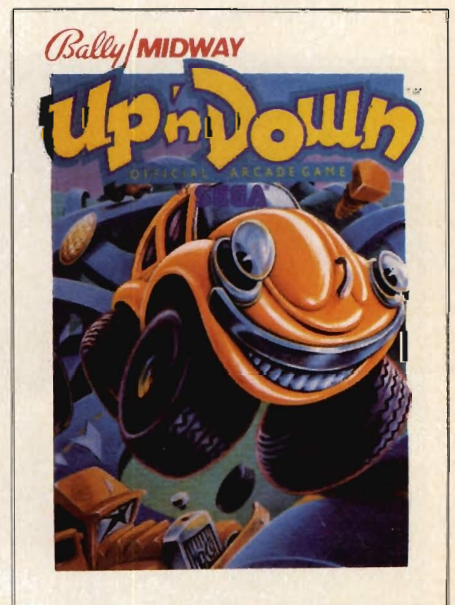
Crashing, bashing *Up 'N Down*. It's one smash hit that really is a smash.



The #1 Arcade Game of 1984.



Nominated as Most Innovative Coin-Op Game of 1984 by *Electronic Games* magazine.



#1 Arcade Hit, *Play Meter* Conversions Poll, 8/1/84.

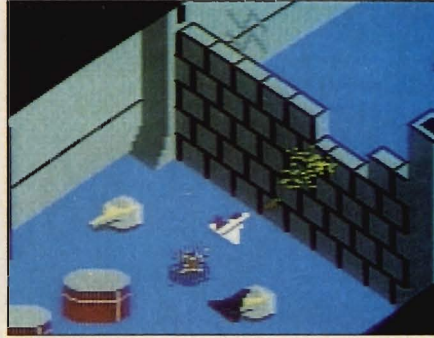
WERE SUCH BIG HITS, THEM HOME.



Sega's Congo Bongo rocked the home game world when it shot up to Number 3 on the Billboard chart this spring.

And now it's available for even more home systems. So check the chart and get ready for jungle action. You'll pursue the mighty ape Congo up Monkey Mountain and across the Mighty River. Do battle with dangerous jungle creatures. Ride hippos, dodge charging rhinos and try to avoid becoming a snack for a man-eating fish.

Congo Bongo. It's fast and it's fun. But be careful. It's a jungle in there.



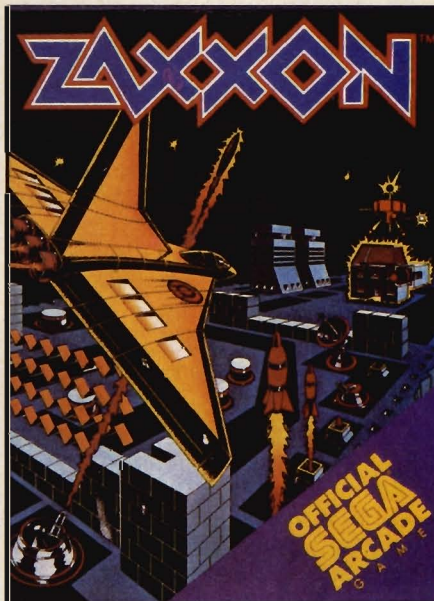
Sega's Zaxxon. If you haven't played Zaxxon, you must have been living on another planet for the past few years.

And now the ultimate space combat game is available for even more home systems. You'll pilot a space fighter through force fields and enemy fire on your way to do battle with the mighty Zaxxon robot. Countless others have gone before you in this Hall of Fame game. But this time your life is in your own hands.

Zaxxon killed them in the arcades. But compared to what it will do to you at home, that was child's play.



Arcade and Home Smash. Hit #3 on Billboard magazine's Top Video Games survey.



One of only ten games ever to make Electronic Games' Hall of Fame.

| | SPY HUNTER | TAPPER | UP 'N DOWN | CONGO BONGO | ZAXXON |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| Atari 2600 cartridge | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ | ✓ |
| Atari 5200 cartridge | | | | ✓ | ✓ NEW |
| Atari Computers* cartridge | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ | ✓ NEW |
| Atari Computers† diskette | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | | ✓ |
| ColecoVision & ADAM cartridge | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ |
| Commodore 64 cartridge | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ | ✓ NEW |
| Commodore 64 diskette | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ |
| Apple II, IIe, IIc diskette | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ NEW | ✓ |
| IBM PC diskette | ✓ NEW | ** NEW | ✓ NEW | ** NEW | ** NEW |

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*Atari 400, 800, 600XL, 800XL and 1200XL.

(Congo Bongo cartridge: 400, 800 and 800XL.)

†Atari 800, 600XL, 800XL and 1200XL.

**Also available for IBM PCjr.

All new games are scheduled to be in your stores for Christmas. Check your local dealer.

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COMPUTER GAMING



ARCHON II: ADEPT (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

and "Imprison," "Heal," and "Banish" are other noteworthy sorceries. But "Apocalypse" is the game's most interesting surprise: when a side seems to be losing, the Adept can cast this to clear the board and take on the opposing forces in the form of one last, major blowout based on the amount of magic strength points left on each side.

The two-player mode is excellent. Each gamer is sure to develop a favorite character, like the life-draining, invisible demon Wraith or the ultimate triple threat, the Chimera. Unlike its predecessor *Archon*, this program allows each gamer to choose his or her own difficulty level, evening up the sides between novices and pros.

The one-player game is a bit more frustrating; at first it seems impossible to win, but with a little practice it's too easy. Because the computer is as predictable as snow in February, its strategy remains about the same. Also, if the player comes too close to beating it, the computer calls an apocalypse immediately — and it's extremely accurate in battle.

Those who enjoy gaming with a friend will find this a great pastime.

(Tracie Forman)

50 MISSION CRUSH

Strategic Simulations/Apple II/48K Disk

You can almost feel the muscles tighten in your chest and the saliva dry

in your mouth as the B-17 carrying you and your crew taxis down the runway and takes off.

Your mission is to cross the English Channel, bomb the designated target, avoid the flak from the batteries on the ground, outduel the German Luftwaffe and get home with crew and plane intact.

Sound complicated? Most definitely not! Sound entertaining? That's a big Roger!

50 Mission Crush is an air battle, role-playing game for those who don't know a wing span from a wing-tip. The game gives all the choices on-screen in the form of easy-to-follow menus. The documentation is also well-written and informative.

Getting there is most of the fun with this simulation. The game can be played with one or two players. Each pilot must name his crew and this personalized attention, though it at first might seem bothersome, takes on a great deal of importance as you get closer to your target of 50 missions. The crew becomes part of the family, much like other role-playing games.

Just because the game is simple, doesn't mean that it lacks a lot of detail. When attacked by an enemy plane, players can select one of eight guns, and there are three different types of German planes to encounter, each with different firepower and defensive abilities.

Fuel takes on an important role in the game. Should you skimp on fuel to load up even more on your payload or play it the other way around so that you are more sure of getting home safely? There is even an option for overloading, which carries its own inherent risks.

As the crew gains in experience, there will be more difficult missions to fly, but the crew will also be more responsive to its duties and much more accurate in its firings.

The game can be saved at any time, and promotions from captain to brigadier general are awarded according to points accumulated on the missions.

If there is one complaint about the game it is the length of time the game displays a fire on board or in one of the engines. It seems the flashing red bars across the screen go on forever. But forever might not be a bad description of how long *50 Mission Crush* will be played by any and all wargame or role-playing computer gamers who gather around your machine.

(Rick Teverbaugh)

IT'S ONLY ROCK 'N' ROLL

K-tel Software/Commodore 64/Disk

If you've always wanted to give your soul for rock 'n' roll, here's a chance to make the sacrifice vicariously without leaving the comfort of home. In **It's Only Rock 'n' Roll**, the gamer is a budding rocker who must form a band and lead it to the heights of musical superstardom.

Each of the contest's 60 turns represents one month, during which a band can try any one of eight activities listed on the on-screen menu. Generally, this choice leads to one or more subsidiary menus. If touring is selected from the main menu, for instance, the next screen lists possible tours. Pressing the appropriate key gets the player information about a particular tour, including number of concerts, duration and anticipated income-per-engagement. When the band picks a tour, a text screen recaps the gig-by-gig progress. To win the game, the band must accumulate \$1 million, 1000 popularity points, 100 happiness points and three status-symbol possessions. A group usually starts out by playing free in the subways or on the streets until it generates enough popularity to justify a small tour. From

COMPUTER GAMING

there, bands can elect to give concerts, make records, promote the act, or tour. Managers can help in many ways, but even the best of these fellows sometimes dips into the till. A music headline service sometimes provides warnings of such wrongdoing, plus information about big opportunities and potential disasters.

It's Only Rock 'n' Roll hits a few wrong notes, too. The fact that the songs which the computer helps the bands write are random collections of notes sabotages the well-intentioned idea of allowing the gamer to view an animated performance. Watching the band in an appropriate setting is cute, but it gets old quickly. And it's frustrating to have to sit through an entire performance — there's no way to shortcircuit the music sequence once it starts — when a player accidentally types "Y" instead of "N" in response to the prompt which initiates this mode.

The "Top 20" list evidences the same lack of foresight. Watching the best-selling records count down from #1 to #20 is interesting exactly once. The wait seems endless when your group's song is #3, but the program insists on presenting the next 16 hits one title at a time before allowing the action to continue. The construction of the list is unfair, favoring the non-player groups. Why is the gamer's band the only one which can't place more than one song at a time in the Top 20? And changing the names of the non-player groups to reflect the U.S. recording scene wouldn't have hurt, either.

On balance, the strengths of *It's Only Rock 'n' Roll* outweigh the deficiencies. Pre-publication fix-up could've made this disk a strong candidate for an Arkie. As it is, *It's Only Rock 'n' Roll* is an intriguing strategy game keyed to one of the most exciting pop fantasies of our age, becoming a Star.

(Arnie Katz)

BRIDGE 4.0

Written by Arthur M. Walsh
Artworx/C-64/Disk

Attention every inveterate bridge player who's ever been frustrated by not being able to find a fourth (or even a second and third): This one's for you!

Bridge 4.0 is a bit short in the visual



BRIDGE 4.0 (ARTWORX)

and sound departments, but it offers hours of first-rate play in what may well be the best card-playing program around. It's even feisty enough to double (no redoubles, though) and smart enough to recognize and respond to Blackwood convention — which is more than can be said for most human opponents.

Bridge 4.0 is a one-player game based on the Charles Goren method of point counting and bidding, and assumes a good knowledge of the basics of the game. This isn't a tutorial, and the computer never wrests control of a hand away from the player, although it will give you a second chance if you make an illegal bid or renig. It also lets you lose. Frequently.

Bridge has minimal graphics: the display of the hands looks exactly like the diagrams accompanying any newspaper bridge column. This may not be glamorous, but it is easy to interpret, and players can change the color of the screen, border or text. Suits are represented by their common symbols, and all honor cards (ace through ten) are represented by capital letters. The game is played using the keyboard, and players bid or play in a two-character format using only letters and numbers. For example, '2C' would be '2 clubs' in a bid, '2 of clubs' during play; 'KH' is the king of hearts and so forth.

The deal is determined by a random number generator which requires that players input a "seed" number between 0 and 999.9999 before each hand. A few minutes with a handy pocket calculator will show that this yields somewhere in the neighborhood of 10 million hands. This ought to be enough to keep even Scheinwold and Goren busy for quite some time.

The player is always South, with the computer bidding the other three hands, until bidding closes with three passes in a row. The computer plays three hands, too, if either of the opponents takes the contract. However, if South or North take the bid (thus making the other dummy), the player plays both those hands and the computer plays the opponents'. This can get slightly confusing if South is in fact the dummy, since dummies don't play hands, normally; they go to the kitchen to get beer for everyone else.

During play, the screen always displays the player's and the dummy's hands, the bid at which the contract was taken and the trick count for both sides. If things get too depressing, typing 'quit' or just 'q' will junk that hand, and a new hand will be dealt. The computer keeps track of the score both above and below the line until the end of a rubber, when the score starts at zero again. The program also allows claiming (CL) and conceding (CO) any remaining tricks.

Overall, the bidding, responses and play are very much according to Hoyle — or in this case, Goren. However, after each hand *Bridge 4.0* offers two interesting options you'll probably never hear at a real-life bridge table. Players can choose to play the same hand over again and try for a better score by remembering where to finesse, or the hands can be switched around. If this last option is chosen, the hand will be re-bid, and there is no guarantee that North will bid East's former hand the same way East did originally. This option has the virtue (or not — depending on how you look at it) of eliminating the classic excuse: "I just can't get good cards."

(Louise Kohl)

BARON

Blue Chip Software/
Apple, C-64, IBM-PC/Disk

Still depressed because you didn't buy a Manhattan co-op when they sold at \$10,000? This real estate brokerage game could be just the ticket to salving your ego — without losing your shirt in the process.

The object of **Baron** is to increase net worth from a paltry \$35,000 to over \$1,000,000 by buying and selling property and investing wisely. The strategy game spans five fiscal years

COMPUTER GAMING

from January 1984 to January 1989.

Each month, the player views a real estate graph, which charts the average progress of land, and residential and commercial properties in New York, California, Texas, Florida and Kansas. The financial journal prints out news of events that could have a bearing on property prices, like "HEWLETT PACKARD TO OPEN OFFICES IN KANSAS." After seeing more graphs which chart the player's own properties, the computerist is shown the current market value of all real estate investments, including the dollar amounts gained or lost by each. Asterisks mark properties selling at their high or low peaks.

After the formalities, it's on to the real meat of the game: buying and selling. A menu screen displays all the options available, including buy, sell, see portfolio, read news, see graphs, or invest. Each option is accessed by a single key.

Nine properties are up for sale at any given time, though the really great values are often bought by computer-controlled companies after a turn or two. Cash poor? Take an option, which gives the player up to six months to come up with the money — or to decide not to buy.

The idea, of course, is to buy low and sell high, though it's much easier said than done. It's an awful feeling to watch the California condo you bought at \$200,000 drop slowly below the \$90,000 mark, dragging your net worth down with it. Still, it's hard to beat the smug satisfaction of owning six Texas lots that set new records in real estate values.

Baron is such an outstanding, absorbing game that it's easy to exaggerate its flaws, like seeing Marilyn Monroe with a zit on her nose. For one thing, the player must access each mode through the menu, meaning that players who want to buy a property have to first leave the property description, then exit the 'buy' screen, then enter a different mode — just to see how much cash is on hand. Also, the misspelling of the word "you're" (it's printed as "your") is annoyingly amateurish in such an adult-oriented game. And finally, though the game itself provides background for different regions, companies, and financial terms, the instruction book could have

been less devoted to learning to play the game (it's really pretty simple), and more to explaining where Del Web is located, or who Goldberg is. While the references are taken from real life, it's wrong to assume that players are already knowledgeable about what these companies do and who they affect. These references should be easy to look up.

There's one major inconsistency in the game that completely suspends reality, in spite of the obvious care taken to research the program. The player begins as a novice, and has a total of five years to build a fortune. Barring some very lucky investments, few will reach the second, Investor, level, much less get all the way to Baron. To keep the game from being impossible, each time a new game is begun the player gets to keep all the money previously earned. But when the new contest starts, it's 1984 again, meaning that computerists are playing with money they might have earned in 1986.

In spite of its problems, *Baron* is guaranteed to keep armchair brokers happily occupied for months. There's no greater fun than second-guessing the market — especially if you have nothing to really lose! Anyone who's ever fantasized about owning hundreds of acres of ranchland or an office in New York should invest in *Baron*. The dividends of fun and satisfaction pay off handsomely.

(Tracie Forman)

INTELLECTUAL DECATHLON

Muse/Apple II/48K Disk

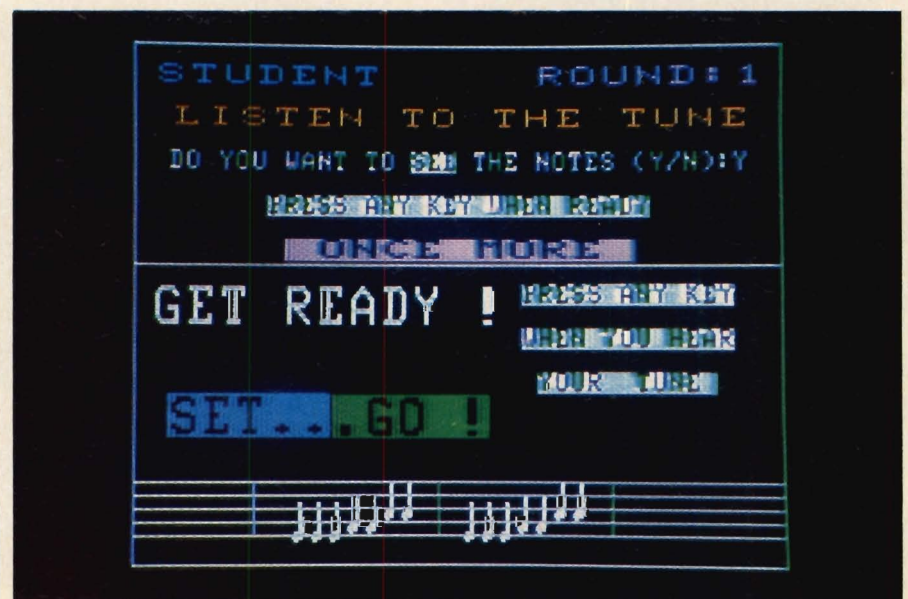
Games that take on Olympic-type formats are always popular—and trivia is getting a new lease on life through both boardgames and the electronic variety. If you think *Intellectual Decathlon* is a combination of both, you're heaving the javelin in the wrong direction all together.

Intellectual Decathlon requires no factual knowledge. Rather, it takes a resourceful mind and a good memory to get close to a perfect score of 21,102.

Each of the 10 events includes practice time, with a score that can be added to a previous score or saved. There is no pause feature, but it's possible to go back and repeat all but one of the events and have the second total added to the accumulated sum. Here's a quick event-by-event run-down of what you're up against.

First there's "Numberstretcher." The object here is to remember as many numbers as possible in the correct order after seeing a string of numbers displayed on-screen. The strings start out with six digits and go up to 19. The event is over with three consecutive misses at a level. Scoring is based on the correctness of the entry and the time it took to remember the string. Total possible is 2,149.

"Note the Notes" comes second. The computer will play a short tune of 7-10 notes. The gamer can see the notes as



INTELLECTUAL DECATHLON (MUSE)

COMPUTER GAMING

well as hear them, but the scoring potential of the event is cut in half. After playing the tune twice, the computer will play about 60 random notes, and somewhere in that collection will be the tune you're looking for. When the gamer hears the tune, he presses any key as quickly as possible. A 50-point penalty is given for a bad guess.

Third is "Safecracker." The object of the game is to align the hands on 12 separate dials to the high noon position. When you move one dial, two, three or four others move at the same time. Points are awarded by how many dials are set at 12 when the time runs out.

In "Mazrace," gamers must work through a maze in the shortest time. Best score in the event is 2,399.

Fifth is the highly enjoyable "Apple Derby." There are six horses, and each one's past record is displayed. Gamers are given the conditions of the race and must decide which horse is most likely to win based on past performance and current conditions. Players choose the amounts of bets and which of the six kinds of wager to make.

"Lying Digits" displays mathematical problems and the gamer must decide whether the answer is correct. A wrong answer deducts 50 points from the score and a correct answer will give points depending on how fast the question was answered.

There are 20 non-related words matched in pairs for the seventh event, "Matchmaker." Points are awarded for each pair correctly matched.

"Brainblender" is played on a 6x6 board and each player is allotted a different sign. Using various combinations of letters keys, the gamer tries to make the moving frame cover their own sign as often as possible during the game.

"Instant Replay" shows players two pictures and they have to decide whether they are identical or different. With each correct guess, the picture becomes more abstract.

In a tough finale, "Abstrajig" tests power of recall. A picture is shown on the screen and then divided into 16 equal parts. The parts are then scrambled and it is up to the gamer to put as many of the pieces back into their original places as possible.

Dr. Gaber Laufer is to be congratulated for putting together such a

challenging game, and one that is so enjoyable to play.

(Rick Teverbaugh)

PLANETMASTER

Magnetic Harvest/Apple II+, e/
DOS 3.3 Disk

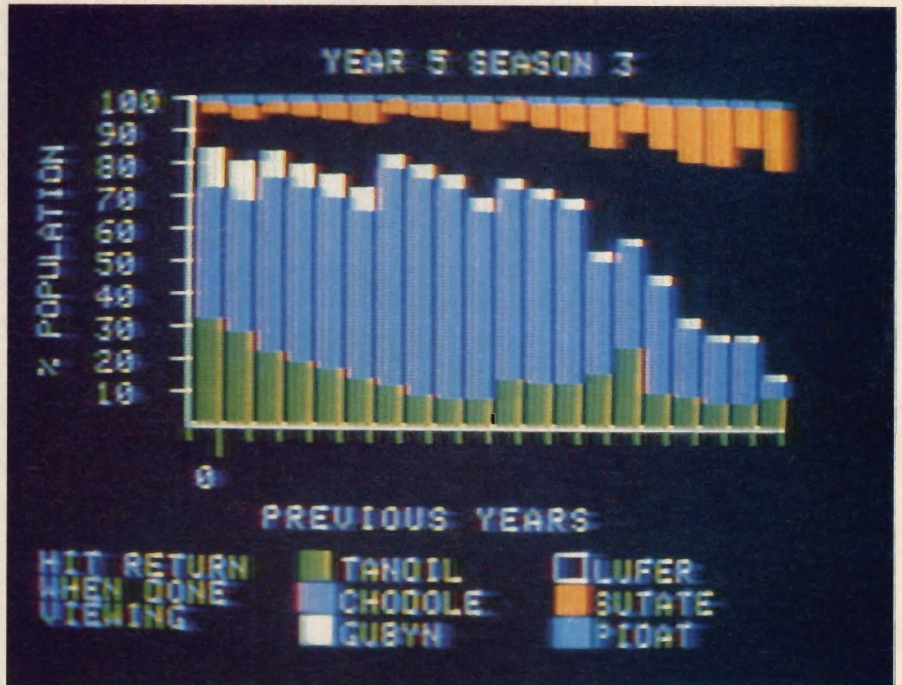
Playing **Planetmaster** is intriguing, unusual, a real experience—kind of like adopting E.T. for a spell.

Magnetic Harvest has put together an addicting, thought-provoking ecological conundrum in which players (one at a time) operating a Space Sanctuary Satellite select near-extinct animals, teleport them to properly-prepared orbiting habitats, and then tend to their needs. Success means the

rectly situated in adjacent environs to make use of nature's law of the hunter and the hunted. How else would the carnivores survive? Attention must also be paid to the type of crop growing in each of the reserves. The wrong food, or not enough of the right one, will cause a drop in birth, and a staggering increase in mortality rates.

Once established in areas which will appear to work, the computer calculates and displays the results. After this, adjustments are allowed. Failing species must be herded to a new home.

The attention to detail is incredible. Gameplay is governed by a complex, but surprisingly easy to learn, set of



PLANETMASTER (MAGNETIC HARVEST)

difference between extinction and revitalization for the species involved.

Selecting six types from the endangered list is not a simple task. The geographical conditions of their home worlds and the SSS must match closely. Failure to properly utilize the full range of environments on the asteroid sanctuary can doom all.

The proper mix of herbivores (plant-eaters), carnivores (flesh-eating mammals), and omnivores (who will eat just about anything!) is essential. It's also important to ensure that warm and cold blooded animals are safely ensconced climatewise.

Additionally, creatures must be cor-

rules. A brief glance through the manual is sufficient to get started. Beyond that, references to specific info or the station map will suffice.

After startup, playing *Planetmaster* is just a matter of fine tuning previous decisions. That is, as long as they were good ones!

The graphics are composed mainly of line-drawn renditions of the creatures, though a map of the station can be displayed. Graphs and text tables comprise the balance of the visual effect. Following suit, there are no splashy color layouts either.

Audio effects are practically nonexistent in this five-level, keyboard-

COMPUTER GAMING

manipulated Apple II offering. However, a dearth of clicks, bleeps, and buzzes does not detract one byte from *PM's* cerebral challenge and enjoyment.

This strategy game proved a very pleasant surprise, to say the least. Assume the responsibility, see if you can become a Planetmaster.

(Ted Salamone)

WORD CHALLENGE

Hayden Software/Apple/Disk

Do you like Boggle? Here's something even better. . . a computerized adaptation of Parker Brothers' great embedded word game. But this is Boggle with a difference: **Word Challenge** introduces contingencies, alternatives and a wealth of options, turning an old favorite into a brand new hit.

The object in *Word Challenge* is to find and list as many words as possible using adjacent letters from a randomly arranged grid. Players can use only letters that are connected in sequence, on any side or corner. Each letter can only be used once in any word, and words must be at least three letters long.

A built-in opponent, LEX, can be handicapped to suit the player's skill levels. Then while LEX and the gamer hunt for words in the grid, the computer busily searches its 90,000-word dictionary to locate all the possible words in the square. When the time is up, the computer counts the words created by LEX and the human player, and matches them against the dictionary, then takes care of the oner-

ous scoring chores.

There are a multitude of options, starting with 26 difficulty levels that restrict LEX to short words and simpler constructions at the easy settings, all the way up to the top level in which LEX can locate every possible word from the built-in dictionary. A special setting lets the computer display all the possible words from a square, whether or not they were found. Another setting allows the player to manually set up a square with the letters he or she chooses. There are embedded word options that make it possible to type only the original word, then receive

credit for all words embedded in it. A competition mode permits replay of the same square (this is good if two humans want to compete using the same grid.) There are various scoring methods, and the timer can be set for any number of seconds, up to 999. The grid itself can be changed from the standard 4 x 4, to an easier 3 x 3, or the more difficult 5 x 5, and the board can be rotated to present a different view to the word-hunter.

Word Challenge is for all ages and skills. Versions of the game are available for Apple, C-64 and IBM.

(Joyce Worley)

ELECTRONIC PRESSBOX

COMPUTER TITLE BOUT

Designed by Ken Kimball

Avalon Hill/Apple II/48K Disk

The non-electronic "Title Bout," created by James and Thomas Trunson, is the best statistical replay boxing game on the market. Although **Computer Title Bout** shares the same statistical underpinning — it's possible to turn any player card from the original game into a digital pugilist by just typing the data onto disk from the printed page — the execution cuts into its appeal.

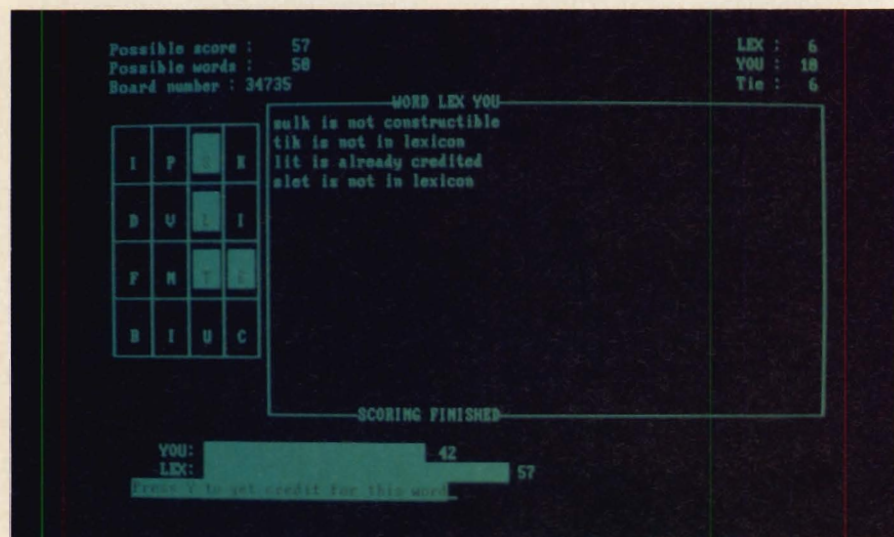
Computer Title Bout is playable by one gamer (managing fighter #1) against the machine or by a pair of

computerists, each coaching a combatant. Boxers are selected from a data disk which contains hundreds of current and former stars, or a manager may create a new protege by entering the required information.

Each individual has ratings in a wide variety of areas, ranging from likelihood of getting cut to ring generalship. These ratings are combined and matched against the opponent's ratings to produce the punch-by-punch action.

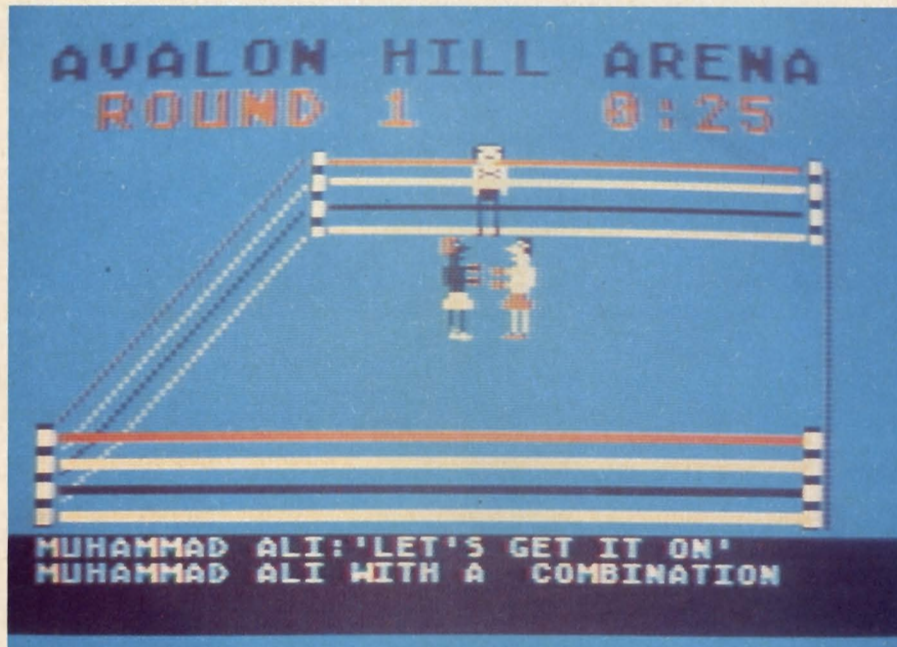
As might be expected in a game of this nature, the player or players affect the action indirectly. Prior to the start of each round, the manager picks a strategy and an attitude. There are six strategies: fight inside, fight outside defensively, fight outside offensively, cover up, go for the KO and follow the fighter's general style. The five attitudes, ranging from all-out attack to full-flight retreat, modify the basic strategies and give the gladiators more varied tactics than are possible in most similar programs.

The timed rounds unfold bit by bit, with childish blocky figures moving around the ring to represent the boxers. As blows are landed, the program monitors the accumulation of hitting points. At the end of the round, the points are added up for each fighter, and, based on the differential between the point totals, has the two



WORD CHALLENGE (HAYDEN)

COMPUTER GAMING



COMPUTER TITLE BOUT (AVALON HILL)

judges and the referee declare the round using a 10-point system. When the margin of victory is 0-5 hitting points, each judge picks a round winner more or less randomly, so the bout usually goes to the fighter who gets the decisive upper hand in several stanzas.

The visuals are unworthy of this otherwise fine game, but Kimball's biggest goof was the misguided attempt to add "color". A fighter makes a snappy comment with each thrown punch, printed right along with the

result of the attempted blow. There's a stock of a dozen or so quips, and they come up without rhyme or reason. Seeing Rocky Marciano say something like, "Eat leather, you mother!" sours the game in a hurry.

How much you like *Computer Title Bout* depends on how highly you value statistical accuracy versus other aspects of the game. Real stat freaks should enjoy it, but its defects reduce its appeal to rank and file computer gamers.

(Arnie Katz)

ENTERTAINMENTS

CROSSWORD MAGIC

Mindscape/Apple/Disk

Puzzle enthusiasts can create their own crosswords using this unusual program. Choose the size specifications for the matrix, then the computer enters words on the grid in the available locations. It assists in creating the clue list, then prints out the puzzle, clues, and an answer code. **Crossword Magic** may not make everyone into a professional-calibre word puzzle designer...but it sure helps!

First the puzzler chooses the desired grid size, from 3 to 20 boxes square. If preferred, the computerist can opt for

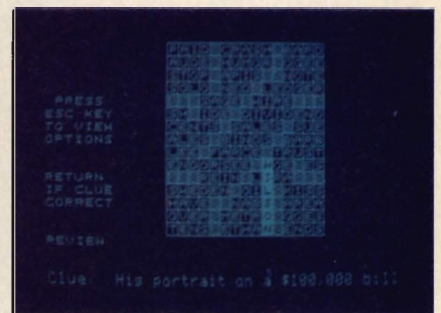
automatic puzzle sizing; this allows the computer to expand the parameters of the grid as needed. Then type a word, and *Crossword Magic* automatically interconnects and enters it on the form. Move the word to different locations, or discard it altogether.

After entering the words on the puzzle matrix, the user enters clues for each, guided by the microprocessor so none will be overlooked or skipped. Then review and correct any entries as needed, and play through a test of the puzzle to make sure it's just right. Finally, print out the creation, or save it to disk to use again later.

Crossword Magic won't put the New York Times Sunday puzzle out of business, nor pose much of a threat to The Dell crossword puzzle magazines. The computer takes most of the work out of puzzle creation, but it still takes sharp mind to come up with a professional-quality challenge. It does a jim-dandy job, taking all of the physical labor, and much of the mental strain out of manufacturing crosswords.

The program fits new words into the matrix smoothly and effortlessly, allowing the creator to see all the locations where each word can be used, or telling the computerist that the word won't fit at all. In the latter case, the computer holds the word in memory until an opening appears, then automatically reintroduces it at the appropriate time.

This is something very different in the way of computer entertainments, since it actually lets the user create a diversion of his or her own. It turns the computer into a crossword factory



CROSSWORD MAGIC (MINDSCAPE)

capable of churning out unlimited numbers of puzzles at exactly the skill level desired. No crossword crafter should be without it!

Crossword Magic is also available for the Atari, C-64, IBM-PC and PCjr computers.

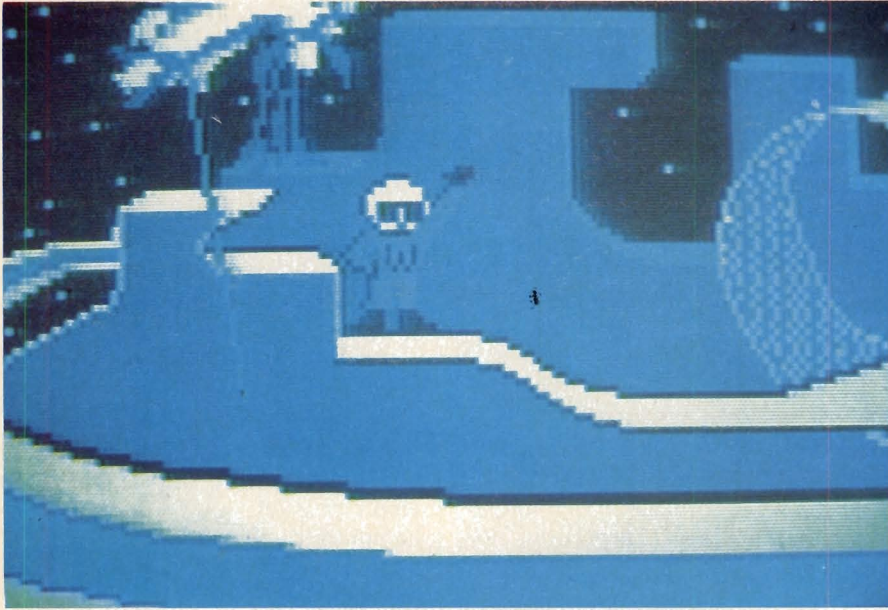
(Joyce Worley)

MOVIE MUSICAL MADNESS

Designed by The Dovetail Group
CBS Software/Atari/Cartridge

Be your own Busby Berkeley, in control of lights, action, camera and more, as you create an animated cartoon right on the computer screen! **Movie Musical Madness** puts the gamer in charge of a mini-movie set, cast as director, composer and choreographer in a musical extravaganza.

COMPUTER GAMING



MOVIE MUSICAL MADNESS (CBS)

The gamer films in color or black & white (for those gamers who want to strive for a somber production) after choosing one of three Jazz Scats to star in the scene. The Jazz Scats are the trio of be-boppers, Ms. Swivel Hips, Wahoo and Mr. Bassman, who provide the action in the drama.

Next the gamer chooses props to decorate the set and create the background. There are stationary forms to build skylines, fences, buildings, plants, streetlights, and other fixtures. Moving props travel back and forth across the set while the movie is in progress, such as a flying witch, a train, and UFO's. The animated props stay where they're put, but have moving parts, such as the puppy hopping up and down, or an arch-villain waving his cloak. Each scene can use up to 15 stationary props, and either one moving or one animated prop.

After setting the stage, the director adds musical accompaniment. There are 20 themes to choose from, to add a cheery (or sinister!) note to the movie.

Finally, the star comes onto the set. Using joystick and keyboard commands, the gamer dances the Jazz Scat around the scene in actions that form the basics of the movie.

After shooting the scene, the compu-director can either film another sequence in the mini-movie, call up the rushes to see what's been created so far, reshoot the scene to make corrections, or end the movie. When

it's finished, the playback will have all props in place, the musical accompaniment for each scene, and the star of the picture in center stage going through the gyrations the director has programmed.

Movie Musical Madness is a merry-madcap sort of program. Designed for kids from about age 6 and over, it will nonetheless charm older computerists just as well as they build sets, pick the music, then guide the stars through their paces. The "movies" may never

win Academy Awards, but the fun is in the creating!

(Joyce Worley)

PEANUTS PICTURE PUZZLERS

Random House/Apple/Disk

The stars of these jigsaw puzzles come straight from the Peanuts comic strip, making this program a delight for kids ages 4 to 8. Lucy, Charlie Brown, Linus, Snoopy and all the rest of the gang are here — 12 characters in all — big as life and looking even better than they do in the funnies.

The computer randomly generates puzzles using the Peanuts characters, in a total of 61 possible combinations, each featuring two of the well-known personalities created by Charles Schultz. Then the picture divides into the number of pieces selected, 4, 8 or 16.

First the screen displays the complete picture. After the puzzler has studied the image, the illustration vanishes, and white outlines of the puzzle pieces appear. Pieces of the picture are presented, one at a time, on the right side of the screen. The player moves a cursor over the outlined shapes, using joystick or keyboard, until it's on the correct spot. If it's properly placed, a new piece appears; if not, a tone sounds, and the gamer gets



PEANUTS PICTURE PUZZLER (RANDOM HOUSE)

COMPUTER GAMING

to try again. Or, the child can leave the cursor where it is, and keep changing the puzzle pieces until a match is found.

When a puzzle is completed, magic happens. One of the pictured characters comes to life in a brief animated cartoon.

There are a lot of special features in the program that make it more challenging. In the four-piece mode, it's easy enough for tiny tots. Eight-piece divisions are tougher, and the sixteen-piece puzzles are for older kids. Although the program randomly selects pairings of the Peanuts characters, you can create your own puzzles and choose the two characters you prefer.

The timing feature adds a dimension of excitement that makes the program entertaining even for adults. Set a time

limit of 30 seconds, 2 minutes, five minutes, or no limit, or choose your own, from 15 seconds to 12 minutes. There's a top-ten scoreboard for each of the three skill settings.

The charm of the program lies in the beautiful graphics, and the delightful animation sequences that conclude each puzzle. The characters look exactly like they should, and the colors are bright and cheerful. The animation is simple, yet amusing — Charlie Brown munches goodies out of a bag; Patty tends a plant, and so forth.

The program is easy to use, but pre-readers will need parental help to get them started, since on-screen instructions prompt the player on how to proceed. Once the tykes learn to use the joystick or keyboard, they'll do fine on their own.

(Joyce Worley)

receives a clue about the location of the correct answer. For example, if the computer is thinking of Texas, and the student guesses Missouri, the computer highlights Missouri's location on the map, then hints, "The Mystery State is Southwest of Missouri."

"Across the USA" is a stumper for computerists of all ages, with three difficulty levels. The computer selects a starting point, then asks the student to chart a path to a goal, also chosen by the microprocessor. The user has to move from state to state until the destination is reached. In the easiest setting, the map is displayed, so it's easy to pick a route. The medium level only displays states on the maps after they are chosen, so it's necessary to know a little more about geography in order to pick the shortest path. The most difficult setting doesn't display the map, or the starting point or destination, so users have to be able to visualize the country with no help.

There's even a primitive arcade-style game included in the program. "State Shoot" displays a state on the screen, in its correct position from the map. An arrow moves up and down the screen, and when it lines up with the state, pushing the space bar starts a count-down. Pushing the space bar again looses the missile, hopefully toward the target state. The distance the arrow travels across the map is determined by the length of time be-

PLAYING IT SMART

COAST-TO-COAST AMERICA

by NeoSoft, Inc.

CBS Software/Apple/Disk

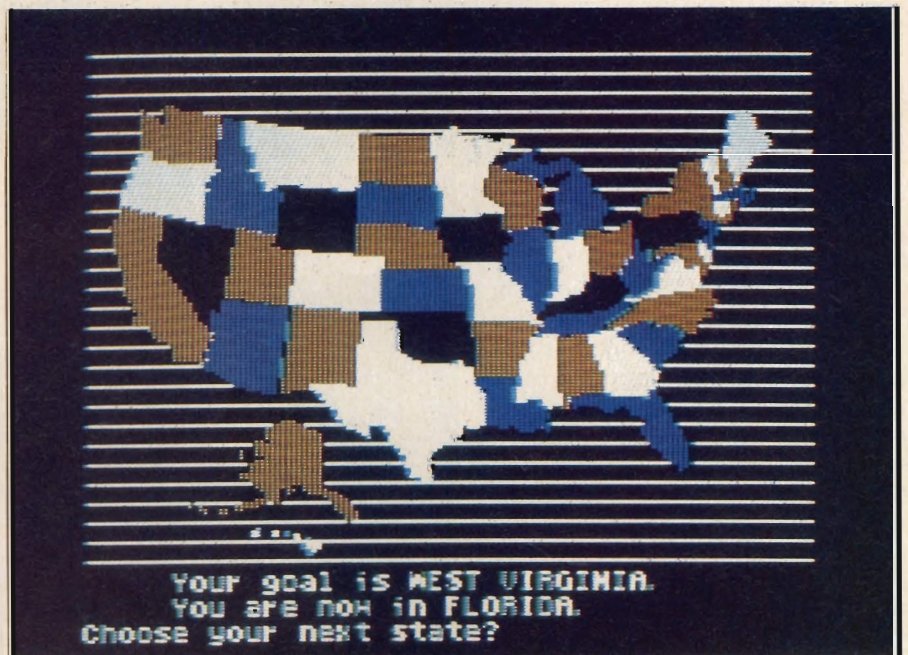
Coast-To-Coast America contains five games to help learners age eight and up gain mastery of domestic geography. Developed by Neosoft, the game comes with a soft plastic overlay that fits over the console keys to make the program easy to use even for first-time computerists. The Neosoft EasyKey Overlay features keys to choose skill levels and select the game. Most of the keys are for the 50 individual states, using postal abbreviations for each name. Finally, A, B and C keys signal the responses to multiple-choice questions.

The first section of the program is "State Facts," a demonstration of pertinent details that appears in response to pushing the key for any state. The state is highlighted in color on a U.S. map, and the computer displays the correct spelling of its name, its capital city, the year it became a state, its nickname, and the industry for which it is most well-known.

"State Quiz" tests the knowledge gained in the first demonstration. One

state is highlighted on the map, for the computerist to identify. Then the program asks multiple choice questions about that state.

"Mystery State" is for geography detectives. The user guesses which state the computer has selected, then



COAST-TO-COAST AMERICA (CBS)

COMPUTER GAMING

tween the first and second taps of the space bar. When the arrow hits its mark, the computerist is asked to enter the correct name of the state. It's not a terribly exciting target-shooting game, but it is a change from the quizzes.

Coast-To-Coast America is a lot like a book of geography facts, with teaching quizzes to test the user's knowledge, but it's more fun than reading a regular textbook. Seeing the map with different states highlighted, then answering the questions in each game, really does help learners of every age become more proficient and knowledgeable about U.S. geography.

(Joyce Worley)

TYPING TUTOR III

Designed by Kriya Systems, Inc.
Simon & Schuster/Apple/Disk

Nowadays everybody needs to know how to type, and there's no better way to learn than with computer instruction. **Typing Tutor III** can teach a novice the basic skills needed, hone these skills until the student is fully familiar with the keyboard, then help the user build speed and accuracy.

It does this through lessons that parallel regular typing instruction manuals. The beginning typist is introduced to proper finger placement, then drilled on a few letters at a time, until the full keyboard is gradually mastered. But the computer does something a textbook could never manage: it constantly monitors the lessons, adjusting the difficulty of the program according to the individual's progress, adding new letters only when the old ones have been learned.

After the lessons, the program's four tests determine what progress has been made. The words test uses the letters learned in the lessons to test the typist's speed. A full keyboard test uses all the keys; the results show which need additional work, and the computer adjusts future lessons accordingly. The numbers test screens the typist's facility with the number keys. Finally, the standard speed test presents lines of text for the student to type, to measure speed and accuracy.

Progress reports keep the user in constant touch with how well the lessons are being absorbed, and also are a sort of score to try to beat.

When the student tires of the tutor-

ial and typing practice, it's time for some fun. The "Letter Invaders Game" rains character missiles from the top of the screen, and the gamer has to type the same letters to keep them from hitting the ground.

The best thing about the *Typing Tutor III* is that it really works. The constant progress monitoring done by the computer turns every lesson and drill into customized instruction that matches the exact needs of the student. Beginners can become accomplished typists with no help at all other than what's contained in the program, and anyone who already knows how to type will certainly increase speed and accuracy. Even playing the game without doing any of the teaching exercises hones keyboard skills.

Typing Tutor III is also available for the C-64, CP/M, IBM-PC and PCjr computers.

(Joyce Worley)

WEBSTER'S NUMBERS

Designed by Jon Conrad
Peachtree Software/Apple/Disk

There's a quartet of games on this disk for pre-schoolers, each designed to reinforce counting skills. But there's more than just number drills here; the games help kids gain hand/eye coordination, shape discrimination and pattern recognition, while they become familiar with the concepts of counting.

The four games are accessed through a pictorial menu, so that a pre-reader can use it easily. The entertainments all use joystick or paddle (paddle seems to work best), and once the parent boots the program and explains how each game goes, the child should be able to manage alone.

"Ribbit" requires one player to guide

a mosquito from house to house in numerical order while avoiding the frogs chasing after the tasty insect. Try to enter the wrong address and a buzzer indicates the error while the correctly numbered haven flashes to get the child back on track.

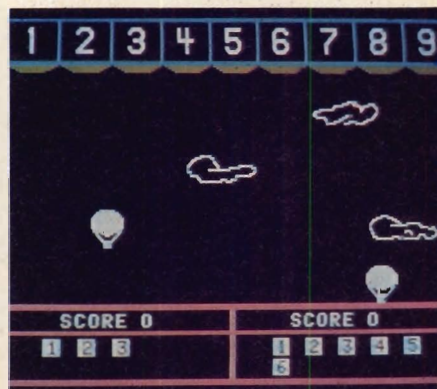
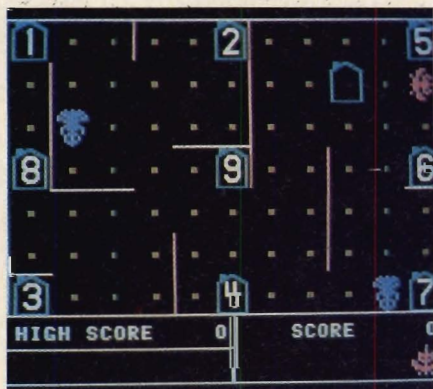
"Balloon Race" is for one or two players, and takes a little more skill. Each side of the screen contains a stack of building blocks, and the child must steer an unwieldy hot-air balloon into the sky, aiming for the number at the top of the screen that matches the number of blocks. There are drifting thunder clouds to make the trip more hazardous for the balloonist.

"Shape Up" is the most unusual contest on the disk. One player tries to arrange a random selection of shapes to match a configuration created by the computer. The simplest constructions use just three, and the most difficult are made of 10 shapes. These must be moved around the playing screen by zapping them with a bolt from the perimeters of the field.

The last challenge is "Pushover." One or two players each have sets of numbered blocks to rearrange sequentially. The blocks are moved around in the same manner as in "Shape Up" — shooting missiles from the edges of the playscreen.

The graphics are simple and unambitious. "Balloon Race" and "Ribbit" feature uncomplicated drawings, and the other two entertainments use crisp brightly colored linework. There's a configuration menu that lets the parent change many of the options, such as the number of clouds in "Balloon Race," and the number of shapes used in "Shape Up," so the difficulty level can be tailored to suit.

(Joyce Worley) ☺



WEBSTER'S NUMBERS (PEACHTREE)

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HALL OF FAME


By THE EDITORS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

The Terrific Ten have become the Distinguished Dozen, thanks to the electronic gamers of America. The readers of ELECTRONIC GAMES Magazine have chosen two more all-time great titles to join the Hall of Fame.

The hundreds upon hundreds of readers who participated in this annual election spoke with surprising unanimity. Many famous games received appreciable support, but two crossed the finish line several lengths ahead of the rest of the pack.

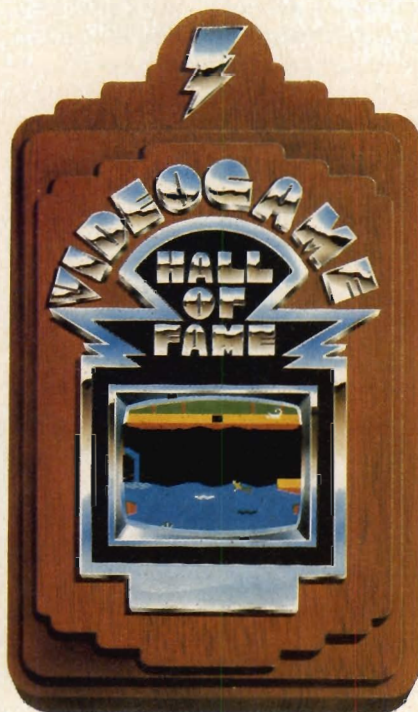
This year's winners, based on more than 1,000 ballots submitted by rank-and-file gamers, are **Dragon's Lair** (Starcom) and **Miner 2049er** (Big Five, Micro Lab,

Tiger, Reston). Other members of the Electronic Gaming Hall of Fame are: **Asteroids**, **Defender**, **Donkey Kong**, **Major League Baseball**, **Pac-Man**, **Pong**, **Quest for the Rings**, **Space Invaders**, **Star Raiders** and **Zaxxon**.

Top vote-getters among the runners-up were **Burger-Time**, **Joust**, **Pitfall!** and **Pitfall II**. This is the second close-but-no-cigar year for both *Joust* and *Pitfall!*. Can they come back next year and, with a little stronger support from their partisans, go over the top? The honor continues to elude several titles which showed up well in last year's voting, like **Centipede** and **Tempest**, but neither game is totally out of the running. 



BURGERTIME (MATTEL)



PITFALL II (ACTIVISION)



7800 JOUST (ATARI)

The Hall of Fame

You can't travel to someplace like Cooperstown or Canton, the respective sites of baseball's and football's shrines, to visit the Electronic Gaming Hall of Fame. Like the energy impulses of which the games themselves are composed, the Hall of Fame can't be seen or touched like more con-

ventional edifices.

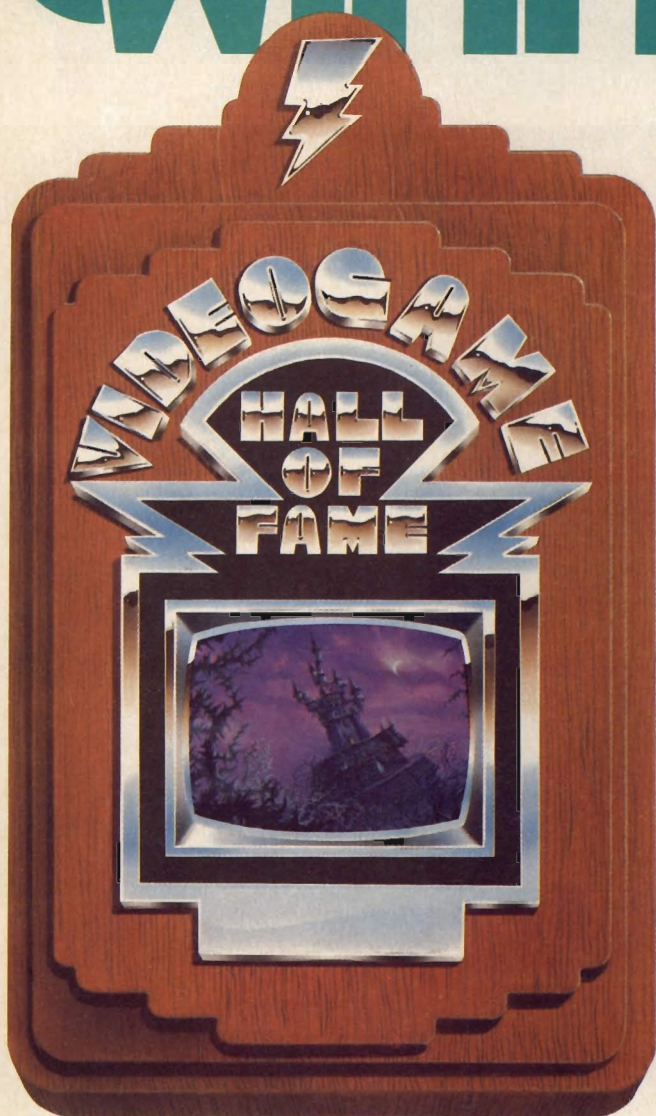
No, the Electronic Gaming Hall of Fame exists as a concept in the minds of game-lovers from coast to coast. You don't even have to leave your computer station (or that comfy chair). Just think about the great gaming milestones of the past, and in-

stantly you're there. (This arrangement saves Reese Communications—which sponsors the annual Hall of Fame vote—a bundle on heat, electricity and maintenance. And you don't have to repaint a concept every few years, either.)

And computers are the key.

WINNERS

Voters
Elevate
Two
Classic
Titles

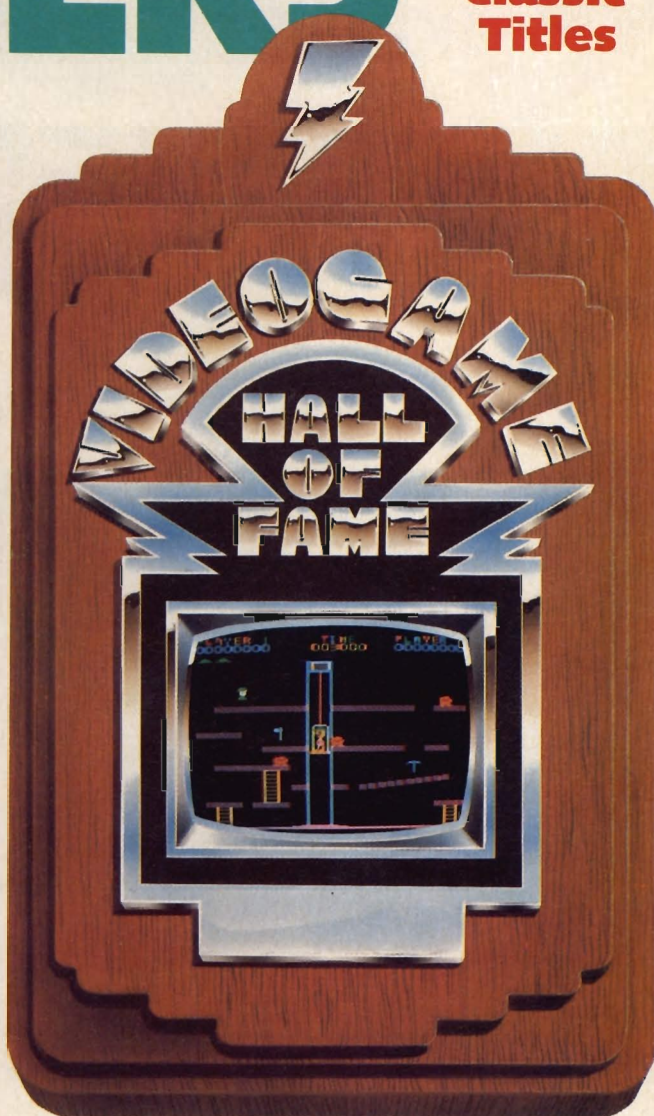


DRAGON'S LAIR (Starcom)

In a sense, the *Dragon's Lair* coin-op, designed by famed animator and filmmaker Don Bluth, rescued the arcades in even more amazing fashion than *Dirk the Daring* saves the princess in the game itself. Interest in the amusement centers had reached a low for this decade when *Dragon's Lair* burst forth in all its laserdisc glory. It wasn't long before enterprising arcade operators were drawing crowds by putting up special monitors for onlookers to follow the unfolding action.

Despite its essentially simple branch-tree plot construction, *Dragon's Lair* proved utterly compelling. Many gamers stuck to the controls until they fought—and thought—their way to the dramatic conclusion.

Making the success of this title even more incredible is the fact that Don Bluth had never before designed an electronic game! Coin-op lovers can only rub their hands in eager anticipation of what Bluth may create in years to come.



MINER 2049ER (Big Five, Micro Lab, Reston, Tiger)

Last year *Miner 2049er* won a landslide victory as Electronic Game of Year. Now this delightful multi-screen climbing and jumping game has ascended the next rung on the ladder of fame in the same high style by coasting to a triumph in the Hall of Fame voting.

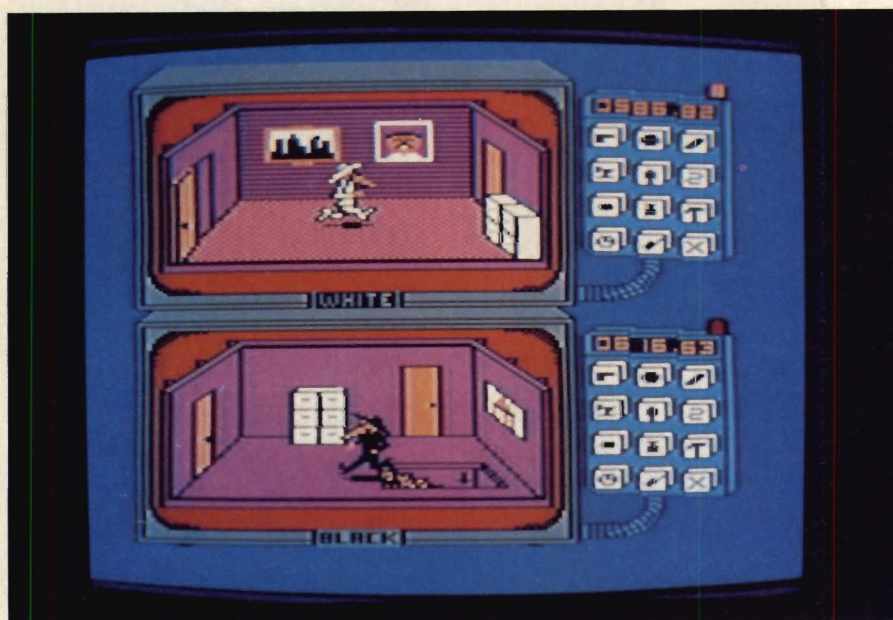
Designer Bill Hogue injected a strong element of strategy into his action-game framework to produce one of the most continuously fascinating computer games ever to flash on a monitor.

Miner 2049er has historical significance as well as intrinsic value. It was the first electronic game designed expressly for the home market which could be placed on almost every videogame and computer system. The multi-publisher licensing, orchestrated by ICG, made *Miner* the first home game to acquire a hobby-wide reputation on a par with the leading games found in the family amusement centers.

Bounty Bob lives!

GAME OF THE MONTH

The Lighter Side Of Espionage



SPY VS. SPY (FIRST STAR)

SPY VS. SPY

Designed by Mike Riedel
First Star/Apple, Atari,
Commodore 64/Disk

Remember those incredible cartoons in MAD Magazine about the two secret agents? Month after month, the little guys in the contrasting spy suits would execute convoluted plots to get the upper hand at the other's expense. Antonio Prohias' "Spy vs. Spy," created in 1960 and still running in MAD today, ranks as one of the great post-WW II cartoon creations.

This one- or two-player action-strategy contest, enjoyable on its own terms, really captures the zany mayhem of the strip. Game-action actually mirrors the antics of Prohias characters.

Having broken into a foreign embassy, the spies compete against time and each other to find the secret plans and make a getaway in a waiting plane. To win the game, a spy must collect a passport, traveling money, the key and the plans in a satchel and leave the building through the one and only exit.

Although the solitaire version is good, **Spy vs. Spy** really shines in the head-to-head mode. A horizontally split screen lets players see what the rival agent is doing while still monitoring the progress of their own map. The White Spy is shown in the top-half display, while the Black Spy reigns on the lower portion of the screen. The white-garbed figure is always controlled by a human gamer, while the black-cloaked one can be guided by

either another gamer or the computer.

The program automatically recognizes the possibility of hand-to-hand combat. When the spies approach within a few paces of each other, the program switches to a half-screen view which includes both characters and puts a club in each combatant's hand.

The number and arrangement of rooms varies with the difficulty, but there are always at least nine. At harder settings, split-level embassies make their appearance. At the novice level, arrows, called "bread crumbs" by the designer, help a spy trace the path he has taken through the room complex.

The game has simultaneous movement as well as display. Players move the spies from room to room using the joystick. They can search for hidden items, set (or foil) traps and even engage in hand-to-hand fighting.

The main strategic element derives from the Trapulator, located to the right of the actual playfield. Pushing the action button twice gains access to the icons, each of which represents a different type of trap. The computerist moves the cursor with the stick until it covers the desired option and then takes the device by pushing the button. The player then positions the spy next to the hiding place and after a confirming white flash lights the screen, pushes the button once to hide it.

Since there is a remedy for each trap except the time bomb hidden somewhere in the embassy, *Spy vs. Spy* becomes a duel of wits in which agents collect — and often re-hide — the prizes while trying to derail their op-

ponent with well-placed traps. In homage to the comic strip, when one spy gets caught by a snare, the other laughs hysterically.

The artwork, is fully worthy of this entrancing contest. It is bright, colorful and entirely appropriate to the tongue-in-cheek tone of the original "Spy vs. Spy".

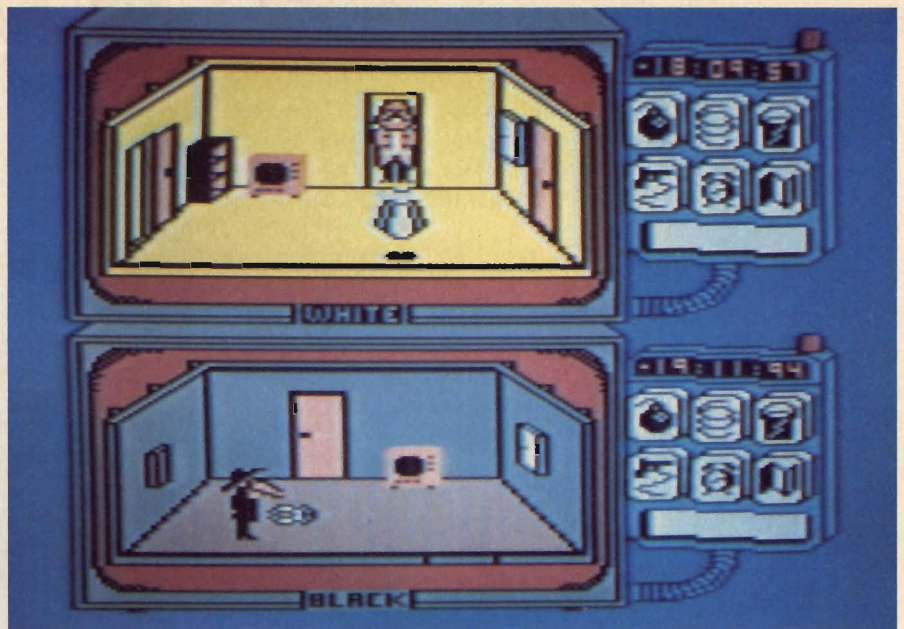
Competitive two-player computer games are quite rare. This is, perhaps, the best one ever designed. *Spy vs. Spy* is easy to learn, but like all really good strategy games, it requires much practice to master. The fluidity of play, with spies constantly pulling off offensive and defensive maneuvers, gives this one a stratospheric excitement level.

So, put on that trenchcoat and start lurking!

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF A HOT LICENSE

Professional football players hop from city to city in sleek jetliners. Minor leaguers rumble from town to town in buses. This comparison could not have been lost on Mike Riedel when First Star picked him to turn the "Spy vs. Spy" comic strip into a computer action-strategy game.

Although Mike is a relatively ex-



SPY VS. SPY (FIRST STAR)

perienced programmer who has worked on several games, *Spy vs. Spy* is his first solo project for a major league software publisher. Talk about putting everything on one roll of the dice!

A cynic might have low-rated Riedel's chances of success. Not only do games based on licensed properties have a poor track record, but circumstances dictated the Riedel would have

to work his wonders in four months, instead of the more usual six to eight.

Riedel has clearly triumphed over these obstacles by creating a fantastic program. In the process, he has vaulted into the first rank of game creators.

To insure faithfulness to the original strip, Riedel began work by immersing himself in "Spy vs. Spy". He read every

Mike Riedel, game designer, with his latest magnum opus, *Spy vs. Spy*, on-screen.



GAME OF THE MONTH

paperback collection he could find, trying to get the essentials firmly implanted in his brain. "The key thing for me," he notes, "was to keep the game true to its 'Spy' origins."

At the outset, the only thing of which Riedel was certain was that *Spy vs. Spy* should be a strategy contest rather than the more traditional type of straight action game. "Shoot-'em-ups were dead," Riedel explains, "so there was no point in developing another one."

"The first thing you notice in the strip is the fact that the spies are always watching one another, which seemed to rule out a standard alternating-turn play-mechanic. At one point during the development, I did toy with the concept of having one player run through the maze setting the traps, while the other player waited his turn. But it just didn't work. For one thing, who wants to sit waiting, while the other player walks around laying snares?"

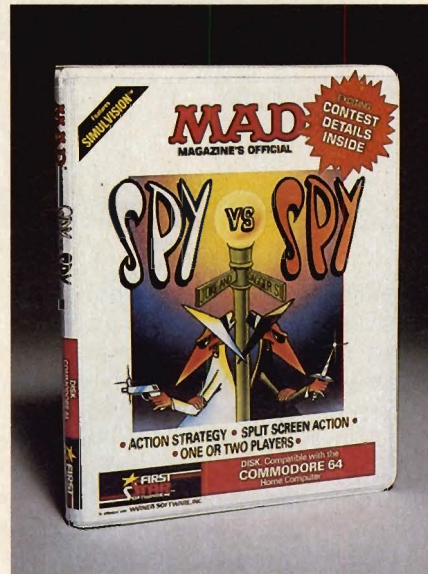
Thus was born a fascinating innovation: simulplay. By dividing the screen into two playfields, gamers can play at the same time that they watch their opponent. A single-screen mode was created to handle face-to-face physical confrontations.

"Also," Mike recalls, "you notice that in the strip the settings are always different. In a game, this wasn't realistic. I had to have boundaries, and an office building-style layout seemed like the way to go."

"Then too, the traps in the strip are also incredibly varied, but this couldn't be translated into a game format,

which requires greater structure. At one point, I had all six of the icon-keys on the 'trapulator' designated for traps, but it soon became obvious that people couldn't orient themselves within the rooms unaided, so the sixth key became the map.

"The traps went through several changes. Early on, I had a knife trap, which was similar to the gun, except



SPY VS. SPY (FIRST STAR)

that this was a reaction-trap — the spy had to step aside to avoid being hit. The spring trap was developed quite late, actually, but it worked out very well. In fact, if you set it up right, the spy can be sent flying through room after room, until he finally hits a wall!"

Mike is very much the typical electronic gamer, especially in his fondness for the little touches, the

"gimmicks" as he calls them, which can add so much for a contest's play value. When a spy is electrocuted, for example, his skeleton becomes briefly visible before he goes up in smoke. Then, after a spy is zapped, the little guy sprouts angelic wings and flutters heavenward. His opponent, meanwhile, chortles heartily, gloating over the temporary one-upmanship.

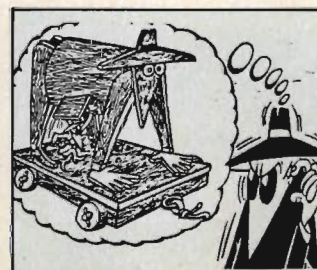
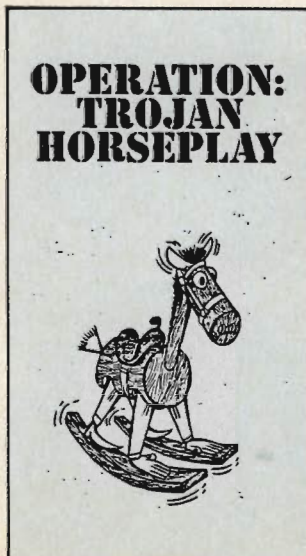
The airport sequence, a real eyeball popper, was a millstone around Mike's neck during the intensive design period. He knew he had to have something outstanding for a capper, and it seemed only natural that after managing to collect the bag full of spy-type goodies, the victorious cloak-and-dagger artist would make for the airport and zip off.

"I think they were getting a little nervous," Mike says with a barely suppressed look of mischief, referring to the folks at First Star. As the publisher, First Star was investing a hefty slice of the company's resources in this project. It had to be hot, and it obviously needed a socko finish.

"I just kept assuring them that there was going to be this terrific airport sequence. No problem. But I had absolutely no idea what I was going to do. I just knew it would involve the airport."

What ultimately evolved is a stroke of genius. Once all the objects have been assembled in the black bag, the door to the airport appears.

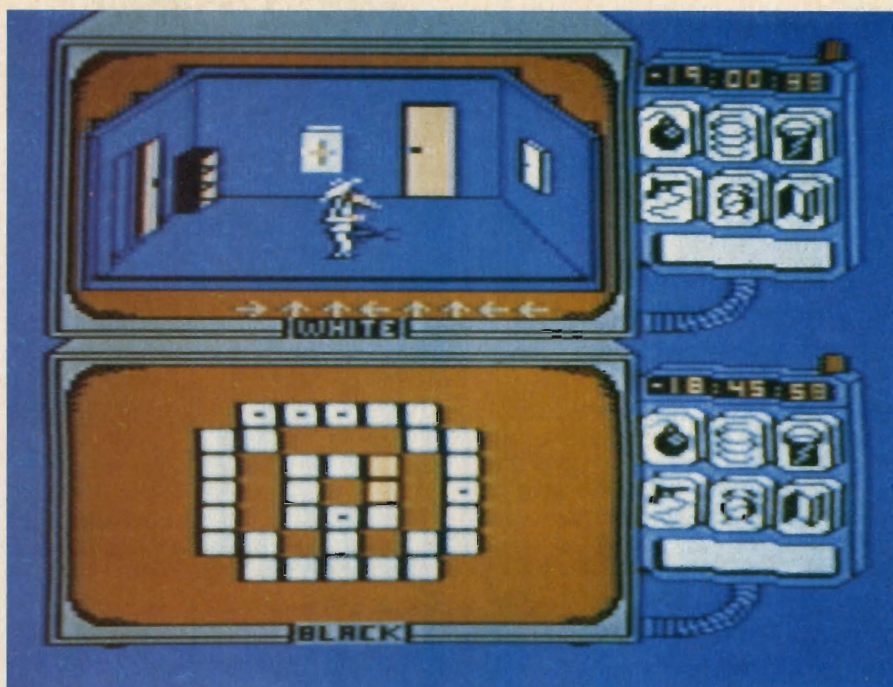
"Early on," Mike explains, "I realized that if the door to the runway became visible before all the objects were assembled, one spy could simply stand in front of the portal, wait for his opponent to pick up all the objects, then engage in combat and attempt to



take the whole bag as the busy spy reached the exit."

Try to get through that door without all the secret goodies and meet another of Mike's "gimmicks": a massive bouncer who not-so-tenderly ejects the errant spy. But get out with everything and a real visual treat awaits. Boarding a small, single-engine aircraft, the victorious spy takes off and actually leaves the confines of his micro-playfield, then soars out over the trapulator and offscreen. After having established the mini-screens as the borders of our game-reality, this departure from a pre-established context is a small delight — a triumph in recreating the wacky out-of-bounds Mad Magazine spirit in computer form!

Mike Riedel represents the new breed of designer. He works on the C-64, using his own art utility program to create his high-quality graphics. ("Someday I'll sell the thing," he mentions off-handedly.) He doesn't do his own financial negotiating, leaving his business management to Desi Net-



SPY VS. SPY (FIRST STAR)

work, a New York-based firm that also handles Christopher Chance and several other top designers. He differs from most of the newer team-oriented software weavers in his ability to complete an entire game, concept to code.

There are intriguing parallels between the lives of Riedel and Prohias, creator of "Spy vs. Spy". Although in his early 20's, Riedel arrived in the States at just about the same time Prohias did, 1963, also fleeing a country torn by political tension, Germany. Mike has expressed an interest in meeting Prohias, but the cartoonist still speaks little English and lives in Florida, while Mike resides in the suburbs of New York City.

Mike Riedel has been around, and he's paid his dues. He's plugged away

at translations, and created interesting software for companies that were unable to promote it or even stay in business. Now at last, his big opportunity has arrived.

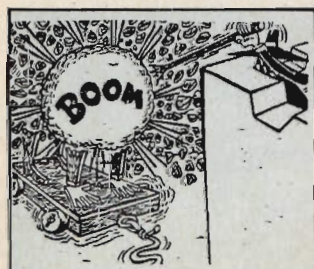
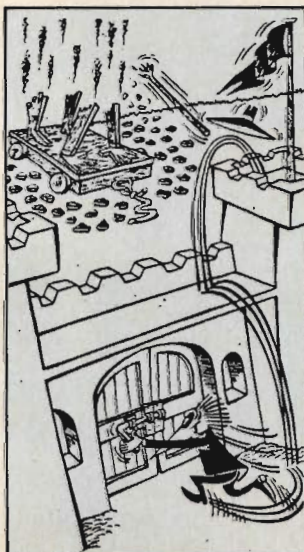
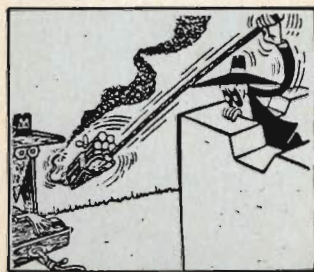
He's grabbed it with both hands, run it up on the trapulator, and come up with a cloak-and-dagger masterpiece.

MIKE RIEDEL'S HINTS FOR NOVICE SECRET AGENTS

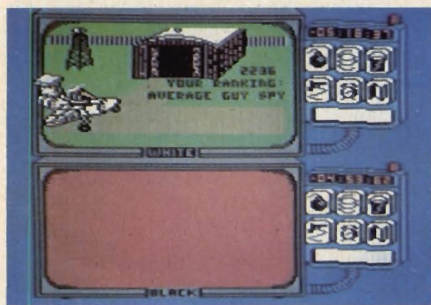
The interactive nature of *Spy vs. Spy* keeps the game from settling into well-charted ruts. Thus, you can toss any idea about "perfect plans" to win this game right out the window. Quite the contrary, the interrelationships among the various elements of the



Mike Riedel looking for inspiration.



GAME OF THE MONTH



The airport and a getaway.

game should provide ample grist for many articles analyzing strategy and tactics.

At this point in time, there's no one more authoritative about *Spy vs. Spy* than its designer, Mike Riedel. So that's where EG went to get some solid advice on how to improve the odds that your spy will be the one to fly off into the sunset with those secret plans.

The first thing a novice should do is study the trapulator. Every trap — except the time bomb — has a countermeasure. For instance, the proper response to the bucket of water over the door is an umbrella. The remedies for traps are always to be found in the same place within the complex.

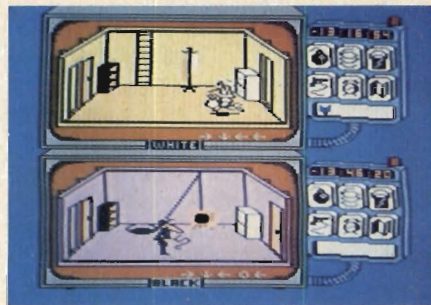
This last fact can be the basis for setting up some fiendish snares of your own. When you locate the response to

a trap, rigging that room with the trap in question practically forces your opponent to get caught sooner or later.

The difference in skill levels isn't really speed. The higher the level, the more sophisticated will be the tactics employed by the computer-controlled spy. Varying the level periodically is an excellent tune-up for play against a human, who after all, is unlikely to be quite so predictable.

When gamers first start playing *Spy vs. Spy*, they usually concentrate on collecting all the needed items as quickly as possible without much reference to what the other agent is doing at the time. This may beat another newcomer, but *Spy vs. Spy* vets know that setting lots of traps is just as important, if not more so. Remember that the spies are timed independently. Since getting caught by a trap uses up precious seconds, it is possible to simply wear down a foe and then finish the game up quickly once your rival's time has run out.

Another tip for tyro trappers: always close doors behind you. It makes the other spy pause to think twice before bursting into a room. Not only does this slow down your adversary, but it helps mask the fact that some of those closed doors hide clever traps.



Cloak-and-dagger skullduggery.

Watch the breadcrumbs, if they're available on the level being played. They can help you guide your spy through the entire complex more rapidly and efficiently by reducing the possibility of inadvertently retracing steps and hitting the same rooms again.

Two-story embassies have an added complication which may not be obvious at first. It is sometimes necessary to go back downstairs and find another staircase to reach parts of the top floor.

To say much more at this juncture might kill some of the fun of finding the subtleties which designer Riedel has lovingly inserted in this program. So buckle up your trenchcoat, pull the fedora low over your eyes to create the aura of menace, and let's go spying!



A visitation from the muse: Mike Riedel with Antonio Prohias, the author of the popular *Spy vs. Spy* comic strip.



WOZ: THE PRODIGAL SON OF SILICON VALLEY

By Doug Garr/Avon Books/
Paperback/\$2.75

Even computerists aren't immune to the human yearning to know about roots. Doug Garr, editor of VIDEO, dons his journalist's cap to profile one of the most celebrated, yet enigmatic, home computer pioneers, Steve Wozniak. Almost everyone has heard of the fabulous Woz, either in connection with Apple or the Us Festivals, but the details which turn a legend into a flesh-and-blood being have gone largely unreported.

This 155-page biography fills the

GAMES LIBRARY

gap with a well-researched account of Wozniak's life and times. Garr strikes a good balance between providing specifics about his subject and burying the narrative under lots of techie talk. The book doesn't contain every conceivable fact about Steve Wozniak, but it hits the essentials and accurately positions Woz in the overall computer movement. And it seldom bogs down

in outright hero worship.

It's pretty obvious that Wozniak is an intensely private individual. Garr only partially succeeds in producing a rounded picture of the computer kingpin's personal side. On the other hand, the writer makes a real effort to delve into the human motivation behind such projects as the Apple computer. This, in turn, makes it easier for the reader to understand the flow of events and some of the reasons why microcomputing has delived as it has.

Woz: The Prodigal Son of Silicon Valley is entertaining work. It sets solid standards for journalistic accuracy, yet it's a good read as well.

(Steve Davidson)

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"A must for all 5200™ owners"—Joystick Jolter—March, 1984

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The Video Game Update—June, 1984

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THE MUPPETS INVADE MICROPOLIS



By JOYCE WORLEY

First they were victors in video; then they hobnobbed in Hollywood. They've even menaced Manhattan. Now Jim Henson's Muppets are on the move again, mastering microcomputers with all their zany antics.

It's a project that spans several companies. Unlike most license deals featuring stars from other media, the Muppets aren't tied to any one manufacturer. Simon & Schuster, Koala Technologies, Broderbund Software and Sunburst have all inked deals with the Muppets for a variety of entertainment and educational products.

Simon & Schuster turned to Joyce Hakansson Associates, a leading educational software design house, for two learning-to-read programs starring the Muppets.

Joyce and the Hakansson team worked with Simon & Schuster, Henson Associates and the Muppet Creators to form the Muppet Institute of Technology for Simon & Schuster, a series of software that makes learning fun.

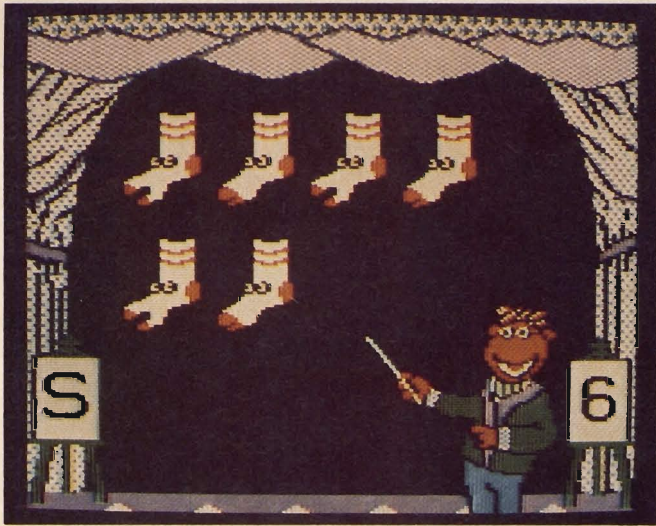
Kermit's Electronic Storymaker (Apple, Commodore 64) lets junior

computerists select words to form complete sentences which are then acted out. The sentences start very simply but always make grammatical sense even if they're a little wacky, since they combine a noun with a verb. For example, "Kermit jumps" produces a picture of that froggy puppet hopping up and down. Add a descriptive phrase, like "Kermit jumps on the moon," for a picture of Kermit leaping around a lunar landscape. All four

main Muppet characters are represented, as well as a variety of vehicles, objects, landscapes, and a lengthy list of verbs.

The Great Gonzo In Word Rider! (Simon & Schuster/Apple, C-64) is an adventure for children seven and over who already know how to read. Kids and combining adjectives and nouns, then Gonzo is the driver in a cross-country race to where Camilla the Chicken, his fowl friend, is imprisoned in a far-off castle.

Broderbund Software's **Welcome Aboard: A Muppet Cruise to Computer Literacy** (Apple) is a home education program for kids and adults. Captain Kermit guides computer sailors on a cruise that combines word processing, telecommunications, database management, programming, computer-aided design, and games. First pilot the ship around islands, using computer programming under Kermit's tutelage. Then Scooter helps word-process messages to the five Muppet characters. Replies are received on the ship's printer. Computer-aided design techniques help redo Miss Piggy's wardrobe; Fozzie helps the user explore his database



THE MUPPET DISCOVERY DISK (KOALA)



KERMIT'S ELECTRONIC STORYMAKER (S & S)



THE GREAT GONZO IN WORD RIDER! (S & S)

Educational Games Flow Forth From Muppetland



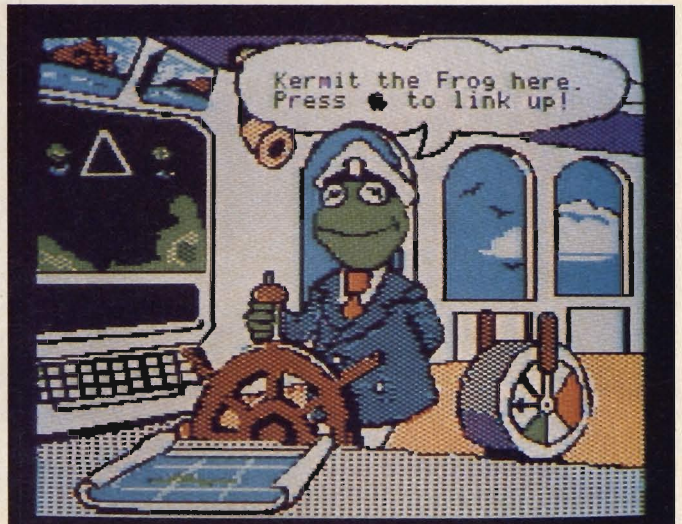
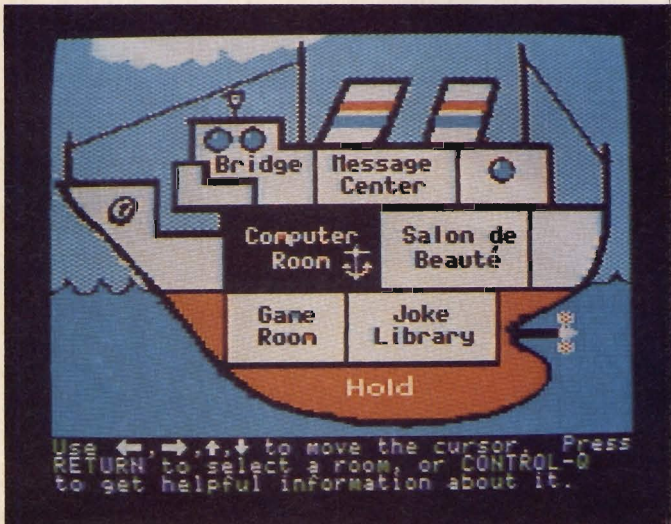
KERMIT'S ELECTRONIC STORYMAKER (S & S)

of bad jokes (written by Henry Beard, former editor of *The National Lampoon* and author of "Miss Piggy's Guide to Life.") Finally, Sam the Eagle keeps his watchful eye on the Muppet-style arcade contest in the Game Room. The Muppet-guides make the tutorials interesting and easy, then the open-ended program permits lots of experimenting once the user gets the hang of each activity.

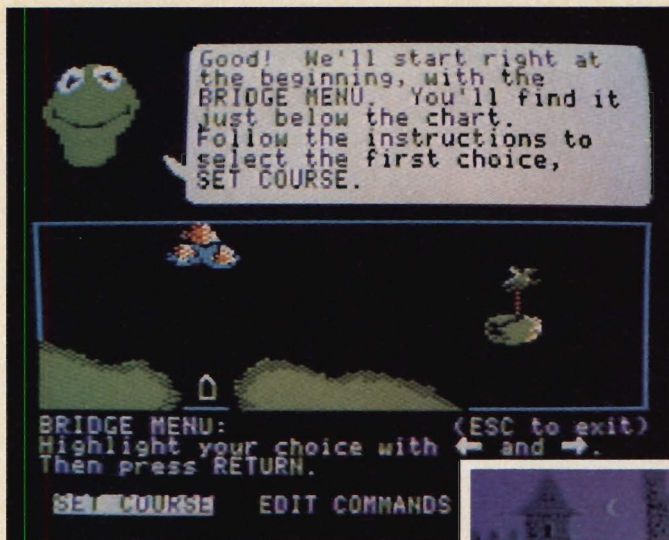
Koala Technologies' **Muppet Learning Keys** (Apple, C-64) is a child-friendly keyboard that plugs into the joyport to help youngsters use the computer. This jelly-proof mylar-surfaced pad features oversized keys

in alphabetical order, plus number and color keys, and function buttons like "go," "stop," and "erase."

Sunburst Communications created the preschool learning software included with the **Muppet Learning Keys**. The **Muppet Discovery Disk**, from a design team headed by Marge Kosel, has three programs to help kids master some primary learning functions while learning to use the keypad.



WELCOME ABOARD (BRODERBUND)



WELCOME ABOARD (BRODERBUND)



WELCOME ABOARD (BRODERBUND)

MUPPETS

"Discover" helps beginners learn the alphabet. Press any letter to get a picture of an object, like 'S' for 'socks'. The number keys produce multiples of the items, and the color key changes their hue. Then press the go button, and see the objects animate. The other



THE GREAT GONZO IN WORD RIDER (5 & 5)

two programs on the *Muppet Discovery Disk* help kids perfect letter and number recognition skills. The first

teaches upper and lower case letters, and the other helps users learn how to count. The disk is menu-operated by clever pictures, so pre-readers can manage it with no help.

The Muppets are definitely on the march, and by the grace of Miss Piggy, (and the talented design crews working with her and the other Henson characters) will probably invade your computer soon!

THE BRODERBUND BRASS

Welcome Aboard is the only Muppet program that's for both adults and children. It introduces new computerists to word processing, databasing, programming, and more.

Cricket Bird was the Project Manager who struggled to keep all the pieces together, making certain that the program's creators had everything they needed to work. George (Story-Tree) Brackett was the overall designer, and Gene (Bank St. Writer) Kusmiak was the chief programmer. Franklin (Bank St. Writer) Smith actually assembled the team, then oversaw its operations, and Gene Portwood was the head man in charge of graphics and animation. Marty (The Print Shop) Kahn designed the arcade contest in the Muppet Game Room. Chris Cerf was Creative Director, and he and Sheila Kinney worked closely with Henson Associates making sure the Muppets maintained their well-known personalities.

Keeping the spirit of the Muppets intact even as they performed the serious tasks of instructing gamers in computer literacy was one of the most



Left to right: George Brackett, Gene Kusmiak, Christopher Cerf, Gene Portwood and Sheila Kinney of Henson Associates.

important goals of the team. Gene Portwood says, "I think we've captured the humor and charm of the Muppet characters in this new educational medium."

Gary Carlston summed up the general feeling that everyone at Broderbund has for the Muppets, saying, "We plan to invite Miss Piggy and Kermit to our company picnic!"

CHRISTOPHER CERF: THE MUPPETS' MAN

Christopher Cerf, an award-winning author, humorist, composer and lyricist, is the man behind the Muppet's electronic publishing efforts. Chris met the Muppets when he was with the Children's Television Workshop in 1970, organizing that company's efforts to market items based on Sesame Street and The Electric Company. Now Chris represents Henson Associates on behalf of the Muppets.

Chris has about as many credits to his own name as the Muppets do. He graduated cum laude from Harvard in 1963, where he was Vice President of the Harvard Lampoon. Chris helped found The National Lampoon in 1970 and wrote dozens of articles for the Lampoon in the years that followed. He's a trustee of the Bank Street College of Education. He authored the famous newspaper parody "Not The New York Times," in 1978. His current book, "The Experts Speak," co-edited with Victor Navasky, was published by Pantheon Books in mid-1984. He won Playboy Magazine's Best Humor award in 1970, and has also won awards for excellence in toy design. A multi-talented creator, Chris also makes marks for himself in the music world. He's won two Grammy Awards, in 1972 and 1977, and was nominated for two more Grammys in 1984 for *Born To Add*, a collection of rock songs from Sesame Street.

His own firm, Christopher Cerf Associates, consults and creates products, books, records and computer software for such companies as Fisher-Price Toys, Warner, CBS Toys, and The Muppets. Chris also worked with Sierra on the Gelfing Adventure based on Henson's movie, "The Dark Crystal."

Chris springs from a multi-talented family. His father, the late Bennett Cerf, co-founded Random House and was himself an internationally famous writer and humorist. His mother, Phyllis Cerf Wagner, is also an editor and writer. Chris' brother Jonathan is two-time winner of the World Othello Championship.

JOYCE HAKANSSON ASSOCIATES



Joyce Hakansson and friends at home.

Joyce Hakansson brought together a crew of 30 artists, programmers, educators, game designers and writers to create educational software for kids, all working together in a magnificent Victorian-style house near downtown Berkeley. The comfortable tree-lined street is often the focal point of the brainstorming, when meetings and creative confabs are held on the steps of the mansion instead of around the conference table.

Joyce was an old friend of the Muppets even before she became involved with this project. She started the software division of Children's Television Workshop, and designed the Sesame Place Computer Galleries.

The Hakansson crew already has an impressive list of titles to its credit, including *Seahorse Hide 'N' Seek* (CBS/Atari, C-64); *Dream House* (CBS/Apple, C-64); *Flip McCloud* (Milton Bradley, TI-99/4A) *Ranch* (Spinnaker, Adam, Atari, C-64) and at least 15 other kideo games.

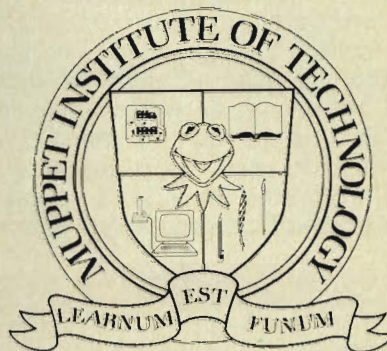
THE MUPPET INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Frank Schwartz, President of Simon & Schuster's Electronic Publishing Group, wanted something special for the Muppet programs—something to position the line squarely for fun, with some learning value on the side—so he created the Muppet Institute of Technology, a make-believe university that turns every user into a "college student".

The company plans seven instructive programs based on the Muppet characters, which together form the curriculum for this highfaluting university. The "tuition" for this "college" is the price of the software, and kids completing the learning courses win graduation certificates.

Schwartz explained that he wanted unique products that differ from the homogenous educational games already on the market. Pointing out that the use of licensed characters hasn't been too successful in software thus far, he elaborated his feeling that the difference this time is in the per-

sonalities of the Muppet characters. "The Muppets have well-known and distinctive characteristics," he said.



"We wanted to make sure the programs were special, by utilizing and reinforcing their own personalities," Schwartz explained. "We've tried to elevate each character's individuality by putting the personalities in settings where they'll flower, instead of making the Muppets conform to the game settings."

OTHER MUPPET SOFTWARE

The loveable Sesame Street characters appear in several other games especially for the younger set. The Muppet milieu inspired The Children's Television Workshop to pen games for CBS Software. *Ernie's Magic Shapes* (Atari, C-64, IBM-PCjr) features Sesame Street's Ernie in a shape and

color matching contest. *Big Bird's Special Delivery* (Atari, C-64, IBM-PCjr) uses Big Bird and Little Bird to help kids learn to compare different objects, then deliver the right packages to their proper addresses. *Sesame Street Letter-Go-Round* (Atari, C-64) features an EasyKey Keyboard Overlay, using three Muppet characters in a letter-matching ex-

ercise starring Big Bird, Bert and the Cookie Monster. *Astro-Grover* stars Grover from Sesame Street, in counting, simple addition and subtraction drills that use the EasyKey Keyboard Overlay packed with the software. *Big Bird's Funhouse* (Atari, C-64) lets preschoolers play a computerized version of hide and seek with Sesame Street characters. Games are for tots 3 to 6.

Winning Isn't Everything: What To Do After A Successful Quest

By CHARLES ARDAI

So you finally did it. It was no easy task, to be sure — gathering those first twenty treasures was simple enough, but fighting the Wizard of Frobozz nearly got you killed. And that final faceoff against the Dungeon Master was enough to test anyone's mettle. But you persevered; you hung in there through thick and thin, facing danger at every turn until at last you emerged victorious. You conquered the famous **Zork** trilogy.

And so it goes with all adventure games. Big or small, hard or easy, text or graphics, all adventures have one thing in common: when they're over, they're over. It may take weeks or months to finish such a game, and some have even been known to last for years. In fact, one of the measures of an adventure's quality is how long it can hold a player's interest. (That is not to say that an adventure is good if it keeps the player puzzling over a single conundrum for days on end; on the contrary, a good adventure absorbs the player into an environment in which there is always something new to see or do, some new puzzle always just around the corner.) Still, regardless of which category an adventure



THE ZORK TRILOGY (INFOCOM)

game falls into, once one has solved all that there is to solve, that's it. The game is over. And no matter how satisfying the ending is, most (if not all) gamers wish that there was something, anything, left to do with completed adventures besides relegating them to a dusty pile on the closet shelf.

And there is.

First of all, even when an adventure is finished, there's usually a great deal left to see that the average player might have missed. In Broderbund's **Mask of the Sun**, the entire pyramid complex to the east is, for the most part, entirely incidental to the game. In fact, since it's an arduous (and, quite frankly, dull) jeep ride away, most gamers bypass this section completely.

Then too, there is the time limit, which makes excess travel inadvisable. This is unfortunate, since the eastern pyramid holds some of the game's best graphics. It's certainly worth a side trip once the game itself has been mastered.

Many adventures have similar "extra" sections, often for no other reason than to mislead a player into thinking that a worthless bit of information is actually crucial to the completion of the quest. For instance, Infocom's **Sorcerer** has Bozbarland, a midway known to the public as "Zorky Park", complete with a roller coaster, flume and haunted house, all of which can be used by the gamer, but none of which have the least bit of bearing on the mission at hand. However, in the same game there's a pile of bat guano hidden unobtrusively in a damp cave (as if anyone would want a pile of bat guano in the first place), without which even the best player will end up caught in a no-win situation little more than halfway through the game. Appearances can be deceiving, you see.

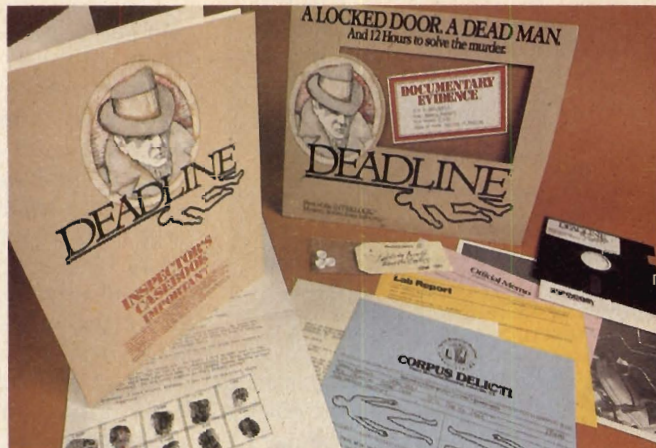
Still, all of the rides and attractions are fully programmed into the game.

Adventure Games: Is There Life After 'Game Over'?

Adventure Games:
Adventure Games:
Adventure Games:
Adventure Games:



PLANETFALL (INFOCOM)



DEADLINE (INFOCOM)

ADVENTURE GAMES

will find the above even vaguely funny, or for that matter, understand its humor at all. But since both are science-fiction comedies, including the joke was not really much of a gamble on the part of the programmers.

Nearly all new adventures have bits of humor hidden away somewhere, just waiting to be ferreted out by some ingenious adventurer. In fact, sad comment though it may be, finding them sometimes takes more ingenuity than solving the game itself.

Each publisher deals with adventure game humor in a different fashion. Infocom, for example, does so by integrating its humor into the storylines of its games. Even its hard-edged mystery series (consisting of *Deadline* and *The Witness*) is packed with humorous responses to the player's commands to do such things as take certain drugs, pilfer the hostess' silverware or follow a corpse ("Is this what they call a death wish?", asks the computer).

Infocom also tries occasionally to poke fun at itself with gags like the authors of *Enchanter* (Mark Blanc and Dave Lebling) making a cameo appearance in their own game. Similarly, *Sorcerer* introduces the player to the Vezza spell, named after Al Vezza, Infocom's Chief Executive Officer, and the Dorn Beast, a vicious monster, seemingly named after the head of the Invisiclues department, Mike Dornbrook.

Of course, there are other things that a gamer can do with a finished

adventure besides searching for sometimes-obscure jokes and puns. Those who are artistically inclined can do a text adventure justice by making it into a drawing or a model. It really does add new life to an all-text game to see its locales depicted, especially in three dimensions. Just try making a model of a favorite adventure, using whatever materials are at hand. It's not as simple as it appears at first, as even the smallest of adventures cover a lot of ground.

Another aspect of this is simply try-



ULTIMA II (SIERRA)

ing to make a map of an entire game. Mapping the worlds of, say, *Ultima II* (Sierra) may even end up more difficult than the game itself. When playing the game to win, an adventurer would cover only as much territory as is necessary to obtain the magical equipment and the power to defeat Minax the Enchantress. However, mapping the whole game would entail traveling across the numerous continents, not only on the Earth, but also on all of the

other planets of the solar system. And what's more, all of this travel would have to be repeated in each of five time periods, ranging from the Era of Legends to the world after a nuclear holocaust (known as the Era of the Aftermath).

No, it's not impossible. Only very nearly so. And it's an ideal challenge for the master gamer that managed to defeat Minax.

In a great many adventure games like the *Wizardry* series or *Ultima III*, part of the challenge is in coordinating the actions of a group of characters on the way to a common goal. On the other hand, some games are made with one player in mind, and these challenge the player to coordinate various forms of input in order to efficiently control the actions of a single figure. Switching these around presents a lot of interesting possibilities for an adventure game that's been completed.

The Return of Heracles (Quality Software) puts the player in legendary Greece with an awesome task ahead: To complete the Twelve Labors of Heracles. In order to reach this end, the player is allowed to enlist the aid of as many mythical heroes as possible, and then lead them about to perform the various tasks. If all of the tasks are performed correctly, Zeus is pleased and the game has been solved.

Once the player has learned all of the strictures of each task, completing them is not too difficult; certainly it's not too tough with a virtual pantheon of fabled Greek heroes and demi-gods at the gamer's beck and call. But what if one were to play the game with but a

single character to command? If nothing else, it would spice up the gameplay, not to mention the fact that it would require the player to plan strategy much more carefully.

On the flip side, there are games like **Gateway to Apshai** and **Beyond Castle Wolfenstein** which require the player to use a joystick for motion and combat and keyboard controls for everything else from spell casting to lock-picking. Playing the game with two players (with one manning the joystick and one the keyboard) may seem to be a logical solution to make the game simpler, but it doesn't work that way. Two players controlling the same character requires the development of some new skills which wouldn't surface in regular play. Honest cooperation, for starters, and of course, intense trust in one's partner (after all, when a zombie is charging and one player shouts, "Ready the Confuse spell!" there's no time for the other player to reply, "Why?").

Yet another enjoyable pastime is to try to find all of an adventure's possible endings. Not all adventures have more than one ending — actually, most don't. But for those that do, finding all the possibilities is a worthy challenge.

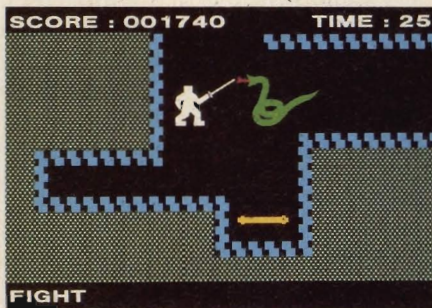
Mystery games are notorious for having multiple endings; in that sort of game the ending changes according to how much evidence the detective has procured and whether motives have been established and alibis broken. Infocom's **Deadline** has a total of ten separate endings, of which only one ends with the guilty parties locked up.

Actually, **Deadline** is not typical of all multiple ending adventures. Many have numerous endings, which are all positive. A good example is **Planetfall**, which has two equally good endings. Which is better: being stranded on an alien planet but becoming its supreme ruler and receiving an unlimited bank account, or getting rescued by the Galactic Navy, becoming a hero and having your arch-nemesis reassigned as your personal toilet attendant?

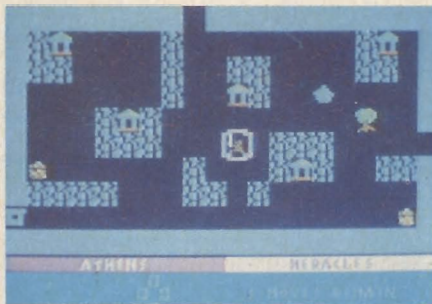
Games with many solutions can be played over and over again for the obvious reason that each replaying can have an entirely new outcome. In a similar vein are games that don't have multiple endings but have several solutions to certain problems.

Sierra's **King's Quest** represents a quantum leap forward in this respect. Not only is it unique in that the player can manipulate an on-screen character, Sir Graham, through various action sequences with a joystick, but each problem that he faces has two possible solutions, a relatively obvious, low-scoring one and a less obvious, higher-scoring one. For instance, when Sir Graham comes up against a troll that blocks his passage over a bridge, he has two choices. He can bribe the troll with one of his precious treasures, or he can use a carrot to entice a nearby goat to butt the troll off the bridge.

Sierra's Larry Archer says, "The first time I played I got a really low score



GATEWAY TO APSHAI (EPYX)



RETURN OF HERACLES (QUALITY SOFTWARE)

because I had given all my treasures away. At the end of the game I had almost nothing left. The next time I played, my score nearly doubled." And by the time *all* of the possibilities have been exhausted players can look forward to **King's Quest II**, which is scheduled for release in mid-1985. The only bad news is that both programs take up 128K and at present only run on the IBM PC and PCjr.

One of the more underrated things that one can do with finished adventures is try to beat them. Not try to beat them in the sense of a high number of points or a low number of moves, but beat them by outsmarting

the program, by using bugs and odd quirks in the program to do things that the programmer hadn't intended.

One such circumstance occurs in **Zork III**, in which the player can summon the Dungeon Master simply by typing, "Dungeon Master, come here." However, by some fault of the program, the player can also drag the Dungeon Master through the whole game by typing, "Dungeon Master, follow me." In this manner, the Dungeon Master can be led anywhere, including the Telpotation Chamber (where if the player plays his cards right, the Dungeon Master can end up stuck in the worlds of **Zork I** or **Enchanter!**).


One of the common compliments



WIZARDRY III (SIR-TECH)



KING'S QUEST (SIERRA)

heaped on adventure games is that they encourage use of the imagination, and this is doubly true when, after the games have been solved, one gets a chance to explore all of the possibilities of the adventure realm. True, even this won't last forever, but how many other forms of computer entertainment can hold your interest for so long? So take heart. Completed adventures don't have to become hand-me-downs or, even worse, something to be stuck under the wiggly leg of a table. The game may be over, but, to paraphrase Captain Kirk and company, the computer adventure is just beginning. 

PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

On Your Marks, Get Set. . .Go For Your Joysticks!

DECATHLON

Activision/ColecoVision/Cartridge

Cramming ten different Olympic sporting events into a regular ColecoVision cartridge is the work of wizards, particularly when the quality of **Decathlon** is considered.

Decathlon sports engrossing, extremely life-like video renditions of the 100-meter dash, the long jump, 400-meter race, the shot put event, and the 110-meter hurdles. The 1500-meter footrace, javelin and discus throws, pole vault, and the high jump round out the classic itinerary.

For one or two Olympians, this cart offers two play options, game or practice. Once your reflexes and timing are honed by innumerable trial runs, (practice does make perfect here), the full game mode enters into successive matches until the entire ten events are completed. (In the practice mode gamers can select, and repeat as needed, any events they need improvement in.)

The graphics are detailed and realistically colored. With two figures competing on an earthen track that runs horizontally before a grandstand full of faceless people, *Decathlon* puts players in the mood. The spirit of friendly competition really grips you whether you're hurling the javelin, making a long jump, or going for the gold in the 1500 meters.

Players normally have three attempts at non-race events, the best score being posted to their totals. Scratches and missed attempts help the game closely parallel life. Elapsed time and the score are displayed for each race, distance covered or height attained and a corresponding score are posted for the balance of the events.

Even if one of the players is out-classed in a heat, the 400 meters for example, both figures remain on-

screen. The distance markers and the running clock show the progress of each. It's a nice touch which adds greatly to the playability.

Though the action is pretty limber and the visuals attractive, the sound effects are somewhat limited. Except for a pregame theme, the only audio enhancements are the sounds of pounding footsteps and the heavy thud of landing objects (shotput, javelin, etc.).

There is one bone of contention with this otherwise excellent sports simulation: the method of movement. To activate a figure, video jocks must toggle the joystick left to right and vice-versa at a furious, hand-numbing, joystick junking pace. (A little circular movement helps with slightly less effort). If anything could

be worse than repeatedly hitting the fire button for auto fire or to flap an animal's wings (as in *Joust*), this is it.

Even so, *Decathlon* has got what it takes. The big *D* is, without question, the best videogame multi-sport simulation on the market.

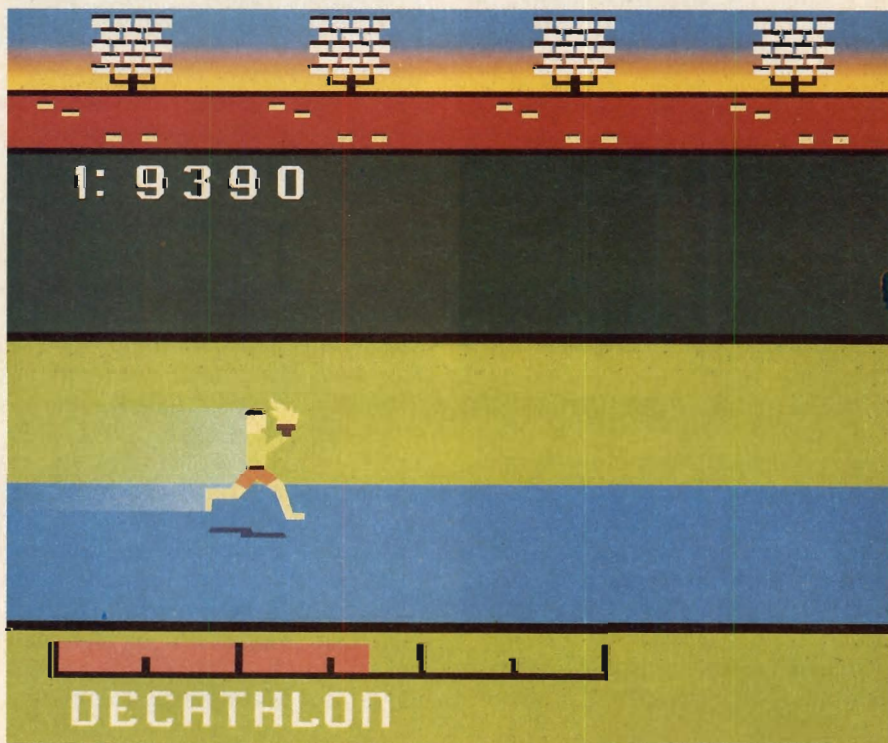
(Ted Salamone)

H.E.R.O.

Activision/ColecoVision/Cartridge

Keeping true to form in one respect, yet departing noticeably in another, Activision has released the ColecoVision version of **H.E.R.O.**, the action yarn in which home arcaders guide a flightpack-propelled figure through danger-filled mineshafts to rescue stranded miners.

Activision usually produces translations which play and look much like



DECATHLON (ACTIVISION)

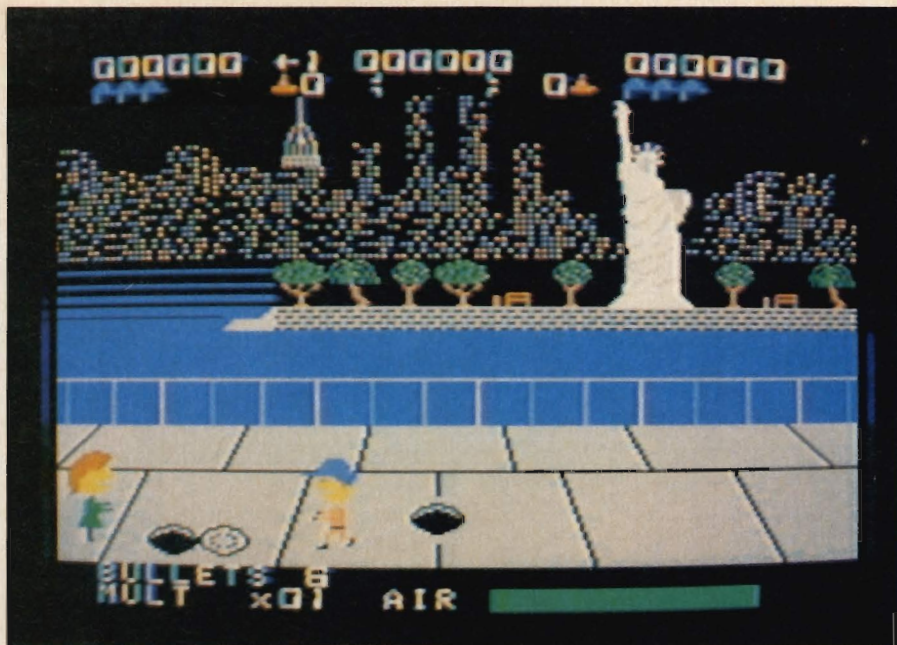
the original release as possible; thus providing gamers with a continuity which helps them choose what game they should spend their hard-earned money on. From past experience, or reviews like this one, you know Activision doesn't mess with success, although they may tweak it a bit to take advantage of some special features found in the different hardware.

H.E.R.O., thank goodness, is a welcome exception to that conservative approach. Instead of altering gameplay (as they did by adding a two player option to the 5200 *Kaboom*), Activision has wisely used the superior graphics capabilities of the CV unit to provide a breathtaking underground panorama.

The player is equipped with several sticks of dynamite (per level or life), about five game lives, the swing-wing flightpack, and a good supply of fuel. Making your way to the miners is no easy task either, they don't do anything to help you — or themselves for that matter.

Numerous deadly creatures fly, hang around, or gyrate about this underground domain. Advanced levels feature blacked-out areas (watch what you touch!), lava walls, and unseen passages. Long-necked beasties similar to the asteroid monster in "Star Wars" put in cameo appearances, for homesick space travelers no doubt!

Joystick control is as smooth as a baby's you-know-what, the animation likewise. Besides excelling in the



SEWER SAM (INTERPHASE)

tantalizing colors and richness of detail departments, *H.E.R.O.* also gets high grades for its addictive play-mechanic. Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.

There are many levels of play and most, even the hardest, are directly accessible through keypad input, though the wise compugamer will start at the beginner's level. It's much safer that way.

Blasting or avoiding monsters and generally flying about consumes precious fuel. Watch the on-screen, bar graph fuel gauge if you don't believe it. The only way to tank up is to rescue

a stranded toiler of the inner earth. Naturally this becomes more difficult to accomplish with each successive level, mainly because the miners are located on deeper and deeper levels. The hazards become numerous, the dark areas proliferate, and blocked passages occur more frequently. Fail to top off though, and it's curtains for our *H.E.R.O.*

Congrats Activision! *H.E.R.O.* is a real champion.

(Ted Salamone)

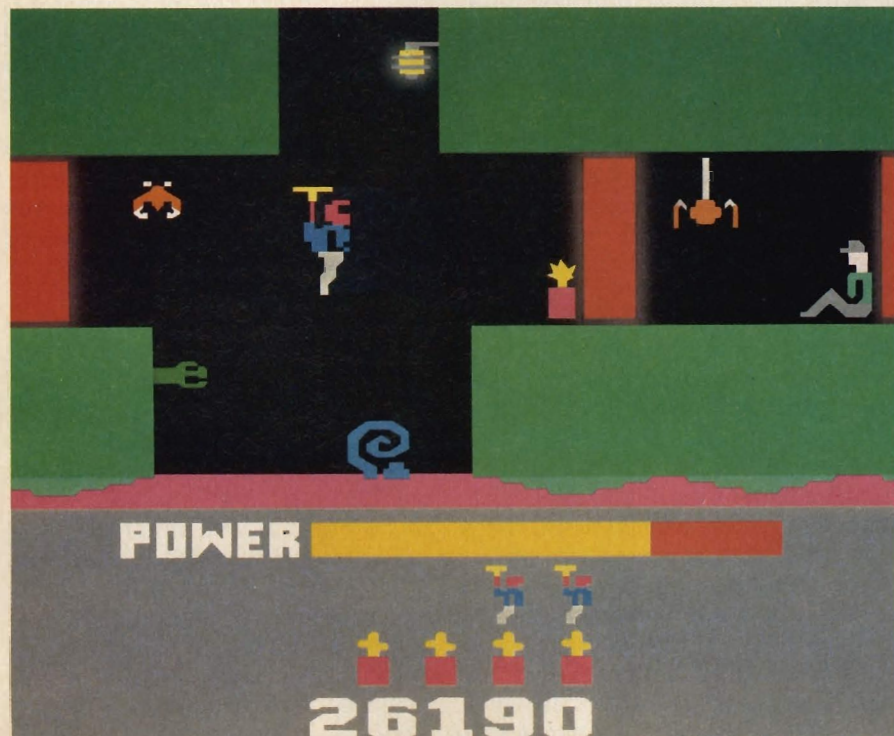
SEWER SAM

Interphase/ColecoVision/Cartridge

What's the fuss all about? Why, ColecoVision games that speak, of course. Even more unbelievable is the fact that they talk without additional hardware. That's right, no need to shell out big bucks for yet another expansion module!

Sewer Sam, one of Interphase's "talkies" for the original third wave programmable, brings new gaming excitement to dedicated videogame machines. When Sam is up to his hip-boots in trouble scouring New York's sewer system for hostile, missile-launching submarines, he'll gasp in despair ("Oh, no!"), die suddenly ("Ouch!"), or meet a demise most horrible. (You'll have to play the game to hear the scream, mere words cannot do it justice.)

Packing a six-shooter with extra ammo, our hero prowls various underground passages until he discovers the three harboring ICBM-firing nuclear subs. To ensure the safety of the free world he must destroy (with his



H.E.R.O. (ACTIVISION)

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PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

pistol) a trio of missiles from each sub before they launch through a crater hole in the roof of the tunnels. One thing's certain, Dirty Harry would probably like to get his hands on Sam's heater!

Every step of the way deadly rats, bats, creatures of the avian persuasion, crocodiles, and sharks menace Sam. When spiders spin paralyzing webs, the other baddies zero in on you. A player's only defenses are a quick tango and his trusty sidearm.

Besides the speech, *Sewer Sam* boasts excellently simulated, three-dimensional visuals. Passageways seem to narrow to a point somewhere in the distance, widening with every advancing football. The animation is very smooth and the coloring is very pleasing to the eye. The audio enhancements are top drawer too!

Sewer Sam can entertain one or two arcaders at a time, though the duet is structured so players take turns maneuvering their sanitation engineer. Joystick response is quick and accurate, just as it must be in such an action-oriented game.

Besides offering a lot of challenge and a good dose of staying power, *Sewer Sam* comes with a sharp looking poster. As with every Interphase title so far, *Sewer Sam* is a first rate, highly entertaining bit of electronic diversion. A must have for ColecoVisionaries.

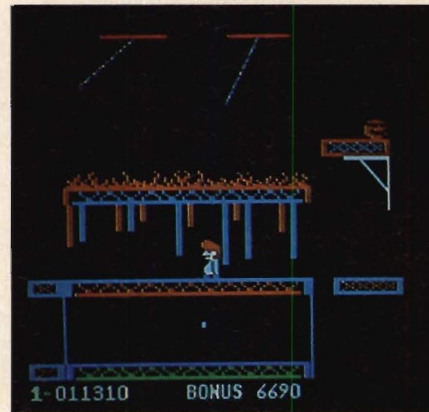
(Ted Salamone)

SAMMY LIGHTFOOT

Sierra/ColecoVision

Sammy Lightfoot's plot is entirely unique, even if its climbing and jumping play mechanic isn't; the player, in the title role, is auditioning for a circus. In order to get the job, Sammy has to survive three screens of death-defying tasks, ranging from a simple leap over a rolling ball to an almost impossible swing from one trapeze to another over a pit of fire.

The game is filled with odd gadgets that are either meant to impede Sammy's progress or help him along. There are trampolines scattered around the first screen, for instance, which bounce the player from one level to another. Other elements in the game are not so readily identifiable, like the set of rectangular boxes floating around screen two. These, along with a strange set of descending rods on



SAMMY LIGHTFOOT (SIERRA)

screen three, detract from the overall feel of the game a bit, but not terribly much. They have their purposes in the game, and that's what matters.

Each screen presents the player with an entirely new series of challenges, and since very few of them are explained in the rules, the player will have to spend some time getting used to them. This is not bad, though; it makes the game a lot more interesting than it would otherwise have been. In addition, there are four separate skill levels for each screen. Each skill level adds a new element to the gameplay of the screen; the game doesn't just get faster—it changes. For example, on the second level of the second screen, the pattern of the floating blocks changes completely. And since the player has the option of starting at any skill level, the game can be somewhat different each time it's played.

Sammy Lightfoot's graphics are good, but nothing spectacular, especially for the ColecoVision. The screen elements are pretty simple, made up mostly of straight lines and rectangles. Sammy himself is quite a character, with his fifties hairdo and his perpetual slouch, and the circus foreman, the "Cool Pumpkin" (a small orange pumpkin wearing shades), is nicely drawn. Sadly, however, sound effects are almost nonexistent; after a short, musical burst before each screen the sound might as well be turned off.

Sammy Lightfoot is simply fun, with its emphasis on action, rather than strategy and planning. It does require imagination, though.

Too many new games seem to have forgotten how to have fun. *Sammy Lightfoot* remembers.

(Charles Ardai) ☺

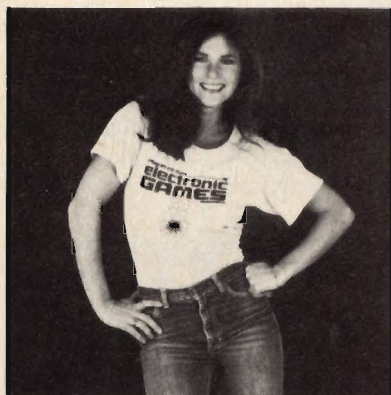
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PARTY QUIZ

Best kept secret of the season

Computer gamers play PQ for hours

What's a PQ, you ask? See—I told you it was the best-kept secret! PQ stands for *Party Quiz*, a computer-trivia game from Suncom Inc.

PQ is a *social* trivia game that allows up to four players to participate simultaneously. Each player uses a controller to respond directly to the trivia questions on the screen.

Recently, a couple of friends, Chuck and Joan, stopped over to visit. I had just received my review copy of PQ that afternoon, and I decided to "boot-up" the program and see just how social this game really was. I couldn't have picked a better couple to participate in an "acid test"—Chuck hates board-type trivia games, and Joan absolutely loathes computers, although she likes trivia questions.

Setting up the game was easy. Each set comes with 2700 "general" questions. Suncom will be offering additional question disks covering specific categories including Sports, Entertainment, a "Bible Edition", and General Edition 2 which expands your inventory of general questions. I received the Commodore/Atari version, although *Party Quiz* is also available for the Apple and will be available soon for the IBM-PC.

After offering my guests beverages and excusing myself to fetch their drinks, I slipped into my study and loaded the game. Returning, I casually asked, "Which country was the first to issue postage stamps and what was the year?" Joan quickly answered, "Great Britain in 1840; now ask me a hard one!" My plan was working; we were on the subject of trivia. I mentioned that I had just received PQ that day, and I was wondering if they'd like to try answering some of the questions asked by the computer. We gravitated into my study.

I handed controllers to Joan and Chuck. My wife, Liz, and I manned the third and fourth. I explained that the computer would display a question,

ADVERTISEMENT



PQ: First "social" computer entertainment

along with four possible answers which were numbered 1-4. The rules were simple: select the right answer and press the corresponding button on the controller. Joan mumbled something about being a klutz, but she took the controller anyway, eyeing it suspiciously.

After Joan answered the first two questions correctly, I suspected that I was being set-up here; for a "klutz" who hated computers, she was doing very well. She missed on the third question, but Chuck answered correctly. Liz answered the next few questions correctly, and then finally, I got one right. It's not every day I get to look like a dummy in front of my friends!

We spent hours playing Party Quiz and all had a great time playing! The questions covered a myriad of topics, from the color of the Lone Ranger's pants to whether the first footprint on the moon was from a right or left foot.

It had been a special evening, indeed! It's not often that I get the chance to use "non-computing" people for play-testing a new product, and even rarer when I can have my friends actively participate in a computer-based game. We're even considering throwing a PQ Party one of these weekends!

As they were departing for home, Joan mentioned that it was about time she bought a computer for her son to do his schoolwork on. Who's she kidding? Not me—I know she's going to buy one to play Party Quiz on!

As I mentioned at the beginning of this piece, PQ is probably the best-kept secret of this Christmas season, at least for now. If you know someone who has a home computer, and/or is a trivia buff, why not pick up a copy of Party Quiz—it makes a perfect Christmas gift. But you'd better hurry while you can still get one—you know how hard it is to keep things a secret at this time of year!

PQ is available at your favorite local computer retailer. To locate the dealer nearest you, call toll free 1-800-323-8341. (In Illinois 1-312-459-8000).

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Where Have All The Lasers Gone? Can This Be The End Of The Road For 'The Saviour Of The Arcades'?

Not much more than a year ago, people were calling laser games the saviours of the arcade. These were the machines that would restore the flagging popularity of videogames. Gamers would pack the arcades to play them, promised the laser game makers. And while they were waiting their turns, these people would also plunk a few quarters into the more conventional, non-laser videogames, a double bonus for arcade owners. Eventually, it was predicted, laser games would do to conventional games what

By DAN PERSONS

still be a few games with computer-generated graphics stuck in the corner of an arcade, but the wave of the future was the laser, and it was destined to wash away all that preceded it.

To say that the predictions have not come true is an understatement. Laser machines that once commanded a hefty price of three and four thousand dollars are now being sold off at a thousand dollars apiece, so eager are distributors to clear out their inventory.

It's not uncommon to enter an arcade nowadays and see **Space Ace** and **Firefox** standing idle, their attract modes repeating endlessly to no one in particular. Where are the players? They're crowding around such games as **TX-1** and **Punch-Out**, machines that feature high-res, computer-generated graphics. While arcaders were once willing to shell out fifty cents to walk in Dirk the Daring's boots, operators now have to cut prices down to the standard two-bits to encourage play.



STAR RIDER (WILLIAMS)



DRAGON'S LAIR (STARCOM)

LASER'S

What happened? How can a system that held so much promise suddenly find itself on the scrap heap? There's no pat answer to these questions. But from what one can gather by looking at the short history of laser games, it seems almost as if the entire medium was preordained to failure.

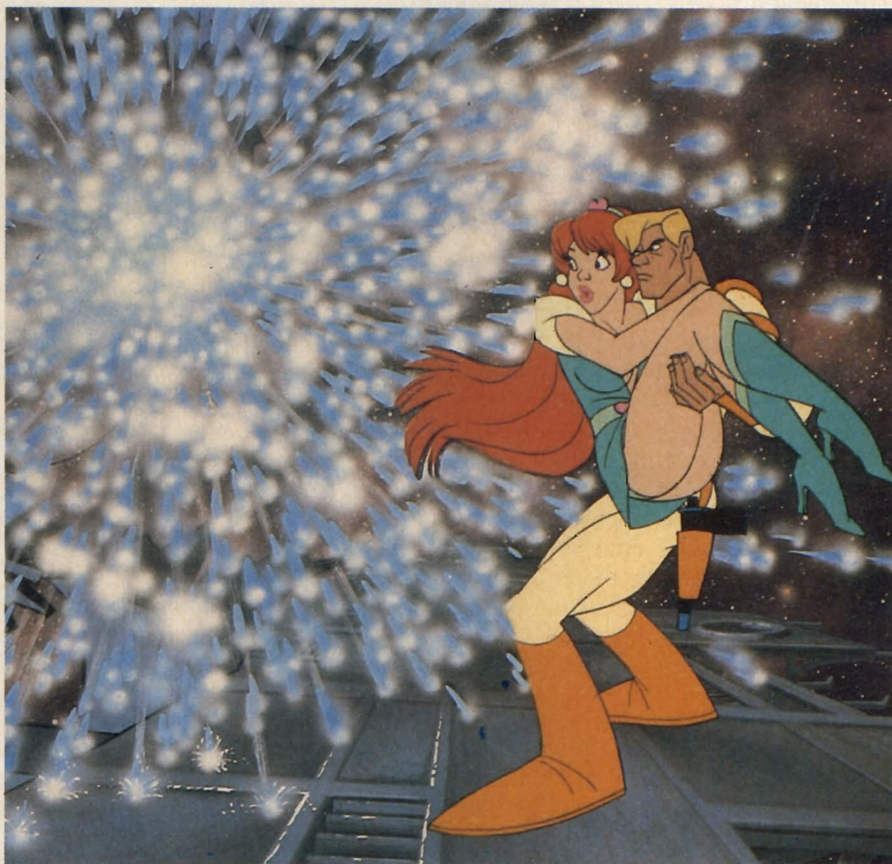
In the beginning there was, of course, **Dragon's Lair**. Combining the game development skills of RDI Video Systems, the animation talent of Don Bluth Studios, and the manufacturing know-how of Cinematronics, *Dragon's Lair* appeared in the arcades in the summer of 1983. Not since **Space Invaders** hit these shores was there such excitement about a single game. It was featured on every T.V. program from Entertainment Tonight to The New Tech Times. Operators had to install monitors above the game

cabinets to handle the swell of spectators that the machine inevitably drew. Licensing deals followed, with the image of Dirk the Daring slated to appear on everything from a Saturday morning cartoon show to lunch boxes and T-shirts. And, naturally, the quarters kept rolling in, enough not only to ensure *Dragon's Lair* a place among the videogame classics, but also to guarantee that the game's follow up, *Space Ace*, would be a big a hit.

So, a happy ending. Especially, you would think, for Starcom (formerly Cinematronics) a company which was deep in Chapter Eleven proceedings before the advent of *Dragon's Lair*. Well, not quite a happy ending, actually. According to Starcom president Jim Pierce, the company is only now pulling itself out of Chapter Eleven, no thanks to either *Dragon's*

Lair or *Space Ace*. According to Mr. Pierce: "Cinematronics didn't make a lot of money on *Dragon's Lair*. In fact, if you combined *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* together, we may have lost a good bit of money."

Nor did *Dragon's Lair* prove to be the miracle that the arcade owners had prayed for. Sure, the machines brought in the players, but only when they were working, and that wasn't often. It didn't take arcade operators long to discover that the disk player used in the machines just wasn't up to the rigors of the arcade environment. Mr. Pierce readily admits to the problem: "To be honest, we weren't prepared for the volume of failures. We had been assured that this was the absolute best disk player in the world. It was Pioneer's industrial model, it retailed for \$2499.00. It was go-



SPACE ACE (STARCOM)

LAST STAND

LASER'S LAST STAND



THAYER'S QUEST (RDI)

ing to do the job and it wouldn't have any problems. As it turned out, there were numerous problems.

"It was quite a struggle at first. We talked to operators and distributors about it and their comment was, 'who cares if it only works a month? You could throw it away and still make money.' But once the money was made, they didn't want to lose that income and they wanted to keep it working."

Ron Getlan certainly wanted to keep the machines up and running. As vice-president of Just Games Incorporated, a company that manages a number of arcades in the northeastern United States, he had made a sizable investment in *Dragon's Lair*. "One of the major problems," says Mr. Getlan, "was that the original *Dragon's Lair* was made with a three-year-old, discontinued Pioneer player. The company did in all the operators by doing that, because Pioneer had no parts, no back up, and it was a piece of garbage player."

It wasn't just *Dragon's Lair* that was giving Mr. Getlan headaches, though: "I said to my chief technician this morning, 'I don't know what I'd have you do if we didn't have laserdisc machines.' The laserdiscs from all of the manufacturers, Pioneer, Phillips, all of them have been terrible problems. They've been breaking down, there's a shortage of parts, and the distributors and manufacturers all have their hands full."

Joe Dillon of Williams Electronics,

for one, is not too surprised at the technical failure of laserdisc games: "The games are just more complicated than the normal videogame. They take more periodic routine maintenance, they're more difficult to move, and they are a little bit more sophisticated. So that I think the support probably hasn't bogged down, it's just that, by their nature, they are going to have more problems. The player we used in our game, *Star Rider*, was very reliable. We had it made to our specifications with some modifications, so we haven't had that difficulty with players."

But even without a high breakdown rate, Williams also had its share of trouble. "The year for lasers has certainly not been what was expected, by any means," says Mr. Dillon. "In the beginning, *Star Rider* was received very well. When it went into the arcade, yes, it was an attractive game and a popular game and it was right at the top of the charts. But as far as



BEGA'S BATTLE (DATA EAST)

success is concerned, I guess it's measured in many different ways. For a player there's one measure of success. For the manufacturer, for us, it was not a success in the sense that we did not sell the amount we had anticipated selling.

"I think that at the time we came out with our game, and with many of the laser games, the players had become somewhat disenchanted. So there weren't the coins in the cashbox to produce a large enough return to the operator to stimulate him to buy."

There was a good reason why players were becoming disenchanted with laser games. After *Dragon's Lair* appeared, manufacturers raced to come up with their own laser machines. The philosophy became "Get it into the arcades, and subject matter be damned." In rapid succession, gamers saw the likes of *Bega's Battle* (*Space Invaders*), *Laser Grand Prix* (*Pole Position*), *Cliff Hanger* (save the damsel), *Space Ace* (save the damsel), *Astron Belt* (first-person shoot-'em-up), *Cube Quest* (first-person shoot-'em-up), *M.A.C.H. 3* (first-person shoot-'em-up), and *Firefox* (guess what? first-person shoot-'em-up). In short, companies were falling into the derivative trap that nearly did in the conventional video games. Boredom rapidly set in.

"I think I would have enjoyed having *Space Ace* in November instead of February," says Jim Pierce, "In November there still were not a lot of bad laserdisc products in the marketplace, and if only three games had been introduced that year, I think laserdiscs would be alive and well today."

"If the game's earning, operators can live with the service problems. They don't like 'em, but it's worthwhile. But if the game's not earning, it's devastating, and I really think that several of the manufacturers hurt us."

Rick Dyer, president of RDI, agrees: "Manufacturers seem to have lost track of the fact they're in the fashion business, and fashions change. But the manufacturers haven't changed, they keep coming out with the same old stuff. After a while, people get bored. The novelty's not there. They need something new."

The game makers, of course, are well aware that arcade-goers are

bored. Unfortunately, manufacturers also seem to have decided that what the arcade-goers want is anything but laser games. For Joe Dillon, it's a simple question of money: "If there were not this premium on the price of producing these games, if the price of the laserdisc players came down, if the price of generating the backgrounds reduced itself, and the cost of producing the game got more in line with player demand, then I'd think we could afford the technology. We had several games in storyboard form, but the players haven't come to laser games in significant enough amounts to defray the increased costs of producing these games. It's not a good economic equation for anybody."

"I think all manufacturers, when they got into laser games, looked at it as a temporary measure for somewhere between three and five years at the most," says Jim Pierce. "My personal opinion is that laserdisc games like *Dragon's Lair* are a thing of the past. I don't think you can ask an operator to pay three or four thousand dollars for a product and expect him to get a good return on his investment today. And I don't think you can expect him to take the risk up front."

So, is this the end of laser games? It's true that many companies, including Starcom, Williams, and Mylstar, have no plans to introduce new laser machines in the near future. It's also true that Coleco has dropped its plans for a home laser system that would interface with the Adam computer system, claiming that "the cost involved would be such that it would not be a mass merchandizable concept at this time."

What's left? Well, computer hobbyists can purchase interfaces from such companies as Video Visions Associates and Digital Research, Incorporated that allow one to hook a laserdisc player up with a personal computer. That assumes, of course, that the user wants to go to the trouble of writing a program to control the player. It also means that one has to use whatever disks are available off the shelf. While that option opens up a lot of opportunities (imagine participating in a space battle that uses the dogfight sequence from "Star Wars"), using regular disks in an interactive system is nowhere near as good as



The Halcyon home laserdisc machine from RDI.

using a disk that was specially prepared to function as a game.

If there's anybody still holds the laser game torch aloft, it's RDI Video Systems' Rick Dyer. He has to. RDI has just introduced Halcyon, a new laser system that Mr. Dyer hopes will reestablish the laserdisc not only in the arcade, but in the home as well.

He's understandably quite excited about the system's prospects: "One thing you may not be aware of is that *Dragon's Lair* was spun out of the Halcyon technology. Halcyon's been under development now for five years. We were prepared two years ago to introduce Halcyon into the home. The problem we had was that market research showed that it was premature, that it was a product ahead of its time. So we decided to introduce *Dragon's Lair*, which was like *Pong* in comparison to the Halcyon game, *Thayer's Quest*.

"Remember H.A.L. from "2001: A Space Odyssey"? Well, Halcyon is the

real one. You talk to it, it talks to you. When you turn the machine on, the computer will say, 'Please say your name.' You give it your name and it says, 'Ah, Dan. It's good to see you.' And it will remember where you left off, it knows what you like, what you dislike, it has intelligence."

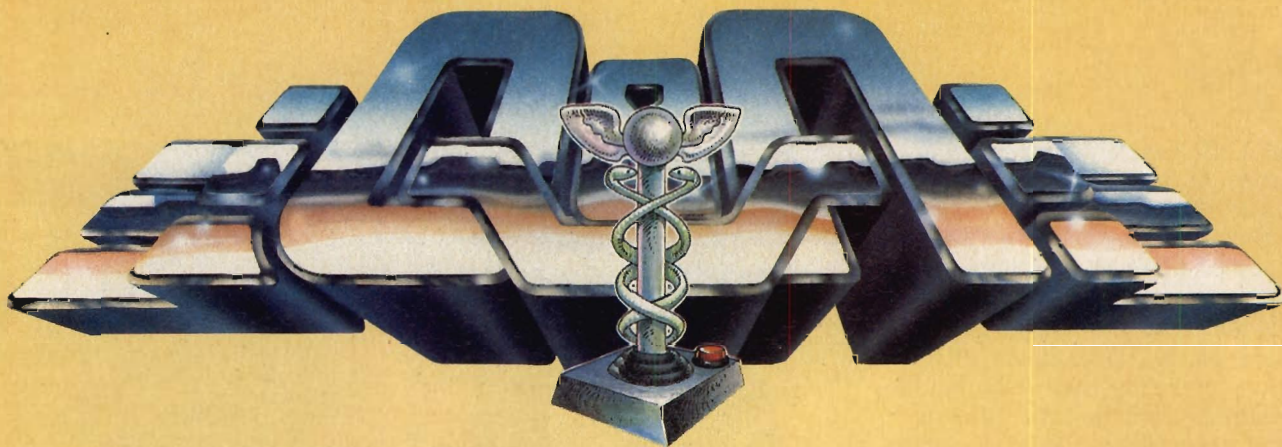
It also has a prohibitive price tag: \$2195.00 for the Halcyon game system complete with a standard laserdisc player. At that price, Mr. Dyer concedes that Halcyon will appeal mainly to "the avant-garde electronics buyer." That's the reason why most people will first see the Halcyon system in the arcade, when *Thayer's Quest* is introduced as a keyboard-operated laser game.

"What we're doing in the arcade is offering conversion kits for the laser games *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* so that they can convert them into *Thayer's Quest*. And kids and adults are just going wild over the game. People love it."

Look into the front of almost any local arcade these days and the laser games that used to be prominently displayed to attract players are conspicuous by their absence. It's too soon to tell whether *Thayer's Quest* will be what gamers have been crying for, or whether Halcyon, on its own, will be able to turn the fate of laser games around. One thing's for sure: Laser games are on the critical list, and this time all the quarters in the world might not be enough to save them.



M.A.C.H. 3 (MYLSTAR)



By THE GAME DOCTOR

Questions, Queries And Quizzers For The Silicon Sawbones

With the bulk of EG's readers at least preparing to make the Great Leap Forward to a home microcomputer, the questions are flying. So let's dispense with the usual banter and get right down to business:

Q: *When I go shopping for computer games for my C-64, I notice that most of the really good games are on disk. Will companies such as Infocom start producing their games on tape format as well as disk?*

(Rusty Howell, Birmingham, AL)

A: Tape is rapidly becoming an obsolete format for the storage of programs. Not only is this medium slow and unreliable, but many of today's highly sophisticated software entertainments require data to be continuously loaded throughout the playing of the game — a process totally impractical on tape.

Moreover, as the price of disk drives falls, most users are opting for the speed and convenience these peripherals provide. However, since disk drives *do* contain a large inventory of moving machine parts, their cost has not plummeted the way prices have on, for example, computers themselves, where the economics of silicon (increasing memory, decreasing prices) largely dictate the price point.

Keep in mind as well that just because you own, say, a C-64 or Atari 800XL, you are *not* limited to disk drives produced by those companies. Outfits such as Percom and Rana, among others, offer compatible drives at a wide range of prices.

Q: *Is Coleco still coming out with its laserdisc module? I've been calling Coleco and they insist they don't have any information.*

(Paul Pereira, Tempe, AZ)

A: To our knowledge, Coleco has scrubbed the laserdisc idea.

Q: *I love the laserdisc game Dragon's Lair. I'm about to buy an Apple IIe and have been wondering if (and, if so, when) there will be a laserdisc player available for the Apples that will enable them to play such games?*

(Chris Cable, Jacksonville, FL)

A: Apple has no current plans to produce a laserdisc peripheral. The only compelling reason for adding videodisk peripherals is for storage of visual images in massive quantity. But

as computer memory swells, this service seems less and less likely.

Q: *I own a TI 99 4/a and do some minor programming. I have some game ideas that I would like to program but I don't have the correct programming knowledge. Can you tell me where I might possibly learn these skills?*

(Brian Ladley, Pt. St. Lucie, FL)

A: Many colleges and universities are now offering computer science courses, so for starters, I'd look into the available programs at nearby schools. There is a world of difference, as you might imagine, between doing some "minor programming" on a small TI computer and actual professional design work. For starters,



DRAGON'S LAIR (STARCOM)

you'd better learn machine (or assembly) language. Also — and this is something an astonishing number of would-be and even *professional* software authors fail to do — check out what the rest of the industry is doing. Keep abreast of the latest innovations by looking into each and every piece of major software as it's released. Study the work done by the top people in the field and try to figure out how they did it. But never, ever, be bound by what exists today. Too many designers are so obsessed by what they believe the hardware *can't* do that they never explore the possibilities of overcoming these limitations.

There are also scores of books available, many of them doing an excellent job of instructing computer programmers on the system of their choice. Then, once you're ready to try and sell, pick up one of the software authors' guides which list the various companies around the country, the type of programs they're interested in buying, and the systems they publish for.

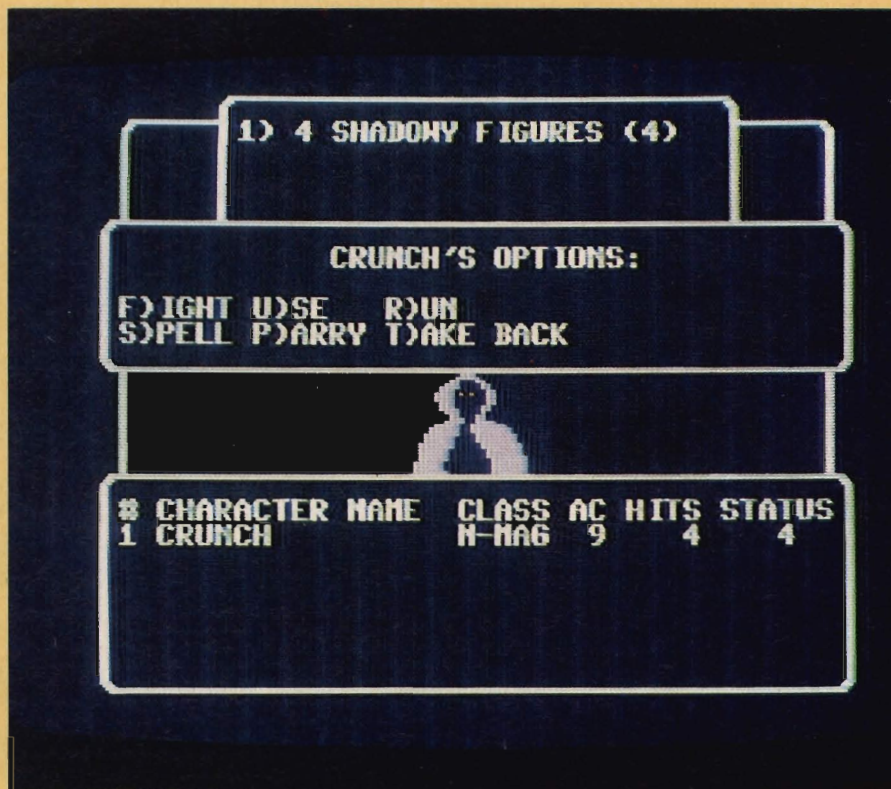
Finally, Brian, let me wish you luck. This is a very rough business and one that requires lots of hard work and genuine dedication.

Q: *I own an Atari 2600 and on most the games, the graphics stink. I was wondering if they're going to come up with an adapter for the 2600 to play Colecovision or Atari 5200 software — or, at least, will the games on the 2600 get better?*

(Michael Grenier, Lake Worth, FL)

A: If Colecovision and/or 5200 games are what you're interested in, Michael, I'd suggest you pick up one of those system and a 2600 adapter (if you're still interested in any of your VCS games.) The only way a 2600 could play 5200 games, after all, would be to attach a 5200 up to it and knock out the VCS!

Remember that the 2600 is over six years old, a game-playing micro-processor originally intended to use 2K cartridges consisting largely of Pong variants. The graphics may seem substandard in the light of today's 128K home computers, but on its own terms the VCS is probably the single most successful electronic game playing machine ever built! So what if it's over the hill and nobody's making software for it any more? Nothing lasts forever and I'm certain that most 2600-owners have long ago gotten their money's worth out of that machine.



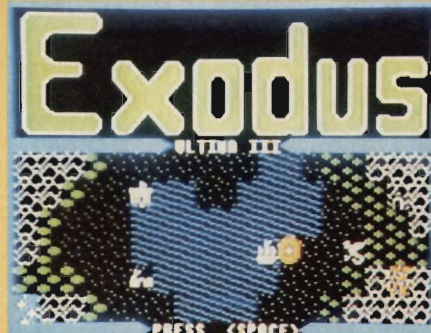
WIZARDRY III (SIR TECH)

Q: *I would like to know if Sir-Tech plans a version of Wizardry for the C-64.*

(Vince DeMarti, Allen Park, MI)

A: Alas, according to Andy Greenberg, the classic game's co-designer, the Commodore 64 is unable to handle all the disk activity required by software. Atari and Commodore owners may never see *Wizardry* on their home monitors.

Q: *Hey, Doc, I recently purchased Ultima III: Exodus and I've got a few questions. On the front box, in the*



lower righthand corner, there was a sticker that read: "Apple Version. Mockingboard music enhanced." What does this mean? In the October '84 issue of EG you said there was "different theme music for towns." I have an Apple II+ and I don't seem to be hearing any music at all. What hap-

pened?

Also, where can you find keys to open doors?

(Mike Eisenstein, Flushing, NY)

A: When a game mentions that it offers Mockingboard sound, it refers to an Apple computer peripheral capable of producing a variety of voices and musical sounds. Just get yourself a Mockingboard and your chips will be alive with the sound of music.

As to those keys, the Ultimate Ultimaniac, Features Editor Tracie Forman advises you to visit the thieves' dens.

Before checking out, let me address questions by several troubled Atari owners with an entire spectrum of difficulties, most of them centering around the recent sale of Atari home division by Warner Communication. If you can't get computers fixed, or factory modifications promised for older 5200's, just keep trying. Atari is currently in a state of near total confusion — no one seems able to tell exactly what's going on right now.

EG will continue to monitor the events in Sunnyvale as closely as possible and by next issue I hope to have some news regarding the new ownership's responsibilities in light of the old ownership's promises.

Until then, keep your chips up, and keep those letters coming in. ☺

INSERT COIN HERE

By BILL KUNKEL

I, ROBOT

Atari

I, Robot, the latest wonder by Atari's coin-op division, is the most beautiful arcade game this planet has ever seen. What were hailed as state-of-the-art special effects less than two years ago



I, ROBOT (ATARI)

in the Disney film "Tron" have now been seamlessly integrated into a real arcade game! Based on the popular SF novel by Isaac Asimov, *I, Robot* presents a free-form, three-dimensional universe of the most delicate, subtle shadings and the kinetic realism borders on sorcery.

So why do I have feeling in my gut that this game is doomed. .?

Because *I, Robot*, for all its virtues, has two problems. For one thing, it's not immediately comprehensible. It *looks* abstract, and because it doesn't fall into any immediately recognizable pigeonhole, it may actually intimidate players.

Its second — and far more serious — difficulty is ironic. Because for all its high-tech, geometric graphics, the game is actually a fairly simple shoot-out. So even the more sophisticated arcaders, who would at least confer

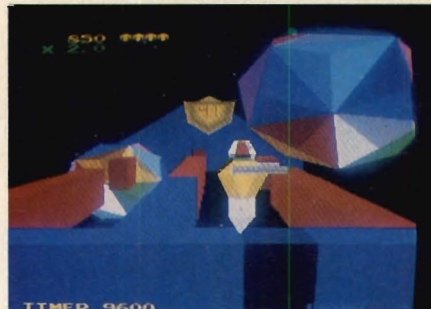
I, Coin-Op

cult status on a game that looked and played equally hot, are likely to become bored with *I, Robot* long before the graphic delights wane.

I, Robot actually consists of two games — or, rather, a "game" and an "ungame," to use Atari's terminology. The "ungame" is an extraordinary graphics program and quite a good idea — just so long as the player knows he is choosing a drawing program, something the documentation leaves a trifle cloudy.

The actual contest casts the player as a robot standing in a 3-D landscape, straddled by a pair of triangular-

shaped boundaries on the left and right borders of a platform. The robot must immediately pass over all red areas on the platform, while occasionally zipping to the triangle's peak and blasting away at the bird-droids that jet by overhead. When all the red

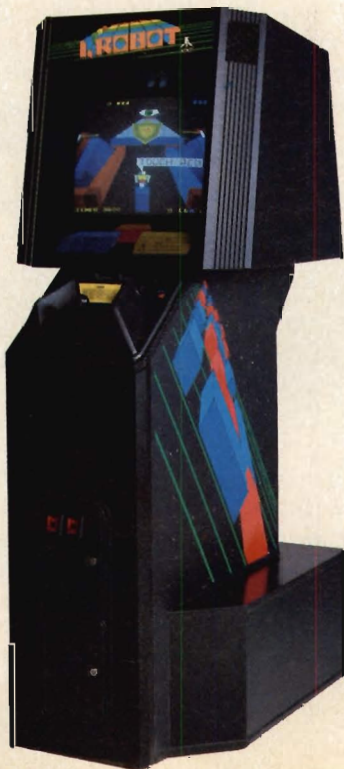


I, ROBOT (ATARI)

terrain has been claimed, the robot must leap over the void into a nearby platform holding a cube inscribed with a massive eye. When the eye is red, the robot cannot jump, but when clear, the leap completes the round and leads into the second scenario: a jaunt through space at warp speed, blasting away at geometric ballistics.

There are also transporters which enable the player to beam up into yet another wildly configured platform. Hitting the start button alters the angle, and the game itself periodically swoops in on a breathtaking zoom angle right in the middle of a shoot-out between robot and birdbot.

Make no mistake, *I, Robot* is a marvel, a game that must be experienced. If nothing else, you'll be able to say you saw the very latest in computer supergraphics. If only you could say you'd played a great game, too.



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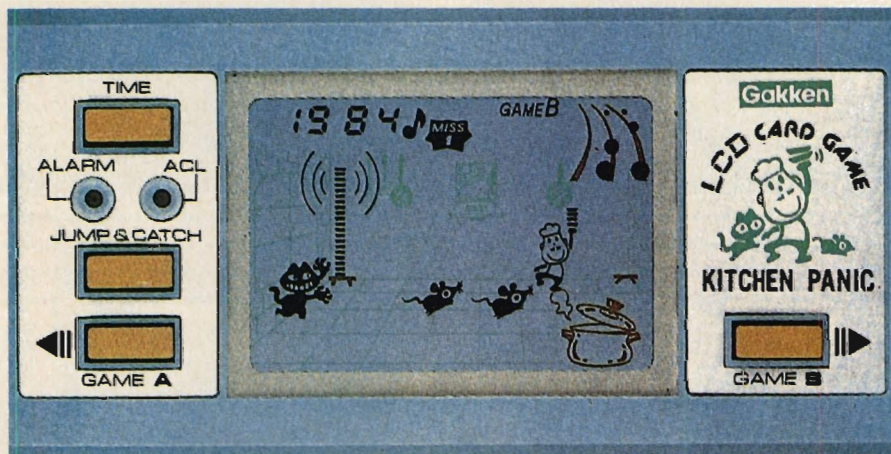
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By JOYCE WORLEY

Someone's In The Kitchen With Stand-Alones



KITCHEN PANIC (GAKKEN)

KITCHEN PANIC

Gakken/\$29.95

In the past, electronic cooks made sandwiches and assembled cakes. Now it's time to clean up the kitchen. This latest domestic thriller casts the anxious cook as a dishwasher busily stacking and storing plates. But the kitchen has pests — mice scamper around the floor until the cat enters the scene. This fierce feline isn't content just to chase away the rodents. It mischievously rubs against the crockery sending the entire stack of dishes crashing to the floor unless it's shoed away by Cookie.

The dishes slide down a pair of chutes on the right side of the mini (1

1/2" x 2") LCD screen. Cookie must catch the plates before they hit the floor and shatter to bits. When he's caught four dishes, he must move them to the table on the left side of the screen, hopping over all the wildlife to keep from tripping. When the cat sidles up to the stack, Cookie has to scare the animal away.

The black and white screen is sparked by red and green kitchen fixtures painted on the plain background. The animated cook, cat and rodents are rather crude black line drawings that get the story across but do little to make the game more attractive. It's a shame the designers didn't add a pot of flowers or bowl of fruit, or give

Cookie a more attractive face.

This is an extremely easy game, suitable for younger arcaders. By pushing the jump and directional buttons simultaneously, the cook hops right over all obstacles. Since the plates stop falling from the chutes for a few moments while the cook dashes cross-screen to stow them, it's no trick to avoid losing crockery.

Kitchen Panic is housed in a pretty blue plastic case that's a bit smaller than most handheld games, making it perfect shirt-pocket size for easy traveling.

KITCHEN PANIC: How It Plays

Directional buttons on each side of the screen move the cook left and right over the screen, and the jump-catch button makes him leap over the cat and mice, or catch the plates as they fall off the shelves. Game B is a little more difficult than Game A, since the cat and mice appear on the scene sooner, and the plates descend faster. When Cookie is situated under the two chutes, pushing the catch button lines him up to receive each plate. When the cat appears, move the cook across the screen and he'll automatically kick the cat away from the stack of dishes. The unit also functions as a clock and alarm, and works on "button" batteries.

LESSON ONE ELECTRONIC LEARNING AID

Video Technology/\$39.95

Stand-alones are generally thought of as purely entertainment devices, but here's one with a difference. **Lesson One** is a computer-like unit designed especially for grammar school kids, ages 6-12. Using *Lesson One* reinforces the instruction received in class, and gives the young student a chance to practice new skills in a game-like format.

The alpha-numeric keys are made of tough membrane, and arranged in alphabetical order (instead of like a typewriter keyboard). Problems and answers appear in brilliant red lights on the L.E.D. display, and sound effects flow through the built-in speaker that flanks the screen.

There are ten activities that deliver *Lesson One's* educational punch; selected by number when the unit is turned on. Game 1, "Memory Tune", turns the number keys to a scale for the arcader to play simple melodies. The instruction manual includes 25 songs for would-be musicians to play by number, or youthful Beethovens can pick out their own opuses. *Lesson One* memorizes up to 41 notes, then plays them back.

Games 2, 3 and 4 are arithmetic drills. "Math Quiz" lets the student (or parent) choose to work on addition, subtraction, multiplication or division. The problem appears, and the learner enters the answer by keyboard. There's a musical salute for a correct response, but the screen flashes "wrong" if an incorrect total is entered. "Multiplication Quiz" tests the multiplication tables, and "Am I Correct" is a manual math quiz. The student enters a problem and its answer, then the machine checks to make sure the sum is correct.


Games 5 through 8 are spelling tests. "Begins With" flashes the number of a picture from the book packed with the unit. The young speller has to enter the letter the word starts with. Game 6, "Spelling," requires the student to spell the word pictured. In Game 7, "Guess That Letter," the unit displays a word with one letter missing for the student to fill in. Game 8, "Guess That Word," displays blanks, and the young learner tries to complete the entire word in fewer than 13 tries.

The last two games are "Letter Finder" and "Number Finder," two logic

tests. *Lesson One's* display first shows "A x Z", meaning that the letter is between those two letters. Guess a letter, and the display changes to narrow down the search, until the correct letter is located. "Number Finder" works exactly the same, as the student tries to pinpoint a number between 10 and 99.

The games will never qualify for any entertainment awards, but they do serve the purpose of providing computerized instructions and drills. It's too bad that the spelling games are keyed to the instruction manual; this means if the booklet is lost, those two games become unplayable.

Computer-like teaching devices can be extremely helpful to learners, by providing tireless drill-instructors and patient correction of errors. Kids enjoy electronic tutoring, so lessons via com-

puter are more interesting to them. *Lesson One* is jim-dandy for its purpose of providing electronic teaching assistance for the kids. On the other hand, it should never be mistaken for an amusement device since the games just don't provide the entertainment value to keep people playing. 

LESSON ONE: How It Plays

Gamers choose the entertainment by pushing the appropriate multi-function key, then Enter. Answers are keyed in one digit at a time. *Lesson One* automatically scores each game, providing a point per correct answer, and musical accompaniment provides sound-effects for each competition. The unit operates on six size "C" batteries, or AC adapter.



LESSON ONE (VIDEO TECHNOLOGY)

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The Twelve Days Of Gamesmas

On the first day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me
A lifetime sub to EG!

On the second day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the third day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the fourth day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me
Four monitors
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the fifth day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me
Five gourmet sticks
Four monitors
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the sixth day of Christmas,
Some gamers gave to me
Six games a-booting
Five gourmet sticks
Four monitors
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the seventh day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me
Seven golden cities

Six games a-booting
Five gourmet sticks
Four monitors
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the eighth day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me

Eight Jacks attacking
Seven golden cities
Six games a-booting
Five gourmet sticks
Four monitors
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the ninth day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me

Nine runners loading
Eight Jacks attacking
Seven golden cities
Six games a-booting
Five gourmet sticks
Four monitors
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the tenth day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me

Ten text adventures
Nine runners loading
Eight Jacks attacking

Seven golden cities
Six games a-booting
Five gourmet sticks
Four monitors
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the eleventh day of Christmas
some gamers gave to me

Eleven Froggers hopping
Ten text adventures
Nine runners loading
Eight Jacks attacking
Seven golden cities
Six games a-booting
Five gourmet sticks
Four monitors
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

On the twelfth day of Christmas,
some gamers gave to me

Twelve Kings a-Questing
Eleven Froggers hopping
Ten text adventures
Nine runners loading
Eight Jacks attacking
Seven golden cities
Six games a-booting
Five gourmet sticks
Four monitors
Three disk files
Two stand-alones
And a lifetime sub to EG!

—By Arnie Katz



*Season's Greetings from The Staff
of Electronic Games*



Calligraphy by Christos Mirtsopoulos

Coming Attractions

INSIDE COMMODORE'S TWO NEW COMPUTERS

The folks who gave the gaming world the VIC-20 and the C-64 have a couple of new systems, the Plus/4 and the 16. What impact will these machines have on the world of computer entertainment software? Our top technic provides thorough analysis of both machines and evaluates their suitability for recreational and other uses.

GAMING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

With the British Software Invasion in full gear, electronic gaming in the U.K. is beginning to exert a real effect on the American hobby. Yet little has been known, until now, about the computer software scene on opposite side of the road? Find out in our next issue!

INSTANT PICASSO!

You, too, can learn to draw — with your computer! This in-depth study spotlights the best graphics software for mainframe computer systems, including user-

friendly programs which let even fumble-fingered klutz's produce works of art on screen.

CAMPS FOR COMPUTERISTS

It's never too early for parents to investigate summer camps for their kids. As decision time approaches, many people are weighing the merits of camps which provide computer training along with the handicrafts and swimming lessons. This authoritative report tells what to look for in a computer camp, and how to match

your child with the one that's going to produce the best vacation experience.

GAME OF THE MONTH: TYCOON

Think you're a budding Rockefeller or Getty? Blue Chip Software has a rock-solid financial simulation that'll give you a pretty good chance to find out, and have some fun at the same time. Next month, EG talks with the game's designer and gets the inside story of this unusual financial simulation.

There'll be plenty of other exciting articles and features of interest to arcaders, plus these regular columns:

- ★ **Passport to Adventure**
- ★ **Q&A**
- ★ **Inside Gaming**
- ★ **Arcade America**
- ★ **Software Showcase**
- ★ **Programmable Parade**
- ★ **Switch On!**
- ★ **New Products**
- ★ **Test Lab**
- ★ **Readers Replay**
- ★ **EG Hotline**
- ★ **Games Library**
- ★ **Stand-Alone Scene**
- ★ **Playing It Smart**
- ★ **In Control**
- ★ **Strategy Session**
- ★ **Insert Coin Here**
- ★ **Articles of War**



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How many plates can the Juggler juggle?



Chinese Juggler

That depends on you. You are the Juggler and your act is the delicate art of plate spinning. Yours will be a tough act to follow if you succeed in matching colors and spinning plates on all 8 poles at the same time.

As your skill increases, so does the pace and the challenge of the game. You must act with speed and precision or the curtain will come down and your act will be all washed up!

Chinese Juggler is a refreshing departure from the usual shoot-em-ups and strategy games. It's fun, fast-paced and will delight players of any age. For Commodore 64. New from Creative Software.

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How do you moonwalk, snake and tut?



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You'll soon become a break dancing expert with our latest bestseller, Break Street. Now that combination of gymnastics, mime, funk, and just plain show-off, leaves the sidewalks and comes home to your Commodore 64.

Individual play guides you through the footwork of moonwalk, backspin, windmill, tut, and the rest of those sidewalk moves. Slow motion and lively musical accompaniment help you perform each move step by step. String together a whole series of moves and record them for future replay.

Catch the beat of the street with Break Street. For individual or team play. New from Creative Software.

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The answers are at your finger tips.

What's the capital of Alaska?



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Do you know? Get ready to outwit your family and friends with Roll Call USA's fun facts on states, capitals and major industries.

Roll Call USA combines history and geography facts into a colorful question and answer game that challenges your knowledge of the 50 states, their capitals, major industries and statehood dates.

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Roll Call USA, a game of USA trivia for team or individual play. For Commodore 64. New from Creative Software.

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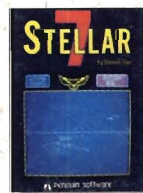
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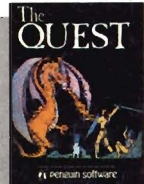
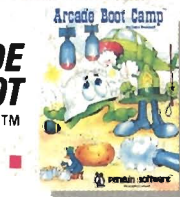
STELLAR 7™



MINIT MAN™



ARCADE BOOT CAMP™



THE QUEST™



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FANTASY . . . introducing the provocative XYPHUS and the hilarious EXPEDITION AMAZON.

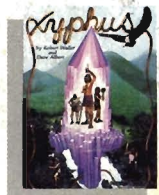
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