

arcade express

THE BI-WEEKLY ELECTRONIC GAMES NEWSLETTER

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A BAKER'S DOZEN FOR THE 5200

There will be thirteen new titles released for the Atari Model 5200 during the first half of 1983. "Defender" pits the arcader against aliens who are abducting humanoids from the planet. "Centipede" is the popular garden insect shooting game. "Qix", the burning fuse game, "Kangaroo", and "Dig Dug" are familiar coin-op hits that will find their way to the home screen for 5200-owners. "Jungle Hunt", scheduled for second quarter release, features a jungle hero struggling to save his lady love. "Pole Position" is a Gran Prix racing competition. "Space Dungeon" has 36 chambers to explore for treasure. "Vanguard" makes the gamer face deadly obstacles before he reaches the City of Mystery. "Counter-measure" puts you in a supertank, fighting terrorist missiles to stop the siege of Washington D.C. Finally, "RealSports Tennis", "RealSports Basketball" and "RealSports Baseball" complete the lineup for the 5200 during the first half of 1983.

GENERAL ELECTRIC HAS ELECTRIFYING NEWS

You'll get a charge out of this. General Electric's "Charge 4" and "Charge 8" desk-top rechargeable battery packs will keep your games running for up to four years, even if you're a heavy player. The chargers work on AA, C, D or 9-volt rechargeable batteries. Plug in your worn out rechargeables and, voila! overnight (or maybe sooner for the smaller sizes) they're good as new. The rechargers sell for \$24 to \$30. General Electric spokesmen say that over \$2 Billion will be spent on batteries in 1983, and most will be thrown away after only a short time. The GE "Charge 4" and "Charge 8" will solve that.

VIDEOGAMES TO BE WIRED FOR CABLE

The charter membership drive for Games Network ended January 1, with early sales amounting to 19% penetration of the cable market, according to Games Network President Larry Dunlap. Games Network will begin delivering videogames via cable transmission in September of this year, in those areas where the cable company signs for the service. Currently 470 cable systems have contracted to offer Games Network programming. According to Thom Keith, Executive Vice President, this represents over 5 million subscribers who'll be able to plug into the system when it becomes operational on a national basis.

Games Network is currently going through its third month of market testing in Fullerton, Ca., where officials report very "positive subscriber reaction to the programming", with little or no technical problems.

AVANT-GARDE IDEAS FOR THE IBM PC

Avant-Garde has fast action for the IBM Personal Computer. "Terran Jeopardy" calls on the gamer to defend earth from alien starships. "Air Traffic Controller" is a skill test for gamers with nerves of steel as they direct approaches, landings and takeoffs in a metropolitan airport. "Laser Maze" bounces laser fire off mirrors in man-to-man combat. "Federation" takes you back into space to command your own starship battling invading alien fleets. The last two titles are also available for the Apple II.

**MS. PAC-MAN TOPS LIST
OF COMING ATARI GAMES
FOR THE VCS**

"Ms. Pac-Man" came to the home screen in February. It features multiple mazes and graphics that far outshine last year's "Pac-Man". Best of all, "Ms. Pac-Man" is essentially flicker-free; this is a

great adaptation of the coin-op hit that all gobble fans will appreciate. "Centipede", the garden-insect-hunt coin-op hit, will be released for the home in March. "Dig Dug", the popular mining game, is scheduled for second quarter release.

Other titles for the first half of this year include "Kangaroo" with 4 skill levels for the gamer to battle through to save the kidnapped baby hopper. "Jungle Hunt", licensed from Taito, forces the on-screen hero to swing from vines, swim shark-infested rivers, and brave avalanche and cannibals to save his lady love. "Phoenix" features waves of warbirds that swoop down on the laser cannon, followed by an attack by the alien ship. "Vanguard", already available in most cities, flies the gamer through nine different tunnels as he battles 11 waves of enemies. "Galaxian", the familiar invasion game, will be available for the VCS for the first time in March. "RealSports Football", "RealSports Tennis" and "RealSports Soccer" complete the roster of games planned for immediate release by Atari.

**MALIBU HELPS STUDENTS
MAKE THE GRADE**

The folks at Malibu Fun Centers are putting their money where their mouths are, when it comes to rewarding good students. The Report Card Appreciation

Program rewards students who bring their report cards to any of the 40 Malibu Fun Center locations between January 16 and February 13, with a gift of three free videogame tokens for each report-card "A" and two tokens for each "B".

This is the fourth Report Card Appreciation Program sponsored by Malibu Fun Centers, and another giveaway is scheduled for June for the year-end grades. So far, no one knows how many tokens have been given out for the mid-term report cards, but there were 31,000 tokens given away just in the first week of the program. Last summer, Malibu Fun Centers gave out over 500,000 tokens in the summer reward program. At 25¢ per play, that's \$125,000 worth of rewards for arcaders with good grades.

**MR. CHIPS GOES
TO ATARI**

Marcian E. "Ted" Hoff, widely recognized as the father of the microprocessor, resigned from Intel Corp. to become the Vice President of Research & Development for Atari. Mr.

Hoff was the inventor of Intel's first microprocessor, the "computer on a chip" in 1971, which became the working ingredient of thousands of products. More recently, Hoff's work has been devoted to speech recognition systems.

Mr. Hoff will lead Atari's research projects in all three Atari divisions, videogames, coin-ops and computers. He'll report directly to Atari Chairman Ray Kassar. When interviewed, Hoff said that the chance to get closer to consumer electronics was part of the reason he took the job, since Intel's electronic parts are primarily marketed to manufacturers.

**COMPUTER BIGGIE TO BE
MAN OF THE YEAR**

John V. Roach, President and Chief Executive Officer of Tandy Corporation/Radio Shack, has been named Man of the Year by the Anti-Defamation League. Mr.

Roach will be feted at a \$300-per-plate dinner in his honor on April 21 in New York, where he'll be presented with the Man of the Year Award.

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COLECOVISION CARTRIDGE LINE
TO MORE THAN DOUBLE

Designers at Coleco aren't even taking time off for coffee. At least it would appear they're not letting any grass grow under them since that company just announced another dozen new titles for ColecoVision, in addition to the 15 new games introduced in January. Additional titles for 1983 include arcade games "Wizard of Wor", "Frenzy", "Sub Roc", "Wild Western", "Satan's Hollow", "Tac Scan" and "Time Pilot". New for use with the Turbo Module will be "Destruction Derby", a fender-bender making use of the steering wheel and foot pedal in an action-packed demolition derby. Other new cartridges are licensed from movies, cartoons and t.v., including "Dracula", "Tarzan", "Wizard of Oz", and "Papa Smurf's Treasure Hunt". This produces a total of 27 titles promised for the ColecoVision in 1983, and company spokesmen indicate the line will be further expanded throughout the year.

SYNAPSE LANDS
JOHN HARRIS

Programmer John Harris, best known for hit games "Jawbreaker" and "Mouseattack", has signed a new contract to author games for Synapse Software. Harris indicates that he feels Synapse is currently writing the best software for the Atari computers, and says he wants to be part of the company for that reason.

Ihor Wolosenko, President of Synapse, said, "This is one of the few times a major author has switched companies. John is a super talent, and we are very pleased that he decided to come on board."

GEMINI MATES
WITH VCS CARTS

"Gemini" is a new videogame system from Coleco that's fully compatible with all games designed for the Atari VCS and Sears Video Arcade. The new Coleco system accepts all carts manufactured by other game companies for use on the Model 2600 Atari. "Gemini" lists for under \$100, and comes packed with Coleco's "Donkey Kong", two controllers with both joysticks and paddles, and \$25 worth of coupons good toward the purchase of other Coleco products.

The low-priced "Gemini" is also compatible with Coleco's new module, the "Gemini Sound I Voice Module" which works with all VCS-type videogame systems to bring voice to home games.

SEGA'S CABINETS
ATTRACT VIDKIDS

Sega has a new line of videogame cabinets designed to appeal to younger players. They bring the game down to kids' eye level, in amusing Monster, Space Monkey and Robot cabinets that Sega believes will be popular especially in family restaurant and arcade locations. Each unit places the game screen in the belly of a fantastic creature, and features heavy-duty controls to withstand younger players' enthusiasm. All Sega's games are available in the new cabinets, but there are limited production quantities at present, as Sega watches the market to judge reception of the new designs.

PUGGLES GAMES
COMING FROM ZIMAG

Magnetic Tape International has a couple of new licenses for videogames to be marketed under the ZiMag brand. One series of games will be based on "Puggles" characters. These are hand-crafted creations by Anthony Barber of Australia, currently sold by California Stuffed Toy Co., the largest stuffed toy plant in the USA. The "Puggles" games will be compatible with Atari Models 2600 and 5200, the Atari 4-8-1200 computers, and the VIC-20.

MTI went to the funny papers for the next license, an agreement with Tribune Co. Syndicate, for a series of videogames based on "Conrad the Frog" and other characters from the "Conrad" cartoon strip created by Bill Schorr and syndicated in over 100 US newspapers. The "Conrad" games will be marketed for the Atari 2600, Atari 4-8-1200 computers, and VIC-20.

STRATEGY IS KING IN SUBLOGIC THREE Gamers need more than fast reflexes to master the three latest releases from SubLogic. A trilogy of strategy games for the Apple test arcaders' skills as they try to control economic simulations, mastermind police pursuits, and deploy the military. These mind-busters are described as easy to play but hard to conquer. "Zendar" is an economic/defense simulation of a small nation. The gamer allocates aid and resources, makes trade agreements with other countries, and defends his own nation's borders against attack in this unusual government simulation. "Frontline" casts the arcader as commander of a frontline sector with troops, tanks and planes to battle enemy forces. Finally, dispatch patrol cars to capture fleeing bank robbers in "Roadblock". Since the robbers' getaway car is faster than police vehicles, it takes real strategy and close map reading to cut them off before they escape.

JOHN DYKSTRA JOINS COLECO DESIGN TEAM Keep your eyes open for some really flashy graphics from Coleco in the near future. Academy Award winner John Dykstra will collaborate with Coleco designers on videogame and computer software, according to an announcement by Mike Katz, Vice President of Coleco. Dykstra won his Academy Award for the special effects he created in the block-buster movie "Star Wars". He later was awarded an Emmy for his work on the t.v. series "Battlestar Galactica".

Mr. Dykstra, who did the special effects in the current t.v. commercials for ColecoVision, is president of Apogee, the company responsible for special effects in "Star Trek: The Motion Picture" and "Firefox". The joint venture with Coleco also includes a licensing arrangement which permits Coleco to use Dykstra's name on products jointly developed by Coleco and Apogee.

JAPANESE COURT CALLS GAMES COPYRIGHTABLE WORKS A Tokyo District Court judged computer programs to be original works that should be protected by the copyright law, just like books and other literary creations. The decision awarded damages to Taito, the company that developed "Space Invaders", from ING Enterprises, a company that copied the game. Meanwhile, on this side of the Pacific, American manufacturers hailed the decision. Since many of the pirated games in the U.S. originate in Japan, this ruling could be the beginning of the end of rampant game-copying that has besieged the industry up to this point.

DATASOFT INKS 'DALLAS' PACT Datasoft has obtained the license to create a series of computer games based on "Dallas", the smash hit t.v. series. Software based on the themes and characters will be the basis of games scheduled for release during the first half of 1983.

Datasoft has also obtained rights for software based on TerryToons cartoon characters "Heckle & Jeckle", and for games based on the late martial arts champion Bruce Lee. The company also plans a couple of kittenish cuties with games based on top cartoon cats "Heathcliff" and "Banjo the Woodpile Cat".

IBM GOES ABROAD International Business Machines is starting to market the Personal Computer overseas. Since its introduction in 1981, the PC has only been sold in the US and Canada. However, initial shipments will begin this year from the IBM facility in Boca Raton. Subsequent production for Europe and the Middle East will come from IBM's factory in Scotland. IBM sources hint that the company already has orders for 50,000 units, and the company predicts that the European market in 1983 "could easily exceed 200,000 units", according to a marketing research firm employed by IBM.

ATARI IS GETTING INTO CONTROL Three controllers said to bring arcade-quality play into the home are on the way from Atari. "TrakBall" will be available in late Spring for the Atari 5200 and VCS 2600. The "Proline Joystick" for the VCS 2600, modeled after aerospace controllers, requires less hand movement for quick response. Its design conforms to the shape of gamers' hands more comfortably than previous sticks. It should be a very durable controller because of its solid metal shaft.

Atari didn't forget the younger gamer. Researchers at that company found traditional sticks hard for small kids to use, so developed the "Atari Kid's Controller". A 5x7 in. keyboard holds 12 buttons, and each kids game has a pictorial overlay for the pad. Atari believes this makes it easier for young players to understand the relationship between the controller and the game.

HOW TO LIGHTEN THE LOAD OF DUNGEONMASTERS "Game Master" from McKelvie Programs is specifically designed to help dungeon masters keep track of the minutia involved with a good Dungeons & Dragons campaign, using the Timex/Sinclair 1000 computer. "Game Master" creates and keeps track of up to a dozen player-characters and six monsters, then saves them on tape for future games. It also takes over record-keeping chores, automates dice rolls, and otherwise streamlines role-playing fantasy adventure games. John McKelvie, President of the company, says the program won't replace but rather is designed to be compatible with Dungeons & Dragons and similar role-playing games.

VIDEOGAMES HELP SPECIAL STUDENTS Kurt Kuhwald, a teacher/advocate in the Special Education Program in San Diego County, discovered that videogames have a potentially positive influence on the involvement level and attention span of students with severe school problems. Kuhwald observed how interested and excited normally apathetic students became while playing videogames, then put this observation to good use with the help of Sega Enterprises. The coin-op giant responded to his appeal by donating an upright model of "Zaxxon" to the school district for use by these students.

Mr. Leonard Wisz, Director of Marketing for Sega, says, "We are proud to be able to participate in such a potentially rewarding project."

GAME COMPANIES WITH NEW HOMES Videogames are on the move, as two software manufacturers relocate to new headquarters. PDI (Program Design, Inc.) has a new home in Greenwich, Ct. PDI's President John Victor says, "The move was necessitated by our dramatic growth in the past year." He explained that both staff and revenues more than doubled in 1982.

Datasoft also outgrew its original facilities on the other side of the country, and moved to a new location in Chatsworth, Ca., with more than double the square footage at the old site. Datasoft also experienced greatly increased sales in 1982, and expects the growth to continue in 1983.

UMI HAS FAST DUO FOR VIC-20 GAMERS Call the exterminator! There are aphids all over the roses in "Video Vermin" a garden insect-hunt game from United Microware Industries that will keep VIC-20 joysticks flying in this shoot-em-up pitting man against mites. A second offering from United Microware is "Skibbereen". This two-player wall-bashing contest turns previous wall-bashers on their side for a new approach to an old favorite.

Scott MacPhee, UMI spokesman, says the new games are designed to get the maximum quality graphics and playability on the VIC. UMI games retail from \$30 to \$40 on cartridge, and \$15 to \$25 on cassette.

THE HOTSEAT

Reviews of New Products

- RATINGS: 10 - Pure gold and about as good as a game could be. A rare rating.
 9 - An outstanding, state-of-the-art game.
 8 - A very good to excellent game.
 7 - A good game.
 6 - Better than average, but maybe not for everyone.
 5 - An average game that does what it promises.
 1-4 - The item has serious flaws.

KEY: The information which heads each review follows the same simple format. First comes the name of the item, then its classification, and, if it's a home arcade software program, the system/s with which it is compatible. Finally, there's the manufacturer's name.

ROAD RACE/Computer Game (VIC-20)/Commodore

This is a traditional driving videogame with a few twists. Graphics are interesting within their limits: the player is in the driver's seat looking out over a dashboard that shows speed, fuel, motor heat and the distance travelled, as he guides the rather unattractive front end of the vehicle between rectangular lane markers. The idea is to travel as far as possible within the 100-second time limit, and extra time is earned for going beyond 6 KM. Crashing into the road markers end the game, of course, but a lesser danger is overheating, which causes your car to stall while precious seconds disappear. Besides starting the car, accelerating and steering, the player also must shift gears. Some neat touches, but not enough to make the game really interesting. Rating: 6

LOST TREASURE/Boardgame/Parker Brothers

This electronic boardgame takes you on an oceanic treasure hunt. Players explore the depths using the Electronic Dive Control Center to help locate silver and golden treasures. It tells you if the loot is in your sector of the sea, then keeps track of your dives, clocking depth and air supplies. It even tells you the value of the treasure when you get it to surface. This is a pleasant family game for two to four persons. The mapboard is an ocean chart and player pieces are molded plastic ships. The Electronic Dive Control Center adds flashing lights, melodic tones, and a great deal of interest to what would otherwise be just another dice and movement game. A good bet for family fun or a pair of younger gamers. Rating: 7

ASTRO DESTROYERS/Game-Clock/Zykkor

This hip-pocket cutie has a good digital clock and alarm, and a stand in back that makes it functional as a desk clock. The first game is the familiar invasion scenario. The arcader must stop the aliens before they stomp down the screen to earth. Game two pits arcader against alien laser beams. Both are pleasant pasttimes to keep your fingers busy when you need a small break. Best of all is the appearance of the playfield. Zykkor put a pretty blue sky behind the game screen. This simple addition greatly enhances the looks of the contests. Rating: 8

AMIDAR/Videogame Cartridge (for Atari 2600)/Parker Brothers

This two-scenario maze-chase game features a unique type of play action that gives it a distinctive identity within this crowded category. In the first place, you're a gorilla running through a labyrinth chased by warriors, while the second turns you into a paint roller pursued by scurrying pigs. Although the play action is quite reminiscent of the excellent coin-op that inspired this home cartridge, the inability of the 2600 to reproduce detailed visual images undercuts "Amidar"s cute game appeal somewhat. Rating: 7

RAM IT/Videogame Cartridge (for Atari 2600)/Telesys

This wall-bashing contest may not be quite as cute as some of Telesys' first few releases, but it more than makes up for this with its non-stop arcading action. The player uses the joystick to move a shooter vertically along a line which bisects the playfield. Short bars in a rainbow of colors, one above the next in vertical columns with a small space between each bar, are found at the extreme edges of the display. As soon as the game begins, these bars start growing toward the center line, one short segment at a time. By pointing the joystick to the left or right and hitting the action button, the shooter can fire in the indicated direction. If it strikes the leading edge of one of the growing bars, it will whittle it down by one segment. If all segments are hit in this fashion, the bar disappears for the balance of the game. (An option in some variations on the cartridge permits the player to totally eliminate a blinking bar with a single shot.) Although the graphics are fairly abstract and simple, "Ram It" is a good-looking game that is very exciting to play. Rating: 8

KRAFT ATARI JOYSTICK/Controller/Kraft Systems

This company has followed up its introduction of joystick and paddle controllers for the Apple II by releasing this lightweight-but-durable command device for use with the Atari 2600 and systems such as the Atari 4-8-1200 and VIC-20 which utilize the same plug configuration. Large-handed players may miss the satisfying heft of the bigger joysticks, but this one is very easy to control, especially for those who can't palm a basketball. It is center-sprung and has a lot of play in the stick. It will seem quite loose to those who use a standard Atari joystick for most of their gaming. Kraft may be a newcomer to the home arcade controller field, but first-rate products like this are putting it on the gaming map. Rating: 9

BOLO/Computer Game (for Apple II)/Synergistic Software

This company has been known primarily for its adventure games, but this solitaire super-tank romp is sure to earn the company kudos from fans of action contests. Presenting a theme derived from a series of science fiction stories by Keith Laumer, "Bolo" puts the gamer in control of a tank that must cruise an absolutely enormous maze looking for the bases which churn out new enemies at a prodigious rate of speed. Since the maze is 132 screens in size, there is a helpful overhead "radarscope"-type map to the right of the main display, along with a fuel gauge and direction-of-travel indicator. "Bolo" can be played using either the keyboard or a combination of joystick and keyboard. The latter is preferable, especially if you have quick enough fingers to occasionally utilize the keystrokes which can turn the tank's turret 45 degrees without altering its general direction of movement. Before each round of play, the would-be tanker has the chance to set the level and intensity of play, which allows you to keep making the game tougher in small increments as your skill mounts. Rating: 8

**MODULE #3 BOOSTS
COLECOVISION MEMORY**

At a time when some companies which had achieved so much so quickly in the home arcading field might consider taking a breather, Coleco is still barreling forward full tilt. Early in February, Coleco surprised the electronic gaming industry by announcing its plans to market Super Game Module #3. Like the other devices, such as the 2600 Emulator and the driving control console, the newest module plugs directly into the expansion port located at the front of the ColecoVision.

The device, which is designed to sell for "less than \$120" according to a company spokesman, increases the memory capacity of this already powerful system by a whopping 1,000,000 bits. (That's probably 128K bytes for those who enjoy dividing by eight.) Although the report does not detail how the memory is allotted to the various functions, the addition of the module to ColecoVision's present 48K bytes should result in the most powerful under-\$500 system yet offered to the public.

Expansion Module #3 will come packaged with "Super Donkey Kong", a four-screen extravaganza designed to show off the enhanced capabilities of a ColecoVision beefed up with all that extra memory. Other titles scheduled for release during 1983 are "Super Donkey Kong Junior", "Super Zaxxon", "Super Turbo", "Super Buck Rogers on the Planet of Zoom", "Super Sub Roc", "Super Time Pilot" and "Super Smurf Rescue in Gargamel's Castle". All these titles represent souped-up versions of games which are either already available or planned for release for the regular ColecoVision system. The "Super Game" cartridges will feature arcade-like title pages, animated intermissions and other little touches that sometimes get lost in the translation from arcade to home screen.

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