

# arcade express

THE BI-WEEKLY ELECTRONIC GAMES NEWSLETTER

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## MILTON BRADLEY ACQUIRES G.C.E.

James J. Shea, Jr., Chairman of the Board and President of Milton Bradley Co., and Edward Krakauer, Chairman of the Board of General Consumer Electronics Corp. (GCE)

announced that Milton Bradley has completed acquisition of the business assets of GCE for an undisclosed amount of cash. GCE will be operated as a wholly-owned subsidiary known as General Consumer Electronics, Inc. GCE, founded in 1980, has attracted industry-wide attention with its introduction of Vectrex, a self-contained home videogame system that uses VectraScan technology. Vectrex is to be introduced in seven of the country's largest markets this winter. GCE also has a line of watches and calculators with game-playing capabilities.

Mr. Shea said that product tests proved Vectrex to be more appealing to children than current systems offered in the marketplace, as well as offering portability to the owner since it doesn't require a t.v. set.

## ATARI PLANS EMULATOR FOR ITS 5200 SYSTEM

Complaints about the lack of compatibility between the Atari VCS and the new 5200 senior programmable videogame system have apparently had some result.

The Sunnyvale, Ca., manufacturer has announced plans to produce an add-on module that will permit owners of the 5200 to play VCS cartridges through their machine. This peripheral is expected to reach consumers during the second half of 1983. Thus those who want to save some of their investment in VCS software will eventually have at least two choices, since Coleco is already committed to marketing a VCS emulator for its ColecoVision system.

## CBS TO MARKET K-BYTE GAMES

CBS has entered into a joint venture with K-Byte for worldwide marketing of ROM-type game cartridges. The two companies signed a letter of intent on August 12, spelling

out their plan to make a firm agreement no later than September 15 for the exclusive distribution of software and peripherals developed by K-Byte. The CBS Technology Center in Stamford, Cn., has several people currently working on game programs, and the venture will encompass designs developed jointly in the K-Byte plant and by the CBS programming team.

K-Byte's hit for the Atari 400/800 computer, "K-razy Shoot Out", is already on the shelves. Three new cartridges will be released in October, "K-razy Antics", "K-razy Critters", and "K-Star Patrol".

## PAC-MAN GOBBLES UP SATURDAY T.V.

"Pac-Man", an animated television series, will air on September 25, on ABC's Saturday morning children's schedule. "Pac-Man" will also star in a prime time

kiddy holiday special later this year.

The series, long on cute but probably as sensible as most Saturday cartoons, features Pac-Man, Ms. Pac, and Pac-Baby. They live in Pac-land along with the family dog, Chomp Chomp, and Sour Puss, a sly cat. This utopia is threatened by Mezmaron, a meanie who wants all the power pellet trees in the forest. Mezmaron's assistants are the ghost monsters Inky, Blinky, Pinky and Clyde, along with a girl-ghost named Sue.

**ACE WINS COURT ROUND** Apple Computer, Inc. was denied a preliminary injunction to prevent Franklin Computer Corp. from marketing the Franklin Ace Computer. Federal Judge Clarence Newcomer ruled that Apple had not shown a probability of success in its suit to halt what it terms patent and copyright infringement. Apple says that Franklin copied computer programs and will continue to seek a permanent injunction against the sale and manufacture of the Ace Computer.

Franklin denies any such violation, and has filed a \$150-million countersuit, charging Apple with attempting to monopolize the personal computer market.

**CYBORG STALKS THE IBM P.C.** Sentient Software has released a new version of the science fiction text adventure "Cyborg" for use on the IBM personal computer. "Cyborg" has been rewritten to accept and understand full sentence commands and will run on any IBM personal computer regardless of the installed operating system.

**BALLY OFFERS TOURNEY MONITOR** Bally/Midway has a new external monitor that attaches to coin-op video games. Contained in a wood-grain cabinet, the 19-in. monitor is mounted on top of the game unit so that spectators and prospective players can have an unobstructed view of the action. Stan Jarocki, Vice President of Marketing for Bally, explains that the monitor is "ideal for use in tournaments, exhibitions, and new game introductions".

**COLECOVISION STRESSES ARCADE TRANSLATION** The first group of games for the new ColecoVision programmable videogame system is strongly oriented toward cartridges based on games which made their debut in the nation's commercial arcades. Besides "Donkey Kong", which comes packed with the machine, titles in this group include: "Space Fury" (Sega/Gremlin), "Venture" (Exidy), "Side Trak" (Exidy), "Mouse Trap" (Exidy), "Spectar" (Exidy), "Rip Cord" (Exidy), "Lady Bug" (Universal), "Cosmic Avenger" (Universal), "Zaxxon" (Sega/Grenlin), "Carnival" (Sega/Gremlin), and "Turbo" (Sega/Gremlin).

Sports games will have a place in the ColecoVision's software library. The first bunch of electronic athletic contests includes "Head-to-Head Baseball", "Head-to-Head Football" and "Skiing". Video gambling will be represented by "Horseracing" and "Ken Uston's Blackjack/Poker".

Two adventure games are planned as early releases. "Tunnels & Trolls" is based on the popular non-electronic role-playing game, while "Smurfs: Rescue in Gargamel's Castle" is inspired by the popular Saturday morning cartoon show.

Rounding out the line are "Smurfs" (educational), "Fidelity Chess Challenger" and "Mr. Turtle" (a kideo adventure game).

**COMPUTER BIZ BOOM** Sales in the home computer industry in 1982 should total 1.25 to 1.5 million units, says the Wall Street Journal, predicting an eight-fold increase over the number sold in 1981.

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**ODYSSEY MAKES  
MARKETING MOVES** Late in August, Magnavox announced it would drop its price for the joystick controller for the Odyssey 2 videogame system, to \$20. At the same time, Magnavox revealed plans to market the Odyssey 2 through Sears and Wards stores. The game will be sold under its own name.

The Odyssey Voice is now available. The \$100 module attaches to any Odyssey console, and a variety of cartridges make use of its capacity for speech and enhanced sound effects.

**PARKER BROTHERS  
ROLLS NEW GAMES** The "Monopoly Playmaster" enhances electronically America's favorite boardgame with lights, sounds and visual effects. The Playmaster is said to speed up the game by managing dice rolls, sales and repurchases of property, and bank loans.

A two-week ad blitz started August 23 introduced the "Monopoly Playmaster" in New York and Chicago, with a series of 10-second spots highlighting the features of the unit.

Meanwhile, "Frogger", Parker Bros.' latest cartridge for use with the Atari VCS, has hopped into the stores, and "Spiderman" will be swinging along sometime in November.

**"SOLAR FOX"  
TAKES OFF** "Solar Fox" is the newest coin-operated videogame from Midway. The game consists of multiple racks with a different selection of targets in each. Players must clear the screen as quickly as possible, avoiding firebirds and forcefields, in a race against time. If all targets are destroyed before the allotted time elapses, the player can advance an extra rack of targets without actually fighting the battles, but still score all of the points in the skipped rack. Clearing 10 racks makes the player a member of the '10 Rack Club'. Difficulty levels increase as the game progresses, in this all-out test of player reflexes.

**ATARI 5200  
BANKS ON  
TESTED TITLES** There'll be no unproven games among the first batch of cartridges for the Atari 5200. The first four cartridges to be made available for separate purchase -- a version of "Super Breakout" comes packed with the system -- are all 5200 editions of games which should be quite familiar to those who regularly play electronic games. Heading to the stores with the first shipment of 5200 consoles are "Space Invaders", "Pac-Man", "Missile Command", "Asteroids", "Star Raiders" and "Galaxian". Except for the last-named title, all these games are already offered for the VCS, the 400/800 computer systems, or both. It should be noted, however, that all 5200 versions will be at least slightly souped up from their original appearances.

Cartridges planned for the near future include a trio of sports games -- "Baseball", "Football" and "Soccer" -- and a couple of hot coin-op titles, "Centipede" and "Defender".

**ATLANTIS FOR  
INTELLIVISION** Imagic plans to release "Atlantis" for the Mattel Intellivision in mid-October of this year. "Atlantis" is already available for use on the Atari VCS. This is Imagic's second game marketed for both Intellivision and the VCS, after "Demon Attack" earlier this year. The game, involving a pitched defense of the watery city, will star in a nationwide contest sponsored later this year by Imagic. Start practicing on game #1 on that cartridge, and watch for contest rules in the next issue of Arcade Express.

"EMPIRE" BIG HIT      Parker Brothers projects \$30-million in retail sales of "The Empire Strikes Back" videogame cartridge in its first year. The cartridge, usable on the Atari VCS, will be followed next year by another Star Wars Saga game. The next George Lucas movie in the epic adventure, "Revenge of the Jedi", will be released in May of 1983. The next Parker Bros. game will coincide with the debut of the 20th Century Fox movie.

BALLY BATTLES      The Midway Division of Bally Manufacturing Co. has announced that it will prosecute copyright infringers to the limits of the new law signed into effect in May of this year by President Reagan. The measure provides for fines up to \$250,000 and imprisonment up to five years for any person infringing a copyright for private or commercial gain. Under the law, fines and imprisonment can be imposed on anyone who reproduces or distributes more than seven copies of any copyrighted audiovisual work during any 180 day period.

Bally will seek prosecution in cases of infringement against all Bally Midway videogames, as well as unauthorized enhancement or speed-up kits.

FACELIFT UNDERWAY      The wide range of video and videogame products produced by Magnavox, a division of North American Philips is getting a top-to-bottom redesign. A presentation titled "The New World of Magnavox", recently staged in Chicago, served as a showcase for some of the revamped items.

The company's plans are still a bit cloudy when it comes to the Odyssey series of videogame systems. The new Odyssey 3 will feature a full keyboard, better graphics and perhaps a decoder to receive Teletext. Odyssey is still debating whether to position the new machine as a game-player that computes or as a full-fledged computer that can play games. Whatever the final marketing decision, it is likely that the O-3, expected to be ready in late 1983, will interface with Magnavox's Laservision videodisc machine. This would certainly open the doors to a whole genre of new, more realistic games, most likely more sophisticated versions of the golf simulation which Electronic Games magazine described several issues back.

VIDEOGAMES GO      Three videogame manufacturers benefited from record movie attendances during the 1982 summer season. Activision, TO THE MOVIES      Mattel and Atari all bought cinema commercial packages from Screenvision, which has 1600 theatre affiliates nationwide.

Activision started it, with ads for "Chopper Command" and "Star Master". Mattel ordered four weeks of two-minute "Tron" ads, run at theatres playing the Disney feature. Atari followed with ads for "Dig Dug", and will begin movie promotions of "Yar's Revenge" in October.

PRODUCTS INCREASE      IBM is marketing new hardware to be used with the IBM IBM USER MEMORY      personal computer. These memory devices enable the user to greatly increase the memory capacity of the personal computer, up to 512,000 bytes (about 160 pages). A memory expansion option plugs into one of the computer's expansion slots, and two of the \$475 options must be used to get full capacity.

IBM will also market a "Prototype Card" for \$45. This plugs into one of the personal computer's expansion slots and allows the user to design custom attachments such as speech synthesizers and speech recognition devices.

# COMING EVENTS

## Upcoming Tournaments and Meetings

**MOONBASE IO CONTEST BEGINS OCTOBER 1982** Program Design, Inc. is sponsoring a contest on "Moonbase Io", to be administered by Electronic Games magazine, according to the following rules:

1. You must purchase a Moonbase Io game and send in your warranty card.
2. EG reserves the right to verify scores.
3. You enter the contest by taking a picture of the computer screen showing your score; then submit the photo to EG.
4. You can enter as many times as you wish, but are only eligible for one prize.
5. All final entries must be postmarked no later than 2/28/83.
6. EG owns all photos submitted.
7. Player must defeat the mother ship and have won the game before score will be eligible. High score isn't enough to win. (Special Code won't appear in score unless you have won the game.)
8. Winners will be listed in popular computer and video magazines.
9. Contest void where prohibited by law.

The top prize is \$500. Two second prizes of \$300 will be given, and four third prizes of \$100 each. Ten runners-up will receive copies of the new game "Critter".

**EXPO FOR IBM P.C.** The IBM Personal Computer Show is scheduled for September 8 through 11th, at the Golden Nugget Hotel/Casino, in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The expo, marking the first anniversary of the IBM P.C., brings together software, operating systems, peripherals, publications and services for IBM personal computer users. More than 30 software exhibitors will be there every day from 9 am to 5 pm. Tickets to the show cost \$15. IBM users will probably get an eyeful, and not just of the products available. The expo is the same week as the Miss America Pageant.

**US FESTIVAL** The US Festival scheduled for Labor Day Weekend in San Bernardino, Ca., features 20 rock bands brought together by rock show veteran Bill Graham. Described as a festival of alternative energy, computers and music, five 200 ft. air-conditioned circus tents will be filled with technological exhibits, including displays of some of the latest videogames. Tickets are \$37.50, available from Ticketron, and no gate sales will be allowed. Festival officials are expecting over 300,000 to attend, and predict this will be the greatest rock happening in this country since Woodstock.

**HUNTING A HERO** Activision is co-sponsoring a nationwide contest to find The Greatest American Hero, in a joint venture with the producer's of ABC-TV's hit series. Entry forms, which are available at participating Activision dealers, must reach Activision by September 20 along with a photograph showing the score. Contestants must play "Star-Master" on its most difficult setting, and the highest scorers in six age categories will fly to Hollywood for 3 days. There they'll take part in a private filming with the stars of "The Greatest American Hero", Robert Culp and William Katt. Prizes include a copy of the special film and a video tape recorder, to help them remember their day in the limelight. T-shirts will go to the top 200 scorers in each age group.

# THE HOTSEAT

## Reviews of New Products

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

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 is a home arcade software program, the system or systems with which it is compatible. Finally, there is the manufacturer's name.

### COLECOVISION/Programmable Videogame System/Coleco

Sneak peeks at this senior programmable videogame have tantalized gamers for the last year or so. It's heartening to report that ColecoVision largely lives up to its advance notices. This well-conceived system is state-of-the-art hardware now, and the modular nature of the ColecoVision should help it hold that leading edge position for some time to come through the addition of enhancing peripherals. (Among the extras scheduled for release are a full keyboard and an emulator that will allow the ColecoVision to play cartridges originally designed for use with the Atari VCS.) Color, sound, graphics and on-screen movement are all excellent.

The attractive and uncluttered unit has a special niche located on the top panel for storing the pair of plug-in multi-function command devices. The only visible controls are an on/off switch and a reset button, since all other game selection operations are executed using the keypad portion of the controllers.

The joystick portion of the controllers is the only obvious negative. The shaft is too short to be comfortable, and the response is not as immediate as one would like. It is relatively easy to substitute any VCS-compatible controller for one of the standard-issue ones, because the plugs match, and many players will want to do this when competing solo.

Overall, ColecoVision is an outstanding system and a welcome addition to the videogaming field. Rating: Not Applicable.

### COMMANDO RAID/Videogame Cartridge (Atari VCS)/U.S. Games

The arcader is in charge of the big antiaircraft gun, assigned to repel the computer-launched airborne assault. Paratroopers drop from helicopters and if they aren't stopped, will land on buildings and start demolishing them. Once the structure is leveled, the sneaky invaders begin tunneling beneath the gun. If they succeed in undermining the position, the heavy piece of artillery falls through to end the game. The enemy also sends a bomber across the screen from time to time, and failure to either blast it before it drops its cargo or shoot the bomb out of the sky cuts off the action immediately.

War may be hell, but it sure makes an interesting theme for a game. This cartridge gets away from the usual tank battle or aerial dogfight to focus on a side of military conflict that isn't often used as a game theme. Rating: 8

## ATARI 5200/Programmable Videogame System/Atari

This machine is intended to put Atari into the high-end programmable videogame market and, perhaps, eventually supplant the VCS when that system finally reaches the end of its long, illustrious career. We tested a prototype rather than an actual production line unit, so it is to be hoped that Atari will clean up some of the little problems that may hold the 5200 back in its mission to conquer the electronic gaming world. Primary objections are that there is too much RF interference breaking up the display screen, and that the sound is tinny and hollow. Since Atari has always done well in these areas until now, these problems could well evaporate by the time the 5200 hits the retail shelves.

Physically, this is an immensely attractive machine reminiscent of the housing the company intended to use on the remote control VCS. There's even a storage rack for games. Except for the on/off switch, the console is free of dials, knobs and switches. Players can input commands through the controllers, so there's no need to constantly return to the console after every round of play.

The controllers themselves are very responsive, though the stick may be slightly over-sprung. Atari plans to produce a 5200-compatible trackball controller in 1983, but few will mind playing "Missile Command" with the regulation 5200 command device until then. Unfortunately, the plugs aren't compatible with either the VCS or 400/800 computers, so players will have to restrain their urge for controller variety, at least for now. It's a shame that "Super Breakout", the game included with the system, must be played using a joystick instead of a paddle. Rating: Not Applicable

## DEADLINE/Computer Program (Apple II, Atari 400/800)/Infocom

Forget about slaying dragons or colonizing distant planets; murder is afoot. As the chief investigator on the case, the sleuth must prowl around the scene of the crime, sift the evidence, question possible witnesses and suspects, and build an airtight case against the culprit within 24 hours. This text adventure contains many innovations, not the least of which is the program's ability to understand player input when delivered in complete sentences rather than the simple verb-noun phrases to which most previous computer role-playing games have been limited. The packaging is also superb. Would-be Sherlock Holmeses get copies of statements by key witnesses, reports from preliminary investigations, and even some physical evidence. "Deadline" ushers in a new era in computer adventuring. Rating: 10

## FROGGER/Videogame Cartridge (Atari VCS)/Parker Brothers

Is the froggy goin' a-courtin', or is he just hopping toward home? Whatever his reasons, the adventurous amphibian jumps along at a furious pace, spurred by the joystick, as he travels up the screen toward a safe haven. Barring the way are a multi-lane highway filled with traffic and a treacherous river clogged with logs, turtles and deadly alligators. This is a highly authentic translation of the coin-op hit. It is one of those rare cartridges that combine great graphics with sophisticated play action. This game is highly recommended. Rating: 9

## TRON/Stand-Alone/Tomytronics

Those who enjoyed the Disney videogame fantasy will immediately recognize the three scenarios that comprise this beautifully produced unit. As the computer warrior Tron, the player races Sark on light cycles, plays catch with the deadly disks and then assaults the Master Computer Program. The only possible flaw is that some players may find "Tron" a shade too easy. Rating: 7

# HONOR ROLL

## The Nation's Highest Scores

### ELECTRONIC GAMES TOP SCORERS

The editors of Electronic Games and Arcade Express are gathering the nation's top scores. To compete, send a photo of the game screen with the final score. Photos only have to be good enough for the judges to read the numbers, and all photos become property of Electronic Games. Include your name and address, and send to: Electronic Games, 235 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003. Scores will be tabulated by both Electronic Games and Arcade Express.

### STAND-ALONE GAMES

Pac-Man/Coleco - Tony Maresca, Oklahoma City, Okla. - 145,500  
Scramble/Tomy - Joyce Worley, Brooklyn, N.Y. - 7,540

### ARCADE GAMES

Battlezone/Atari - Mike Johnston, Los Alamitos, Ca. - 5,899,000  
Missile Command/Atari - Joe Fernandes, Artesia, Ca. - 52,246,260  
Centipede/Atari - David Jagoda, Utica, Mi. - 3,117,115  
Star Castle/Cinematronics - Bob Mines, Jim Pucey, Corland, Oh. - 9,833,940  
Crazy Climber/Taito - Tim McGuigan, Lincoln Park, Mi. - 404,050  
Defender/Williams - Scott Dixon, Richmond, Va. - 48,955,300  
Pac-Man/Midway - Michael Hines, Hudson, NY - 5,978,640  
Armor Attack/Cinematronics - John Hooper, Lakewood, Ca. - 319,670  
Scramble/Stern - Tim Morrison, Millington, Tn. - 944,310  
Phoenix/Centuri - Chris Lewis, Grand Falls, Canaca - 418,080  
Astro Blaster/Sega/Gremlin - Mikey Rue, Tempe, Az. - 66,230  
Gorf/Midway - John Chandler, Hobbs, N.M. - 225,100  
Dig Dug/Atari - Paul Choi, East Lansing, Mi. - 1,438,190  
Donkey Kong/Nintendo - Eric Henckel, Houston, Tex. - 381,300  
Frenzy/Stern - Tracy Parish, Millington, Tn. - 145,427  
Frogger/Sega-Gremlin - Roy Scott, Lake Charles, La. - 117,730  
Stargate/Williams - Ronald Bactad, Carmel, Ca. - 10,235,000  
Robotron/Williams - Scott Flinko, Indiana, Pa. - 7,326,800

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