

**Electronic Games**

Formerly Arcade Express

# **HOTLINE**

**THE BI-WEEKLY ELECTRONIC GAMES NEWSLETTER**

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**COLECO BUYS DRAGON'S LAIR** Home rights to the hot coin-op laser disk game "Dragon's Lair" have just been purchased by Coleco Industries. The company plans to have the game ready by mid-1984, with all the hardware needed to make it work for home arcaders. Coleco is reported to have paid \$2 million for the rights to produce the home version...a pretty fancy price for a pretty fancy game!

**ATARI WON'T TALK WITH MILTON BRADLEY; MB SUES FOR BREACH OF CONTRACT** Milton Bradley is charging that Atari is in breach of contract, since that company has withdrawn from a previously announced agreement whereby MB would produce voice recognition products for the California manufacturer. The devices would have been used as verbal controllers for games. According to MB's spokesmen, Atari's failure to go ahead with the original agreement caused MB to "forfeit its limited time-window...to bring these products to market or sell them to another video-game maker." MB says that this has substantially hurt the company's financial outlook for this year, and is asking for \$43 million in damages.

MB also has an agreement to produce voice recognition products for Texas Instruments. Shipment of the TI voice unit is scheduled to begin in the fourth quarter of this year.

**OSBORNE CLOSES NJ PLANT; LAYS OFF 203 IN CALIFORNIA** Osborne Computer closed the plant in Monmouth Junction, NJ, where Osborne I computers are manufactured. The company cites a drop in sales as the reason for the action. The Monmouth Junction location plant had been producing 200 to 250 Osborne I computers per day. Eighty-nine employees were laid off in this action, and the location is now slated to be used as a distribution center.

In a separate action which the company says is designed to cut overhead, Osborne laid off 203 workers at the Hayward, California factory, reducing manpower at that location to 523 workers.

**NCMI WILL SUPPORT MERCHANTS FIGHT AGAINST LOCAL BAN ON AMUSEMENT GAMES** National Coin Machine Institute, the non-profit trade association for the street vending industry, has pledged to support Marshfield, Massachusetts operators in their fight against the local ban on all amusement games. Herbert Beitel, managing director and legal counsel for the NCMI, explains that 189 people attending Marshfield's annual town meeting voted to ban amusement devices of all kinds. This represented less than 2% of the population voting.

"We think that such a ban, if it were upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, could jeopardize the freedom of every business-owner in this country," said Mr. Beitel. He went on to say that, although the NCMI is pledged to support the appeal, "it might be possible to find a solution at the source...with the citizenry of Marshfield." NCMI officials believe the citizens would vote against such a ban if the question is brought to referendum, and say they "believe strongly every local political avenue must be explored" before the case goes to a higher authority. Beitel explained, "As much as we believe in..home rule..we think the action by a very small minority in Marshfield is wrong."

**SAN DIEGO PADRES PLAY ELECTRO-BASEBALL** The Padres are using electronic games to help them sharpen up their averages this summer, thanks to Sega's "Champion Baseball". The San Diego manufacturer donated several of the new coin-op videogame machines to the Padre's clubhouse, and now the ballplayers can warm-up electronically before they go onto the diamond. There's no hint yet whether "Champion Baseball" will actually help them elevate the team to first place, but it certainly beats checkers as a pasttime until the real game starts!

**MUSE GOES STAR-GAZING** "Titan Empire" by Ed Zaron from Muse Software is one answer to those oft-heard criticism of shoot-'em-up videogames! This one is meant to combine all the action and adventure of a regular arcade-style game, with the challenge and strategic planning of an educational title. The gamer defends the planets from warring enemy ships, using torpedos and tracking missiles. The battle takes the arcader through an orbiting solar system containing all of the planets and their major moons, so gamers learn their names, characteristics and relative positions in space. This astronomical thriller for the Apple is nationally available at \$34.95, or direct from Muse Software, 347 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.

**KRELL ANNOUNCES CONTEST FOR BEST EDUCATIONAL GAMES** Krell Software has some incentives for programmers who want to try writing educational software. All entries must be suitable for instructional use, but the winning programs should "demonstrate an advance in the art and science of educational computing". Programs can be submitted on 30 specific subjects, for the following computers: Apple; Atari; Commodore; IBM; Monroe; Radio Shack; Sinclair ZX-81; MTU-130; WICAT 100, 150; Texas Instruments 99/4A. Thirty first-prize winners will receive \$500 in Krell Software; 30 second-place winners will get \$300 of Krell software, and 30 third-prize winners will receive \$200 of software. Deadline for submissions is December 1, 1983. For contest rules, write Krell Software, Dept. 44, 1320 Stony Brook Rd., Stony Brook, New York 11790.

**NINTENDO AIDS KIDS AT MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY CAMP** July 23-31 marked the week of the 7th Annual Muscular Dystrophy Association Summer Camp in North Bend, Washington. Camp Waskowitz became the vacation home for kids with MD, as they enjoyed typical camp recreations such as swimming, arts, crafts, hayrides, and less typical camp sports such as electronic games. Nintendo America donated the use of several videogame machines that were specially adapted for use by handicapped electrogamers, in a move that the Muscular Dystrophy Association says will "open new vistas in camp entertainment" for these young people.

Along with the arcade games, Nintendo also donated prizes for the winners and runners-up in the special videogame competitions held at Camp Waskowitz during that week.

**SIRIUS GOES TO THE BIRDS** Sirius Software looked to the skies, but instead of invading aliens from outer space, they saw birds. "Buzzard Bait" calls on the player to battle three pairs of birds who prey on the humans in order to feed their young. The gamer has to try to rescue the people from the deadly birds to win the game. "Buzzard Bait" is available on disk for the Apple and IBM PC computers, for \$39.95

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**DONKEY KONG CEREAL IS A SELL-OUT!** Ralston Purina says that the new product, "Donkey Kong Cereal", is so popular they can't keep up with the demand. Seems kids everywhere are munching up so much of the breakfast food that the supplies are running short. This forced the manufacturer to run trade ads saying "Sometimes it's embarrassing to be so popular" and explaining that the cereal's acceptance in the marketplace has far exceeded their initial expectations.

But Ralston doesn't plan to increase production at this time, as the company powers feel this initial high sales activity is just part of a surge that occurs during the introduction of a new product. They expect demand to diminish after the first reaction slows down.

**CBS GIVEAWAY HIGHLIGHTS SUMMER** CBS is giving away goodies to promote its line of videogames this summer. In September, special game pieces will appear in newspaper and magazine ads. Match these pieces against the counter card at your retailer, or against the outside of the "Wings" game cartridge, for a full refund of the purchase price. Even if you don't win, you can still get a free "Wings" t-shirt or "Wings" Commander cap.

CBS is also offering a \$5 rebate on purchases of their new videogames. Titles covered under the offer include "Gorf", "Wizard of Wor", and the new releases, "Solar Fox" and "Blueprint". The rebate offer expires September 30, 1983.

**COMMAVID IS GOING TO EUROPE; NAMES BERTELSMANN CORP. EURO-DISTRIBUTOR** CommaVid has appointed Bertelsmann Corp. as the exclusive distributor for their line of videogames in Europe, and intends to develop games to appeal to specific national groups. Dr. Joseph Biel, VP of the Illinois company, says CommaVid will expand right along with the growing European interest in videogames. "We can adapt or develop videogames for a particular national interest," said Dr. Biel in his announcement of the Bertelsmann appointment. Games currently being marketed in Europe are "Cosmic Swarm", "Mines of Minos", "Room of Doom", "Cakewalk", and the two summer releases, "Rush Hour" and "Stronghold". Dr. Biel did not reveal any specific plans for nationality-targeted Euro-games at this time.

**EXIDY OFFERS CASH FOR QUESTIONS** Here's a chance for arcaders to give some input to a coin-op company and maybe win a prize as well! Exidy is offering prizes for questions and answers to be used in the next version of their "Fax" game. Submit at least 15 usable Q&A's to be eligible to win. (The company advises contestants to send more than 15, because the person who submits the most questions that are actually used will get the Grand Prize.) Questions must be no more than 80 characters, including spaces and punctuation, and answers must be multiple choices, totalling 28 characters or less. There's a list of 20 topics to work with. The contest ends Sept. 15, and you'll need the official rules and entry forms. Write Exidy, 390 Java Dr., Sunnyvale, California 94089, or call them at 408-734-9410.

**BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT'S A GAME!** Roklan Corp. has just made an agreement with Ripley's International for a joint venture for video and computer games, based on Ripley's Believe It Or Not. According to Jim Gonzalez, Roklan Vice President of Sales/Marketing, the games "will tie in with the Ripley's cartoon characters and will be an extension of the popular ABC television series."

Programming has started on three games for the Atari VCS, Intellivision and Coleco-Vision. Computer versions will be produced for the Atari, Commodore 64 and Apple computers.

The games are slated to be introduced at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January.

**COMPUTER COMPANIES SPEND BIG AD BUCKS** According to "Ad Age", computer hardware and software companies have increased dollars for ads during the first quarter of 1983 by 230% over the same period last year.

COMMODORE USERS GET SPEED READER Davidson & Associates released "Speed Reader II" for the Commodore 64 early in August, with the same features as the current Apple and IBM PC versions. This educational program for adults, high school or college students uses a timed reading test to electronically compute the user's reading speed and comprehension. Then exercises strengthen eye muscles to enlarge eye span and sharpen perception. Special lessons help the user become a more efficient reader, increase speed, and build comprehension. A special feature allows users to enter additional reading material into the program, and even has a grade level analyzer to measure the reading level of the new material.

The two-disk program comes with a 60-page instruction manual containing a course outline, for \$69.95. Additional disks can be purchased to adapt the program for junior high and elementary students, from Davidson & Assoc., 6069 Groveoak Pl. #14, Rancho Verdes, California 90274.

SOFTWARELAND URGES MANUFACTURERS TO UNIFORM PRODUCT CODING Softwareland, a chain of retail software stores in the Southwest, is urging vendors to adopt uniform product codes just like the grocery industry has done. The use of the Uniform Product Code (UPC), commonly known as bar codes, will "allow retail outlets to complete sales more quickly and efficiently," says Taylor Coleman, President of Softwareland. He went on to explain that the codes "reduce the possibility of errors due to cashiers punching in numbers incorrectly."

Softwareland is providing vendors with the information needed to apply for Uniform Product Code numbers. Once a vendor obtains a number, Softwareland will further assist by producing free camera-ready copies of the bars and numbers for use on the product package. For information, software manufacturers should contact Jeffrey Lyons, Softwareland, 2629 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale, Arizona 85257, or call 602-941-0456.

HORSE RACE ANALYZER TO BE MARKETED BY AHTI Advanced Handicapping Technologies, Inc. (AHTI) is now the sole owner of all rights to the "Horse Race Analyzer", a hand-held microcomputer formerly marketed by Mattel. The Analyzer uses past performance data from the Daily Racing Form to mathematically rate horses and predict outcome of races. When originally introduced by Mattel, the Analyzer sold for \$125. AHTI now plans to retail the item for around \$50, and promises an active marketing and promotional campaign for the item this Fall.

THE STREETS ARE PAVED WITH JEWELS IN ATARI'S "CRYSTAL CASTLES" Atari's newest play-for-pay machine is "Crystal Castles", an adventure game featuring Bentley Bear's travels in search of ruby gemstones. The lovable bruin goes from castle to castle, over secret ramps, elevators and through dangerous passageways. The roads are paved with rubies, but hungry Gem Eaters, walking trees, giant crystal balls, and Berthilda the Witch hamper Bentley in his jool-gathering. Bentley might find a magic hat in one of the castles, and this helps him get through the gauntlet of goonies.

"Crystal Castles" has ten levels of play, with four castles per level, and a total of 16 different playfields. The controller is a special glow-in-the-dark trackball, and the vanity board is a "Crystal Castle Hall of Fame" with the top 250 scores. The highest scorer's initials are engraved in the first castle, to put them right in the thick of the game action -- a real ego-trip for top arcaders!

FUTURE COMPUTING SEES CONTINUED HEALTHY MARKET Future Computing, Inc. forecasts sales of over 5 million home computers in '83, up from 2.2 million in 1982, or over 100% increase in sales this year. This figure was previously typo'ed in Arcade Express. FCI predicts the home computer market will continue its current healthy growth for some time to come.

JUNIOR TOPS THE LIST "Donkey Kong, Jr." has climbed back to the top of the heap  
 IN E.G. POPULARITY POLL this month. The ColecoVision cartridge is back in first  
 place, towering over his poppa who had topped the list in  
 last month's poll. In fact seven out of the top fifteen spaces are filled this month  
 by ColecoVision games. In the coin-op division, "Pole Position" continues to lead the  
 pack, and in computers - big surprise - it's still "Star Raiders" for the umpteenth time!  
 Will any game ever pass this one in popularity? Only time - and you, the voter, can tell!

POSITION THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	TIMES ON LISTS	GAME TITLE	SYSTEM	MANUFACTURER
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MOST POPULAR VIDEOGAME CARTRIDGE:

# 1	# 6	4	Donkey Kong, Jr.	ColecoVision	Coleco
2	14	11	Zaxxon	ColecoVision	Coleco
3	9	4	Centipede	Atari 5200	Atari
4	1	12	Donkey Kong	ColecoVision	Coleco
5	5	12	Pitfall	Atari 2600	Activision
6	2	8	River Raid	Atari 2600	Activision
7	3	7	Advanced Dungeons & Dragons	Intellivision	Mattel
8	4	8	Lady Bug	ColecoVision	Coleco
9	10	4	Ms. Pac-Man	Atari 2600	Atari
10	New	New	Enduro	Atari 2600	Activision
11	-	5	Turbo	ColecoVision	Coleco
12	7	3	Pac-Man	Atari 5200	Atari
13	New	New	Defender	Atari 5200	Atari
14	New	New	Pepper II	ColecoVision	Coleco
15	13	12	Venture	ColecoVision	Coleco

MOST POPULAR COMPUTER GAME:

# 1	# 1	19	Star Raiders	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
2	2	17	Pac-Man	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
3	3	12	Centipede	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
4	6	9	Choplifter!	Atari/Apple	Broderbund
5	4	6	Miner 2049er	Atari/Apple	Big Five/Micro Fun
6	5	18	Castle Wolfenstein	Atari/Apple	Muse
7	7	3	Defender	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
8	New	New	Zaxxon	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari
9	-	2	Shamus	Atari 4-8-1200 VIC-20	Synapse HES Games
10	9	4	Astro Chase	Atari 4-8-1200	Atari

MOST POPULAR COIN-OP VIDEOGAME:

# 1	# 1	3	Pole Position	Atari
2	5	3	Q-Bert	Gottlieb
3	2	13	Donkey Kong	Nintendo
4	3	9	Joust	Williams
5	4	13	Dig-Dug	Atari
6	7	14	Zaxxon	Sega
7	6	2	BurgerTime	Data East/Bally
8	New	New	Time Pilot	Centuri
9	10	11	Centipede	Atari
10	New	New	Zevious	Atari

# 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 is the name of the item, then its classification and, if it's a home arcade software program, the system/s with which it's compatible. Finally, the manufacturer's name.

CRITICS THIS ISSUE: SD-Steve Davidson; AK-Arnie Katz; JW-Joyce Worley

DINO EGGS/Computer Game (for Apple II)/MicroLab/48K Disk

Even without its charming visuals, "Dino Eggs" would still be a climbing contest with a big difference. A time-traveler who has accidentally contaminated the dinosaurs decides to ferry them to the safety of his own future era. The player guides this rescuer around a succession of randomly generated playfields using the joystick in a hunt for dinosaur eggs. When found, these are carried to the time travel chamber, which will then teleport to a random location on the same field so that the hero can begin the next round of egg collection. There are other dangers which must be surmounted in the course of this quest, including the gigantic Dino Man, who is capable of stomping the arcader's on-screen representative into fudge. The only way to keep this monster at bay is to collect firewood and build a blaze that can keep Dino Man at a distance until it sputters out. There are some pleasingly fresh concepts embedded in this game. "Dino Eggs" is a stone-age treat for action game lovers. (AK) Rating: 9

THE QUEST/Computer Game (for Apple II)/Penguin/48K Disk

At a list price of just under \$20, "The Quest" represents an outstanding value for electronic adventurers. This illustrated adventure -- created with the Graphics Magician -- is pretty to watch and mind-bracing to play. One especially clever bit of designwork: The player is the advisor to the hero, rather than the dragon-killer himself. This makes the business of entering instructions through the keyboard seem less contrived. You're not just babbling to yourself, you're letting the mighty Gorn know what you want him to do! So grab your backpack and supplies -- there's a world out there that needs saving! (SD) Rating: 9

TROMPERS/Computer Game (for Apple II)/Avant-Garde/48K Disk

Arnold Strump, dog-catcher and amateur radio enthusiast, has made a little mistake, and it's up to the player to help him correct it. It seems one of his messages has traveled further afield than intended and is serving as a beacon for visitors from the planet Tromp. They arrive, one by one, in flying saucers which come into view on the left edge of the display and travel horizontally toward an exit on the right. In the course of this cross-screen journey, the Tromper inside the craft bails out -- and must be caught by Arnold, who moves back and forth across the bottom of the playfield carrying a pan for this purpose. If he misses, the Tromper begins bouncing around the display, increasing the chance that one will hit Arnold and cost the player one of the five "lives" with which the arcader begins the action. There are five skill levels

and the player advances to the next highest automatically during play if all Trompers are caught. Higher levels challenge Arnold with a second danger, person-holes, which are a one-way ticket to oblivion. "Trompers" is squarely in the "cute game" genre, though the Apple's graphics capability undermines this slightly. Although "Trompers" is easy enough to make a good kideo game at its lowest skill setting, it becomes livelier -- and harder -- to a considerable degree at levels three, four and five. (SD)  
Rating: 8

STELLAR 7/Computer Game (for Apple)/Software Entertainment/48K Disk

The Arcturan fleet has caught Earth napping. It's on the way to our home planet through a series of warp-links which permit shortcuts in interstellar travel which close the gaps between the stars. Since the aliens have fooled the Terran armada into zooming off on a wild goose chase, the only hope is an experimental armored craft called "Raven". The player uses either joystick or keyboard to guide this powerful weapon against an assortment of Arcturans. The goal is to travel the seven warp-links right back to Arcturus and destroy its warlord before the maniac can conquer this planet. "Raven" is equipped with several offensive and defensive aids, including the biphasal thunder cannon and the invisio cloak. Graphics in "Stellar 7" will remind many of those in vector graphics games such as "Tempest", and the play-mechanic is in the same general family as Atari's "Battlezone". The excellent pseudo-3-D, variety of targets and excitement level all stamp "Stellar 7" as a fine first effort from a new company. (AK) Rating: 8

ZAXXON/Computer Game (for Atari Computers)/DataSoft/48K Disk

Though this edition of "Zaxxon" isn't bad, it may possibly disappoint those who became familiar with the game in the arcades or the ColecoVision cartridge. The play-mechanic comes through fairly faithfully, but the graphics are curiously sparse. The total effect is all right, but not quite up to what one would expect in a disk for the Atari family of microcomputers. (AK) Rating: 6

JUMPMAN JR./Computer Game (for Atari Computers)/Epyx/ROM Cartridge

The dreaded Alienators from "Jumpman" are back, and only the intrepid Jumpman Junior can save the day! He must roam through the 12 sections of Jupiter Command Substation (each one represented by a separate screen), and defuse the bombs which the invaders have strewn just about everywhere. Randy Glover, the designer, is improving with each outing, but "Jumpman Jr." is still not an unalloyed joy, despite its numerous strengths. For instance, the hero frequently gets hung up, frozen in place, when trying to go up and down ladders. The contest is still highly playable, but home arcaders can expect the same sort of frustration, albeit to a lesser degree, they experienced with "Jumpman". Nevertheless, the varied situations and excellent animation of the on-screen hero earn this one a strong rating -- and probable success with the gaming public as well. (SD) Rating: 8

WRESTLING/Stand-Alone Game/Bandai Electronics

Bandai has brought the squared circle to handheld size, and in so doing, has crammed a lot of fun and action into miniature form. The LCD screen is backed by beautifully colored graphics : A sky-blue ring, decorated with a large two-toned eight-pointed star in the center surrounded by the shadowy faces of the spectators surrounding the action. Inside the ring is the referee with the two wrestlers..a clean-cut champion defending against a masked villain. Two buttons move the hero up and down the ring, and the attack button makes him jump into the combat. When the battlers engage, clever matrixing puts the struggle right before your eyes. Wrestling is a mighty big sport to cram into such a tiny housing, but Bandai has managed to capture a lot of the fun and spirit. The game itself is more cute than challenging, but the cleverness of the cartooning makes this handheld a big winner. (JW) Rating: 7

ACTIVISION's "DREADNAUGHT FACTOR"  
TAKES INTELLIVISION TO OUTER SPACE

"The Dreadnaught Factor", Activision's fourth cartridge compatible with Intellivision, is the first game from designer Tom Loughry. "Dreadnaught Factor" requires a Terran hyperfighter to fly through a stargate to examine an intruder in this sector -- a giant alien spacecraft, larger than the entire video screen. The fighter must drop bombs on the 16 energy vents in the heavily armed Dreadnaught as it approaches Earth. The player can, by adept shooting, reduce the firepower of the Dreadnaught by 50%, and can slow the approach to Earth by crippling the four engines that power the giant spacecraft. "The Dreadnaught Factor" will retail for \$39.95, and should be available nationally in September.

PARKER ALLOTS BIG BUCKS  
TO VIDEOGAME ADS

According to Rick Sterns, Executive VP of Parker's consumer electronics division, the company plans to allot around \$40 million to advertising for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 1983. Most of this will be spent during the last two quarters of this year. Sterns points to the \$14 million ad budget of two years ago by way of comparison, as he promises aggressive ad support for the new titles from Parker during the coming months. The company plans to use network t.v., plus MTV, and other cable programming, as well as print ads in various consumer books.

The first batch of Parker ads will feature "Q-Bert", "Popeye", "Tutankhamen" and "Super Cobra".

MATTEL MAKES  
ADDITIONAL STAFF CUTS

Mattel says it will reduce its payroll in its electronics division by cutting another 400 workers from the staff, reducing the number of jobs at Mattel Electronics to 1140 employees.

This follows a cut of 260 employees early last month.

The company has announced that it expects a pre-tax loss in the second quarter of more than \$100 million. However, company spokesmen say that Mattel has not changed its plans, and will continue developing new hardware and software for videogame systems despite these layoffs.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Lewis R. Shomer has just been appointed as Vice President of Marketing & Sales for THE INTERFACE GROUP. Mr. Shomer formerly was with IBM, Honeywell, Computer Investors Group, Pertec and Novation...David Edelman is the new Vice President of Administration/Finance for SOFTWARE DISTRIBUTION SERVICES. He was formerly the chief financial officer for the Erie County Industrial Development Agency...Franklyn S. Barry, Jr., is the new president of MODERN TEK SHOPS. He was formerly president of Fisher-Price, and has hands-on experience in software through Fisher-Price's subsidiary, U.S.Games.

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