

HOTLINE

THE BI-WEEKLY ELECTRONIC GAMES NEWSLETTER

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"BEST OF" ALBUMS COMING FOR ADAM Coleco plans to pump up the catalogue of games available for its Adam computer through deals with leading software houses to produce anthologies of some of their best efforts on data pack for the machine. Forthcoming this year are collections from Electronic Arts ("Hard Hat Mack", "Pinball Construction Set"), Synapse ("Capture The Flag", "Gruds In Space" and "Type Attack") and Broderbund ("A.E." and "Choplifter!").

"LIVE YOUR GAME" CONTEST LAUNCHED Micro Lab has created a "Live Your Game" series of contests in association with ELECTRONIC GAMES magazine. The first of several planned sweepstakes will start in the May issue of the leading gaming monthly and will support Micro Lab's recently released "Dino Eggs". In the actual game, the player assumes the role of a time traveler who journeys to the past to save the dinosaurs from deadly contamination resulting from an accident on one of his own previous trips. Accordingly, the winner of the "Dino Eggs" sweepstakes will be flown to Chicago, given the all-around royal treatment, and get a special behind-the-scenes tour of the city's world-famous Field Museum.

The next sweepstakes, says Micro Lab's Susan Goldberg, will be themed to the upcoming "Heist", a new game from Mike Livesay.

FIVE MILLION VIDEOGAMES SOLD IN 1983 Despite the Big Shake-Out and a summer sales slump that had manufacturers running for cover, videogame hardware and software had a stronger sales year in 1983 than many had expected as recently as six months ago. More than five million videogame machines were purchased by Americans in 1983, a significant decline from the previous year's totals. Cartridge sales actually rose in units to approximately 80 million games from the previous year's volume of 60 million carts. It must be acknowledged, however, that nearly 40% of videogames sold at deep discount prices ranging as low as \$4.99.

NCMI SPONSORS STUDENT ANTI-DRINKING GROUPS The National Coin Machine Institute (NCMI) has approved sponsorship of Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD), and urges its members to back SADD chapters and activities in their communities. Currently there are 6000 schools participating in SADD, with over 2½ million student members. "If our members can save just one life or prevent one accident in the communities where we operate, we will have accomplished a lot," says NCMI president Mel Grossberg.

To get information about SADD, call the NCMI Hotline, 1-800-327-7724. They'll provide information about chapters in your area, or help organize a local branch of SADD in your own town.

EPYX TRIES "BUY ONE, GET ONE FREE" Here's a promotional idea that gamers should love. Epyx is running an incentive program from January 1 through February 29, that lets gamers receive free their choice of any one of 28 selected Epyx titles. Just send in proof of purchase and game box sticker from programs bought during that period. Free games are available for the Commodore 64, Atari, Apple, IBM, VIC-20 and Radio Shack computers.

TI CONTINUES 99/4A SUPPORT Texas Instruments spokesman Dale Osborne says that TI is determined to "exit the home computer business with grace", so will continue to support the 99/4A home computer, and its 2 million owners. Texas Instruments introduced 20-25 new titles this winter before announcing its pullback from the home market, and these games are currently in distribution. In addition, TI is urging third party software manufacturers to produce for the 99/4A. In some cases, products developed for the 99/4A will be turned back to the original creators. For example, games by Imagic previously scheduled by TI will be marketed under the Imagic label. Similarly, TI turned over to Sierra On-Line the rights to new products developed by Walt Disney.

TI will honor all warranties for hardware and software, and will maintain service and exchange centers for the indefinite future.

All known 99/4A owners will receive information, newsletters, catalogs and direct mail pieces to keep them advised of services, hard- and software available. New owners should mail in their Owner Information Card, or in order to be included on the mailing list, send name, address and 99/4A serial number to Texas Instruments, Box 53, Lubbock, Tx. 79408.

Finally, TI is continuing its 6-day-a-week toll-free line -- 1-800-TI-CARES. Dale Osborne warns that thousands of calls are arriving hourly to the switchboard, so just keep trying until you get through.

We regret seeing Texas Instruments exit the home computer business, but happily, the company's Professional Computer Division is alive and healthy. Meanwhile, we applaud the company for their efforts to assure that all 99/4A owners can look forward to receiving the information and program support they need.

WARNER TO DISTRIBUTE "ELECTRONIC GAMES" Beginning this Spring, the distribution arm of Warner Communications will assume responsibility for ELECTRONIC GAMES magazine, says Jay Rosenfield, president of Reese Communications.

ELECTRONIC GAMES, the first and largest magazine serving the gaming hobby, is an ABC audited publication. The agreement between Reese and Warner also covers the top-selling VIDEO magazine.

ATARI SOFT TRANSLATES TWO HIT TITLES FOR VIC-20 SYSTEM AtariSoft's production of software for non-Atari computers won't be neglecting Commodore's VIC-20. Among the programs targeted at the mini-priced system are "Dig-Dug" and "Chop-lifter!" Atari's expertise with low-memory systems, hard-won through years of work on the 2600, has evidently paid off, to judge from advance copies of the games previewed by HOTLINE.

GRANNY FIGHTS THE GATORS "Granny & The Gators" lets arcaders guide a heroine through the jungle in Bally's latest video/pinball combination. Video gators and savage spear-chucking natives challenge Grandma as she canoes through dangerous waters to the passage that leads her to the Pinball Jungle, in a skill-test that's bound to be a hit with everyone who liked "Baby Pac-Man", Bally's earlier pinball/videogame combination.

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- ELECTRONIC ARTS PROMISES MORE GAMES IN "ONE ON ONE" MOLD** Trip Hawkins, president of Electronic Arts, has told HOTLINE that the publisher is already developing additional games to capitalize on the programming breakthroughs showcased in EA's runaway hit, "Dr. J & Larry Bird Go One On One". The software publishing executive turned coy about the exact subject of any follow-up to the landmark sports contest, but he hinted that the subject might be a simulation of some form of head-to-head competition from the pages of history. Although the ultimate sales success of "One On One" won't really be determined until EA publishes editions for the usual range of home computers -- it is only available for the Apple II at present -- Hawkins acknowledged that initial volume is more than three times as large as any previous Electronic Arts game for similar post-release periods.
- METHODIST HOSPITAL "JOUSTS" WITH SICK KIDS** Explaining that the hospital wants to maintain a policy of "attending to the total needs of its patients", Methodist Hospital, Indianapolis, In., is placing coin-op games in the Children's Pavilion. A "Joust" machine has been put on freeplay for the sick kids, in a program that hospital spokesmen hope will make conditions more pleasant for patients. The "Joust" game was donated by Modern Vending, MVS Amusements, and Williams Electronics.
- IBM SETS AD BUDGET** IBM plans to spend \$40 million in ad dollars this year promoting the PC Jr., and that's not peanuts! The campaign includes extensive t.v. commercials, which began in January, as well as extensive print advertising to appear in consumer magazines starting in February.
- DR. WACKO EXPLAINS PROGRAMMING** "Dr. C. Wacko's Miracle Guide To Designing & Programming Your Own Atari Computer Arcade Games", published by Addison-Wesley, aims to teach everyone how to use the Atari 400, 600XL, 800 or 1200XL, even if they've never programmed before. The 235-page book comes packed with a disk that contains, along with the instructions, an arcade game by Dr. Wacko, for \$24.95, or buy the book alone for \$12.95. Along with the information arcaders need to start programming their own computers, the book includes the Wacko games ready to type.
- FLORIDA RESTAURANTS FEATURE ICE CREAM, GAMES** John Phillip Tuba Ice Cream Corp. has just opened four new "entertainment restaurants" in Broward County, Florida. Each features pizza, submarines, beer, wine, and a line of ice cream treats. Every location has roughly 50 coin-op games to keep the customers coming back, as well as a "robotic show" of robot musicians to serenade diners. This makes a total of nine JPT Ice Cream Entertainment Restaurants, with five more currently under construction, and 13 additional franchises throughout the State of Florida.
- TAITO SERVES "ICE COLD BEER"** Taito America hopes that every arcader will soon have "Ice Cold Beer" in his mitts. No, they're not offering to buy everyone a drink; that's the name of the latest coin-op from the company that introduced Americans to "Space Invaders". The front panel of the coin-snatcher looks like a mug of beer. The bubbles in the glass are holes in the playfield, and the gamer tries to maneuver a ball into the only lit hole without falling in a trap or tilting the machine. The challenge increases as play progresses, and a heart-beat countdown gives bonus points to successful players on each level.
- "DIPLOMACY" COMES TO IBM PC SYSTEM** At least a few frustrated fans of "Diplomacy" will get relief from the frustration of not being able to own and play the magnificent computerized version of this multi-player boardgame obsession by summer, says publisher of both the electronic and non-electronic versions, Avalon Hill. The firm, which originally premiered the computer edition on the TRS-80, now promises a disk for the IBM PC. Memory size, apparently, will keep this program off the more popular game-oriented computers like the Apple, Atari and Commodore 64.

**TWO COMPANIES READY
OLYMPIC COMPUTER GAMES** Activision's "Decathlon" was the first game sparked by the approach of the '84 Olympics -- there had been some earlier attempts at such a game, of course -- but it won't have the field (and track) to itself. Human Engineered Systems has announced "HesGames 84" and Epyx is preparing "Summer Games" for shipment to stores before the actual event takes place this summer in Los Angeles. Both allow the computerist to try his or her skill at a variety of events, and both have excellent hi-res graphics. Which title will win the race to the top of the sales chart? Stay tuned for late results...

**BRUCE LEE KICKS AGAIN
IN DATASOFT DISK** A multi-screen action/adventure starring that now-legendary hero of martial arts movies, Bruce Lee, is one of the stellar attractions coming for computer gamers from DataSoft. More than 20 imaginatively designed and strikingly rendered playfields serve as the backdrop for lots of running, jumping and kicking. The program will first appear for the C-64 and then will be translated for other major systems.

**INFOCOM MAKES "INVISICLUES"
AVAILABLE TO GAMERS** Now computerists can buy hint books and game maps for all ten Infocom games. The "InvisiClues" hint book gives helpful suggestions, printed in invisible ink. The gamer rubs the clue they want with the special "InvisiClue" pen that comes with the enhancement package, and maps help gamers find their way through the adventure worlds. The enhancement packets are available for \$7.95, and can be ordered direct from Infocom, Box 855, Garden City, NY 11530, or by calling 1-800-262-6868.

**HERE'S GRIDIRON GLORY
FOR COIN-OP QUARTERBACKS** The latest entry in the laser disc coin-op race is "Goal To Go", an interactive football game from Stern that lets the players select different plays, then use joystick, hand and foot buttons to simulate the action on screen. From kickoff, the player gets control of the ball, then chooses from a series of plays. After selecting each play, an "X & O" diagram appears. The computer monitors play selections, and if the same play is picked too often, it won't let that gamer get too far. It's an all-offensive game. The object is to gain at least ten yards in four downs, or score a touchdown. The game ends when the arcader fails to make a first down.

Stern has also started shipping "Great Guns", a one or two player gun battle. A variety of target screens are progressively offered, up to a total of nine. If two arcaders play, each receives bonus bullets, and additional bullets are also awarded to good shooters.

**CBS TUNES UP
MUSICAL GAMES** Through an agreement with the Dovetail Group, CBS Software will produce a trio of musical games narrated by the three main Dovetail members in their guise as the Jazz Scats jazz group. Likenesses of this colorful threesome appear on screen and they also scat-sing the rules. "Half Time Battlin' Bands" is likely to be the most popular among gamers. It's a race to complete a band formation on a football field at half-time in such a way as to make the notes play the appropriate marching tune. Also highly intriguing is a program which allows even youngsters to create computer movies complete with soundtrack.

**"ZAXXON" COMING
TO COMMODORE 64** Commodore 64'ers who've wanted a home edition of Sega's superb space battle have found a friend in Synapse Software. The company has acquired the rights to produce a version of the game for the C-64, and the result is the flashiest and most eye-appealing title yet offered for the computer. Its multi-colored graphics set a new standard for the C-64, and this edition even includes an extra screen that the coin-op original lacks.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF HOTLINE will return to its normal format after this issue's special listing of the semi-annual index of reviews on the following pages. Don't miss it!

HOTLINE'S SEMI-ANNUAL INDEX OF REVIEWS With this issue, Hotline completes its publishing half-year, and following is an index of the items reviewed during the last six months. All entries follow the same easy format. First is the name of the item, then the system/s for which the item was reviewed, followed by the manufacturer's name. Finally, there's the issue number it appeared in.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SYSTEM</u>	<u>MANUFACTURER</u>	<u>ISSUE #</u>
<u>COMPUTER GAME REVIEWS:</u>			
Aquatron	Apple	Sierra On-Line	11
Arachnoid	VIC-20	UMI	5
Astroblitz	VIC-20	Creative Software	4
Attack of Mutant Camels	Commodore 64	HES	5
Blue Max	Atari	Synapse	1
Bouncing Kamungas	Apple	Penguin	11
Bristles	Atari	First Star	9
Buck Rogers	Atari	Sega	11
Buck Rogers	Commodore 64	Sega	12
Candy Bandit	Commodore 64	T & F Software	8
Cannonball Blitz	VIC-20	Sierra On-Line	8
Castle Wolfenstein	Commodore 64	Muse	11
Chambers of Vocab	Apple	Readers Digest	13
Clipper:Around the Horn	Atari	PDI	3
Cohen's Towers	Atari	Datamost	10
Computer Football Strategy	Atari	Avalon Hill	9
Computer Statis Pro Baseball	Apple	Avalon Hill	10
Creature Creator	Apple	DesignWare	5
Dancing Feats	Atari	SoftSync	8
Dino Eggs	Apple	Micro Lab	2
Drol	Apple	Broderbund	13
Enchanter	All Systems	Infocom	9
Encounter	Atari	Synapse	12
Flip & Flop	Atari	First Star	8
Fortress of Witch King	Apple	Avalon Hill	6
Frogger	Atari	Parker Brothers	1
Gateway to Apshai	Atari	Epyx	14
Gold Fever	VIC-20	Tronix	5
Gridder	VIC-20	MicroDigital	4
Gumball	Apple	Broderbund	11
Hard Hat Mack	Commodore 64	Electronic Arts	13
High Rise	Apple	Micro Learn	10
International Soccer	Commodore 64	Commodore	3
Jawbreaker II	Commodore 64	On-Line Systems	3
Juice!	Commodore 64	Tronix	11
Jumpman Jr.	Atari	Epyx	2
Lady Tut	Apple	Progame	4
Last Gladiator, The	Apple	Electronic Arts	10
Lode Runner	Apple	Broderbund	1
M.U.L.E.	Commodore 64	Electronic Arts	10
Minit Man	Apple	Penguin Software	4
Mothership	Commodore 64	SoftSync	6
Movie Maker	Atari	Reston	9
Mr. Cool	Atari	Sierra On-Line	4
Mr. Cool	Commodore 64	Sierra On-Line	7

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<u>NAME</u> (computer games cont'd.)	<u>SYSTEM</u>	<u>MANUFACTURER</u>	<u>ISSUE #</u>
Mr.Robot & His Robot Factory	Atari	Datamost	12
Murder By The Dozen	Apple	CBS Software	13
Murder On The Zinderneuf	Atari	Electronic Arts	3
Music Construction Set	Apple	Electronic Arts	7
Night Raider	Atari	Datamost	9
Oil's Well	Atari	Sierra On-Line	12
One on One	Apple	Electronic Arts	12
Predator	VIC-20	HES	8
Quest For Tires	Atari	Sierra On-Line	13
Rainbow Walker	Atari	Synapse	14
River Raid	Atari	Activision	1
Robotron 2080	Commodore 64	AtariSoft	13
Round About	Apple	Datamost	13
Scorpion	VIC-20	Tronix	4
Sillicon Warriors	Atari	Epyx	12
Snokie	Atari	Funsoft	14
Spare Change	Apple	Broderbund	6
Spitball	Commodore 64	Creative Software	13
Spy Strikes Back, The	Apple	Penguin Software	7
Star Ranger	Commodore 64	Commodore	6
Stellar 7	Apple	Software Entertainment	2
Tail of Beta Lyra	Atari	Datamost	10
The Quest	Apple	Penguin	2
Trompers	Apple	Avant-Garde	2
Zaxxon	Atari	DataSoft	2
Zeppelin	Atari	Synapse	9
Zeppelin	Commodore 64	Synapse	13
Zombies	Atari	Bram	10

VIDEOGAME REVIEWS:

Battlezone	Atari 5200	Atari	14
Beamrider	ColecoVision	Activision	11
Berzerk	Atari 5200	Atari	7
Decathlon	Atari 2600	Activision	4
Joust	Atari 5200	Atari	14
K-razy Shoot-Out	Atari 5200	CBS	8
Miner 2049er	ColecoVision	Micro Lab	1
Missile Command	Atari 5200	Atari	7
Mission X	Intellivision	Mattel	1
Nova Blast	ColecoVision	Imagic	3
Pengo	Atari 5200	Atari	8
Pole Position	Atari 2600	Atari	3
Q*Bert	ColecoVision	Parker Brothers	9
Robot Tank	Atari 2600	Activision	14
Spike	Vectrex	GCE	5
Springer	Atari 2600	Tigervision	7
Super Cobra	Atari 5200	Parker Brothers	14
Time Pilot	ColecoVision	Coleco	6

NOTE The Hotline Index of Reviews will be continued with the next issue, with the listing of miscellaneous items that were reviewed during the first 14 issues of this publishing year.

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 is compatible. Finally, the manufacturer's name.

CRITICS THIS ISSUE: AK-Arnie Katz; BK-Bill Kunkel; SD-Steve Davidson

JOUST/Videogame (for Atari 5200)/Atari

This is a remarkably faithful rendition of Williams' science fantasy coin-op cult favorite. The player maneuvers a knight mounted on an ostrich around the playfield which is composed of strategically placed horizontal ledges, and fight against vari-colored villains mounted on buzzards. After a few rounds of lance-to-lance combat, the ground erodes into a bubbling lava pit that adds an extra note of excitement. "Joust" uses sound particularly well, including sonic clues as well as the audio frills. (BK) Rating: 9

SUPER COBRA/Videogame (for Atari 5200)/Parker Brothers

If you like "Blue Thunder", here's a home edition of a seminal helicopter attack game that has been dealing out its brand of frenetic actions in arcades around the country for several years now. The super cobra must be maneuvered across a horizontally scrolling, multi-segment playfield, bombing and shooting the enemy weapons and installations. The only serious flaw in this version is that the programmer did not take advantage of the 5200's capabilities by allotting separate function buttons for lasers and bombs. This would have been much closer to the spirit of the coin-op -- and would have made "Super Cobra" more fun to play. (BK) Rating: 7

BATTLEZONE/Videogame (for Atari 5200)/Atari

Once players get over the disappointment of not finding "Battlezone"'s vector graphics duplicated on this home edition, they're very likely to enjoy this home game's visuals on their own merits. The secret: the play elements that make "Battlezone" an enduring classic are all in their proper place in this first-person steering and shooting blastathon. (BK) Rating: 8

ROBOT TANK/Videogame (for Atari 2600)/Activision

In a sense, the visuals stamp this cartridge as at least a cousin of Activision's "Enduro" multi-phase racing game. The playfield here is designed to provide an illusion of screen depth so that the objects which approach the player's armored fighting vehicle exhibit a pseudo-3-D motion. The idea is to cruise along the surface of the planet in the tank, spot enemies, and wipe their threat off the face of the world with a few well-placed shots. (SD) Rating: 7

(continued next page)

RAINBOW WALKER/Computer Game (for Atari systems)/Synapse

Steve Coleman gets the credit for designing this latest jewel in Synapse's growing line of action/strategy titles. This vertically scrolling, color-changing game puts the player into the magic shoes of Cedrick, who runs through the sky turning on the colors of the rainbow one section at a time. A little devil, the shooting star and a whirlwind are only three of many obstacles which complicate the mission. "Rainbow Walker" is an authentically innovative game, combining the strategy of a color-shifting program with the speed and excitement of a scroller. And the audio-visuals are so outstanding that some might be tempted to categorize "Rainbow Walker" as a "cute" game -- if the play-action wasn't so noteworthy. (AK) Rating: 8

GATEWAY TO APSHAI/Computer Game (for Atari systems)/Epyx

This action adventure plunks the hero down in the middle of the first floor of an eight-level dungeon with little more than wits to serve as a defense. The home arcader moves the character around the multi-segment playfield with the joystick, uncovering the overall layout of the place one tiny section at a time. The idea is to collect treasures, including magical items, while slaying or avoiding monsters until the warrior grows powerful enough to brave the deepest level of the labyrinth to find the hidden passage to the Temple of Apshai. This ingenious design uses the "option", "select" and "start" buttons to quickly input a surprisingly wide variety of orders. The unique system makes it possible to change weapons, activate a spell or drop an item -- to name but three of many possibilities -- at the touch of a single button. "Gateway to Apshai" is a near-perfect blend of action and strategy, easy enough to learn but tough enough to give zest to infinite replays. (AK) Rating: 9

SNOKIE/Computer Game (for Atari systems)/Funsoft

Can you steer the oh-so-cute snow crittur, Snokie, through this seven-phase arctic mission? It takes a mighty facile hand on the joystick to keep the hardy little character leaping and dodging over obstacles, even at the slower of the two available game speeds. This one- or two-player contest offers little that's strikingly new, but it's a good, professional job. Alain Marsily has given "Snokie" a graphic look reminiscent of "Super Cobra", leaning more to broad areas of bright color than super-detailed rendering. Good, if low-key fun. (SD) Rating: 6



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