

Video games create computer wiz-kids

Children play their way to understanding programming principles, formal logic

By MEGAN O'MATZ
Collegian Staff Writer

Playing home video games is a valuable learning tool in helping children prepare for the computer age, a consumer affairs specialist for the Mattel Corp. said Tuesday.

Randolph Petromgelli said, "When a child plays video games he or she has to analyze the situation and give input to the computer after which the child sees the results of his efforts on the screen. It is natural, therefore, for the child to think about how the computer operates."

An example of how video games are a natural introduction to computers is provided by 12-year-old Andrew Katkin of 620 E. Foster Ave. Katkin developed his interest in computers after he began playing video games two years ago. He now gives computer lessons in his home

to five children between the ages of six and 10.

"After I had played video games for awhile I went to Island Technology (119 N. Butts St.) and started taking computer lessons. Then I convinced Dad to buy a computer," Katkin said. "I started giving lessons a little while ago. I found that it was fun and I could make some money doing it."

During the hour-long sessions, Katkin usually allocates about 15 minutes for his students to play video games, which he believes are beneficial for them.

In explaining the benefits of playing a video game similar to Asteroids, Katkin said, "They (his students) have to calculate how fast the ship is going and figure out when to press the keys. It allows them to become familiar with the keyboard and it's a fun way to learn."

Daniel Katkin, Andrew's father and a University professor of human development, said working with computers is a good form of learning for children.

"In order to write a program the child has to dream up a complex task, figure out the component parts and put them in some logical order," Katkin said. "This is a valuable thinking skill that involves formal logic, reasoning and problem solving. The key to developing a child's interest is to let the child choose what he is working on. You capture the creative urge that way, which is something they value."

In addition to furthering a child's interest in computers, video games have a more direct effect in helping children develop hand and eye coordination.

"In playing video games the

amount of hand and eye coordination activity is tremendous," Petromgelli said. "This is very important, especially for younger children. Playing video games also helps people who are recovering from accidents in which their motor coordination has been impaired."

Susan McHale, a University professor of individual and family studies, said children learn hand and eye coordination by doing such tasks as pressing buttons while looking at the screen.

"They learn to respond quickly," McHale said. "They learn what the different stimuli mean and how they should respond."

Although playing video games may be a good learning experience, it can also have a negative influence on the child if it is not supervised correctly, Petromgelli said.

campus briefs

Fraternity is rechartered

Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity was rechartered last weekend during a gathering in the Nittany Lion Inn, the fraternity president said yesterday.

Randy Shultz said the fraternity was presented with its charter during the gathering of fraternity members, alumni, national fraternity members and parents.

The fraternity, which was originally chartered on Dec. 17, 1937, left the University in 1978 when the national fraternity pulled the chapter because of low membership. However, the University did not pull the fraternity's charter, Shultz said.

Alpha Epsilon Pi is also planning a philanthropy for next fall and will be more involved with the IFC's Dance Marathon in the future, Shultz said. —by Kristine Sorchillo

Program to give 'insight'

A program to help students in the College of Business Administration make decisions concerning their careers will be held this afternoon in the HUB.

"Insight '84" is a program in which University alumni hold panel discussions with students on topics concerning business careers such as course scheduling and interviewing tips. They also talk about the companies they work for, Lori Lindenberg, chairwoman of the program, said.

"I don't think the students can get this (information) anywhere else," Lindenberg (senior-marketing) said.

The program will include panel discussions representing the eight majors offered by the college, Lindenberg said. Each panel will be made up of alumni who graduated from and worked in that major and are members of the College of Business Administration Board of Directors.

The discussions will last an hour, with each panel member speaking for 10 to 12 minutes, Lindenberg said. Three sessions and an open house are scheduled beginning at 1 this afternoon, she said. —by Steve Wilson

Bicycles to be auctioned

The University Department of Purchasing is sponsoring an auction Saturday, April 7, at noon, in the salvage warehouse on Bigler Road behind the flower fields and parking lot 83.

About 25 unclaimed bicycles will be for sale to the highest bidder. Interested students are encouraged to participate in the auction. —by Anita Huslin

Democracies have to defend against terrorism, Shultz says

By R. GREGORY NOKES
AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State George P. Shultz said Tuesday the United States and its allies must engage in an "active defense" against state-sponsored terrorism, which he called "a weapon of unconventional war against democratic societies."

He suggested that procedures should be adopted for striking first at terrorist groups before they can mount their attacks.

He singled out Iran, Syria, Libya and North Korea as nations most involved in terrorist activities that take advantage of the openness of democratic nations.

He said the terrorist threat is mounting and that a passive strategy

that relies on security precautions and intelligence gathering is insufficient to provide protection.

"We have no choice . . . but to address ourselves boldly to the challenge of terrorism," Shultz said in a speech prepared for the Trilateral Commission, which is meeting in Washington. "State sponsored terrorism is really a form of warfare."

Shultz has for some months been promoting recommendations on ways of combating terrorism, but he didn't offer any in his prepared remarks.

But he said the need to combat terrorism raises "a host of questions for a free society." Among them, he said, are in what circumstances and in what way should nations respond to terrorism.

Also, he said, "When — and how —

should we take preventive or preemptive action against known terrorist groups? What evidence do we insist upon before taking such steps?"

He said "it is more and more appropriate that the nations of the West face up to the need for active defenses against terrorism."

Shultz also was critical of members of Congress and others who he said questioned the use of American military power in pursuit of what he called worthwhile diplomatic objectives, such as in Lebanon and Central America.

He added that the real question in Central America is not whether the United States believes in military solutions, but whether the United States has "a moral right to try to stop" those who try to impose Marxist solutions by force.

House subcommittee approves bill to allow prayer groups 'equal access'

By MARGARET SCHERF
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Legislation approved yesterday by a House subcommittee would require public high schools to give student religious groups the same privileges to meet on school premises as other voluntary student groups.

The so-called equal access bill was approved on a voice vote by the House Education and Labor subcommittee on elementary, secondary and

vocational education. The measure goes to the full committee.

Under the bill, public secondary schools could not prohibit student religious groups from meeting voluntarily in school facilities during non-instructional hours if other student groups are permitted to do so.

Violations would be penalized by a cutoff of federal aid funds to the state or local educational agency with jurisdiction over the non-complying schools.

Schools or teachers would be forbidden to sponsor the religious meetings, and a teacher could be present only as a monitor.

The subcommittee adopted an amendment proposed by Rep. Gary L. Ackerman, D-N.Y., that would prevent any teacher or other school employee from being forced to attend a religious meeting if the content is contrary to the employee's religious beliefs.

But the panel rejected many other amendments offered by Ackerman, an opponent of the bill.

India:

Sikh terrorism continues to escalate in northern region

By VICTORIA GRAHAM
Associated Press Writer

CHANDIGARH, India — Police arrested about 300 people yesterday during a general strike to protest growing violence in northern India, and a Sikh terrorist group threatened to kill a politician a day until its demands were met.

A homemade bomb was tossed into a crowd near the town of Moga, 190 miles northwest of New Delhi in Punjab state, police in Chandigarh said. Five people were seriously wounded, the police said, blaming the attack on Sikh terrorists.

The government declared Chandigarh, joint capital of violence-torn Punjab and Haryana states, a "disturbed region." The declaration empowers police to shoot lawbreakers on sight and to make searches and arrests without warrants.

In Parliament, the opposition demanded that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government step down for failing to curb Sikh terrorism that has claimed more than 125 lives in two months.

Militant Sikhs are waging a campaign for greater religious and political autonomy in Punjab state, about 150 miles northwest of New Delhi. While a minority in Hindu-dominated India, they are the majority in Punjab.

Sikh attacks on Hindus and government officials have prompted some retaliatory attacks, and several Parliament deputies said during debate that they feared widespread rioting if the terrorism is not quelled.

More than 350 people have been assassinated in Sikh-dominated Punjab in the last three years. According to the government, Amritsar's historic Golden Temple — seat of the Sikh faith — is being used as an arsenal and a sanctuary for fugitives.

The Dashmesh Regiment, a little-known Sikh terrorist group, said in a letter to a newspaper in Punjab state that it would murder one political figure a day until the government lifts a ban on a radical Sikh student organization.

The terrorist group has claimed responsibility for

assassinating two Hindu politicians and one moderate Sikh leader in the past seven days.

Authorities outlawed the All-India Sikh Students Federation last month, charging that it advocated separatism and fanned tensions between Hindus and Sikhs.

The general strike, called by the right-wing Indian People's Party, shut markets, businesses and factories in New Delhi, the Jammu region and the states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

In the Indian capital, hundreds of strikers hurled rocks and damaged several city buses. Police used metal-tipped bamboo staves to scatter crowds that attempted to set buses on fire. A post office was ransacked.

Police said about 300 people were arrested, including about 200 activists of opposition parties charged with violating a ban on public gatherings of more than four people.

Essential services, banks, schools and government offices remained open.

During the strike, paramilitary troops patrolled the streets of Panipat, Karnal and other towns in Haryana state, which borders both Punjab and New Delhi. Police in Haryana and Punjab also have "shoot-to-kill" powers.

Vishwa Nath Tiwari, 48, was given a state funeral in Chandigarh on Wednesday. Tiwari, a member of the upper house of Parliament and a supporter of Mrs. Gandhi, was shot Tuesday in his living room.

Many students of the local university, where Tiwari was a professor, wept as the body was carried through the streets, accompanied by thousands of people.

The funeral was peaceful, unlike the funeral Tuesday for right-wing politician Harbans Lal Khanna in the Sikh holy city of Amritsar in Punjab. The ceremony for Khanna, who was killed along with his police bodyguard on Monday, led to violence that left nine civilians and two police sergeants dead.

Authorities extended the nighttime curfew in Amritsar and several other Punjab cities, including Jullundur, Ludhiana, Patiala and Khanna.

USG program to answer students' legal concerns

By MARK DIANTONIO
Collegian Staff Writer

Students can have their legal questions answered and meet police officers in a friendly atmosphere at an Undergraduate Student Government-sponsored program from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. today and tomorrow in the HUB Gallery.

USG police services committee chairman Jim McNally said several qualified representatives from various organizations will be available to answer students' questions about apartment leases, drunken driving laws or problems with local authorities.

Those representatives will be from the Association of Residence Halls Students, the Organization for Town Independent Students, USG legal affairs department, University Police Services,

State College Police Department and State Police at Rockview, McNally said. Dog McGruff, the Crimewatch mascot, will also participate in the program, he said.

Students attending the programs can ask questions and pick up pamphlets explaining legal issues or procedures to follow in case of a discrepancy, McNally said.

He said a slide show and a demonstration of a breathalyzer test may be included in the program today.

The program should expose students to the various legal services available to them at the University and help direct students with questions to someone who can help them, North Hills senator Kate Cooney said.

Cooney said making students aware of the services offered "will give students a better idea

of where to go for help if they have a problem in the future."

McNally said the program is also aimed at creating a greater awareness of current legal issues and promoting a more positive image of police officers among students.

"The police want students to know that they are here to help the students, not to hinder them," he said.

Cooney said program organizers expect a large response from students who have questions about the legal language of their apartment leases or dorm contracts.

USG is holding the program in the spring because students with lease and contract questions can still be helped instead of waiting until the fall when housing concerns have been taken care of, she said.

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