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INTERAction

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- Battledrome

HOT NEW RELEASES

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- Quest for Glory IV
- Incredible Toons
- Leisure Suit Larry 6
- Police Quest 4

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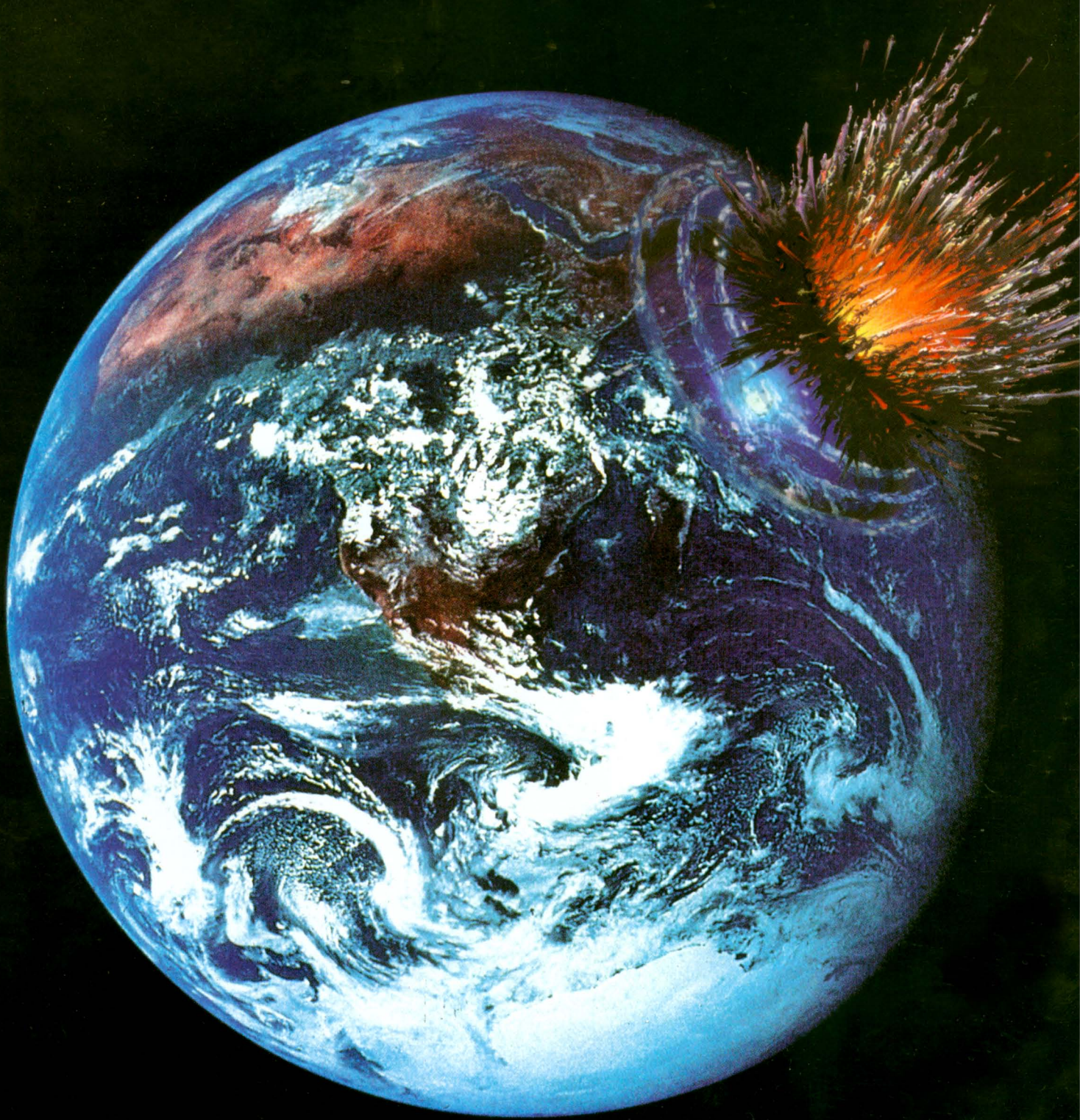
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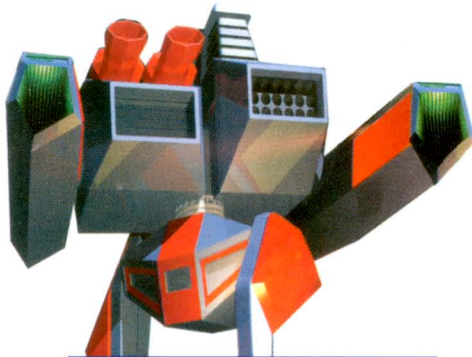
Do you have a copy of the book *Software People: An Insider's Look at the Personal Computer Software Industry*? If you do, Ken Williams would like to borrow it.

The book, published in 1985 by Simon & Schuster, was written by Douglas G. Carlston. We will return the book to you, along with a Sierra Family game of your choice as a way of saying thanks.

Please contact Jerry Bowerman at 206-649-9800



Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers bursts onto the gaming scene in multimedia CD-ROM. Read about the all-star cast and game features on page 56.



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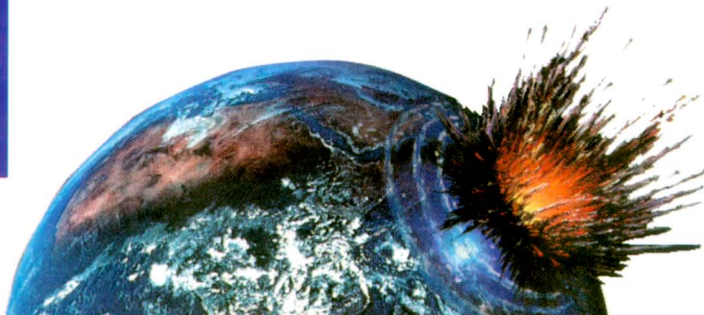
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New number for Tech Support:

Effective in March the new phone number will be 206-644-4343. Customer Service will remain 800-743-7725 at this time.



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Published by Sierra On-Line, Inc., P.O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614.

For more information on Sierra games:

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Sierra On-Line is a public company. Sierra On-Line stock is listed on the NASDAQ Exchange as SIER.

THE INSIDE VIEW



Founders of Sierra On-Line and the graphic adventure game: Ken and Roberta Williams.

[Note to young readers: This article represents Ken Williams' opinion as to the pros and cons of freedom of speech and whether or not computer games qualify for protection under the First Amendment to the Constitution. The government is trying to decide what games you should be able to play. How do you feel about this? You may want to raise these issues at school for some interesting discussion.]

In last evening's paper there was an article that grabbed my attention. Sega, the video game company, had announced that it was withdrawing a game from the market. *Night Trap*, in case you may not have seen it, is a game in which the player tries to protect a group of young girls who are under attack by a group of ninja-like vampires. *Night Trap* uses live action video, and is considered by some to be excessively violent and exploitative of women.

Sega's "voluntary" withdrawal of *Night Trap* was as a direct result of Congressional pressure. A few weeks back government hearings were held on violence in video games, during which a Sega representative was told by a Congressman, in no uncertain terms, that Sega should clean up its act or Congress would do it for them. Sega was coerced into pulling *Night Trap* off of retail shelves. It was, in effect, legislated out of existence.

I am not convinced that *Night Trap* is a great work of art, but neither am I convinced that it deserves banning. My

first reaction in reading the article was to recall scenes from the Ray Bradbury book, *Fahrenheit 451*, in which books considered by the government to be "harmful" were burned in the streets. This issue of a government deciding for its people what they should be able to see, read or listen to really troubles me.

My company, Sierra On-Line, publishes several products which are meant for adults, not children — for instance, our *Police Quest* and *Leisure Suit Larry* products. *Leisure Suit Larry 6*, which we released a few weeks ago, contains a warning label that states that the game is appropriate only for persons 17 and older. We cooperated with Sega in forming a software rating system and used the exact same warning label that Sega used on *Night Trap*. Unfortunately, restrictive labeling appears not to be sufficient to our government. I watched the Congressional hearings on television (C-SPAN) as Sega attempted to explain to Congress that many Sega gamers are adults and that Sega products which specifically target an adult audience would carry a warning label. Sega's arguments fell on deaf ears.

Is government pressure which leads to products being pulled off the market censorship? Of course it is. Is this a good thing? Perhaps. Are there products that Sega would have released, and that adults would like to own, that will not be developed because of these hearings? Yes. Sega, and the whole video game industry, know they are precariously close to government action. Games with controversial content will be closely examined for at least the next few years.

Should *Night Trap* have been banned? Should our government decide what we hear, read, play or see? Should different rules apply to video games than computer games? How about to books, records and films? Does this mean that other products which target adults, such as *Police Quest*, are next to be banned? This article is my attempt to look at all sides of the issue of software censorship, ratings and the bigger picture of what is and isn't appropriate on a computer, or a television for that matter.

Actually, these are very old issues. There is nothing new here. Books, records and films have already dealt with these issues. I really believe this is only an issue because it is set in consumers', and in Congressmen's, minds that Sega is a video

game system, and video games are for kids. *Night Trap*, if it were a film, would have a hard time earning an "R" rating. There are far more violent programs on TV every night. The basic plot of scantily-clad young ladies under attack by some form of monster underlies half of all horror films that exist today.

Can video or computer games be compared to films or books? Absolutely. Books, magazines, records, video tapes, television, video games, computer games, paintings and even comic books are all linked. They are creative works. They are guaranteed freedom of expression by the First Amendment to the Constitution of

"I watched the Congressional hearings on television (C-SPAN) as Sega attempted to explain to Congress that many Sega gamers are adults and that Sega products which specifically target an adult audience would carry a warning label. Sega's arguments fell on deaf ears."

the United States of America. Each of these mediums can be used to tell a story, to state an opinion, to explore an issue, to evoke an emotion, to promote a cause, to educate and even to convey a set of values. In fact, computer and video games are the best medium available today for artistic expression. Today's multimedia computers can do text as well as any book, sound as well as any audio device and graphics equivalent to any television. The computer then steps out in front of these other mediums through its use of interactivity.

For instance, with Sierra's *Police Quest* product, you don't just read about how officers feel and think, you become an officer and see the world through an officer's eyes. Unfortunately, it is not a very pretty world. Cops see a side of life most of us can pretend doesn't exist. There seems to be a growing, and dangerous, gap between the public's perception of the



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“Congress focused on the violence in Mortal Kombat, another Sega game, and on Night Trap. Violence in a creative work isn't necessarily bad. The amount of violence in a creative work can not be used as a means of determining whether it has a right to exist.”

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Even though a computer can be more powerful in conveying a message than other mediums, it has much in common with them. All of the creative mediums — art, music, painting, photography, film, books and interactive entertainment (computer games) — are creative works. The First Amendment to the US Constitution is the best-known provision of the Bill of Rights. It prohibits Congress from making any laws that restrict Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press, and the right to assemble peaceably. Creative works are entitled to freedom of expression under the First Amendment. This concept has been repeatedly affirmed in the courts throughout the years. In general, there are

few restrictions as to what can be written, heard or viewed. All countries, however, limit manifestations of free speech that are regarded as threatening the civil order or as obscene or slanderous. The extent to which speech is regarded as threatening or slanderous and the way in which limits are imposed are critical factors in determining the degree of free speech in a society. There is a very clear pattern of countries with a high degree of free speech being themselves free countries.

Sometimes it is hard to understand why freedom of speech is a good thing. For instance, on New Year's Eve a New York disk jockey, Howard Stern, had a pay-per-view television program, a televised party, that was the largest-grossing pay-per-view event of all time. The high point, as reported in national newspapers, was a lady who proved she was able to eat live maggots. One would think that good taste could be counted on to control what creative works are produced, but this appears not to be the case. Deciding where the limits are, as to what is and isn't okay in a creative work, is well beyond me.

Congress focused on the violence in *Mortal Kombat*, another Sega game, and on *Night Trap*. Violence in a creative work isn't necessarily bad. The amount of violence in a creative work cannot be used as a means of determining whether it has a right to exist. Has Congress seen the film *Schindler's List*? I cannot imagine a more graphic depiction of violence. Yet, this is a film which will very likely win every award as the best film of 1993. In spite of the "R" rating, many high schools, and parents, are encouraging students to see *Schindler's List*. Another film, *The Piano*, which will be seriously considered as the best film of 1993, contains material which many might see as obscene. Violence in a creative work may or may not be acceptable. Nor is it easy to define what is obscenity. In some cases the courts have even made the confusing decision that what is obscene, and therefore illegal, in one neighborhood may be legal down the street.

What I am attempting to say is that there is far more at stake here than Congress applying pressure to Sega to pull games like *Night Trap* and *Mortal Kombat* off the market. Dangerous precedents are being set that are already dramatically affecting your right to decide for yourself what you want to see. There are constitutional issues which must be addressed before more games are pushed off the market.

Congress is to be applauded for trying to accomplish something, even though some may argue, myself included, that they are off track. There is a crisis in progress and something must be done. We are living in a violent society that is getting more violent by the day. Everyone is

grasping at straws to try to figure out how to reverse a trend which is starting to become scary. Murder rates are up in virtually every major city. I watched a TV news article on *Sixty Minutes* this week about the growing problem of children under 16 who are committing murders. A recent Seattle newspaper article mentioned a ten-year-old child who had been shot twice in a six month period in unrelated drive-by gang shootings.

Someone has to do something, and do it now. My fear is that time spent chasing games like *Night Trap* may consume a lot of energy, and harm a creative industry without any positive benefit. Valuable time is being lost while a bad situation is getting worse.



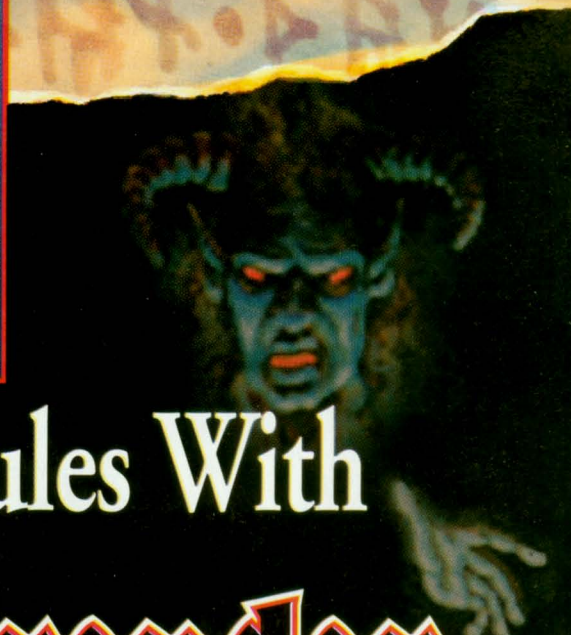
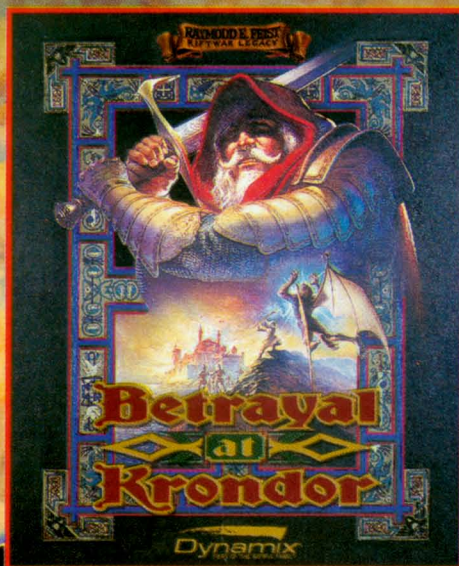
There is far more at stake here than Congress applying pressure to pull Mortal Kombat off the market.



Should Night Trap have been banned? Should our government decide what we hear, read, play and see?

It is far from clear that creative works, such as *Night Trap*, have any significant negative impact on society. The creative output of a society is a reflection of that society. It does not form the society. Look back through history at the writings of each generation. They are reflective of that time in our history. Does anyone believe that ancient cave drawings, showing prehistoric man hunting animals, are the reason cavemen ate meat rather than become vegetarians? I do not honestly believe that airing twelve hours each day of *The Brady Bunch* and *Ozzie and Harriet* reruns would suddenly make our society any less violent. I travel the world extensively, and there are plenty of countries which depend almost exclusively on the US for their books, film and radio, that have essentially no crime — Bermuda, for instance.

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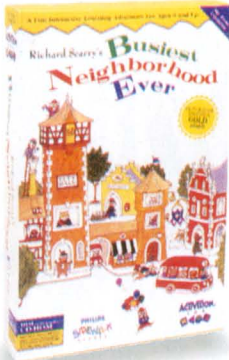
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In researching this article I did find a small number of news stories regarding violent incidents, where there were indications that a creative work may have been the origin. In one story, two teenage boys, according to a lawsuit filed by the child's parents, attempted suicide (one successfully) after listening to the lyrics of a song by the rock group Judas Priest. Recently, a five-year-old boy burned down his house, killing his two-year-old sister, after watching a *Beavis and Butthead* show, in which fire was portrayed as "fun." In another bizarre incident at least three different kids, after watching a Disney movie containing a scene where kids lie in the street playing a form of the game "chicken", got themselves killed trying to recreate the same stunt in real life. Luckily, these are the exceptions, not the rule. In the above instances, Judas Priest was cleared of any wrong doing, MTV moved the time slot of *Beavis and Butthead* beyond children's bedtimes, and Disney, in an unprecedented move, re-edited their film to remove the scene in question. The creative industry must always remember the power of our medium and its ability to influence people's lives. This is an awesome responsibility.

I like to focus on the values contained in a creative work, and what message underlies the content. Some works convey good values and some works convey bad values. Separating the two is not easy, and is not for governments to do. The creative industry can play an important part in bringing about positive change in people's attitudes. Many important social issues, over time, have been advanced through the arts — for instance, gay rights, women's rights and minority rights. The movie *Philadelphia* is a perfect example of the arts being used to advance a controversial point of view. Sometimes people agree with what a film has to say, sometimes they disagree. Allowing the government to decide which films (or even computer games) get made is a very dangerous situation. Governments have at

times hidden behind the veil of attempting to "protect" their citizenry to prevent social change. Almost all creative works have some underlying message. The makers of *Night Trap* claim to have had a message. They say they were trying to poke a little fun at late-night horror movies. Even Howard Stern claims to have an important message underlying his madness, although it usually eludes me.

I have my own personal, controversial, but firmly held opinion on all of this. I split people into three categories; un-adjusted, well-adjusted and mal-adjusted. People who steal, or who harm others, are mal-adjusted. Children are un-adjusted and the rest of us are reasonably well-adjusted. If a person is mal-adjusted, and is the kind of person who is going to wind up in jail, odds are that the person was on that track by the time he or she had reached the age of 12. If you survey the people in prison you will find the vast majority had unfortunate childhoods. There are very few who were successful high school graduates with loving parents who were brought up in "good" neighborhoods.

Children are like blank sheets of paper. They soak up the values around them like a sponge soaks up water. The older they get, the more cynical they get. By the time we reach adulthood, we are pretty set in our ways. If a child's parents, friends or even the TV shows a child watches tell a child that violence is OK, you will have a violent child. Children of abusive parents become abusive adults. Children of alcoholics often times become alcoholics. Children who watch too much violent TV will assume violence is natural. Children whose parents do not have a strong work ethic will not have a strong work ethic. Children surrounded by other children who take drugs are likely to consume drugs. Children need to be taught proper values from the beginning. If they grow up wrong, they tend to be lost forever. If we can give kids a proper start on life, we will reverse the decay of America.

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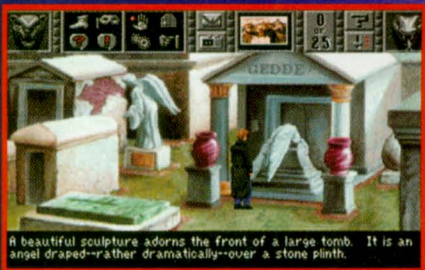
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Nightmare sequences create a chilling atmosphere.

“The first time an all-Hollywood cast of name actors has been assembled for an interactive movie...”

—*The Hollywood Reporter*

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the Nightmare.

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I support a strong ratings system because it gives adults the freedom of expression necessary to a free society, while protecting children from subject matter which might confuse them as to what is acceptable conduct. I feel adults in a free country have a right to watch films like *Basic Instinct* without government censorship, but see no reason children need to know about crazy women with icepicks, and failed cops, until later in life. It drives me crazy when TV networks, thinking they are protecting children, edit two minutes from an "R" rated film and then air it in prime time. It is not the amount of clothing actors wear, or even if they say a few cuss words that should be the primary factor in determining whether or not children should be exposed to particular subject matter. We really need to ask ourselves as a society whether or not a creative work conveys a set of values that we want our children to learn. If not, then let's protect our children. Our children are our future. Let's just find a way to accomplish this goal while preserving the benefits of a free press.

My recommendation: protect our youth. Software, films, records, and books must clearly outline, on the package, what the package contains. Parents must learn to look for and understand ratings. Either we control what children see, until they are old enough to understand it, or our society will

"My recommendation: protect our youth. Software, films, records, and books must clearly outline, on the package, what the package contains. Parents must learn to look for and understand ratings. Either we control what children see, until they are old enough to understand it, or our society will pay the consequences."

pay the consequences. Censorship is not the answer. A free press, and freedom of expression, are necessary to a free country. Let's also encourage those who produce creative content, which might be absorbed by children, to understand how important it is that we send the right message.

Thank you,




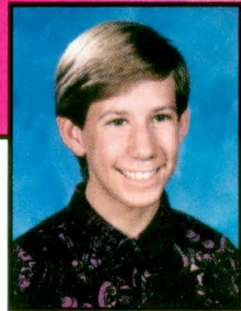
Ken Williams

Author's Note:

After writing this article I forwarded a copy to Sega of America, to see if they wanted to add anything. Their President, Tom Kalinske, responded personally with a wonderful two-page letter and another dozen pages of his correspondence with political leaders. Space doesn't allow me to print his entire response, but here are a couple of paragraphs I thought you might find interesting:

"Tom Zito [author of *Night Trap*] clearly believed he was making a somewhat campy take off of a "B" grade horror movie, that would be highly interactive, and difficult to solve. He is very upset by the media reaction and doubts many members of the media who criticized it ever played the game. The same forty seconds of neck-drilling footage, out of one hundred and eleven filmed minutes of digitized film, was shown over and over by the media. This is like judging the Hitchcock movie *Psycho* by only watching the 'shower scene' over and over. But the First Amendment also gives the media the right to do this.

"*Night Trap* may or may not be the greatest interactive product ever done. There are many books, plays, movies, paintings, etc. that I do not care to see; however, I will always defend the right for others to create, see and/or read them. What makes these few government officials the appropriate censor for the rest of us?" 



INQUISITION 2000

In this issue I'm going to tell you about *Battledrome*. It's a Herc game; and in case you don't know what a

Herc game is, I'll explain. In a Herc game you ride in a big robot and try to blow away your opponent, whoever that is. You're competing against others in a coliseum for money. But when I say others I mean others! You can play the computer or over your modem against a friend or another member of your family. If *Battledrome* sells well then it will be put on INN, and then you'll be able to play against thousands of people all over the country, without calling long distance.

As you fight you win money with which you can either buy new weapons, upgrades, fix-ups, or a new Herc (our name for the robots). Of course right now you're probably thinking there are already games that do stuff like that (if you've played any of them), so now I'm going to tell you the really cool stuff. In *Battledrome* you can send out flying cameras — in a 3-D rendered coliseum that is floating in space — and steer them around looking for the

enemy. The cameras move faster than your Herc and they see farther (just in case you were wondering why using the camera is better). You can also attach probes to your enemy so that you can always see where he/she/it is. You can shoot down your enemies probes and they can shoot at yours.

When you play against computer-controlled Hercs there are many different levels of difficulty. There are ten Hercs, which provides one part of the difficulty, and the other is that the computer has different levels of intelligence. So one time you might be fighting a light Herc that's smart as... can be; the next a heavy Herc that just wanders aimlessly.


Battledrome should come out the first of April, and I personally think it will come out on time. So far there's no plan for a sequel but there are going to be add-ons. It looks like it's going to be a lot of fun for anyone who likes this type of game. And I hope you buy it and like it. MONEY BACK IF YOU DON'T — just kidding, I'm not high enough status-wise to say that.

By Chris Williams

I know that I've been saying that in this article I'd write about *Phantasmagoria*, but my mom refuses to let me write about it because it's rated R and this article is for teens. I, of course, argued that we're the ones who are going to play it, but she wouldn't agree. So now I want to thank a few people for writing me and will answer their letters below:

To Vladimir from Russia: We don't have all Sierra's games at my house but we've made some 300+, and no I don't just play Sierra's games. We used to have a program that jumped levels and I could probably find one. Thanks for the letter.

To Blake Darlin of PA: *Phantasmagoria* should be scary but I haven't seen it so I don't know. It's rated R because of content, language, and blood. You should upgrade your computer just because in a few years you won't be able to buy anything on floppy. Being my parents' son is like being anyone's son, it has its ups and downs. I can do a little QBASIC.

Well, with that I end my article. I hope you liked it, and I'll say good-bye, "Good-bye." 

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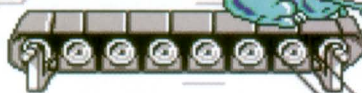
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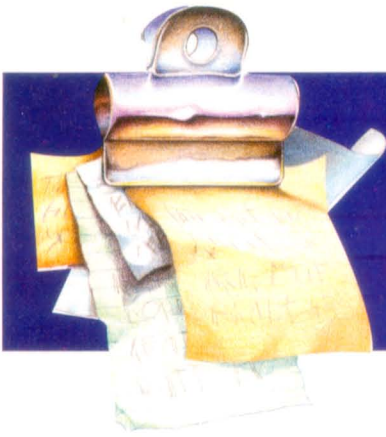
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NEWS NOTES

Corporate Move to Affect InterAction

We've been writing about the Corporate Offices of Sierra On-Line moving to Seattle for several issues of *InterAction*. The process is actually begun, and several units are now in the middle of relocating from California to Washington. Readers of *InterAction* will have an opportunity to notice the change because *InterAction* is moving. This is the last issue being put out in Oakhurst and by the staff here.

The next magazine will be coming to you from an entirely new staff and new location. Even as we work on this magazine, computers, equipment and desks all around us are being disassembled and packed up for the trip. The writers have put our computers in a circle to protect them from premature packing while we are still working on the editorial content.

The address for the new Corporate Offices of Sierra On-Line is 3380 146th Place SE, Suite 300, Bellevue, WA 98007.

SIERRA

Outpost at CES

As we go to press the Consumer Electronics Show is in full swing.

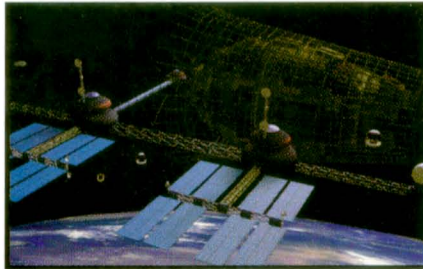
Late Breaking News!

Outpost won 1994 Best of Show at January CES from Game Bytes Magazine.

Check out your computer journals for news.

"Will the Last Person Leaving the Earth Please Shut Off the Lights?"

In "An Early Look at Sierra's *Outpost*," a Sneak Preview printed in the December 1993 issue of *Computer Gaming World*, Martin E. Cirulis says "Just when I felt confirmed in my opinion of the current trends in Science Fiction computer games, I literally stumbled across a new product that threw my assumptions into disarray. While attending the World Science Fiction Convention in San Francisco this past September, I noticed the Sierra banner flying proudly, and promptly shuffled through the crowd hoping to see some new adventure game demos... Imagine my surprise when I realized the program on display wasn't another quality adventure game, but was an incredible looking



Strategy simulation *Outpost* utilizes NASA's latest space colonization research.

strategy game called *Outpost*. The surprises didn't stop there. Not only was this a strategy game, but it seemed to be designed for the CD-ROM format, and it was running from Windows! Also, while I stood there amazed I began to realize that not only was this game Science Fiction, but the science was so hard one could bounce a meteor off it." Cirulis went on for three pages, so if you're interested, look up CGW. You can read more about *Outpost* on page 18 of this magazine.

DYNAMIX

Rise of the Dragon Coming For Sega CD

Dynamix is preparing a new release of *Rise of the Dragon* for the Sega CD. This is a science fiction action/adventure game featuring private investigator William 'Blade' Hunter. Only your intelligence, fighting ability, and decision-making skills can save the wasteland of 21st-century Los Angeles from the threatened annihilation and extortion demands of a sinister underground gang and their evil overlord. Look for *Rise of the Dragon* this Spring on Sega CD.

Stellar 7: Draxon's Revenge for 3DO



Update! *Draxon's Revenge* is a megahit for 3DO! Two out of every

three owners of the revolutionary new 3DO system purchased it.

Draxon's Revenge has been featured in recent high-tech news stories on NBC's *The Today Show* and CNN's *News Watch*. The game also drew media attention at the recent Winter '94 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

Computer Gaming World had this to say about *Draxon's Revenge* for 3DO in its January 1994 issue (Battle of the New Machines): "The first thing we noticed about this game was that there was terrific CD-audio coming out of the machine instead of the FM synthesized soundtracks we're used to hearing in computer games. Also, we started to become true believers concerning the texture-mapping capabilities of the machine after playing this game. Our visceral desire for violence was also sated by the fantastic bit-mapped explosions that seemed far superior to the polygon-filled pyrotechnics we're used to seeing."

Even More Incredible Machine for 3DO


Later this Spring, the classic puzzle-strategy game, *The Even More Incredible Machine (ETIM)* will bonk and conk its way onto the innovative 3DO platform. *ETIM* is the world's first 3DO interactive construction toy with strong puzzle-strategy and "edutainment" elements.

BRIGHT STAR

Dr. Brain to star in Children's Television Workshop



The Dr. Brain Series - *The Castle of Dr. Brain* and *The Island of Dr. Brain* - has been selected by Children's Television Workshop to be developed into a weekly television game show that will expose young people, ages six to twelve,

to the mysteries of math and science. Victoria Strong, Director of Program Development and Marketing for CTW said "With our first look at the *Dr. Brain* series of products we were both enchanted and excited about the game show possibilities. Our goal is to deliver a television show for young people that will create a compelling environment and encourage children to exercise their problem-solving and critical thinking skills." 



1993 AWARDS

For Dynamix, Sierra, Bright Star and Coktel

SIERRA ON-LINE

Freddy Pharkas: Frontier Pharmacist

Best New Adventure Game, *Games Magazine*.

Gabriel Knight

Best of Show, Consumer Electronics Show - June 1993, *Game Bytes*.

King's Quest VI: Heir Today, Gone Tomorrow

Best Adventure Game, *Mac World* 1993 plus inducted into the MacWorld Game Hall of Fame. Adventure-Role Playing Award, Prodigy, selected by children, announced in *Family Fun Magazine*.

Leisure Suit Larry 6

Best IBM PC Game of 1993, *San Francisco Examiner*.

Outpost

Best of Show, Consumer Electronics Show - January 1994, *Game Bytes*.

BRIGHT STAR

A.J.'s World of Discovery

NAPPA, National Parenting Publications Award, 1993.

National Parenting Center, 1993 Seal of Approval.

Beginning Reading

National Parenting Center, 1993 Seal of Approval.

Mixed-Up Mother Goose

Child's Best Software Award, *Child Magazine*.

Pepper's Adventures in Time

1993 Games of the Year, Reader's Choice in the Edutainment category, *Game Bytes*.

DYNAMIX

Aces Over Europe

Best Simulation Game 1993, *Gameplayers PC Entertainment*, March/April 1994.

Betrayal at Krondor

Best Fantasy Role-Playing/Adventure Game of the Year, *Compute Magazine*.

Game of the Year/Best Computer Role Play Game, *Strategy Plus*, January/February 1994.

Best Role Play Game 1993, *Gameplayers PC Entertainment*, March/April 1994.

Front Page Sports: Football Pro

Best Sports Game, *Strategy Plus*, January/February 1994.

The Incredible Machine

Child's Best Award, *Child Magazine*, October 1993.

Best New Puzzle, *Games Magazine*, December 1993.

Editor's Choice, *PC Games*, April/May 1993.

Best Action/Action-Strategy Games, *Electronic Games*, January/February 1993.

Spotlight on Exceptional Games, The 7th International Computer Game Developers' Conference, covered in *Computer Gaming World*.

The Even More Incredible Machine

Best Puzzle Game 1993, *Gameplayers PC Entertainment*, March 1994.

Top Ten Software Picks for Kids, *Money Magazine*, November 1993.

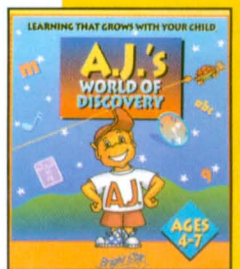
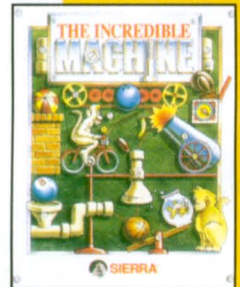
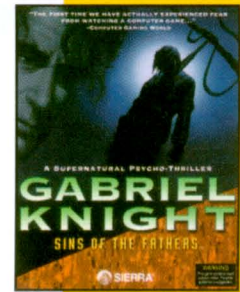
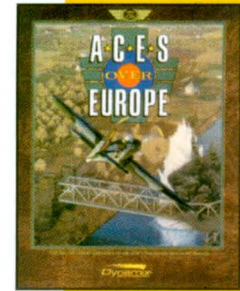
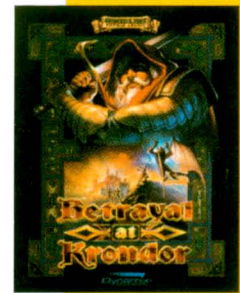
COKTEL VISION

Gobliins 2

One of the Best New Puzzle Games, *Games Magazine*.

Lost in Time

"The Year's Most Politically Correct Adventure Game", *The Seattle Times*.



RUMOR MILL



HEARD IT IN THE HALLWAY

It's Wintertime. Unlike what you might expect from a "California-based" software company, outdoors we have ice, snow, and sub-freezing temperatures. For the numerous programmers, musicians, artists and animators of the company — most of whom hail from sun-soaked Southern California — leaving nice warm beds each morning to come to work can be something of an unwelcome challenge. Though it is cold and miserable outside, inside the building the atmosphere is quite different. The many games of Christmas 1993 are complete. The new games that players will find under their Christmas trees in 1994 are just getting underway. The artists and programmers, who just a few short weeks ago were in "crunch mode" to get their products out for last Christmas, are more rested and ready to get back to work. The game designers and art directors are full of new ideas and new energy. It may be the dead of Winter outside, but inside of Sierra it is the Springtime of renewal.

Sierra Brand

It's a great time to be an observer here at the development offices of Sierra. A good time to "take the temperature" of the staff and gain an understanding of what current goals and philosophies prevail amongst the game designers. Will 1994 products be tainted by the "Hollywood thinking" that puts so much emphasis on animation and music that sometimes the presentation seems to come at the expense of the game play? Will it be a year where the words "mass market" hang heavy in the air, which can inevitably lead to games that are so easy as to alienate veteran adventure

game players by pandering to the needs of beginning adventurer? Will the spirit of creative freedom and "trying something new" that launched the development of *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers* and the soon-to-be-released *Outpost* prevail? Each January, I and others around the company start the designer watch, putting our figurative wet fingers in the air to see exactly which way the creative winds will blow in the year ahead.

Admittedly, this was a tougher year than most to gauge designer opinion. Roberta Williams, always a major influence in designer doings, is now located in Seattle, Washington and her two games in development (*King's Quest VII* and *Phantasmagoria*) are both being done on a "closed set." Her influence in game design was somewhat muted this year, and it is likely that her games will have a very different look and feel than others from Sierra in 1994. The rumors abound that not only is Roberta going to full-motion video and a dark, mature theme with *Phantasmagoria* (which will make it a unique game already) but that both *King's Quest VII* and *Phantasmagoria* will do away with the Icon Bar interface and other trademarks of the Sierra Adventure game that she herself worked to pioneer. Any other information regarding Roberta's activities remains a mystery to this reporter, but I can tell you about what's going on here in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

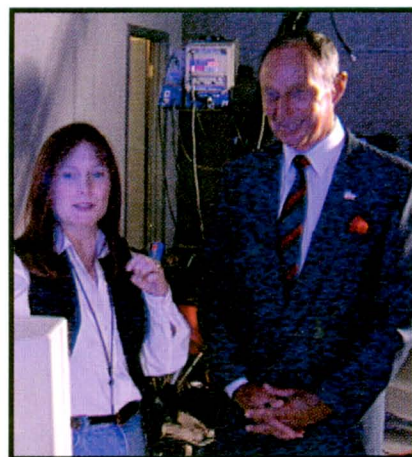
Meanwhile, Back in Oakhurst...

When is a *Police Quest* not a *Police Quest*? Usually, Sierra makes a point of

Warning: Often right, more often wrong, and occasionally even wildly inaccurate, Johnnie Magpie is *InterAction Magazine's* least controllable and most controversial pseudo-journalist. Management does not endorse, and in fact barely even tolerates, the inclusion of this feature in our magazine.

By Johnnie Magpie

adding a sequel to an adventure game series every other year (so that each game has time to reach new audiences), so I was somewhat surprised to see a new *Police Quest* on the schedule for production in 1994. After all, Sierra just released Daryl Gates' *Police Quest: Open Season* in late November of 1993. But a quick look at the design notes shows that the upcoming product is NOT an adventure game, but a strategy game based on the cases and missions of a Los Angeles SWAT team. Though Daryl Gates' name wasn't listed on the design notes, it's safe to say that the Chief is probably in on this design. (Chief Gates is widely credited with developing the first Special Weapons and Tactics Team decades ago). It was Tammy Dargan (ex-*America's Most Wanted* producer and co-developer of *Police Quest: Open Season*) whose name was listed, so another collaboration is probably a safe bet.



Will Producer Tammy Dargan team up with Daryl Gates for a sequel? Stay tuned!

A new Roger Wilco design will come from the Guy from Chicago and one Guy from Andromeda. The *Space Quest* series is, as they say, in the works. While the change in this game won't be as radical as changing an adventure game to an arcade game, this *SQ* will feature a new design team made up of two of the funniest designers Sierra has ever employed. One piece of good news here is that Scott Murphy, an original "Guy from Andromeda" whose work was noticeably absent from *Space Quest V*, will be pitching in to bring back the irreverent, sophomoric and silly humor that made the first *Space Quest* games so fun. The

other is that designer Josh Mandel, whose work last year on *Freddy Pharkas, Frontier Pharmacist* made the game a constant belly laugh and more than one magazine's "Adventure Game of The Year for 1993," will be the major creative force in this romp for Roger Wilco.



Josh Mandel has been out to space but has come back to start the next *Space Quest* Saga.

Josh Mandel has put his indelible mark on *Space Quest* products in the past (the hugely funny *Space Quest IV* sequence featuring the software sale rack at Radio Shock, penned partially by Mandel, is still among the all-time comedy highlights of an adventure game). Josh's attention with *Space Quest VI* will be firmly focused on using Roger Wilco and his adventure series as a venue to give the video and computer game industry some much-needed ribbing. Look for thinly veiled pokes at Fighting games, Flight Sims and more in the story, which features a miniaturized Roger voyaging through the body of a sick and injured space cadet. The name of the game, at least until Sierra gets its first ugly letter from Broderbund's lawyers, is said to be "Where in Corpsman Santiago is Roger Wilco?" Enough said.

Congress to Look into Al Lowe

Is the other Father of *Freddy Pharkas* funnier? As noted above, Josh Mandel was one of the designers of the fabulously funny *Freddy Pharkas*. The other was the laugh-out-loud Al Lowe, who put *Leisure Suit Larry 6*, his fifth *Leisure Suit Larry* design, to bed in November of 1993. Will he be doing another *Larry* in 1994? Nope!

No, Al Lowe has decided to turn his satiric wit on the only group of people he knows that are more unintelligent, more unintentionally funny, and more in need of a real job than even our old friend *Leisure Suit Larry* Laffer. This group is, of course, Congress. No word yet on whether this will carry a special focus on two esteemed Senators from Connecticut and Wisconsin, though most of us in the

software industry hope so. [Ed. Note: See *Inside View* by Ken Williams for more information on this point.] The game, which is being referred to in development schedules as *Capital Punishment*, represents a new venue for Al Lowe and the software industry, with its emphasis on Political Comedy. Word is that Al Lowe, who's been writing games about lecherous, balding and totally unappetizing bachelor types since *Leisure Suit Larry 1* in 1985, is having trouble leaving his old "schtick" behind, so don't be surprised if he's written in a big part for Ted Kennedy. Also, can you spell "potato" (or is that "potatoe")?

As to the horror game *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers*, Sierra will likely



Is Al Lowe running for President or is he going to just fill in for Rush Limbaugh?

break another rule for Christmas of 1994. Sierra produces a new installment of its games every other year (as mentioned above). But the design for a sequel is already underway even though the original shipped only a few short months ago. With design by Jane Jensen (who penned both the original *Gabriel Knight* and numerous revisions to the script that eventually became the best-selling *King's Quest VI*) and direction by Robert Holmes (who directed not only the original *Gabriel Knight* but also did a spectacular job on what needn't have been a spectacular project — *Hoyle's Classic Card Games*) this project looks like another one to watch for.

A number of customers have written to ask "Why did *Police Quest: Open Season/Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness/Gabriel Knight* require 4 meg and a 386? They were better than earlier games, but not THAT much better!" or some such variation of the question. The answer is, from the mouth of new Sierra Development Guru Mark Hood, that "You haven't seen nothin' yet." Sierra debuted SCI-32, a new proprietary development system for computer games, with the three aforementioned

products in Christmas of 1993, but Mark wanted to make it completely plain that the games themselves (i.e. the graphics, animation, etc.) were not designed with or for the new SCI-32 system. Expect next year's games, all those mentioned above and others as well, to set new standards in all the traditional senses that computer games are normally judged. Being that Mark Hood doesn't work in Sierra Marketing and is one of those programmers who is always telling us why something can't be done or can't make schedule (he leaves the overpromising to the marketing guys), I'm already impressed. We'll wait and see together of course, but if I hear anything first, know that you'll be the first one I tell.

And in Eugene, Oregon

Dynamix, located hundreds of miles north of Oakhurst and always somewhat different from Sierra in game design philosophy, has tried to keep its plans for 1994 a secret from this reporter. But sources close to the top of the Dynamix organization tell me that in 1994 Dynamix will "stick to what we're good at." Some games will move to new platforms to be enjoyed by a new audience: *Rise of the Dragon*, *Stellar Fire* and *Willy Beamish* will move to Sega CD, and *Stellar 7: Draxon's Revenge* and *The Even More Incredible Machine* will be offered on the hot new platform 3DO. Where will it end? *Football Pro* would be a phenom on either Sega CD or 3DO, as would the soon-to-be-released *Front Page Sports: Baseball*. We'll have to wait and see what happens as Dynamix branches out into new venues. Speaking of the award-winning and much-discussed *Front Page Sports*, what sports beside Baseball might join Football in the mucho impressive game series? (Hot rumor: A Soccer game in honor of the world championship soccer games to be held for the first time in the US of A this year.)

What's next in the *Aces* line, which has extended from flight sims to submarines with *Aces of the Deep*? (It won't be *Aces Over Korea*, as was reported recently by at least one mainstream computer game publication). Will there be even more *Even More Incredible Machines*? The answers to these and other questions will have to be addressed in the year ahead.

Bye for now.

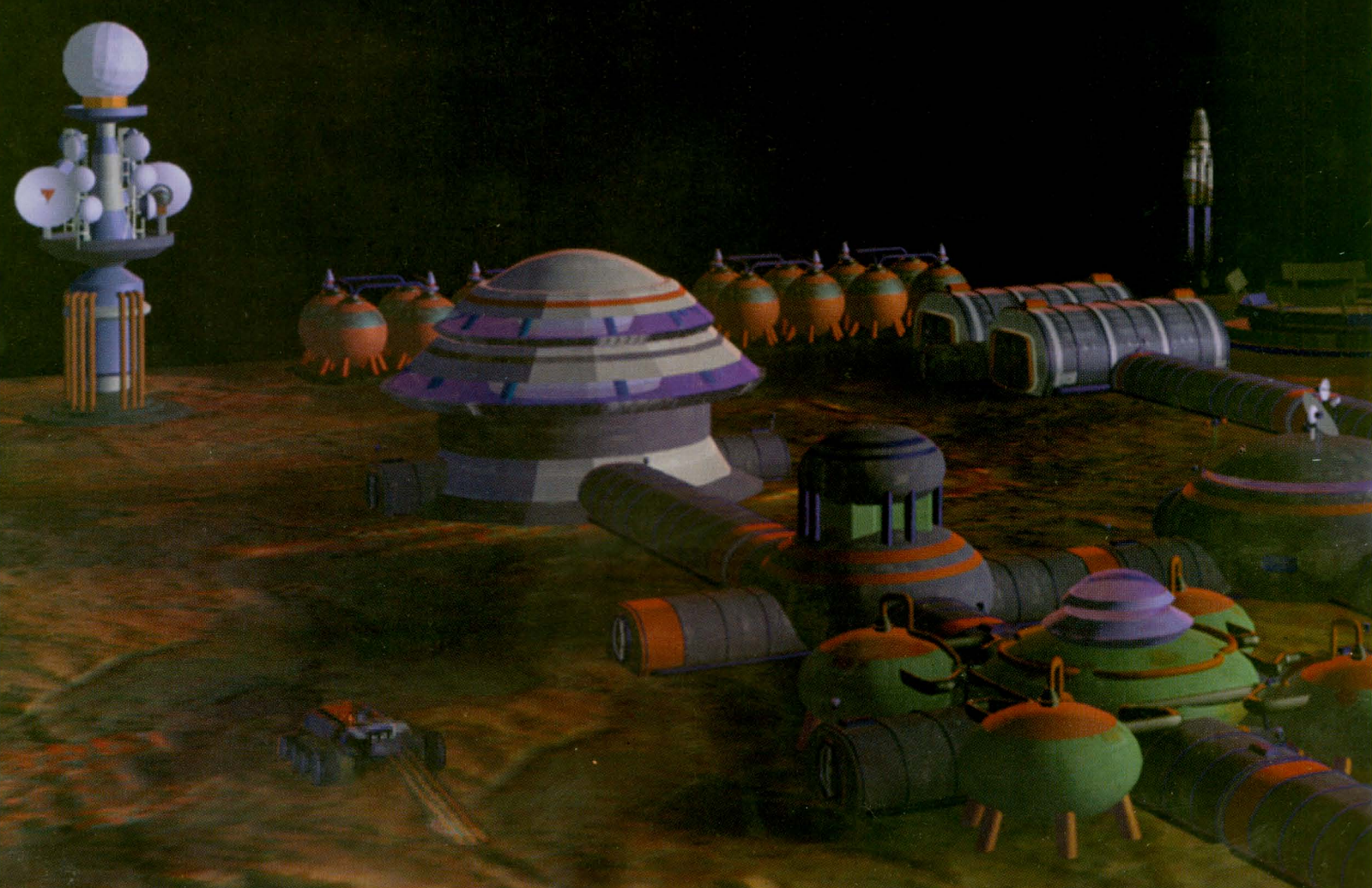
Johnnie Magpie



COMING

Attractions

OUTPOST



An Out-of-this-World Strategy Simulation

Based on the Latest NASA Research

[This article is a brief excerpt from *Prima Publishing's Outpost: The Official Strategy Guide*. The new book, authored by Bruce Balfour, will be available in April. Look for it in your favorite bookstores.]

Outpost gives you the opportunity to rescue human civilization from certain doom. You have control over a huge number of tiny lives; determining their destinies, forecasting their fates, meddling with their minds, tampering with their technologies, interfering with their...well, you get the idea. Anyway, you assume an awesome responsibility as the natural leader of the last human outpost. It's a tough job, fraught with danger, but you have to do it because nobody else can.

What is Outpost?

Outpost is a strategy simulation in which players explore new worlds, research new technologies, and strive to rebuild human civilization on distant planets. Based on NASA research into future space projects, as well as current planetary science and theories on interstellar spacecraft design, *Outpost* is a realistic simulation of the complexities involved in building a self-contained colony on a hostile planetary surface.

Starting with projections of technology that will be available 50 years from now, you send out probes from Earth to collect data on possible planets orbiting distant stars. While those probes continue their journeys, you will build and stock a colonization starship powered by a nuclear fusion propulsion system. Armed with the data from the probes, you will choose your target star system and launch your mothership on its interstellar voyage.

Outpost, like other simulation games, leads a sort of schizophrenic existence in the computer gaming world. On one hand, it looks and feels like a game: it's fun, amusing, perhaps even addictive. On the other hand, it's a model of a complex

system in the real world. Poking the model at one point has an effect on everything else in the model. Events will occur that you can't anticipate. You can build your colony and explore various lines of research without running out of time or being attacked by the Giant Crab People of Fomalhaut Four. While there are goals in the game that allow you to gauge your progress, you're free to ignore them. Without even noticing, you may learn things from the simulation. This would seem to place *Outpost* in that nebulous game category known as "infotainment." In any case, *Outpost* can be played from a realistic point of view or as a game, whichever holds the most appeal for you.



The virtual interface puts you in control.

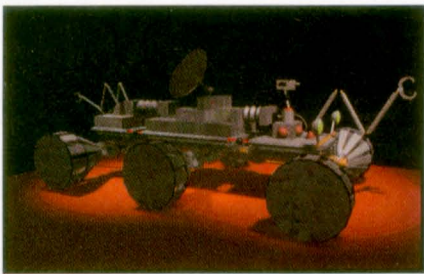
By Bruce Balfour

Why Leave Earth?

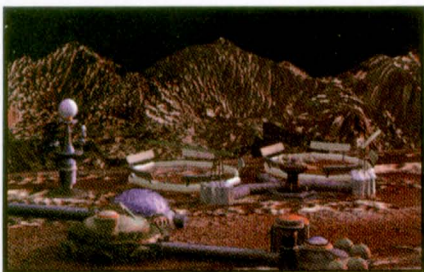
Human life on Earth is about to be destroyed by a big rock.

The space program has limped along since the 1990's, with other nations launching probes and the occasional spacecraft to other planets in the Solar System. Government funding for NASA continues to shrink year by year. Private companies still launch a few satellites, probes, or robot landers, but none of the conglomerates sees any short-term profit potential in space operations, so they have little interest in space-related investments. Public organizations, such as The Planetary Society, continue using their resources to fund small space projects and encourage international cooperation, but cannot afford large-scale operations. This is the situation when mankind becomes aware that it may have made a mistake.

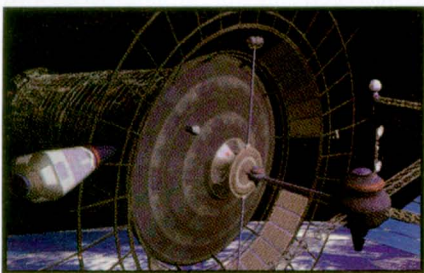
Astronomers observe a dark object approaching the Earth. Although its flight path is similar to a previous short-period comet discovery known as Vulcan, the object shows no signs of a cometary tail or coma, causing it to be classified as an asteroid. There is general agreement among astronomers that the asteroid is, in fact, the extinct comet, now covered with insulating dust after so many passes through the warm inner solar system. The variation in Vulcan's former trajectory is explained by intermittent jets of heated gas from its interior, acting as thruster rockets which make it appear to defy gravitational laws. After someone remembers the titles of some old science fiction novels, the enormous asteroid is renamed Vulcan's Hammer by the media. Calculations show that the asteroid has an excellent chance of intersecting the Earth's orbit in the year 2045, striking the surface of the planet with a billion megatons worth of destruction. Many people consider this to be a bad thing.



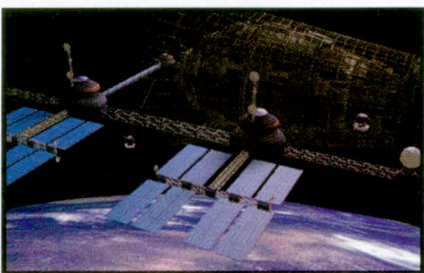
Explorer robots reveal the hidden mysteries of the planets.



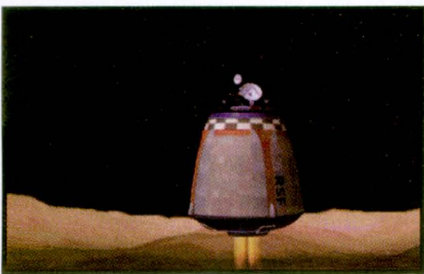
Build your colony to stand the test of time.



Make life and death decisions about what to pack on your starship.



The last hope for humanity rests on an untested starship and 200 colonists.



A seed factory lands first to prepare the way for your colonists.

The starship is to be assembled in Earth orbit, fueled from the atmosphere of Jupiter, then launched on its interstellar voyage. During the starship design stage, long-range space probes will be launched to gather data on star systems with the potential of having terrestrial planets. Faster probes launched during the mothership's fueling will gather more data on the target star system, allowing the colonists to choose their destination planet.

Much too late, one attempt is made to detonate a nuclear explosive near the incoming asteroid. This explosion increases the threat by splitting the asteroid into two pieces which continue on the same flight path as before. The larger chunk is nine miles across and the smaller piece is six miles across.

Projections show that the larger fragment will shatter the Earth's crust for hundreds of miles, bursting upwards in an incandescent fireball of vaporized rock, blasting a crater 108 miles in diameter and more than 12 miles deep as the ground moves in enormous waves of liquefied rock. Tsunamis hundreds of feet high will race across the oceans. Heat from the explosion will generate a massive firestorm. A black cloud of dust will rise into the stratosphere, plunging the Earth into its longest night in which land temperatures will fall below freezing and photosynthesis will cease. Nitric oxides will rain from the air, turning the oceans to acid. And that's only the projected damage from the larger asteroid fragment.

There will be no chance of resupplying your colonists with shipments from the Earth. Not only are the distances too great, but any survivors on Earth will be fully occupied dealing with their own issues after the asteroid has struck. If you don't produce enough of your own life support resources, and you suddenly run out, your people are going to die. The cavalry won't ride in at the last moment to save you, because the cavalry won't exist any more. It's a tough universe out there.

Your Mission

On arrival at your new home, your job is to survive and establish a colony on the planet's surface. This colony must be managed as if it were a living city: continuing the building program, keeping the population employed and happy,

exploring the new environment, mining for resources, recycling waste products, dealing with random events such as meteorite strikes, advancing the civilization, researching new technologies, and establishing long-term terraforming operations on those planets that can retain an atmosphere. You can also develop multiple colonies and establish trade between them.

Since you're in charge, the fate of all those tiny lives will rest in your hands. If you make a lot of bad decisions, you alone will be to blame if the last bastion of humanity fails to survive. If you succeed, you will win the deep and heartfelt gratitude of all those simulated people. And isn't simulated gratitude what life is all about?

There's One in Every Crowd

Try as you might, there's always going to be someone in a crowd who thinks you're an idiot. This is also true among the colonist population. Fifty years is a long time to spend in space, even if you spend most of that time asleep. People start wondering what it would be like to be in control; or who elected you to be in charge. It would be nice to travel with 200 happy people whose only ambition is to follow your orders, but this is a simulation of reality. This happy fantasy isn't going to happen.

When the colonies reach a certain level of self-sufficiency, the option to establish trade agreements with the rebel group will arise. If you choose to be antagonistic, this will be your chance to create a form of economic warfare with the intent of taking over the rebel colony or its resources. You will also have the option to be a good neighbor and provide the rebels with resources they need in return for their services. You can create one big and happy economic family, assuming the rebel colony chooses to go along with your plan. Much will depend on the ability of the rebels to manage their resources, as well as how sneaky they are, a direct result of the level of difficulty you choose for competition.

Why Can't Aunt Phoebe Go Too?

The human population of the colonization starship is limited to 200 people, most of whom are scientists with the required skills to rebuild civilization. The ship also carries a tremendous amount of cargo. The main limitations to the colonization effort are the ship's



Your last stop in the solar system: a gas station at Jupiter.




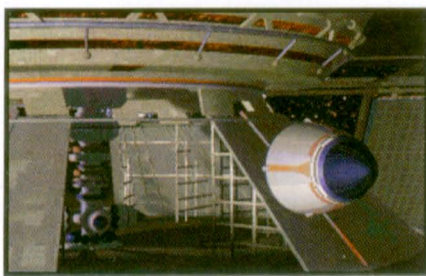
Repair robots: you break it, they'll fix it.

propulsion system and the funds required to build the starship. The departure mass of the starship, powered by fusion technology and fueled from the atmosphere of Jupiter, is almost all fuel. There are no gas stations available on this journey. The additional mass of the human cargo and supplies is just dead weight until the ship reaches its destination. Since there is no propulsion system that is 100% efficient, that payload is limited to a small portion of the weight that can be moved by the vehicle. Out of all the possible people that could be rescued, the decision must be weighted toward which 200 people will best serve the future of the human race. The supplies that go with them are the minimum necessary to support the colonists.

Conclusion

In *Outpost*, data for the selection of a star system to colonize can also be obtained through Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI) and Ultra Long Baseline Interferometry (ULBI). These methods expand on the idea of interferometry by using widely separated space probes to gather data. Unlike ground-based interferometry, the data between probes will have to be synchronized because they'll be moving in different directions at different speeds. The VLBI probes will gather data from within the solar system, giving you basic information about the star systems you're interested in. The ULBI probes are interstellar, so they can form a long baseline between themselves and the starship for optical planetary imaging and spectroscopy of the star system you've selected as your new home.

With the VLBI data, you can make some educated guesses about which star systems are likely to contain terrestrial planets. This can save you a lot of grief, particularly if you can't afford to send off Ultra Long Baseline Interferometry (ULBI) probes to gather data ahead of your starship. Imagine the heartbreak of building your ship, stuffing it to the rafters with colonists and supplies, making the long journey, then arriving at your new home only to find there are no planets you can live on. Imagine how the colonists will feel about a leader who can't make intelligent decisions. Imagine the intense discomfort of being tarred, feathered, then ejected out of the nearest airlock without the benefit of a spacesuit. 



Once you've decided to land, there's no turning back.

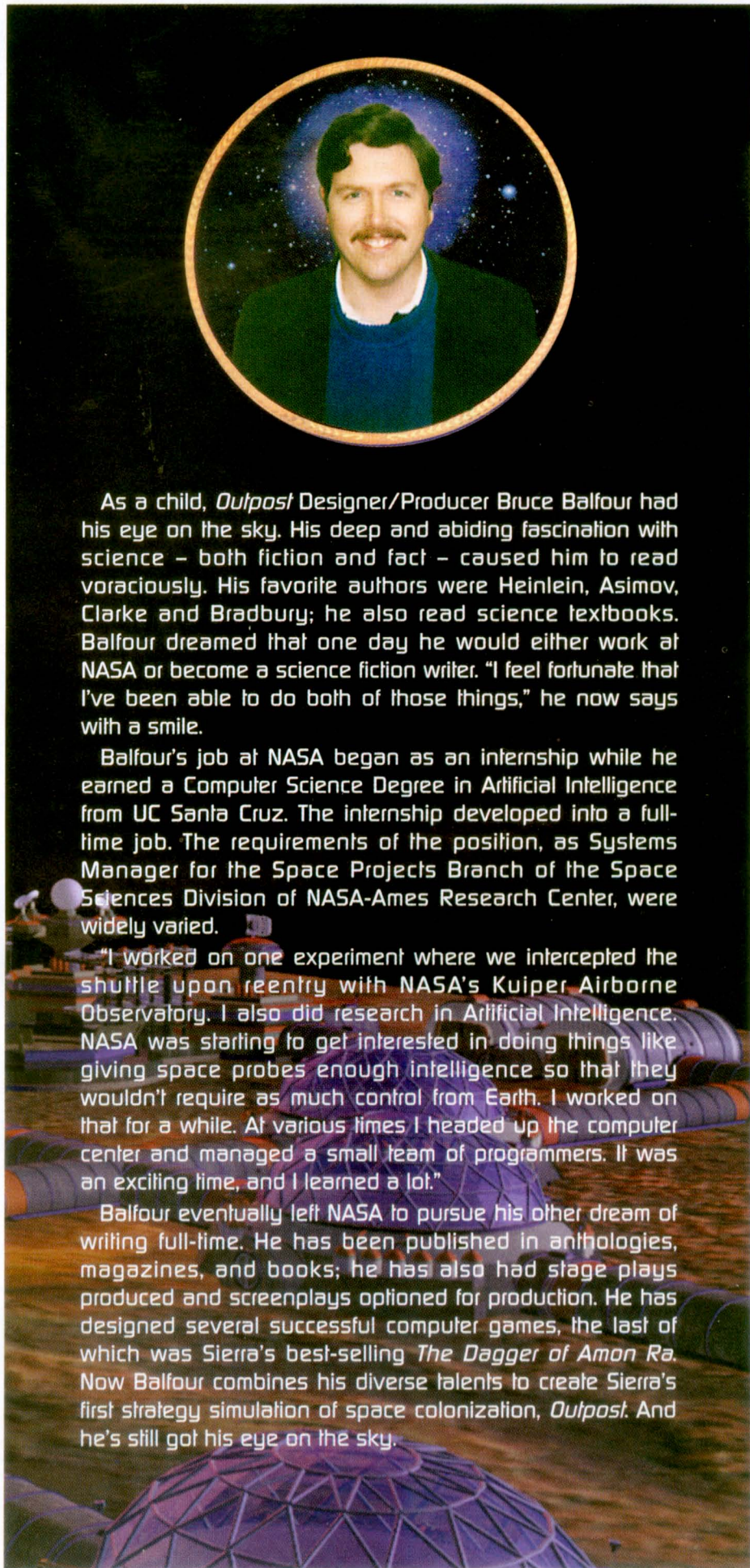


As a child, *Outpost* Designer/Producer Bruce Balfour had his eye on the sky. His deep and abiding fascination with science – both fiction and fact – caused him to read voraciously. His favorite authors were Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke and Bradbury; he also read science textbooks. Balfour dreamed that one day he would either work at NASA or become a science fiction writer. "I feel fortunate that I've been able to do both of those things," he now says with a smile.

Balfour's job at NASA began as an internship while he earned a Computer Science Degree in Artificial Intelligence from UC Santa Cruz. The internship developed into a full-time job. The requirements of the position, as Systems Manager for the Space Projects Branch of the Space Sciences Division of NASA-Ames Research Center, were widely varied.

"I worked on one experiment where we intercepted the shuttle upon reentry with NASA's Kuiper Airborne Observatory. I also did research in Artificial Intelligence. NASA was starting to get interested in doing things like giving space probes enough intelligence so that they wouldn't require as much control from Earth. I worked on that for a while. At various times I headed up the computer center and managed a small team of programmers. It was an exciting time, and I learned a lot."

Balfour eventually left NASA to pursue his other dream of writing full-time. He has been published in anthologies, magazines, and books; he has also had stage plays produced and screenplays optioned for production. He has designed several successful computer games, the last of which was Sierra's best-selling *The Dagger of Amon Ra*. Now Balfour combines his diverse talents to create Sierra's first strategy simulation of space colonization, *Outpost*. And he's still got his eye on the sky.



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DYNAMIX'S NEWEST SIM STOMPS ITS WAY ONTO YOUR PC!

You're up against Diablo, the best HERC pilot in Cyberspace. Win this fight and you're top dog; lose here and it's back to the bush leagues. It's been a grueling climb to the championship rung of the Battledrome ladder, but the trail of crushed opponents and ruined hardware left in your wake tells you it has been well worth the trip. Your palms are slick with sweat as you grab the throttle and control stick. Your enemy is out there... somewhere.

The press of a button releases one of your recon drones to scan the arena. A burst of laser fire erupts from behind an obstacle as your camera drone moves past. Diablo's energy bolts lance into your hapless probe, knocking it wildly out of control and breaking your datalink. An impressive shot, but he's given away his hiding spot.

You quickly switch over to a battle view and attempt to outflank your opponent. You spot the place where your drone was downed. Now it's just a quick sprint around the far side of the obstacle and you'll be ready to zap Diablo into the next time zone. Too late! You see the small orb hovering at the edge of your field of view. You turn just in time to receive a full salvo of missiles into the torso of your HERC.

Shields buckle and armor vaporizes. You desperately squeeze off a few rounds from your pulse cannon. The impacts stagger Diablo, but he manages to hurl another salvo of missiles in your direction. You watch helplessly as the swarm of missiles home in on your now defenseless Herc.

Maybe next time...

Dynamix, the original programming talent behind the venerable PC *Mechwarrior*, passes a new milestone in computer HERC games with *Metaltech: Battledrome*. *BD* is a multi-perspective robotic combat game where players have

By David Selle

the option of battling against live opponents via modem or testing their skills against an array of computer AI adversaries. The ultimate goal is to become the top warrior in Cyberspace.

Each player in the game receives a ranking based on point totals accumulated from winning matches in the *Battledrome* arena. The number of points a player receives during each match is based on the difficulty of the opponent he fights. Beating up on the little guys, while it can be fun, will not move you up the ladder very quickly. This assumes you win of course; should you lose, your rank will suffer accordingly.

Them's fightin' words

Before entering combat, you must negotiate the terms of the duel. This gives you the opportunity to level the playing field against a superior opponent or to

stack the odds in your favor against an equal foe. The size of the arena, weapons used in combat and terms for victory are all subject to negotiation. Every match also has a purse which goes to the winner, but you can bet your own cash as well. Not feeling lucky? Fine, just bet your lunch money. But if you think you're gonna crush him like an empty soda can, you may as well bet the farm.

Once you've accumulated enough cash you can upgrade your HERC or purchase a new one. *Battledrome* features ten basic robot chassis which can be thoroughly customized. The game supports a vast arsenal of weapons and other components which yield a virtually limitless array of possibilities for configuring your robot.

You can run, but you can't hide

Combat in *Battledrome* is fast-paced and intense. Each player is provided with a number of camera "probes" which he can launch and pilot around the arena in

Your palms are slick with sweat as you grab the throttle and control stick. Your enemy is out there... somewhere.



The size of the arena, weapons used in combat and terms for victory are all subject to negotiation. Every match also has a purse which goes to the winner.

search of his opponent. Skillful use of the camera probes enable you to track down your opponent quickly and engage him in battle. *Battledrome's* unique interface allows players to engage in combat from virtually any camera angle.

SIM-ply great graphics

The artists for *Battledrome* have worked overtime to bring to life a top-notch simulation experience. The full-screen view, combined with multiple light sources and impressively rendered robot shapes, gives *Battledrome* an unmatched visual presentation. Did I mention multiple screen resolutions? In 320X200, 320X400, or 640X480 (the last in 16 colors) the game looks great. The animation for the robots is also really spectacular. The walking and running animations are incredibly smooth and fluid. Explosions and weapons impacts are well-rendered. Another nice touch is the ability to customize the full-screen, heads-up display. Use as much or as little of it as you want.

Great graphics isn't the only laudable sensory stimulus provided by *Battledrome*: the sound and music will have you tapping your toes and snapping your fingers. Just don't let go of the joystick. From the sizzling zot of a laser bolt, to the satisfying crunch of your opponent's imploding cockpit, the sounds really make the game come alive.

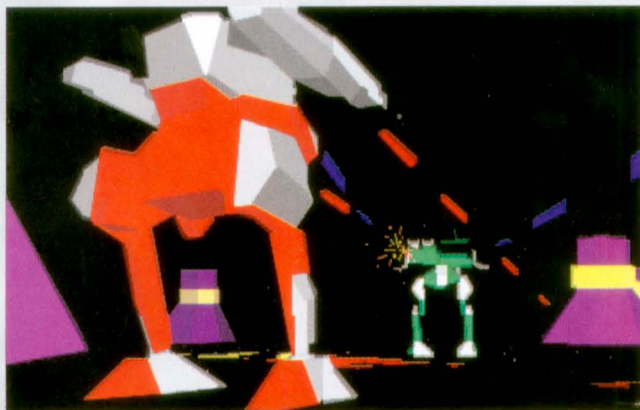
Reach out and crush someone

Perhaps the most salient feature of *Battledrome* is the option for modem play. The AIs for *Battledrome* are good, but nothing quite matches the challenge and unpredictability that a human opponent brings to a game. Cutting loose with a "Ha, ha, ha, that looked real painful!" after putting the crimp on your buddy in Hoboken adds a great "in-your-face" element to *Battledrome*.

Mo' Metaltech

Battledrome is the first game in the *Metaltech* product line, all of which are based around Virtual Robotics. The next *Metaltech* product slated for release is *Metaltech: Earthsiege*. This is more of a "sim" in the traditional sense. It will be based around campaign scenarios in which players do battle with sentient Cybrid machines out to conquer the solar system. Also, currently in the works is a Sega version of *Battledrome* (using The EDGE 16™ modem) and a possible on-line INN version of the same game. The *Metaltech* series will add an exciting new product line to the Dynamix stable of titles along with the *Great Warplanes™* and *Front Page Sports™* series.

The man at the helm of the *Metaltech* bandwagon is Mark Crowe, known for his work on the *Space Quest* series. He's backed by a veteran cast of programmers, designers and artists. This *Battledrome* fan looks forward with great anticipation to more releases from this talented team.



From the sizzling zot of a laser bolt to the satisfying crunch of your opponent's imploding cockpit, the sound is hot!



The artists for *Battledrome* have worked overtime to bring to life a top-notch simulation experience.

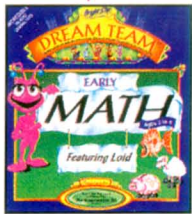


Each player in the game receives a ranking based on point totals accumulated from winning matches in the *Battledrome* arena.

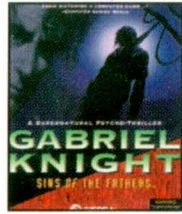
System Requirements:

IBM and compatibles, 386/25MHz or better,
2 megs RAM, VGA, Hard Disk, DOS 5.0 or better
Recommended: 486/33MHz, 9600 baud modem,
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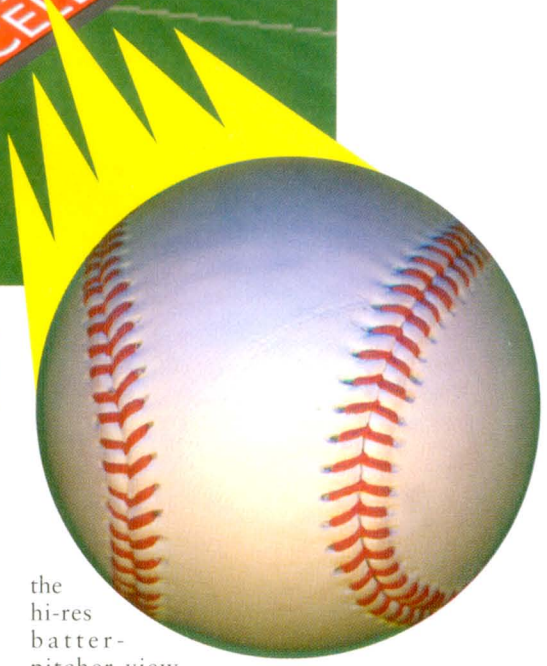
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A Sneak Preview



Smell the grass and feel the warmth of the summer sun. Listen to the hawkers selling their wares: Red hots, peanuts, soda pop... Hear the crack of the bat, the roar of the crowd as the ball sails over the fence. To the faithful who feel a sense of loss as Summer turns to Fall and baseball is no longer on the airwaves, these images bring a smile and a yearning for another season of The Grand Old Game. In the cold of Winter we keep our game alive with the never-ending arguments, the "what ifs", and the promise of Spring Training. For some of us, we keep the game alive with computer baseball simulations.

Not resting on their laurels, the designers of the award-winning *Front Page Sports: Football (FPSF)* and *Front Page*

By Doug Johnson

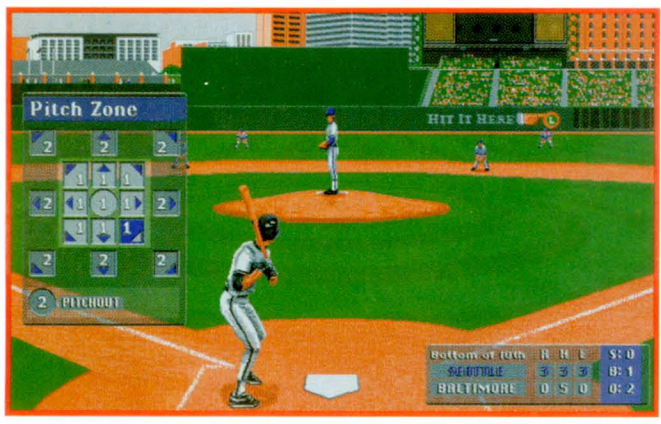
Sports: Football PRO (FBPro) have been applying their talents to Baseball. Their goal is to produce the kind of simulation that people have come to expect from Dynamix, with the innovative ideas and attention to detail that earmark their football simulations.

As with *FPSF* and *FBPro*, actual players were filmed and rotoscoped to provide smooth and realistic player movement animation. Player animations include leaping and diving catches, feet-first and head-first slides, and crashes into the wall. Additionally, *FPSB* will be the first simulation to position all four umpires on the field with their play-calling positioning determined by actual umpire instruction manuals.

Also striking is the high-resolution batter-pitcher view. From this full-screen, behind-the-plate perspective you can call the type of pitch, its speed, and where to throw it. As the batter, you'll knock the dirt from your cleats, dig in, and take your best swing. You'll even see the batter's number on his back as he swings through a pitch. During gameplay,

the hi-res batter-pitcher view seamlessly gives way to the 256-color field display where the action can be viewed from any angle you want.

As with *FPSF* and *FBPro*, *Front Page Sports: Baseball* combines the best elements of arcade gaming action and strategic simulation accuracy. Those who wish to approach the game solely for its arcade value will find that its graphical detail and "CAMS" (Camera Angle Management System) allow for smooth, logical game play. CAMS is a group of cameras that the user can position to watch the play. CAMS provides for nine camera positions tied to the nine player positions. Each camera can be separately positioned in a full 3-D environment. When the ball enters a camera's region, the view will switch to the stored camera position. Additionally, there is a full free-floating camera that can be set anywhere in the ball park (or even in the parking lot) and a "follow-the-ball" camera view.



Hi-res batter-pitcher view: from this full-screen, behind-the-plate perspective you can call the type of pitch, its speed, and where to throw it.

The same approach to league management that makes *FPSF* and *FBPro* unique is used in *FPSB*. Users can create custom Associations (an Association is a group of Leagues playing for a common championship; Major League Baseball is an example of a real-world Association) in either a Single Season or a Career Season (ongoing) format. Up to 30 teams can be used in each Association, divided between one to three Leagues with one to three Divisions per League. The user can choose from over 50 Association configurations. Each league within an Association can choose to use the DH (Designated Hitter) rule or not. Thus an Association can be composed of a DH league and a non-DH league, for example.

Front Page Sports: Baseball
will be the first simulation to position all four umpires on the field with their play-calling positioning determined by actual umpire instruction manuals.

A full season schedule is provided for each Association configuration with days off and realistic "home stand" and "road trip" alignments. Games can be rained out and rescheduled as part of a double-header at a later date, or for post-season resolution if made necessary due to a lack of available dates (if there are no free dates for the game and its outcome will not affect the standings, it remains unplayed). Additionally, a schedule generator will be provided for users who do not want to play through a full 150+ game schedule. The full season schedules have an "All-Star"

game in which the computer automatically selects teams based upon accumulated player statistics. Users can also play "Exhibition" type "All-Star" games with teams either selected by the computer or by the user.

Career Associations give *FPSB* a depth and richness of game play that has not been previously seen in baseball simulations. This type of continuing league allows users to build a franchise, act as General Manager, and make roster decisions that affect their teams for the short term and the future. In addition to the active 25-man and 15-man Disabled List/Reserve Roster, the Career Association teams have a 10-man "low minors" roster where players develop after being chosen in the Amateur Draft. Players usually require three years of development before they are ready for "the Show", although the occasional phenom will require less seasoning, while the truly gifted players go directly to the active roster from the draft. Unlike most computer baseball simulations, *FPSB* does not arbitrarily restrict or divide the rosters between position players and pitchers, which allows users to tailor their teams and player development systems as they see fit. Thus, for instance, a team can concentrate on developing pitching in the farm system to fuel the big-league club and provide "trade bait" to get the required position players.

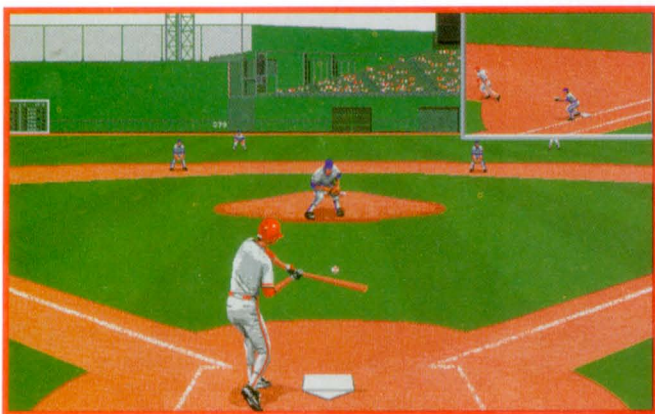
The fans of America's Pastime no longer have to feel wistful six months a year. The boys of Summer are as close as the nearest computer. Look for *Front Page Sports: Baseball* from Dynamix at software retailers early this Summer. ⚾

For a free demo disk call 1-800-757-7707, and mention offer D809. This free demo offer expires September 30, 1994.

Front Page Sports: Baseball

Features:

- Filmed, rotoscoped players.
- High-resolution batter-pitcher interface.
- Physics-based pitching, hitting and ball flight.
- Game control level determined by the user.
- Three levels of skill, determined by the user.
- Richly detailed, full-color stadiums are featured throughout.
- Instant Replay function is available at any time.
- Plays can be reviewed and edited to provide game highlights.
- Realistic Spring Training feature.
- Trade up to three players with either computer- or human-owned teams.
- Generate historical teams by inputting the statistics of legendary ball clubs.
- *FPSB* tracks over 500 statistics for each player.
- Full box scores, play-by-play, and game highlights are generated for all League games.



As the batter, you'll knock the dirt from your cleats, dig in, and take your best swing.



Coktel's *Inca* Series

Flight Sims Like You've Never Seen Them!

The first Coktel product to become a hit in America was *Inca*, released first for MS-DOS on diskette in March of 1993. The premise of the game is that the ancient Incas, already regarded as one of the most scientifically advanced of all the old civilizations, were much farther along in their understanding of the universe and its secrets than even modern-day Earthlings. The opening of the game starts with an ancient Incan wise man who predicts the return of the Incas through the heroic acts of a warrior/pilot named Eldorado, then promptly dies and proceeds to crumble into dust. From

there, things get bizarre quickly as the rest of the story unfolds. With an outrageous plot that mixes Spanish galleons with space battle, and pits ancient Incan star ships against laser sword-wielding conquistadors, *Inca* is a work of interactive art that could easily have come from the mind of a surrealist artist like Salvador Dali. It is definitely software from the Twilight Zone.

In reviews, writers from magazines like *Compute!* recommended the product while openly admitting they

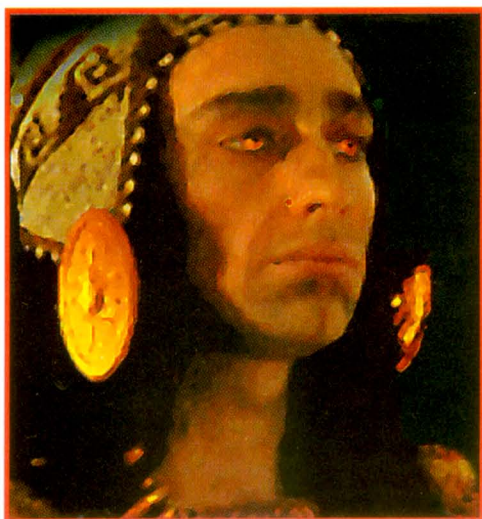
were at a loss for words and didn't quite know how to explain why they liked it so much. Even video game reviewers who normally attempt to make a serious living writing about products that feature hyperactive hedgehogs and heroic plumbers were forced to describe the game using words like "weird" and "crazy." They all also mentioned the outstanding graphics and animation, richness of presentation, and intensity of gameplay while reviewing the game. What really got most players, though, was a combination of the incredible 3-D graphics technology used to bring the space flight

By John Williams

sequences to life and the haunting, authentic Incan soundtrack that lured them into the game.

Inca for MS-DOS originally sold for \$69.95, but is now available at \$29.95 or less at most retail stores — a great value considering this game offers up over 12 meg worth of gaming and is shipped on ten 3.5" high density diskettes. A multimedia CD version of *Inca*, released just before Christmas, now carries a suggested retail price of \$34.95.

If *Inca* was widely seen as "odd" or "unique," the upcoming *Inca II* will build on the reputation of the original while adding a distinct flavor all its own. While *Inca* was deep and hypnotic — if a little deranged at times — *Inca II* adds an element of humor and melodrama that makes you wonder if the author of the



games didn't intentionally design the convoluted plot of the original game just to see how many people might take him seriously. *Inca II* continues the plot of the original game, but adds as a new central character the stereotype 1920's barnstorming pilot complete with a stinky cigar and the old-style leather flight helmet. This stodgy flier, a combination of Chief Engineer Scotty from *Star Trek* and the helicopter pilot from the original *Road Warrior*, helps you (as the young, inexperienced Incan warrior) through a new adventure, following a path that is both against your father's will and almost exactly follows his footsteps.

From the earliest scenes of the game, both the humor and the seriousness of the presentation become clear. Beautifully photo-digitized scenes display obviously French actors in Incan Indian clothing. These

actors read theatrically and passionately with a French accent from a script that features Mayan dialogue as it might be translated by a very young William Shakespeare. Unlike most American games, where the call to action is easily stated in terms like "You must save the princess" or "Kill the Wizard," in *Inca II* the goal of the game must be learned from careful observation of multiple modern-day melodramas, all brought to life in incredible multimedia. The first takes place at a combination tribal powwow and corporate board meeting (complete with both a solid granite conference table and actors decked out in full war paint) and another is a common marital spat. The problems to be overcome include father and son rivalries, suicide missions in space and invasions from alien intruders. The very deep and suffocating seriousness of the whole opening is made palatable once the player is presented with the first serious game puzzle — which is solved by throwing rocks at others and hiding behind bushes.

If at times hopelessly out of sync dialogue, intentionally out of place props and special effects and insanely twisted story alone weren't enough, there's also something for those that enjoy a little less cerebral fun. At the heart of *Inca II* is one of the best combo 3-D simulator/arcade shoot-em games ever made available for computers (even better than the one found in the original *Inca*, which was widely praised for its arcade/flight sim elements). The scene-changing mini-movies, dramatic special effects for ship takeoffs and landings, and other rich visuals also add to the presentation.

To the French, and those who love French movies, *Inca II* is a very intelligent, well-presented game with an intense plot that doesn't collapse under its own weight (unlike the plots of most French movies I've seen). To the rest of us, this is a game that presents lots of fun visuals, interesting concepts and ludicrous situations while delivering up a first-class combination of flight sim/arcade and adventure game.

By the time you read this, *Inca II* should be available at many retail stores for around \$30 on 3.5 disk for MS-DOS, and around \$35 for multimedia CD. Ask your local retailer for his pricing and availability. ✈



Exciting arcade sequences using flight simulation technology will rivet you to your seat.



Intriguing and challenging puzzles based on ancient Incan folklore.



Puzzle your way through mazes as you battle conquistadors.



Inca II continues the award-winning graphic tradition of the original.



Inca II takes you to the four corners of the universe.



Coktel's Goblins Series

Great Goblins! Great Puzzles! Great Fun!

If you took the “meat” of what made the very first *King's Quest* so popular when it was originally published in early 1984, you'd probably come up with a few key elements. One of them was the little hero of the game that runs around on screen. (This has since become a trademark in all Sierra Animated Adventure Games). Another would be the linear structure of the game design that helped the player understand what the quest was from one moment to the next. The final element would be the sense the player was given that it was okay to experiment and do nutty things, since creative and experimental solutions were what the game looked for and most rewarded.

The early Sierra adventure games presented problems that were seemingly easy to understand and everything was presented as an interlocking treasure hunt. At game beginning, for instance, you might be presented with a door. You need the key to get in the door. You find someone with the key, but he wants you to buy it, so you must find money. Another person tells you that the only place to find money is the other side of the door, so you deduce that there must be another way to get to the other side of the door. In the meantime, you might find diamonds, weapons, and a Genie that can help you do magic as you go through the game. At all times you understood what you were being asked to do. Things like complicated storylines, complex characters or scheduled events never got in the way of the quest, though their presence made the games all the more enjoyable.

Those were the golden days of adventure gaming, and many old-timers thought they were gone forever as classic adventure gaming has given way to “interactive storytelling.” With the complexity of today's computers, it has been assumed that no longer is it okay to just find treasure, one must also be able to determine the karat weight of the diamonds and the purity of the gold. Never mind that Magic Goose — the real question might become whether those eggs can be used to do a complicated leveraged

buyout of a locksmith business. (No surer way to get into that door, is there?) Good old-fashioned adventure gaming, with its treasure hunts and interlocking puzzles, seemed obsolete.

In the original *Gobliiins*, which was the first of the Coktel products that Americans were exposed to, the simple and straightforward challenge and rewards of adventure gaming returned. The goal: to rescue the King because a



Goblin 3 takes you on a quest for the fabled Jewel of the World.



Imaginative and challenging puzzles will keep you in stitches for weeks.




Great sound effects and music keep you company as you mix adventure and puzzles.

Wizard is picking on him. The challenges of the game are so specific to the player that the player is unable to leave one area of the game until it has been solved. The rewards, like those of a jigsaw puzzle, come from making everything at your disposal work together. A simple innovation made it unique: where a traditional Sierra game had one hero on-screen at all times, *Gobliiins* has three (hence the three i's in the name). Each Goblin has his own skill and his own ideas for how to tackle the problem. Making the three work together, and watching what might happen when they don't, is as much fun as the rest of the puzzle-solving.

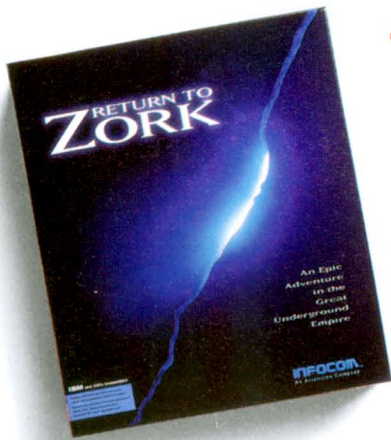
Shortly after *Gobliiins* comes *Gobliins 2* — two i's in the name, two characters on screen for the player to work with (though the two goblins are much more developed personalities than the three in the original). A little more complex, and a little more taxing on the brain of the player, but definitely still a return to basics, with goals plainly established and little room for frustration (though there's plenty of room for confusion, outrage, etc!)

Upcoming *Gobliins 3* is perhaps the most ambitious of the *Gobliins* games and certainly the highest-quality of the series. While only one goblin is portrayed on-screen — represented by the one i in the game name — that i has an attitude. This goblin, by day a harmless reporter, at regular intervals turns into a large and rude werewolf. He is also assisted by various and sundry helpers whom the player manipulates as well. *Gobliins 3* is as much fun as the originals, with challenging puzzles, wacked-out characters, and a ludicrous plot.

The mindbending puzzle games *Gobliiins* and *Gobliins 2* were called “ sleeper hits of 1993 ” by more than one magazine. While originally marketed for \$50 each, they are now available at a suggested retail price of \$24.95 (\$29.95 on Multimedia CD). *Gobliiins 3*, which should be available on both Disk and CD by the time you read this, will be offered at the same low prices. 

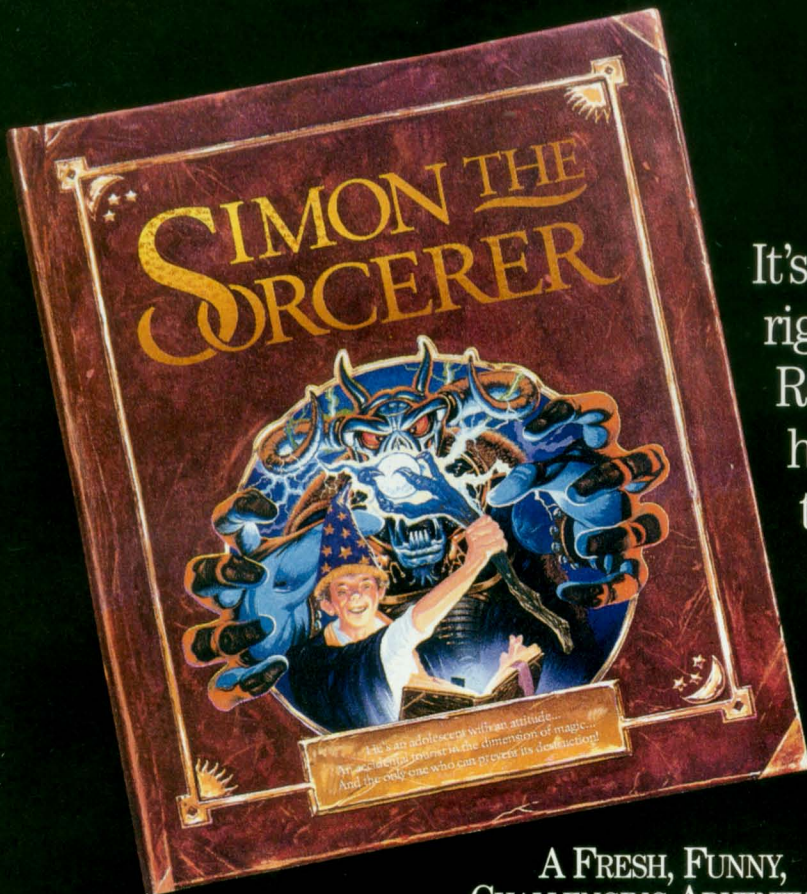
By John Williams

If you're one of the stubborn holdouts who still has not broken down and bought



Return To Zork,[™] there's something you should know.

It now comes with a



It's a magical offer. Because right now, when you buy Return to Zork, one of the hottest adventure games on the market, you also get Simon the Sorcerer™, one of the freshest games on the market. Both for the very same low price.

A FRESH, FUNNY, CHALLENGING ADVENTURE.

Join Simon in a wacked-out world filled with beer-swilling trolls and swamplings as he sets out to defeat the evil wizard Sordid. It's an exciting escapade through a sometimes beautiful, sometimes scary, magic underworld where danger is never really taken too seriously.

You'll get to journey through more than 100 lavishly illustrated scenes, from a cozy cottage to the depths of skull island. Challenging but logical, it's fun for everyone from first-



A wondrously animated world



Stunning graphics

time gamers to expert players. The lively soundtrack is filled with toe-tapping tunes. And then there's Simon. Armed with a sharp wit and a tongue to match, this adolescent with an attitude will keep you laughing. And you can start smiling now, because to own this spellbinding adventure, all you have to do is buy Return to Zork—a game you wanted anyway.

Curse.



Over 1 hour of spoken dialogue

RETURN TO ZORK. A CLASSIC IN THE MAKING.

The original Zork®, introduced in 1982 was the most popular text adventure game ever, with production values that set new standards in interactive entertainment. Now that Infocom® tradition continues with Return to Zork — destined again to be a classic.

But don't take our word for that. Check with the industry leaders. "Winner:

Adventure Game of the Year" — Strategy Plus.

"Winner: Adventure Game of the Year" — Games Magazine.

"Winner: CD-ROM Game of the Year" — PC Entertainment.

Filled with

fascinating puzzles, it features a cast of 23 Hollywood stars, a revolutionary interface, a fully orchestrated music score and over an hour of real time spoken dialogue.

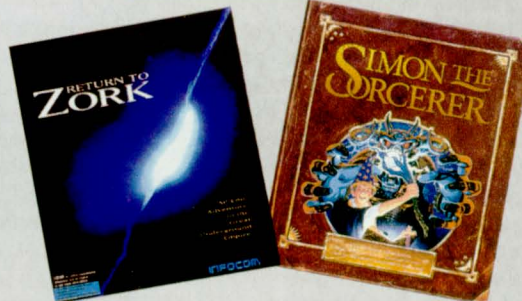
Return to Zork pits you against the evil Morphius, ruler of the Great Underground Empire. Along the way, you will meet unforgettable characters you must talk to, fight with, deceive and befriend in order to save the planet.

It's a game too good not to own, and a deal

too good not to jump on. So order today. Or you'll curse your bad luck.

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An Expert Look at the Latest Technology

If you're reading this – and I know you are – then you're probably in possession of a computer and a few computer games. And thanks to our surveys, we know other things about you as well: most of you use your teeth to rip the shrink-wrap off the boxes (despite the risk to your dental well-being), lots of you plan to buy a new sound card that will make your old sound card sound like the sound card you had three sound cards ago, and you either already own or plan to own a CD-ROM drive.

Once you own a CD-ROM drive, the same rigmarole that you went through with video cards, sound cards, CPUs and hard drives will begin anew for you in the exciting world of multimedia. Some especially fast people are already upgrading from their single- or double-speed CD-ROMs to triple-speed drives. We'll have to find a new way of designating them pretty quickly, before we have to start saying things like, "Yeah, I'm thinking about getting one of those new octuple-speed drives, but I think there's still some life left in my old septuple-speed."

CD-ROM Drives – What Should One Do With All This Power?

The amount of power you wield with a CD-ROM is truly staggering. I bought my first CD-ROM just a month ago, and now I understand how absolute power can corrupt absolutely. I've got the CD-ROM that lets me look up anyone's telephone number in the United States (very useful for rekindling old relationships with sworn

enemies). I have most of the Library of Congress on another CD. Then there's this Karaoke thing that I deny ever using. And another CD that shows you, in full-motion video and step-by-step animation, the innermost workings of your digestive tract. Cooooool.

But there are other CD-based platforms springing up, especially practical for those of you who have thus far shied away from trying to add a CD-ROM drive to your current system. And may I say that your reluctance is well-founded, totally understandable, realistic, and to be encouraged. Installing computer CD-ROM drives is still an ugly business, and anybody who can do it deserves your utmost respect.

Sega offers a CD peripheral for its 16-bit Genesis videogame system. Various manufacturers are releasing systems based on the 3DO standard (Panasonic's REAL system is already out, with entries from AT&T and Sanyo soon to come). Philips has offered its CD-I (CD-Interactive) for about two years now. And Commodore has produced two CD systems, the CDTV (discontinued) and the CD32, both based on the Amiga computer system.

These platforms are all completely stand-alone. They don't hook up to a computer, but rather plug into your television set; they use your television's speakers or your stereo, and don't require any additional hardware (except the Sega CD, more on

that in a moment). You sit on your couch with a controller and point-and-click to your heart's content. You never have to poke around inside of them, you don't have to remember any cryptic commands or what a subdirectory is, and you almost never get vague error messages about bad commands or system errors. You can play a standard music CD on any of them and a Kodak Photo CD on most of them.

Unfortunately, there's a lot less software out there for these systems than there is for computer CDs. That's changing, and the changes are coming far faster than they were a year ago.

The Sega CD is the cheapest of the bunch at \$299 (but it requires an \$89 Genesis, bringing the total in line with the cost of the \$399 Commodore CD32). It's also probably the best-selling of the bunch, with sales in the hundreds of thousands.

But there are drawbacks. The palette is limited to 64 colors, and the resolution is a relatively coarse 320x200, which together make the graphics significantly sub-TV quality; the graininess is obvious, but not hopeless (unless you sit right up close). When it's not trying to mimic videotape, it's capable of crisp, colorful graphics that move at lightning speed...perfect for videogames, but little else. You're not going to find any interactive encyclopedias or annotated Beethoven symphonies on this system. What you will find are sports and arcade games, with a smattering of other categories, including a line of bizarre quasi-semi-paragames consisting of pop

By Josh Mandel

artists' music video footage that must be edited together on-the-fly, an experience about as pleasant as trying to assemble a jigsaw puzzle while juggling the pieces. But much of the software is high quality arcade-style gaming.

At this writing, new software for the Sega CD appears weekly, and the quality is steadily improving. But Sega has already announced the Saturn, a more advanced system, to be released this year. Sega CD fans are understandably nervous about how much longer their system will be supported. The same can be said, though, for any system on the market, just as computer owners who buy 486 systems this year can already feel the specter of Pentium tapping on their shoulders.

CD-I from Philips Makes a Comeback and Panasonic Unveils 3DO

The Philips CD-Interactive system has bucked that trend. Introduced a couple of years ago, CD-I languished with poor sales, but Philips persisted. In the past few months, CD-I has experienced a resurgence, with the availability of an optional MPEG cart (which allows the unit to play sequences — or whole films — with nearly videotape-quality appearance), a lot of new titles, and a lower price (\$499).

There's a good amount of software already available for the CD-I, but it's not that easy to find...electronics chains, rather than software stores, carry it. Much of CD-I's existing library is family-oriented: interactive storybooks, art and music, tours, and more. Films on disk are also becoming available for use with the MPEG cart.

Panasonic's powerful REAL 3DO FZ-1 is the newest kid on the block. At the time of this writing, the price is a hefty \$699, but a price cut of \$100 or more is expected shortly, and other manufacturers will be bringing out their own versions of the hardware at different price points. How does this work? Let's use videotape recorders as an example. JVC invented a "system" for videotape players and called it VHS. (Sony invented one called "Beta," but that's another, sadder, story.) JVC then licensed this system to other manufacturers, who all came out with their versions of VHS-compatible VCRs, all with different prices, extra features, and so on...but with the common factor that they all played and recorded VHS tapes. 3DO, like VHS, is a set of specifications licensed to other manufacturers, so these manufacturers can turn out their own 3DO-compatible systems. You'll see, for instance, one 3DO system come out with a built-in modem, or another with a wireless controller, et cetera...different optional features, but all using the same software. Whether this system takes off or not remains to be seen. There are over 300 licensed software developers for 3DO, but they may not all actually produce software.

The 3DO's specs are impressive. 16.8 million colors can be displayed simultaneously (although I doubt you can tell the difference between One million and 16.8 million), the resolution can go as high as 640x480. MPEG compatibility is planned (some systems may come with it). There's not much software available yet: a handful of games, the majority of which are aimed at children. But there's a great deal of 3DO development in the works, and new games should be flowing steadily into stores by press time. There's great concern that 3DO systems will never achieve popularity on the scale of systems like the Sega Genesis because of their high price. It's a Catch-22, because if the system grows in popularity, it will come down in price...but it can't come down in price until it begins to grow in popularity. It's too early to tell which way this war's going to go, but as long as heavy hitters like Time-Warner and AT&T are investing in 3DO, there's hope.

The CD32 Has It All – Well, Almost

The Commodore CD32 combines excellent power and a low price. It can display 256,000 colors at once in higher resolution than the 3DO. MPEG and Kodak Photo CD compatibility are both planned. The software library is probably the biggest of all the dedicated CD systems, because the CD32 is compatible with the sizable library of existing CD-ROM software for the Amiga and the defunct CDTV. This means games, education, and reference works are all available.

The fly in the ointment is Commodore's ability to market their system. Amiga owners are all too aware of Commodore's repeated performance problems in the US. Finding the CD32's great library of compatible software is extremely difficult; most software stores in America no longer carry Amiga software. In Europe, the CD32 is doing very well, but Commodore hasn't been able to transfer that popularity to an American audience (which is precisely what happened with the Amiga 500 as well).

A word of caution to anyone who's considering investing in one of these systems: a CD-based system is due out this year from Atari, as an adjunct to its Jaguar videogame system. Nintendo's Project Reality is expected in 1995. The Sega Saturn is on its way. And no doubt there are others on the drawing boards as well. In other words, no matter what kind of CD system you buy, a more powerful one is just around the corner, probably at a better price, too. But if you let that bother you, you'll still be waiting to buy something 20 years from now, and in the meantime, the rest of us will have saved the galaxy many times over. ☞

**Red Hot Dynamix Titles
Sega CD and 3DO**



Fight an evil empire bent on universal domination in Stellar Fire for the Sega CD.



Stellar Fire for the Sega CD creates a hyper-realistic 3-D environment.



The fast, fully animated game play of 3DO is the perfect platform for Stellar 7.



Enemies inhabit every corner of the incredible Stellar 7 universe.



Sega Visions says that "Willy [Beamish] and company will make you laugh in this terrific addition to the Sega CD line-up."

Window Shopping for a Multimedia Upgrade Kit



Why can't we just go out and buy a CD-ROM drive, a sound card and speakers, and then live happily ever after? Because it just doesn't work that way. Unless you really know what you're doing, once you get the components home and installed, you have no guarantee that they'll even work together. This is ridiculously frustrating! You have to spend a lot of research time learning about multimedia, which is no small task because you have to learn a bunch of stuff. And who wants to spend the time learning it in the first place? It amazes me that people out there have already done it and succeeded. What about us casual users? Surely there must be an easier way to upgrade.

As a matter of fact, there is. We can buy a complete Multimedia Upgrade Kit that already meets the MPC-2 standards. There are three advantages to this method. First, we're sure all the hardware components will work together. Second, we'll spend a minimum of research time. Third, we'll get a bunch of free CD-ROM software. It beats frustration, believe me. Let's look at six different packages that meet today's standards. (NOTE: The Reveal multimedia upgrade kit contains two great Sierra games on CD-ROM: *King's Quest VI* and *Stellar 7*.) We'll keep two goals in mind: to minimize the amount we have to learn about multimedia and keep the budget under \$500. But first...

What's in a Multimedia Upgrade Kit?

Usually, a complete multimedia upgrade kit includes a CD-ROM drive, a sound card, speakers, and a software bundle all in one box. Although, as you'll see in a moment, some manufacturers exclude the speakers or they skimp on their software bundle. See the side panel on page 37 for kit information.

386 Owners: Don't Buy a New Computer Just Yet

In the last issue of *InterAction* we learned that we had to have a 486/25 with at least 4 MB RAM to meet the MPC-2 standards. But manufacturers don't print these requirements on their boxes. Beside the "MPC-2 compliant" sticker, you'll typically find these hardware requirements:

- 386SX
- 2 MB RAM
- VGA graphics
- DOS 3.3 or higher
- 3.5" 1.44 floppy drive
- 30 MB hard drive

So what does this mean? If you own a 386, you may not have to buy a new computer to run today's multimedia software. I spoke to three different software dealers and a few manufacturers who would have gladly sold me an "MPC-2 compliant" multimedia upgrade kit even though I own a 386. In fact, one dealer told me he had a double-speed drive hooked to his 386 at home and everything seemed to work fine. Then again, maybe you can run today's multimedia software on your 386, but what about tomorrow's titles? Buyer beware: ask your dealer or multimedia upgrade manufacturer what your options are.

Three Things to Learn about a Double-Speed CD-ROM Drive

These three things are speed, speed, and speed. Let me tell you about a CD-ROM experience I had last year. For my 30th birthday, my wife surprised me and mail-ordered a "blazingly fast" single-speed CD-ROM drive. But once I got the drive installed, I found it was so slow, it was infuriating. For example, if you tried to play Kennedy's famous speech, there'd be these long irritating pauses. Like this, "Ask not..." — and the disk would go out and do its thing — "what your..." — and the disk would do its thing — "country..." And pretty soon you were watching the clock: 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock — then your calendar — Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday...January, February, March... 1994, 1995, 1996. (Okay, I'm exaggerating.) What the manufacturer's ad must have meant was "our CD-ROM return rate is blazingly fast."

Today, CD-ROM drives are referred to as "double-speed" or "meets MPC-2 standards." (Personally, I'd rather see something like this: Plays the entire Kennedy speech without one hiccup! Well, perhaps this is too much to ask.) We assume then that these double-speed drives go twice as fast as last year's single-speed drives. But how can we be sure? Learning these three terms will help:

- 1) transfer rate
- 2) access time
- 3) memory buffer

Transfer rate is the speed at which a drive moves data. The bigger this number,

By Patrick Bridgemon


the faster the drive. It's measured in Kilobytes per second (KB/second). As a comparison, a typical hard drive will have a transfer rate of around 800KB/second. The fastest CD-ROM drive I've read about is the Pioneer DRM-604X Minichanger. It holds 6 CDs at a time, and has a transfer rate of 614KB/second. (For CD-ROM, that's fast. Pioneer calls it a quadruple-speed drive and they're asking a quadruple price for it, too. It retails for about \$1,845. Not quite in our budget.) The average transfer rate of the double-speed drives in this article is 300KB/second.

Access time is measured in milliseconds (ms). The smaller this number, the faster the drive. It's the amount of time the drive's head takes to respond to a request for information. As a comparison, the average access time of a hard drive's head is at least 18ms. The fastest CD-ROM drive I've read about is the NEC Multispin 3X at 195ms. NEC calls it a triple-speed drive and it costs \$500 for an internal model. The fastest access time of a drive in this article is 250ms. The slowest is 350ms.

Memory buffer gives your CD-ROM drive the ability to load anticipated extra chunks of data into RAM. A bigger memory buffer means you'll spend less time waiting for the CD-ROM drive. The largest possible memory buffer is 256KB. The smallest is 64KB. (You can also buy CD-ROM cache software to function as a memory buffer. If you own DOS 6.2, you already have a CD-ROM cache.)

Let's put it all together. Double-speed Drive A has a 300KB/second transfer rate, a 350ms access time, and a 64KB buffer. Double-speed Drive B has a 350KB/second transfer rate, a 250ms access time, and a 256KB buffer. Can you tell which double-speed drive is faster: Drive A or Drive B? Drive B is the faster drive because it has a higher transfer rate, a faster access time, and a larger memory buffer.

Conclusion

Multimedia upgrade kits are a sensible way to go. For a minimum investment of time and money, you can get a great fast introduction to the world of multimedia. Once you get started, you'll probably want to learn more. Because multimedia is a hot topic right now, in addition to a few books, you'll find many magazines are covering the subject. Check out *Computer Shopper*, *Computer Buyer's Guide and Handbook* Volume 11, Number 10, and *PC Upgrade*, Volume 2, Number 6. There are a lot of multimedia-only magazines, too. Three are: *Multimedia World*, *CD-ROM Today*, and *CD-ROM World*. Good luck in your research. I hope this brief tour will get you started. 

Special Offer! Crazy Nick continues his CD-ROM extravaganza with a special price on a double speed drive, only \$239.95, see page 83 for details!

Six MPC-2 Multimedia Upgrades Worth Considering

Creative Labs

1901 McCarthy Blvd.
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 428-6600

SoundBlaster Discovery CD 16 Multimedia Kit - \$449.99

1 year warranty

- Panasonic double-speed drive (internal)
300 KB/second transfer rate
320ms access time, 64 KB buffer
- SoundBlaster 16 sound card (speakers included)
- Software bundle: *Aldus Photostyler*, *The San Diego Zoo Presents: The Animals!*, *Software Toolworks' Multimedia Encyclopedia*, *Just Grandma and Me*, *Where in the World is Carmen San Diego Deluxe*, additional Creative Labs software.

Creative Labs

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SoundBlaster Edutainment CD 16 Multimedia Kit - \$499.99

1 year warranty

- Panasonic double-speed drive (internal)
300 KB/second transfer rate
320ms access time, 64 KB buffer
- SoundBlaster 16 sound card (speakers included)
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Media Vision

3185 Laurelview Ct.
Fremont, CA 94538
(510) 770-8600, (800) 638-2807

Pro Audio Spectrum 16 Multimedia System - \$499.99

1 year warranty

- Double-speed drive (internal)
300 KB/second transfer rate
250ms access time, 256 KB buffer
- Pro Audio Spectrum 16 Sound Card (Sound Blaster Compatible, speakers included)
- Software bundle: *PC Karaoke*, *Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia for Windows*, *Mayo Clinic, Where in the World is Carmen San Diego*, *Microprose Civilization*, *Battle Chess*, *Mantis*, *Macromedia Action!*

Orchid Technology

45365 Northport Loop W.
Fremont, CA 94538
(510) 683-0300, (800) 767-2443

Orchid Soundwave/CD Multimedia Kit - \$ 449.99 1 year warranty

- Orchid CDS-3110 double-speed drive (internal)
300 KB/second transfer rate
350ms access time, 64 KB buffer
- Orchid Soundwave 32 soundcard (Sound Blaster compatible, speakers not included)
- Software bundle: *Day of the Tentacle*, *Video Movie Guide 93*, *Gus Goes to Cybertown*, *Macromedia Action!*

Reveal (800) 4-Reveal

Reveal Ultra Multimedia FX - \$449.99

1 year warranty

- Panasonic double-speed drive (internal)
300 KB/second transfer rate
320ms access time, 64 KB buffer
- Reveal Sound FX Studio EMC 16-bit sound card (Sound Blaster compatible)
- Desktop and boom microphones, stereo headset, Reveal 8-watt speakers
- Software bundle: *Software Toolworks' Multimedia Encyclopedia*, *U.S. Atlas*, and *World Atlas*; *National Parks, King's Quest VI*, *Stellar 7*, *Chessmaster 3000*, *1993 Guinness Book of Records*, *Adventures*, *Mavis Bacon Teaches Typing*, *Clipmedia II SE*, *Macromedia Action! SE*, *Microsoft Works* (Multimedia Ed.)

Sony Computer Peripheral Products Company

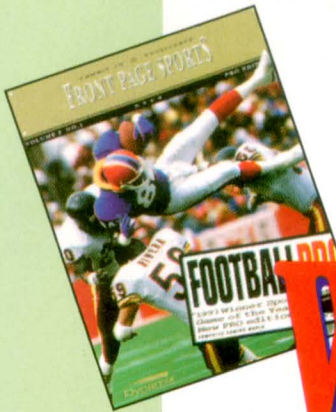
3300 Zanker Road
San Jose, CA 95134
(800)352-7669, (708) 860-9500

Sony Desktop Library - \$499.99

1 year warranty

- Sony CD-ROM CDU 31A-LL/L2x drive (internal)
300 KB transfer rate, 350ms access time, 64 KB buffer
- 16-bit sound card (MPC compatible, Sony SRS-58PC speakers)
- Software bundle: *New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*, *Time Magazine Almanac*, *The Presidents: It all started with George*, *Great Wonders of the World*, *Where in the World is Carmen San Diego*, *Geo Works*, *Sony CD Audio Play Utility*, *TEMPRA Access Software*.

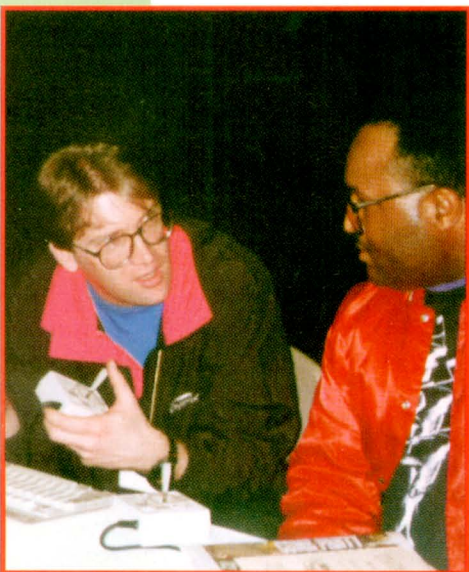
Front Page Sports: Football Pro



Scores Big With the Pros!



Falcon Mike Kenn rewards his opponent with an autographed Football Pro.



Pat Cook, the creator of Football Pro, demonstrates the game for an adoring fan.

Imagine being invited, by four of the most celebrated football players in the NFL, to join the festivities at "The World's Largest Super Bowl Party" in Atlanta during Super Bowl week. Can you begin to imagine scoring a touchdown against Marcus Allen or winning a one-on-one basketball challenge with Ronnie Lott? How about singing with Mike Kenn or playing golf with Chris Miller? And what, exactly, would you be willing to do for Super Bowl tickets? Dynamix was able to answer all of these questions, and then some, during "The World's Largest Super Bowl Party" in Atlanta.

During Super Bowl week, January 27th through January 30th, Dynamix didn't have to imagine any of this because we were right smack in the middle of it all. As an NFLPA licensee with *Front Page Sports: Football Pro*, Dynamix was invited to be a sponsor of "The World's Largest Super Bowl Party" in Atlanta. And, wow, was it a great event!

Marcus Allen and Ronnie Lott originated this bash, "The World's Largest Super Bowl Party," first held last year in Los Angeles. This year they added some local flavor by including Mike Kenn and Chris Miller from the Atlanta Falcons as hosts. As the Official Party of the NFLPA, it offered unique opportunities, in a casual and laid-back atmosphere for conversation, autographs, photographs, competition and fun with top NFL stars. For one whole week we played *Front Page Sports: Football Pro* with NFL players and fanatics and learned that Marcus Allen is as competitive with a joystick in his hand as he is on a football field.

The main event for Dynamix was the Marcus Allen Challenge. We randomly selected contestants to attempt to stop

the five-time Pro Bowler from scoring a touchdown on *Front Page Sports: Football Pro*. The challenge, along with video coverage of Marcus and his challengers, was broadcast on several huge TV screens throughout Atlanta's Apparel Mart. Although Marcus won most of the time, there were several young challengers who made him sweat. Like Anthony, NFLPA's guest from the Make a Wish Foundation. He chose all the right defenses and finally intercepted the ball from Marcus, stopping him from scoring and crunching his offense. Marcus didn't seem to like being defeated, so he continued to practice



Marcus Allen, five-time Pro Bowler, suits up for the main event, "The Challenge."

playing *Football Pro* for the next hour and a half, fighting off autographs and people who apparently thought they were his relatives. As in real-life football, practice helped. Marcus was in full control during his next challenge; no one was good enough to beat him!

Some of the other challenges, which didn't include *Football Pro*, were fun too! We found that Ronnie Lott is not

By Kathy Gilmore



Anthony, from the Make a Wish Foundation, gets Marcus Allen's autograph.



Marcus Allen gives Anthony and his sister Christina a run for their money.

such a bad basketball player, Mike Kenn really can sing when he has the words on a screen right in front of him and Chris Miller must be a natural all-around athlete. Do you want to know about the guy who won the Super Bowl tickets? He had to shave his legs, wear a skirt, do a wonderful little chorus line dance and sing in front of over 10,000 screaming fans and television cameras. Just remember, he'll have to live with that for the rest of his life!

Our hosts, Marcus and Ronnie, have every intention of making "The World's Largest Super Bowl Party" an annual event to benefit inner-city kids. Top names from all sports teams will continue to come out, while sometimes making fools of themselves, to support such terrific charities as Big Brothers and Big Sisters and the NFL's Youth Education Training Program. Michael Jordan even showed up this year to help the fundraising efforts of the Richard Dent Foundation, whose current project is helping the homeless. Next year's party will be in Miami, Florida, the home of Super Bowl XXIX.

Front Page Sports: Football Pro received a lot of attention from fans, the media and NFL Players during Super Bowl week. CNN aired a ten-minute review of *Football Pro* four times over Super Bowl weekend that included an interview with Marcus Allen raving about our game and, of course, his success. I think we've got him hooked. "The World's Largest Super Bowl Party" was a great opportunity to gain recognition for a tremendous product and have a lot of fun (But, we really were working!). The *Front Page Sports: Football Pro* development team at Dynamix scores big points and deserves many congratulations for a game well done!



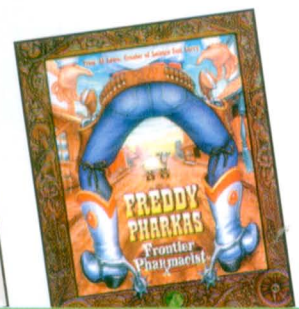
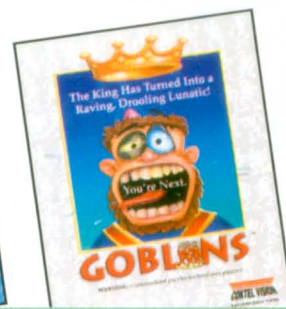
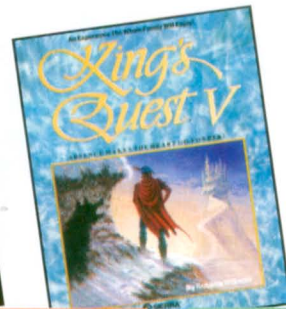
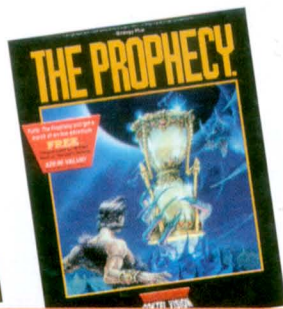
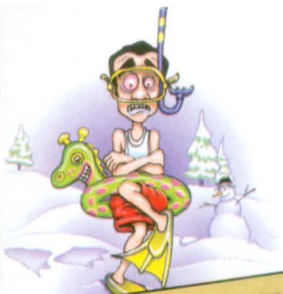
Marcus Allen introduces himself to his first opponent in "The Challenge."



Mike Kenn scores his first ever Football Pro touchdown.

Crazy Nick™ is crazier than ever for dreamin' up this spring sale...

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Take-A-Break Pinball	49.95	29.95

All of the above require Windows 3.1, 386SX or better, Soundboard with DAC, either 2 or 4 MB. SRP - Original Suggested Retail Price

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All MS-DOS are 3.5 VGA. Requires: 286 or better (*386 or better), 640k, hard drive, mouse. SRP - Original Suggested Retail Price

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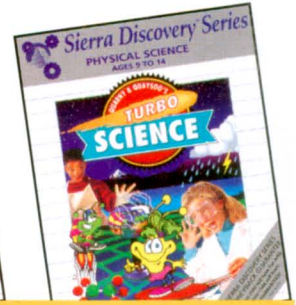
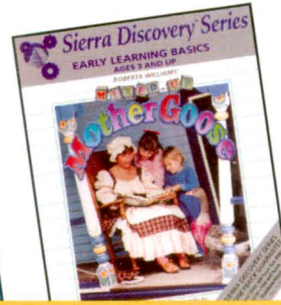
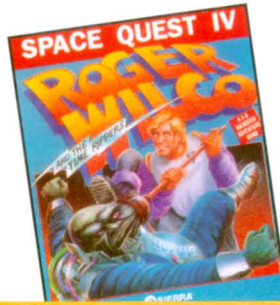
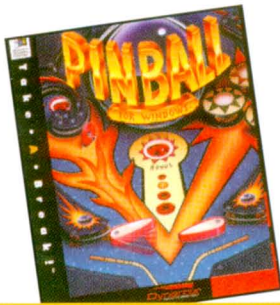
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but what he says goes at Sierra, so enjoy these great savings while they last!

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SPECIAL EDITION

Edutainment

IN THIS ISSUE

The Dream
Team

The Sierra
Discovery
Series

A.J.'s World
of Discovery

Berlitz
for Business
Japanese

So, your eight-year-old is vying with you for the title of household master of computer gaming. He already spends a couple of hours after school playing *King's Quest VI* before you even get home from work. So, what if he had his very own games to entertain and challenge him?

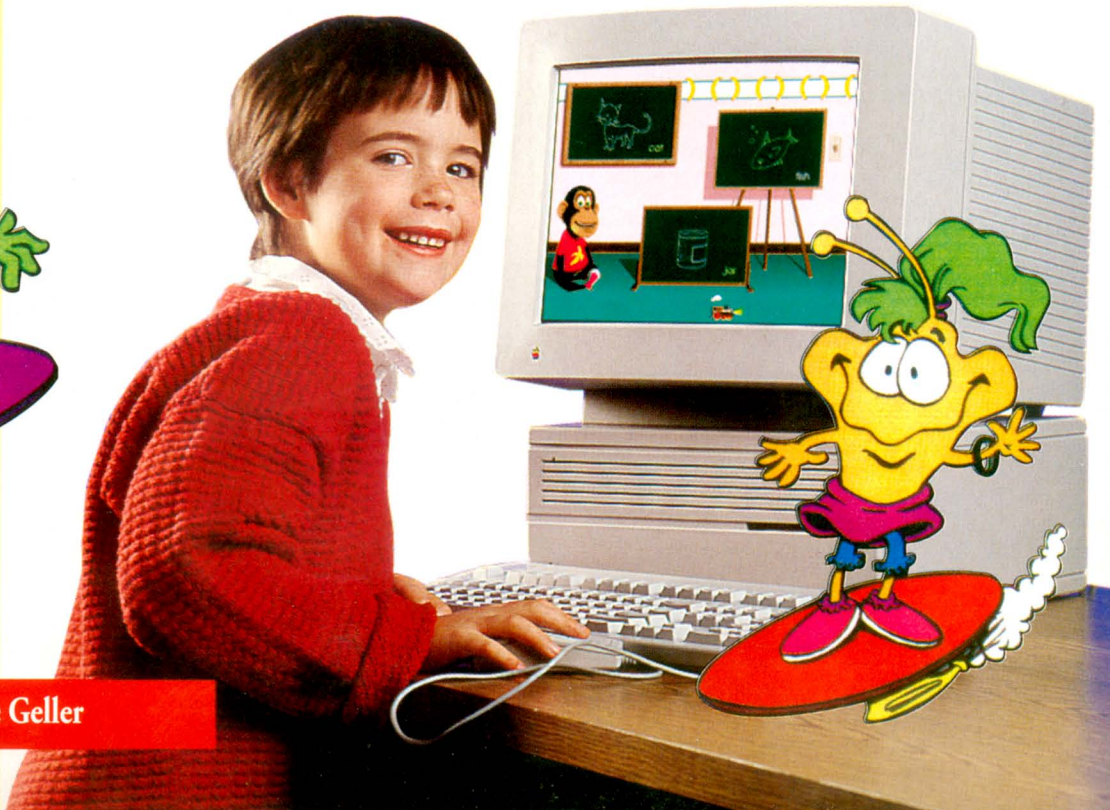
Sierra's edutainment division has the corner on interactive entertainment — just for kids! Bright Star Technology, which joined the Sierra family in 1992, develops some of the most original and technologically advanced software available for children. With sixteen different products to choose from, there's something to please every inquiring young mind.

The *Dream Team* products bring together animation and digitized speech to create characters whose mouths move in perfect sync with their spoken words. These are fun-loving characters with real personalities and intelligence, who skillfully sneak learning into totally fun games. Because children see and hear words and letters, the lip sync technology enables kids to learn quickly, thus building their confidence and pride.

For adventure and traditional gaming value, check out the *Sierra Discovery Series*. By applying story line development and adventure game technology, these interactive products enable kids to learn through exploration, giving their imaginations free rein.

Just released is Sierra's first foray into adult edutainment — *Berlitz for Business Japanese*. This is foreign language learning at its most exciting and effective, incorporating elaborate art and lip sync to create a completely new and different way to learn Japanese language, culture and customs.

Sierra's edutainment division, located in Bellevue, Washington, is home to more than 30 employees and is growing rapidly. You can always expect the best in computer edutainment for your kids from Sierra.



By Leslie Geller

Can you find these characters in the poster?

- 1.** Yobi is a magical spelling wizard who is never without his pet.
- 2.** This character lives in a star-spangled box and loves to read.
- 3.** Adam is a swingin' kid and determined to save oceans and rain forests.
- 4.** They travel on turbo boards and know lots about science and math!
- 5.** Spooky is a friendly ghost who can teach you how to haunt a house!
- 6.** Her favorite food is also her name.
- 7.** His t-shirt spells his name and he wears cool sneakers.
- 8.** Loid is from an asteroid in space. He has lots of mondo math games in his home.

The Dream Team has Arrived!



Sierra is pleased to announce the arrival of its **Dream Team** line of children's software products to software stores nationwide!

Developed by Sierra's edutainment subsidiary, **Bright Star Technology**, these revolutionary products use patented lip sync technology. Your children will be enchanted by the fully integrated, interactive graphics and sound. They will learn and have fun – it's guaranteed!

Now, for a limited time, you can buy these unique **Dream Team** products at a **VERY SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE – UP TO 50% OFF!** Just stop by these and other fine software retailers and ask for the **Dream Team** by name!

Babbage's
Best Buy
Blockbuster Video
CompUSA
Computer City
Egghead Software
Electronics Boutique
Hastings

Intertan
Lechmere
MacWarehouse
Micro Center
Multimicro
Nobody Beats the Wiz
Software Etc.
Tiger Direct



You can read all about the **Dream Team** product line in the article on page 43. ***But remember – act fast!*** This special price ends April 30, 1994.



1. Yobi hangs out with Crackers the parrot in *Basic Spelling Tricks* and *Advanced Spelling Tricks*.



2. Jack, the jack-in-the-box, teaches the alphabet in *Alphabet Blocks*® and basic reading skills in *Beginning Reading*.



3. Adam is in two adventures, *Lost Secret of the Rainforest* and *EcoQuest: The Search for Cetus*.



4. Quaysoo on the left and Quarky on the right are the stars of *Turbo Science* and *Mega Math*.



5. Spooky teaches typing in *Kid's Typing* and the faster you type the more haunted the house becomes!



6. Bananas, the charming chimp, teaches with Jack in *Alphabet Blocks* and *Beginning Reading*.



7. A.J. invites you to join him in *A.J.'s World™ of Discovery*.



8. It's fun to learn math with Loid in *Early Math*.



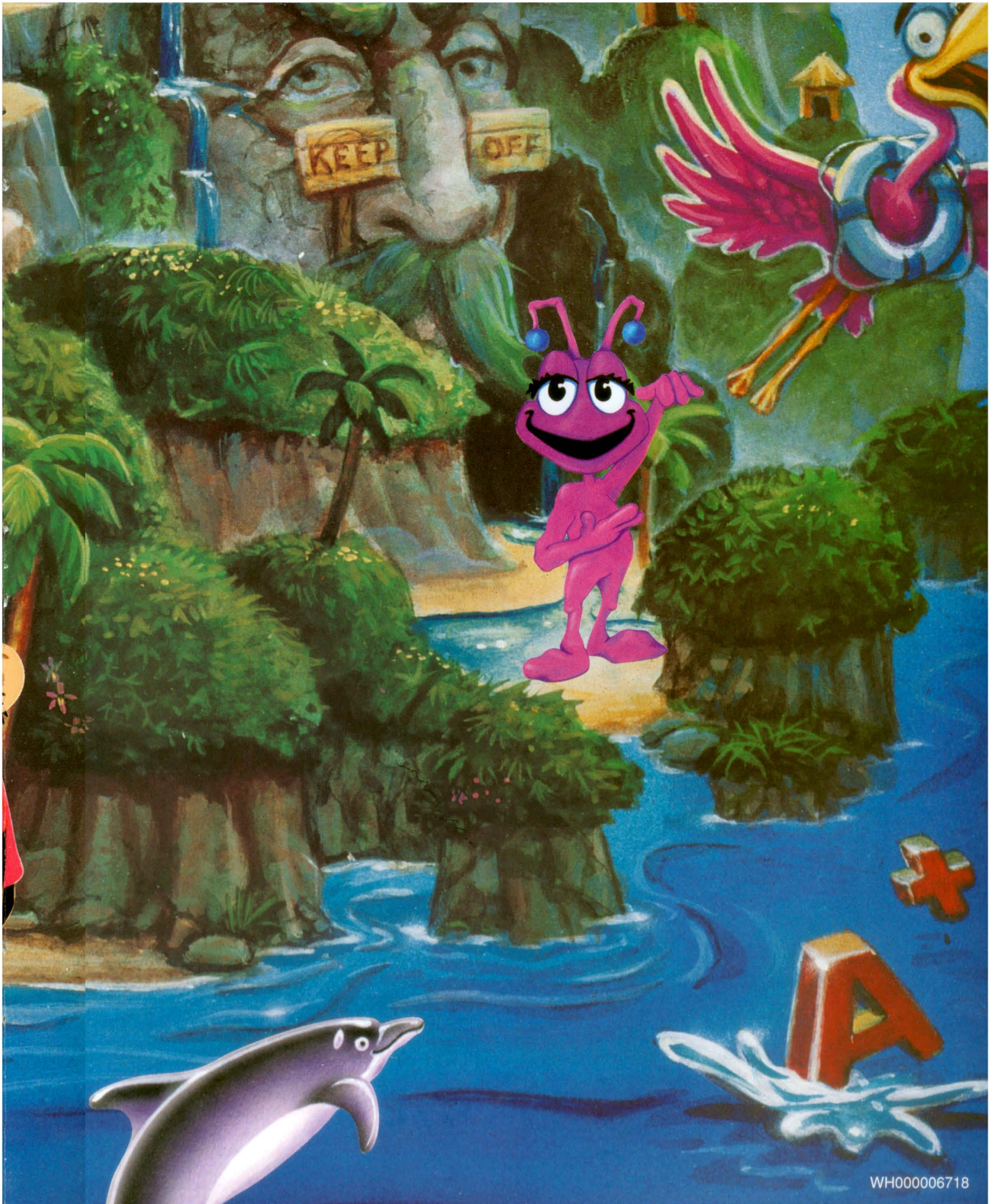






Bright Star

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Spooky

Introducing

The Dream Team

Kids Love To Learn with the Dream Team Talking Characters



Math is fun when three- to six-year-olds learn with Loid!



Yobi and Crackers are proof that learning to spell can be fun.

Profile: Brennan P.

Age: 7

Occupation: First grader

Favorite sport: Soccer

Favorite food: Fried okra

Pets: A dog, Little Bear, and a cat, Sybil

Favorite television show: *Animaniacs*

Favorite computer game: *Basic Spelling Tricks*

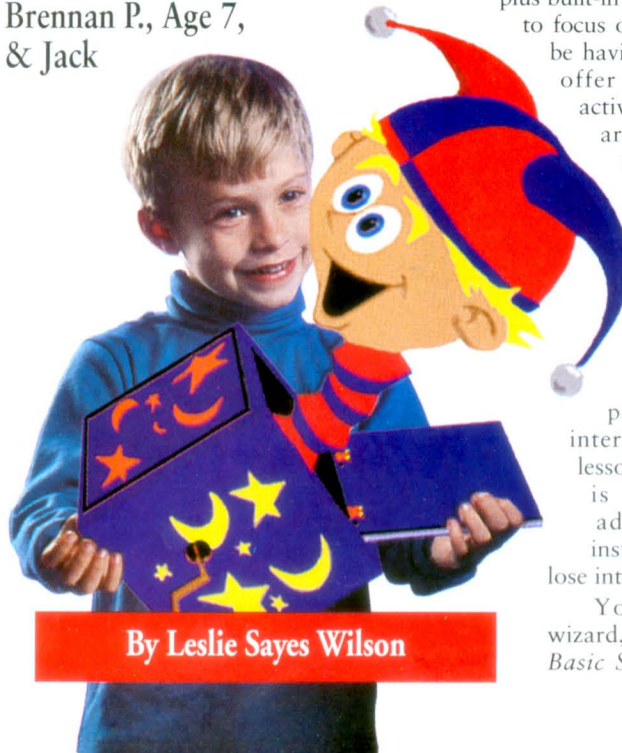
Brennan's comment: "I like to get past the animals and the fire guys... oh, I'm so clever!"

Parent's comment: "I'm a teacher, and I think this is a great, entertaining way to teach kids how to spell. Brennan just loves it." -Melissa P.

That parents want what's best for their kids is a penetrating glimpse into the obvious. When we pick out their clothes for the day, we first check the weather. When we feed them, we make sure they're getting their RDA of vitamins and minerals. We make sure their toothpaste has fluoride, their socks are free of holes, their bicycle tires have the proper air pressure.

When we pick out our children's software, we have the same goal: to provide what's best for them. Software should be educational and should also provide entertainment. The word "edutainment" was coined to characterize software that provides both of these sometimes divergent software features.

Brennan P., Age 7,
& Jack



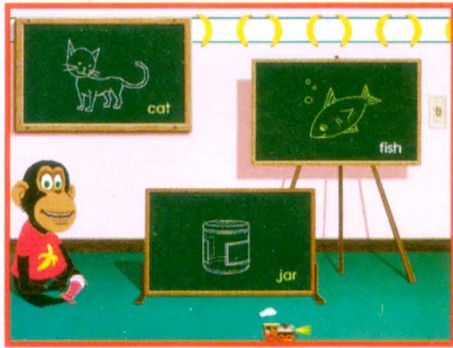
By Leslie Sayes Wilson

The *Dream Team* family of edutainment software gives your children true one-on-one instruction as no other product can. These remarkable products combine Sierra's proprietary technology with on-scene tutors to create a revolutionary teaching method designed especially for children.

Sierra has succeeded in doing what no other edutainment company has done: it has brought together animation and digitized speech to create characters whose mouths move in perfect sync with their spoken words. This enables your child to comprehend quickly and thus learn faster. These child-driven products foster an interchange between child and computer by allowing randomized rather than sequential information to be presented to the user. This, plus built-in intelligence, enables the software to focus on areas in which the child may be having difficulty. The products also offer progressively challenging activities, but because the products are child-driven, the lessons are never more difficult than the child is ready for.

The *Dream Team* tutors are infinitely patient on-screen coaches who encourage, reinforce only in positive ways, and celebrate your child's every success. Each has his own distinctive personality and continually interacts with the user, adjusting lessons according to how the child is progressing. Children and adults alike enjoy these gentle instructors who never criticize or lose interest.

Yobi, the wise and magical wizard, is the coach for two products: *Basic Spelling Tricks* and *Advanced*



Bananas is an infinitely patient tutor who offers your child only positive reinforcement.



Jack the jolly jack-in-the-box gently guides your child through the first steps in reading.

Spelling Tricks. The first, geared toward seven- to ten-year-olds, teaches how to spell the most commonly misspelled words in a fun, humorous and nonthreatening way. The material is presented as a series of maze-like puzzles that the child must solve to master tricky words.

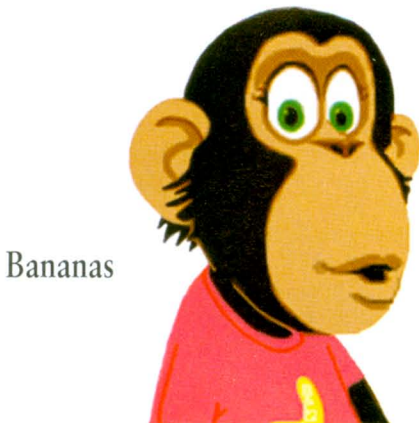
Advanced Spelling Tricks is the next in the series, continuing the spelling adventure with new scenery, jokes, mazes and tricky words. Your child will have more than 40 hours of fun helping Yobi correctly spell hundreds of words that represent 90 percent of spelling errors made by children ages nine to twelve. In both products, Yobi gives hints and spelling rules to help long-term retention and spelling mastery.

Loid coaches children ages three to six in *Early Math*, a product designed to give children a strong foundation in mathematical skills and attitudes. *Early*

Math emphasizes problem-solving through analysis by putting the child in charge of the life of Loid, a charming character from another world. Activities involve shapes, patterns, number and quantity, ordering by attributes, following instructions, measurement, counting, and simple addition and subtraction.

The Dream Team tutors are infinitely patient on-screen coaches who encourage, reinforce only in positive ways, and celebrate your child's every success.

Hope W., Age 6



Bananas



Loid

Profile: Hope W.

Age: 6

Occupation: First grader

Hobbies: Dance, Drama

Best joke: Why is six afraid of seven? Because seven eight nine.

Favorite television show: *Inspector Gadget*

Favorite food: Feta and walnut pasta

Favorite computer game: *Early Math*

Hope's comment: "Look, you take the shapes and make a bridge so Loid can drive his jeep over. See? I try to do it quickly."

Parent's comment: "I wish we'd had this product sooner. Hope is gaining a lot of confidence in her math abilities. Loid, the tutor, never says anything negative, but only encourages." -Leslie W.

Profile: Loid

Occupation: Talking tutor for *Early Math*

Pets: Fish, sheep

Color: Pink


Favorite mode of transportation: Water bucket

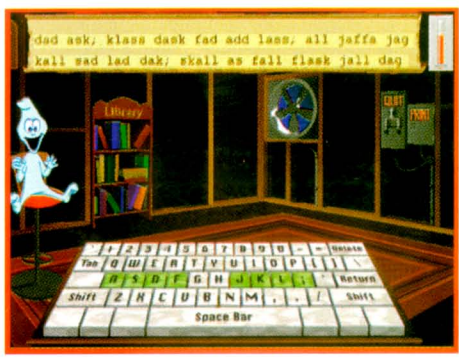
Hobbies: Counting sheep, making pictures

Best school subject: Math

Favorite computer game: *Early Math*

Loid's comment: "With your help, we certainly make some neat pictures. Good job, good job, good job!"

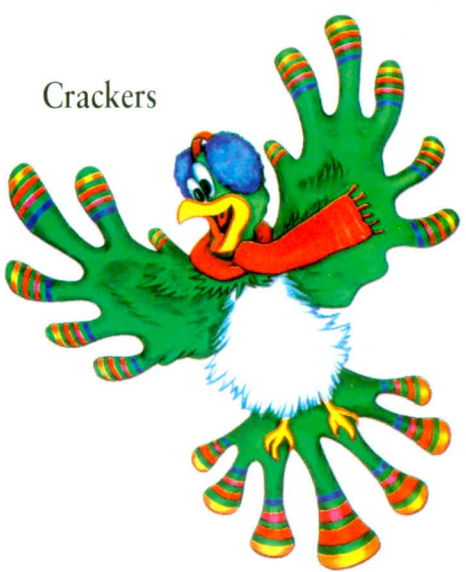
Other tutors in the *Dream Team* family are Spooky, who guides seven- to ten-year-olds through *Kid's Typing*; and Bananas and Jack, who give children ages three to seven a great start to learning letters, phonetics, and reading in *Alphabet Blocks* and *Beginning Reading*. All the coaches have the *Dream Team* attitude: they reinforce only in positive ways; they advance only as quickly as the child wants to advance; and they never, ever lose patience. What a wonderful gift to give a child! Ask for the *Dream Team* family in your favorite software stores. 



Kid's Typing is the only children's typing program with a personal on-screen tutor.



Puzzles and mazes engage nine- to twelve-year-olds in Advanced Spelling Tricks.



Crackers

Kaitlin M., Age 8

Heather W., Age 8

Yobi



Profile: Kaitlin M.

Age: 8
Occupation: Third grader
Pet: A cat, Dinah
Favorite sport: Gymnastics
Favorite food: Vanilla ice cream with whipped cream, a maraschino cherry, and grenadine syrup swirled on top
Best school subject: Language
Favorite computer games: *INN*, *Basic Spelling Tricks*

Kaitlin's comment: "It's real cool. I like it because you get to write down the three words and then do the game. I like Yobi because he has this stick he's holding and I think it's really neat."

Parent's comment: "It's encouraging to have a game like this. My daughter has such an interest in spelling, and I'd hate for her to lose that. As she advances to the upper grades, subjects become more challenging but perhaps not as much fun. I appreciate the fact that she's learning and having fun at the same time." -Susan M.

Profile: Heather W.

Age: 8
Occupation: Third grader
Least-liked pastime: Running laps in P.E.
Favorite television show: *Square One*
Best school subject: Geography
Favorite computer games: *Mega Math*, *Basic Spelling Tricks*

Heather's comment: "I can spell 'practice.' P-r-a-c-t-i-s-e. No, i-c-e, because at the bottom it says 'practice skating on ice.' It's a trick to help you remember. See?"

Parent's comment: "Heather isn't a strong speller, and yet she's really digging into this game. The mnemonics and Yobi's other tricks seem to make the difference." -Leslie W.

Profile: Yobi

Age: Very old
Occupation: Talking tutor for *Basic Spelling Tricks* and *Advanced Spelling Tricks*
Pet: A parrot, Crackers
Hobby: Saving endangered species
Favorite food: Strawberry yogurt and bananas
Best school subject: Language
Favorite computer games: *Basic Spelling Tricks*, *Advanced Spelling Tricks*

Yobi's comment: "To spell a word correctly is to honor its meaning."



By Karin Snelson



The Sierra Discovery[®] Series

"Most people don't realize that some of the best adventure games we've ever done are hiding over on the educational shelf at their favorite software store..."

—Ken Williams, founder, Sierra On-Line, on The Sierra Discovery Series (*InterAction*, Summer 1993)

The Sierra Discovery Series (SDS) features action-packed interactive adventures and games that — in the midst of all the excitement — teach kids ages three to fifteen about subjects from reading and math to ecology and history.

I talked to some parents who admitted to playing them when no one's around. But mostly they seemed pleased that the programs are holding the so-hard-to-lasso attention of their children, who are rapidly gaining valuable learning and computer skills — and liking it.

The *Seattle Times* education and edutainment software reviewer and parent Steve Kent (he's also owner of about 300 adventure software programs) says, "Overall, SDS from Sierra-Bright Star is very competitive straight down the line, and in many areas it's the very best."

Parent and educator Greg Coffin agrees wholeheartedly. "I use many of these games at our school. There are a few companies out there that you know whatever they come out with is going to be good and useful. Sierra-Bright Star is one of them."

The latest hit in the Sierra Discovery Series is the new, fresh *Mega Math*. A team of Ph.D. math experts and enthusiastic designer Randy Dersham combined their efforts to produce this unusually effective and captivating way to learn



mega MATH

addition, subtraction, multiplication and division for children ages six to twelve.

So how does it work? The key to success is answering math equations correctly and quickly. "The format seems to be a natural for math. It nudges kids through math's in-your-face drill-and-practice mental torture," says Joyce Sunila of the *Los Angeles Times*.



Mega Math replaces tedious memorization exercises with dynamic arcade-style action games with VGA graphics, digitized speech, sound effects and music. Meanwhile, a talking mathematician named Dr. Krista

records your progress, gives you positive feedback and helps you practice the areas where you need the most work. *Mega Math* adapts itself to fit your skill level by automatically tracking and recording your success with math facts.

Dersham says that one of his main priorities in creating *Mega Math* was designing it for easy, independent use. "We wanted any player, even six- or seven-year-olds, to be able to sit down and enjoy this without anyone telling them what to do. That was the whole point of talking Dr. Krista."

Mega Math was also designed to be effective for all different types of kids, even taking into account variations in mood and personality. "Feel like a fast-paced game where you can whack things? Try *Das Liquidators*. Or, if you don't want to deal with the stress of a time limit, try the Orff Strategy," says Dersham.

"There is a stress, a pulse-building feeling in *Mega Math* that you might feel watching a horse race," says Kent. He must have been referring to *Das Liquidator's Challenge*, where, in a mutant urban setting of cracked cement and scurrying rats, warrior Iyam Neverwrong and alien Libksa Haveet Myway confront you with



Mega Math's engaging math games are designed using proven teaching techniques.

a frantic, high-energy game of fast thinking. An equation appears at the top of a screen, as creatures (mostly ladybugs and spiders) with answers on their backs run around.

Your goal is to pound the creatures marked with the correct answer. If you pick the right one, it blows up and the vacuum sucks up the leftover parts. If you get it wrong, or run out of time, one hammer is taken away (you start with five). You win when the vacuum cylinder explodes.

Dr. D. Vious's Mind Masher is a *Mega Math* game where a shape-changing object drops from the top of the masher. Your goal is to click on the correct answer from the choices at the bottom. If you're right, a boxing glove will punch the shape into a big balloon. If you're wrong, it falls to the bottom of the masher and disappears. If you're right enough times, the balloon explodes from the pressure of all the "right answers" and you win. (Half the fun is watching Dr. D. Vious and his wildly moving eyebrows get more and more nervous as the balloon gets closer and closer to exploding.)

When the game is over, your score flashes on the screen. *Mega Math* applauds your efforts, as long as you're trying. I only scored 44 percent on one game, yet I walked away feeling like a champ.

In the *Odessa's Fast Facts* section, when I had solved most of the subtraction sets, *Odessa* said, "Awesome job! You pass! Wanna try for 100%?" In this game, you master an entire set of facts, answering the equations as quickly as you can. This entitles you to move along to new, more challenging sets. (In the Knowledge Central area, a player, parent or teacher can change information, look up results, print out reports, tests and awards, or even change the fact sets.)

Mega Math's Orff Strategy is a classic strategy board game. You start by clicking on a game piece and selecting a square where you'd like to move it. An equation appears on the left side of the screen. Use the ten-key pad to produce the correct answer, and your piece will move, converting any neighboring opponents' game pieces into yours! Wrong answer? Lose your turn. The object is to occupy more squares on the board than your opponent.

And, as *Mega Math* fan Heather Wilson puts it, "I like it where you land in one space and the other player turns into your team." Ten-year-old Nate Patterson liked the Orff Strategy, too. "It's so challenging, and you can pick your own piece and move it around. I like what the players do. They're funny!" (Dersham said that it was his intention to have the on-screen characters reflect "the silly, crazy kid things that junior high school kids do.")

Everyone I talked to is excited about SDS's *Mega Math*. In another unprompted burst of enthusiasm, Steve Kent said, "*Mega Math* is wonderful. It's not just good, it's incredible. The music is exciting, the graphics are fun and the program has a sense of humor that every ten-year-old in America will appreciate... For this age group, I can't imagine anything that will compete with this."

Mixed-Up Mother Goose

Mixed-Up Mother Goose, for children ages three to six, was the first full-color animated adventure in the Sierra Discovery Series. You could call it a scavenger hunt, or a magical, musical journey through Mother Goose Land. Each player's goal is to find the missing parts of sixteen mixed-up nursery rhymes and return them to their owners.

Say you are walking along, minding your own business, and you see a sheep. You deduce, "It must belong to Little Bo Peep!" You look at the map and rack your brain thinking of where in the program you last ran into her. You could wander through and explore Mother Goose Land forever if you wanted to — up the stairs, through the gate, in and out of Mother Goose's house, into the castle — it all depends on how long you feel like playing the game.



Mixed-Up Mother Goose on CD-ROM features music from Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and others.

When you've successfully matched everything up, and all is right in Mother Goose Land, the characters perform not just songs, but show-stopping production numbers.

Along the way, players build problem-solving, logic and basic computer skills essential to the beginning student. Dave Kreimer reports that his five-year-old daughter loves the program. "She's learning memory stuff, which I understand is an important skill for reading—she's getting quicker at remembering who needs what. Also, she's not going to be intimidated by computers later on when she needs to use them."

Designer Roberta Williams's *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* won *MPC Magazine's* "Best Multimedia Title — Learning for Children" 1992 award. This SDS product also won the Software Publishers Association award for the Best Early Education Program of 1990 and the 1993 Child's Best Software award from *Child Magazine*.

EcoQuest: The Search for Cetus (Ages 10-13)

In *EcoQuest: The Search for Cetus*, players ages ten to thirteen embark on a challenging undersea odyssey. Young Delphineaus the



EcoQuest has hand-painted, luminous underwater scenery and a spectacular soundtrack.



dolphin and a cast of sea characters search for Cetus, the whale king. Through a watery labyrinth of toxic waste, oil spills and deadly driftnets, players learn about the beauty of nature's ecological balance — and, too often, the lack thereof.

Sierra designer Jane Jensen worked with Gano Haine on the creation of *EcoQuest*. She enjoyed the process of designing the plot, puzzles, text and dialogue, as they worked toward establishing positive feelings about the sea. “*EcoQuest* offers overall lessons about caring for the environment — what we put into the oceans, the current state of our oceans, what’s endangering the animals — along with specific practical solutions like not letting go of helium balloons, pulling apart six-pack rings, etc.”

Jim Baumann, father of seven- and eleven-year-old boys, recommends *EcoQuest* highly. “It’s a good one. My children really love it.” Sure enough, on the phone, Justin vouched for his fondness for the whale and Andrew said that the game was fun, and that they’d already “beat the program” by finding the whale. Back on the phone, Jim said, “It’s a good challenge, a fast-paced learning game. It’s like a word problem—the conceptual, intuitive part of learning.”


Castle of Dr. Brain



Select from novice, medium and expert skill levels, changeable during play.

The other adventures in the Sierra Discovery Series are also wonderful and well worth mentioning: *Mixed-up Fairy Tales* (ages 7-10); *Pepper's Adventure in Time* (ages 8-12); *Turbo Science* (ages 9-14); *Lost Secret of the Rainforest* (ages 12-15); *Island of Dr. Brain* (ages 12 and up); and *Castle of Dr. Brain* (ages 12 and up).

Placing Sierra-Bright Star in the context of the industry, Kent states, “Kids can be challenged by figuring out how to poke out an opponent’s eyeballs or by taking the same amount of time to figure out a math problem. Which is the parent going to prefer?”

And, it seems you can't go wrong. Sierra has a full money-back guarantee that your children will learn and have fun using their products. 

System Requirements (vary throughout SDS series)

DOS: Most support 286 or better. (Mega Math and Turbo Science need 386SX or better), 640K, 256-color VGA graphics, Hard Drive, Mouse. Support standard sound cards.

(*Castle of Dr. Brain* available for the Mac)
(*Mixed-Up Mother Goose* and *EcoQuest* available on CD-ROM)
(*Lost Secret of the Rainforest* and *Pepper's Adventures in Time* support Windows)

Island of Dr. Brain



The *Island of Dr. Brain* is full of visual puns and peculiar mind-challenging puzzles.

Mixed-Up Fairy Tales



The mischievous Bookend has mixed up the pieces of five of the world's most beloved fairy tales.

Lost Secret of the Rainforest



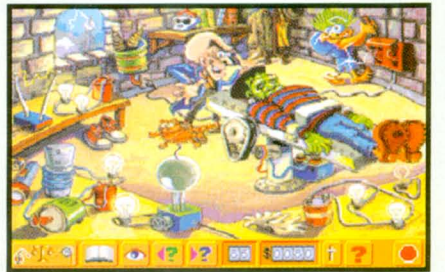
Lost Secret of the Rainforest is a trek through lush jungles, mysterious caverns and misty peaks.

Pepper's Adventures in Time



Ride the time machine into American history with award-winning *Pepper's Adventures in Time*.

Quarky & Quaysoo's Turbo Science



Turbo Science was created with the assistance of an award-winning team of educators.



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Linda Bordelon, Dress Shop 2.0 owner, Longwood, Florida

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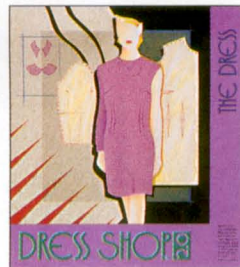
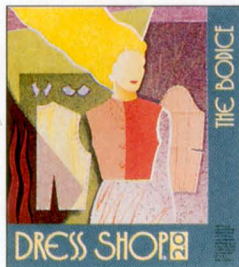
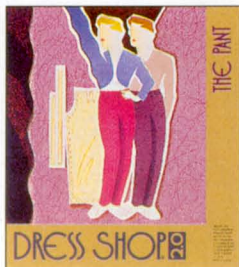
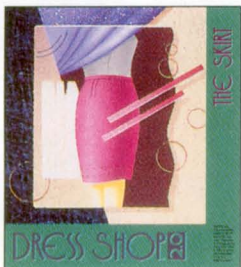
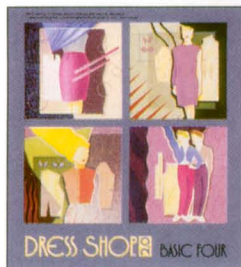
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GAME

Review

FREE OFFER!
See page 52



A.J.'S WORLD OF DISCOVERY

Funny thing about kids' computer games. Sometimes I think my daughters are enjoying their games more than I am with mine. Sheesh, the nerve of them, or maybe, just maybe, it's really the manufacturers' fault. Yeah, that's the ticket. To think, gamewise, kids are having more fun than us bill-paying, car-honking adults. What's this world coming to anyways?

A.J.'s World of Discovery (AJWoD) is a product of Bright Star Technology, Inc., one of the leading design teams of contemporary kids' computer games. Bright Star, a division of Sierra On-Line, has demonstrated time and again a clear commitment to educational development of children, especially with *AJWoD*. Not only does *AJWoD* offer kids, ages four to seven, a unique perspective on their personal development but in so doing offers parents the opportunity to gauge their child's progress as well.

A.J. himself is a cute, impish type of character who represents the common glue

that ties the overall software package together. Introduced in the opening credits, A.J. then becomes conspicuously absent from gameplay although his animated cohorts lend more than a helping hand teaching the game's basics.

Essentially, the game is segmented into two distinct phases. The first of these is the



Picture Maker. Children build their own scenes and learn to identify objects and words.

By Marc Dultz

Environment, which is the housing mechanism that introduces the child to A.J.'s world. The opening or Main Screen depicts the wondrous features of A.J.'s immediate world, including some ordinary as well extraordinary scenery. For instance, there's the standard fare garden in the foreground and the not so standard fare rocketship in the background. There's A.J.'s commonplace house and A.J.'s not so commonplace turtle-shelled pal sporting a Buck Rogers jet pack.

Using a simple point and click interface, a child can interact with any one of over two dozen colorful objects. When activated, each object comes alive via digitized speech and impressively choreographed animation. Some are humorous in nature, like the laughing tortoise or the slap-happy caterpillar. Others draw the child into either some form of learning game or activity path.

Two distinct types of activities are available within *AJWoD*. The first are

referred to as the Introductory Activities, and are easily accessed by clicking on them from the Main Screen. Three Introductory Activities exist that serve as a preliminary guide for what's to come.

The *Clock* game teaches the child concepts of time by depicting various childlike activities during various times of the day. At 3 PM the child may be in school, while at 5 AM he's (hopefully) fast asleep. The *Garden* captures a child's imagination by allowing him to plant different flowers, then watching them grow as the child's online session time progresses. Lastly, the *Music Room* allows the child to toggle background music on or off or lets him alter the music altogether by choosing from one of several faces.

The second set of activities are based upon Discovery and Learning exercises. Again through a point and click approach, kids acquire opportunities at playing any one of seven different learning games. Ranging from writing games to puzzle solving, batteries of dexterity, creativity and strategy skills to the development of spatial relations, a multitude of options exist that will keep children educationally entertained indefinitely. Each game can have its difficulty settings adjusted, thus facilitating the use of the game's built-in learning curves.

In addition, some of the learning-related games offer what is termed a Discovery mode, which further enhances a child's

exploratory skills. For instance, in the *Picture Maker* game, children get the opportunity to design their own scenery, complete with alterable background.

The second phase of the game is built around the Lesson Exercises of which four sample exercises are provided. These lessons go off on two divergent tangents, one targeting math skills and the other language skills. These exercises follow much the same format as the activities, but



Writing Game. They'll love putting words together – especially when the words become objects that move and make sounds.

with a twist. The same familiar control icons are available but now include a score box, eraser and OK icons. The score box is a numerical evaluation reflecting the child's progress through each exercise and tied into the evaluation table. The eraser icon allows children to change their answers before being evaluated, while the OK, or thumbs up icon, allows the child to submit his or her answer.

Probably the most intriguing feature of *AJWoD* is the ability of parents to call up a report card indicating the child's progress through each level. Although not accessible in the sample exercises, parents can gain some insight on the progress of a child's development through each level of each of the add-on lessons.

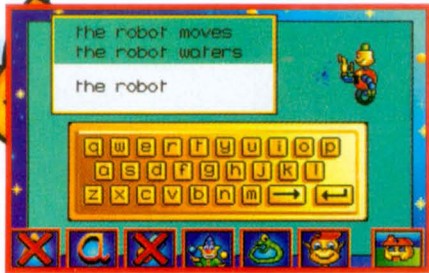
In a nutshell, children acquire one point for completing a particular level within an exercise. They cannot duplicate success by constantly playing one level to run up their evaluation score. As a result, a maximum total of 45 points per lesson are attainable due to the three levels per exercise, fifteen exercises in total.

With *AJWoD*, not only do children get to spend hours of important developmental time in front of a strong interactive learning tools but more significantly they spend less time in the typical VCR plagued, "just-slide-it-in-the-slot," family setting. In addition, parents have available a foolproof method of monitoring their child's learning and reasoning skills without the necessary schooling environment. Apart from the lack of social skills acquired through one-on-one relationships, A.J. and his friends did their homework and earned a thumbs up. 🚶

Reprinted from Strategy Plus, No. 39, February 1994. For subscription information call 1-800-283-3542.



IT'S FREE!



Children love putting words together – especially when the word becomes an object that moves and makes sounds.



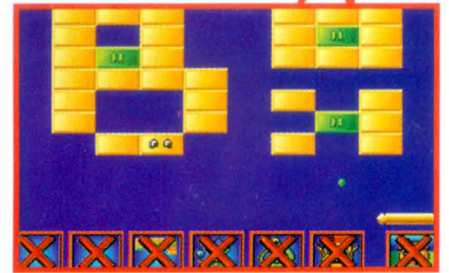
In addition to being an amusing game, A.J.'s Funny Faces also teaches visual recognition and memory skills.



In the Picture Maker, children build their own scenes and learn to identify objects and words.



Learning the concept of time is fun with a playful clock like this. It shows the time with hands and digitally.



Children's judgment, hand-eye coordination, and reflexes are developed in the Disappearing Blocks game.

Winner of the National Parenting Center Seal of Approval for 1993 and the 1993 National Parenting Publications Award (NAPPA)

A.J.'s World of Discovery is a remarkable, award-winning children's software program. Now you can treat your child to a truly enjoyable interactive learning experience—for FREE!

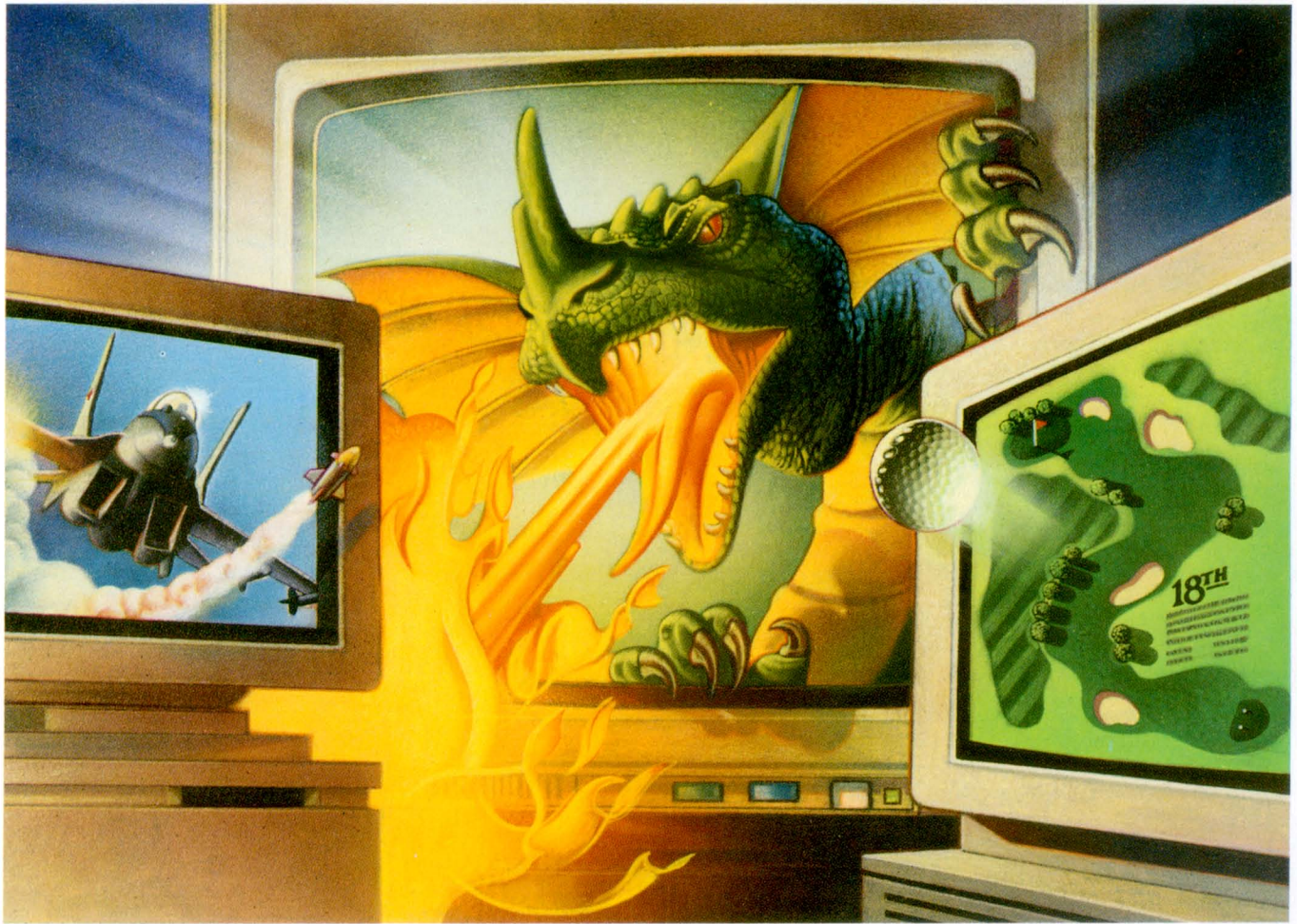
A.J.'s World is full of fun and learning, with ten different activities that teach basic skills such as logic, reasoning, and memory. They're all designed to delight young children and capture their attention and imagination. Excellent graphics and amusing sound effects make the program a favorite among kids ages four to seven.

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By Karin Snelson

You're sitting at dinner, surrounded by Japanese executives, nervously making an origami airplane out of the business card you were handed earlier. You're hungry, but some of the food in front of you has suction cups. Would now be a good time to mention that you're a vegetarian? Preoccupied with the hole in the toe of your sock (how could you have forgotten you'd be taking off your shoes?), you politely refuse a bottle of Japanese beer.

What you do and don't know about Japanese customs could make or break your next trip.

Berlitz for Business Japanese on CD-ROM is the revolutionary multimedia language software from Sierra that can teach you what you need to know about the Japanese language, customs and culture.

After a few minutes into this program I could tell I wasn't dealing with an ordinary language tutorial. First I met Harry, a happy Mexico-bound fellow who is vigorously shaking maracas to festive music. His plans change. Suddenly he finds out he's heading for Japan on business and that he has to prepare fast. Fortunately, Sensei, his personal talking tutor (and yours!), comes to the rescue.

So begins the journey — a fun, interactive learning experience based on over 100 years of Berlitz language instruction expertise and enhanced by Sierra's state-of-the-art technology. The spectacular animation (more like fine art) is truly beautiful, as is the music. Sensei, the endearing, animated coach, is made possible by Sierra's patented "talking tutor" technology.

As Sierra's divisional president Al Higginson states, "...the opportunity to watch mouth movements...is critical to the success of learning correct pronunciation.

Berlitz for Business products will set a new standard in computer language and culture training."

Sensei guides you through topics such as Using the Phone for Business, Shopping, Traveling Around and Eating Out. "Is it served raw?" could prove to be the most important phrase you learn in the Eating Out section. Here you can even find detailed, animated lessons on how to use chopsticks. In the event of failure, you'll also learn how to request a fork.

Most of the lessons begin with a dialogue between an American businessman and various Japanese people in different business and leisure situations. Each section provides you with the conversational skills you'll need, along with helpful information about Japanese customs.

You can practice your speaking skills by becoming an active participant in the dialogues, even choosing which character

Sayonara Tedious Flash Cards, Hello Berlitz for Business Japanese!

you want to be. If you hook up a microphone, you can use it to record your voice and play it back to compare your pronunciation with that of the native Japanese speaker.

"The interactive nature of this program is definitely its strength," says *Berlitz for Business Japanese* user Dr. Marjorie Bennett, who feels that it has other language-learning methods beat by a mile. "I've tried listening to tapes, and a course on video. This is much more entertaining. You have ample chance to practice at your own pace, on your own schedule."

Berlitz for Business Japanese also teaches basic reading and writing skills. Japanese characters are not easy to learn, partly because the written language incorporates three kinds of character sets: kanji, hiragana and katakana. You'll learn what these characters look like, how to pronounce them, and how to combine

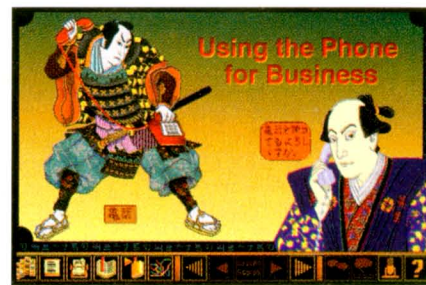




Eating Out: Guides you through eating out in Japan, from making dinner reservations to paying the bill.



Business: Introduces customs and expressions useful for doing business in Japan.



Using the Phone for Business: Teaches you how to use the phone effectively to reach clients in Japan.

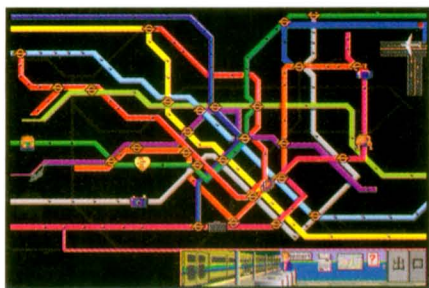
characters into words and sentences. If you don't have the time or inclination to learn the characters, you can easily skip over these sections.

In fact, at any time you can switch to a different section of the program. You can also use the index button, which is accessible from any part of the program. Simply click on it to find all subjects listed in alphabetical order. Product evaluator Mark Anderson says, "It's easy to jump around and figure things out without a manual. If you want, you can just go to the areas that interest you."

The program was carefully designed to give you many learning options, based on what you want to work on and practice with. You can continually test yourself in many ways, from end-of-section quizzes, to taking a part in the dialogues, to removing the on-screen translations.

THE Tokyo SUBWAY GAME

What if you don't like learning language in the typical linear, drill-and-practice manner? No problem! You can learn everything in the program by playing the *Tokyo Subway Game*. The game is also an exciting venue to test your newly-honed skills, and to learn about the intricacies of the Tokyo Subway System. (Ask anyone who has been lost in this labyrinth to vouch for the value of this feature!)



You can learn everything in the program by playing the Tokyo Subway Game.

Your goal is to collect six icons scattered along the subway routes by answering questions. Answer them correctly and Harry advances to the next stop. Wrong answer? Harry gets ejected from the subway car. If you don't know the answer to the question, click on "Investigate" which will take you back to the appropriate lesson. When you and Harry

successfully collect all the icons, Harry can proceed to the Narita International Airport and catch an airplane home!

Product evaluators were unanimous in their enthusiasm for *Berlitz for Business Japanese*. "It's really a high-quality, intuitive product, and quite engaging. The time went fast! It would be an excellent preparation for anyone who is going to Japan," says Bennett.

If you want to learn Japanese, and have been pondering the purchase of a CD-ROM drive, the announcement of this impressive 370-megabyte program will push you over the fence. *Berlitz for Business Japanese* for Macintosh and Windows is a breakthrough in language instruction, and we anxiously await the next languages in the series!

Special Notice

If you are flying to Asia with Northwest Airlines between February 1 and December 31, 1994, and you buy this program, Northwest is offering a free round-trip ticket within the 48 contiguous United States and Canada. If you register the software, Sierra will send you a *Berlitz Japanese Phrase Book and Dictionary* — free!

Program Features

- **Language Essentials:** Introduces kanji, katakana and hiragana characters and provides tips for correct pronunciation.
- **Basic Expressions:** Explains how to phrase questions and construct sentences. Includes expressions, greetings, and names of common objects.
- **Arrival:** Introduces phrases to help you get through customs and immigration and exchange money once you get to Japan.
- **Hotels:** Shows you how to check into a hotel and request hotel services.
- **Business:** Introduces customs and expressions useful for doing business in Japan. Provides information on dress, seating, gift-giving, the use of professional titles, and exchanging business cards.
- **Using the Phone for Business:** Teaches you how to use the phone effectively to reach clients and contacts in Japan.
- **Eating Out:** Guides you through eating out in Japan, from making dinner reservations to paying the bill.
- **Traveling around:** Teaches you phrases to help you get around Japan by taxi, subway, train, bus or boat.

- **Shopping:** Teaches you how to select and pay for items in a Japanese store.
- **Entertainment and Leisure:** Explores leisure activities in Japan, including theater, golf, and sumo wrestling.
- **Getting to Know Japan:** Introduces the history and geography of Japan, including information on major cities and special points of interest.
- **Dictionary:** Run the "Japanese Dictionary" program included on the CD to find the English meanings of Japanese words and vice versa. 人



A Few Fascinating Facts... and Travel Tips

- Japan straddles four constantly shifting pieces of the earth's crust and experiences over 100 earthquakes a year.
- The numbers four and nine are considered unlucky in Japan; never give gifts in these numbers.
- Remember that your socks will often be on view and you will be embarrassed if your toes poke out for all to see.
- Take a book of matches from wherever you are staying—they usually have the name, address and phone number printed on them and could prevent you from getting lost.
- Japan ranks forty-second in the world in geographical size but seventh in population.
- The world's first real novel was written around 1010 by Shikibu Murasaki, a woman of the Heian Court.

HOT OFF

the Press

GABRIEL KNIGHT

SINS OF THE FATHERS™

A Multimedia Experience Not to be Missed

In any format *Gabriel Knight* is an amazing game. From the first gripping animated sequence to the terrifying climax, every aspect of this neo-Gothic psycho-thriller is designed to raise the hackles of even the most seasoned of gamers. *Gabriel Knight's* riveting plot and deep, complex characters have been acclaimed by professional reviewers and adventure game connoisseurs alike.

And when *Gabriel Knight's* rich, compelling story line is combined with the capabilities of multimedia, it crosses from adventure gaming into the realm of emotional interactive experience. *Gabriel Knight* has over 7,300 lines of recorded dialogue, a riveting score, and animated sequences which caused Johnny Wilson of *Computer Gaming World* to say that seeing a demonstration of *Gabriel Knight* was "the first time we have actually experienced fear from watching a computer game product."

But the most remarkable feature of *Gabriel Knight* is the voices.

Game Designer Jane Jensen wouldn't settle for just any performers to speak her words. She took her script to Hollywood, and cast *Gabriel Knight* with the best in the business:



The Cast of *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers*

Gabriel Knight	Tim Curry
Detective Mosely	Mark Hamill
Dr. John	Michael Dorn
Grace Nakimura	Leah Remini
Wolfgang	Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.
Willy Walker	Rocky Carroll
Narrator	Virginia Capers
Hartridge	Monte Markham

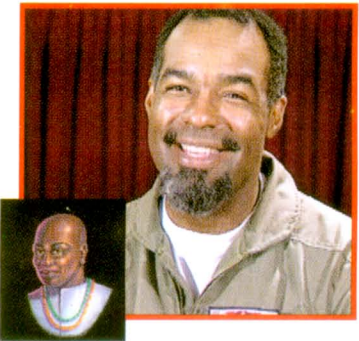
By Leslie Sayes Wilson



Tim Curry is an accomplished British actor who rose to cult hero status as Dr. Frank N. Furter in the classic film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. He has also appeared in *The Three Musketeers*, *The Hunt for Red October*, and *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York*. About interactive entertainment, Curry says: "You can sit in your own home and make your own movie, which is very cool to me."



Mark Hamill plays Detective Mosely, Gabriel's good friend. Hamill created the role of Luke Skywalker in the *Star Wars* trilogy. He states that *Gabriel Knight* is "very entertaining. The story line itself is sophisticated. It's the kind of story you'd see in a feature film."




Michael Dorn, well-known for his role as Worf on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, portrays the voodoo shop owner Dr. John. Dorn has appeared in films such as *Rocky* and *Jagged Edge*, among others. Dorn's deep bass voice lends a disturbing quality to the mysterious atmosphere of *Gabriel Knight*.




Leah Remini currently appears as a regular on the award-winning television series *Evening Shade*. She has also appeared on *Cheers*, *Blossom*, and *Who's the Boss?* Remini's sarcasm and wit were perfectly suited to Grace's persona. Remini provides an ideal foil to Curry's Gabriel.



Stuart M. Rosen is the voice director of *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers*. He has received ten Emmy awards during his many years in Hollywood. His voice-over direction credits include *Robocop*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *Fraggle Rock*, to name just a few. He also directed Sierra's first Hollywood voice-over production, *King's Quest VI CD*. Rosen says that *Gabriel Knight* "is far and above... most of the things I've done in many ways. I think it's outstanding. I'm very proud of it."

The result of this perfectionism is nothing less than a not-to-be-missed multimedia experience. *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers* is one of the reasons they invented the CD-ROM drive. 



Here are just some of the things Compuserve subscribers are saying about *Gabriel Knight*.

Geoff Watson: "It is certainly one of the best adventure games I've ever played. Glad to hear you're working on a sequel!"

Ahmed Y. Uppal: "...the best Sierra game I've ever played."

Mark J. Brader: "Although I have certainly played games with great depth to the puzzles, I have rarely found the story lines to be merged with the puzzles ... You have surmounted the problem. Your story is rich and enjoyable... This is the first game I have played that I expect to keep to play again, for the story, as I would keep a good book to read again."

Unca: "Probably the best writing of the year... I am normally not a horror fan, but the writing is so good in this tale, and I like the characters so much that I am compelled to keep playing just to find out what they're going to say next."

Geoffrey Kidd: "Add me as another voice pleading (crying, screaming, sobbing - I got no pride!) for a sequel. More Gabriel, more Grace, more more more!!!!!"

Gerhard Skronn: "CONGRATULATIONS!! This is by far the BEST Sierra game I have ever played... Keep up the extraordinary work (and give us sequels)."

Martin Blackwell: "I loved *Gabriel Knight*! It was by far the most interesting story of any other game I've played."

Wayne N. Keyser: "...this game really IS getting scary ... the dream in the lecture hall is... yeesh!"

Dan Milano: "What I liked most about GK was the story itself. It was so involved, and the characters were so real. GK was more like a TV movie than a game."

Rae M. Barent: "It really is one of the neatest adventure games I've played (and I've played a lot)...What is most interesting is that the characters are not caricatures... there is a depth to them not usually found in games."

Mike Danoff: "I already am hoping for a sequel. It is great to have an interactive novel for adults that still is highly imaginative and — well — escapist, too. Thanks!"

Geoff M. Keighley: "The best Sierra experience I've had in a long time! Adventurers shouldn't be without this one. This game gives me the creeps. I play it in a darkened room in a very quiet house and it has this atmosphere that really gets to me. LOVE IT!"

Eeyore (Linda C. Lindley): "*Gabriel Knight* is a wonderful new Sierra character... Don't lose Grace... she's wonderful too! KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!!!!"

Denise Tyler: "I want to commend the folks that did the artwork in *Gabriel Knight*. It is absolutely WONDERFUL!... I'm really enjoying the game."

Lisa A. Woodford: "GREAT game!! I love the story line!"

Gimlee: "I definitely feel I've gotten my \$\$ worth, both in customer support and game play."

GAME

Review

A★C★E★S
OVER
EUROPE

Where Eagles Dare

Dynamix Takes Aerial Combat to New Heights With Aces Over Europe

By Stephen Poole

There's something about the aircraft that fought in the skies above Europe during World War II that fires the imagination of any airplane enthusiast. The sleek, aerodynamic design of the P-51, the sharklike fuselage of the Me-262, the graceful curves of the Supermarine Spitfire, the incredible durability of the B-17 Flying Fortress — these and other classic designs left behind a legacy unparalleled in the history of aerial combat.

Dogfighting buffs continue to marvel at these aircraft, planes that went from the drawing board to the runway in almost record time, yet which delivered nearly everything their designers promised. But why is there so much interest after all these years, when the entire concept of air power has undergone such a radical rethinking as to make the tactics of World War II seem almost trite?

Perhaps it's because World War II — particularly in the European Theater — was the highwater mark of dogfighting, a technique rendered almost useless in this age of stealth technology and fire-and-forget weapons. It was a time when a pilot's skill, rather than the computer technology at his fingertips, was the only thing that stood between him and a fiery death.

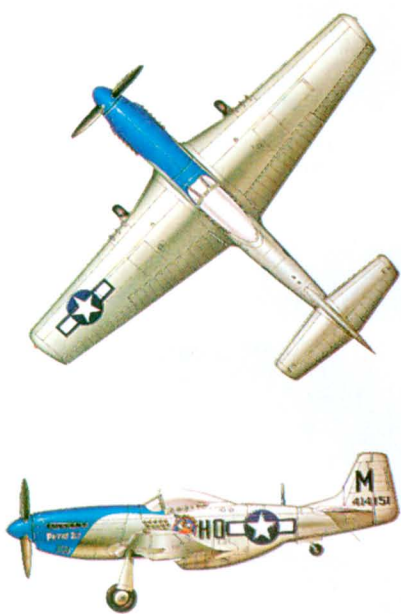
In spite of the unquestionable horror of all warfare, there's something romantic about the concept of man and machine becoming one in an acrobatic dance of

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death — twisting, turning, firing, diving, looping, and rolling in a deadly aerial ballet. Though nearly every encounter ended with a fatality, there seemed to be an interpersonal dynamic between adversaries that was lacking in other types of combat. The plane, tactics, and even the luck of an opponent must have burned each encounter into a fighter pilot's mind as surely as if it had been his last — and made him aware, if only for a few moments, of the individuality of his foe.

Have Your Cake and Eat It Too — Almost

This is the world of *Aces Over Europe*, the third installment in Dynamix's *Great War Planes* series. Other WWII air-combat simulations have been set in the European Theater — *Their Finest Hour: Battle of Britain* and *Secret Weapons of the*



P-51D Mustang

Luftwaffe from LucasArts, and *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* from Electronic Arts, to name three outstanding examples — but for me, none brings the action to vivid life the way *Aces Over Europe* does.

Aces of the Pacific, Dynamix's predecessor to *Aces Over Europe*, has earned a sacred spot on the hard drives of many a PC fighter pilot. Nearly every flight-sim junkie I talk to loves *AOTP*, despite the fact that its flight model is somewhat forgiving even with all realism toggles on. But as good as *AOTP* is, *Aces Over Europe* is even better, thanks largely to the scores of enhancements and new features that Dynamix has incorporated in the game.

The most obvious change is in graphics. While *AOTP* had decent graphics, there was little or no use of shading or texturing, making the planes appear rather flat. In *Aces Over Europe*, however, nothing could be further from the truth. Gradient shading has been added to all aircraft exteriors, making for a much more realistic look.

Each squadron — whether it belongs to the USAAF, RAF, or Luftwaffe — comes with its own historically accurate colorings. And when your shots find their mark against an enemy aircraft, you now see the flash of lead hitting metal, a realistic and invaluable aid in making the most of your ammo.

But the graphic change likely to cause the biggest buzz is the simulation's Tall Res mode, which switches the resolution from 320x200 to 320x400. The result? Some of the best looking aircraft you've ever seen on a PC. Greatly reduced are the jagged, "stairstepped" edges on wings and fuselages; in their place you'll find the smoothest lines seen on a sim this depth and playable.

There is, however, a price to pay for graphics with this level of definition: Dynamix tells us that playing in Tall Res will knock the frame rate down about 15 percent. Nearly everyone agreed that *Aces of the Pacific* required a 486/33 to really soar; if the preview version (85 percent complete) of *Aces Over Europe* I've been playing is an indication, it's a safe bet that you'll need a 486/50 to achieve a truly satisfactory frame rate in Tall Res mode. Even in standard VGA mode, though, the planes are a marked improvement over *AOTP*.

Of course, looks aren't everything, especially for air-combat fans, so Dynamix didn't limit changes to the graphics department. The flight models are greatly enhanced in *Aces Over Europe*, addressing several of the issues for which the hardcore flight-sim crowd took Dynamix to task. Stalls are much more frequent — and more dangerous — than in *AOTP*, and players accustomed to flinging themselves about the sky in mind-boggling maneuvers are in for a healthy reality check. Mass affects both the top speed and performance of aircraft; you can really tell the difference between a P-47 loaded with bombs and one that's dropped its payload. Spins are now accurately modeled for all the aircraft, and will undoubtedly be the cause of many a fiery crash for players unaccustomed to such realism.

And just what planes are affected by these new flight models? American planes you can fly are limited to three fighters, the P-38, the P-47, and the P-51; American bombers you protect or attack are the B-17 Flying Fortress, the B-24 Liberator, and the B-26 Marauder. British mounts include the Hawker Tempest and Typhoon, two types of Spitfire (the Mk. IX and XIV), and the DeHaviland Mosquito, a fighter-bomber that combined impressive speed with awesome firepower; the only RAF bomber here is the B-25 Mitchell. For the Luftwaffe, you can fly two types of the ubiquitous Bf-109 (of course), three types of Focke-Wulf 190s, and two especially historic aircraft: the Me-262 and the Arado 234B, respectively the first jet fighter and



The B-26 was fast and heavily armed — a formidable adversary in the skies above France.



The Spitfire, with its amazing maneuverability, could fly circles around the enemy.



It's either them or you, so blow enemy fighters right out of the sky.



Dogfights in World War II often came down to one-on-one test of skill.

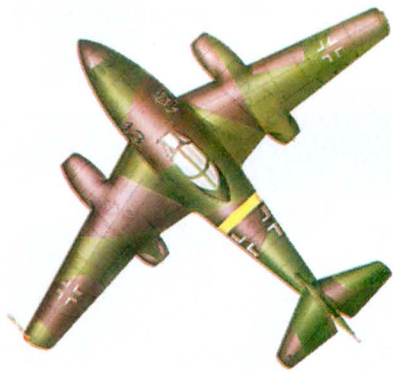


Pilots jostled in the skies over France in the most incredible aerial war ever fought.

bomber to see combat. The other German plane you'll see is the Junkers 88 bomber, an extremely fast light-bomber which was sometimes equipped with nitrous oxide injection that gave it a top speed close to 400 mph.

Just Like Coming Home

The physics may have changed and the looks may be superior, but anyone who's played *Red Baron* or *Aces of the Pacific* will feel like they've come home with *Aces Over Europe*. The Main menu presents all the options that made those earlier titles such a joy to explore. From it, you can choose to fly a single mission, start a career for any of the three combatants, view any of the vehicles you'll fly in or against (including ships and tanks), set realism levels and flight-control options, and access a VCR function that's one of the best in the business — if you have the time and inclination, you could easily create a short war movie with this baby.



Messerschmitt 262 Schwalbe

The titles for all the Single Missions are self-explanatory: Historic Missions, Dogfight a Famous Ace, Fighter Sweep, Scramble (improved over *AOTP* in that enemies are attacking as you taxi down the runway), Training (which allows you to practice aerial gunnery, ground and shipping attacks, and landing), Escort Bombers, Intercept Bombers, Anti-Shipping Strike, Close Support, Interdiction (which offers missions suspiciously similar to ones you fly in Close Support), and Crossbow (attacks on V-1 launch sites). Ground attacks are much more difficult than the ones in *Aces of the Pacific* due to increased AA fire, and new targets such as tanks, jeeps, and bunkers also serve to spice things up.

As you can see, this sim presents an incredible variety of missions. But the fun doesn't end there. Except for Historic Missions, you have almost total control


over every aspect of the mission — number and type of planes for both sides, the skill levels of all pilots (you can select specific aces for both sides in dogfighting missions), armament, ordnance, the altitude at which aerial engagements begin, and the type of weather you'll encounter.

You can choose to begin a career with one of several campaigns; the number of campaigns available depends on whether you join the USAAF, RAF, or Luftwaffe. The earliest you can take to the skies is 1 April 1944, and the last campaign begins 31 January 1945.

Players may be initially disappointed to find that *Aces Over Europe* doesn't offer a chance to fly during 1943, when air superiority was still undecided and the cream of the Luftwaffe hadn't yet been decimated either on the Eastern front or in attempts to halt U.S. daylight bombing raids. But by beginning the simulation in April 1944, Dynamix has been able to place plenty of emphasis on ground attacks against targets of opportunity — tanks, bridges, airbases, and so forth — that weren't available until long-range escorts entered service in large numbers. And an incredible amount of aerial combat took place during the last year of the war as the Luftwaffe made increasingly desperate attempts to stem the tide of battle, so there's no shortage of white-knuckled action.

In fact, it sometimes seems that if you're flying for the USAAF or RAF, the opposition is a little too stiff and a little too numerous. By November of 1944, the Luftwaffe consisted mainly of novice pilots with no combat experience under their belts, and Allied air patrols frequently ranged unopposed over the continent. Yet in American or British Career mode, almost all sorties — even those in January of 1945 — are marked by encounters against enemies who seem to have been honing their skills during the entire war. Then again, maybe the problem isn't so much a case of the German AI routines being artificially strong as it is my dogfighting skills not ranking with those of Gabreski or Zemke.

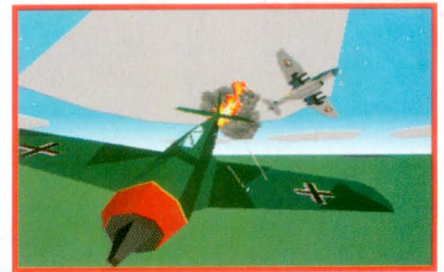
The Mark of Quality

I could go on and on about the other enhancements Dynamix has introduced in *Aces Over Europe*, but there's a simpler and easier way to get that point across: if you like dogfighting and have enough computing horsepower, buy *Aces Over Europe*. Everything about this product is first-rate, from the wonderfully illustrated 200-plus page manual to the plethora of Realism options that make *Aces Over Europe* accessible to even the greenest of pilots. With *Aces Over Europe*, Dynamix is no longer just the name of a software developer; it's a mark of quality. 

Reprinted from *Game Players PC Entertainment*, October, 1993.



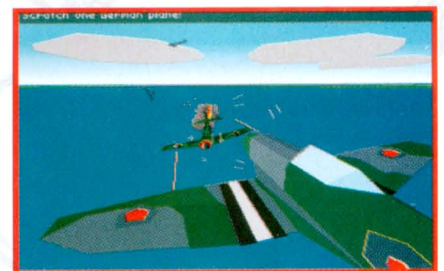
In Summer 1940 RAF Spitfires dueled with the Luftwaffe for control of the sky above England.



The Focke-Wulf was a fearsome dogfighter, heavily-armed and lined with bullet-proof steel.



The P-51's main assets were its high top speed, its maneuverability, and its incredible range.



The Spitfire, quick and agile, could outrun anything in the sky.



First person point-of-view and realistic action drop you right into the cockpit.

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Exclusive

Please meet three of the women who star in **Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out**



We've asked them to say a few kind words about Larry Laffer. After months of agonizing, they think they've actually come up with nice things to say:

Well, there is this one feller who keeps coming in. He's short, balding, and looks like he ain't had no loving in a coon's age. He's clumsy; he's done fell over my microphone cord twice, and he keeps coming in for matches.

My name's Burgundy, and I'm the best danged country and western singer youall ever saw. Maybe you heard of me? I wowed 'em at the Dewdrop Inn down in Roanoke, Virginia. My current gig is at La Costa Lotta Spa, where I'm singing my little heart out at the Blues Bar for city slickers who don't appreciate me a-tall.

Well, there is this one feller who keeps coming in. He's short, balding, and looks like he ain't had no loving in a coon's age. He's clumsy; he's done fell over my microphone cord twice, and he keeps coming in for matches. He

wears this white leisure suit and scratches hissself like he's got the Saturday night fever, and he says his name is Larry Laffer.

Leisure Suit Larry. Ain't that something?

Anyways, I can tell from that hound dog look in his eye that he's a boy in need. He says he just wants to go out on a date, but I recognize that expression. This feller wants me to wrassle with him down to the sauna.

But back in Possum Holler my mama taught me one thing: it's more blessed to give than to receive, so make sure the boy is blessed before you git involved.

This Larry's gonna have to come up with something fer me before I do anything fer him. I sing and sing and sing, and take insults from the bartender and that funny boy from the Health Spa, and by gum taking that kind of abuse can sure work up a powerful thirst, if you know what I mean.

The problem is, the only drinks they serve in the Blues Bar have sprouts, or rutabagas, or some other disgusting vegetable in 'em. There ain't no danged beer to be had anywhere at La Costa Lotta! And when I'm thirsty, lots of beers are the only thing that'll do the job. Course, I can't say there ain't no beer anywhere on the spa's grounds. I've sniffed some of the employees here, and I can smell it on 'em. Oh, they all deny it when I ask fer a beer, and say drinking's against the rules and all, but that dog won't hunt. They've got beer somewhere, all right.

I think I'll send this feller Larry on a mission. If he can git me some beer, I wouldn't mind shimmying out of this gorgeous, sparkly dress and meeting him at the sauna for a friendly little wrassle.

By Leslie Sayes Wilson



Well, hello, my name is Shablee, and am I bubbly! Do you find me beautiful? Thank you. I spend much of my time here in the make-up class. I believe it's important for me to look my very best when trying to meet that special someone.

I've been coming to this spa for years because the men here are so handsome and sexy. Take that guy over there in the corner. His name is Larry Laffer. He's been in here before, checking me out, trying to figure out what I want, what I need.

Really, my needs are simple. I need a beautiful new dress for the dance. I need to feel safe. And most of all I need a real man, a macho man, a man's man.

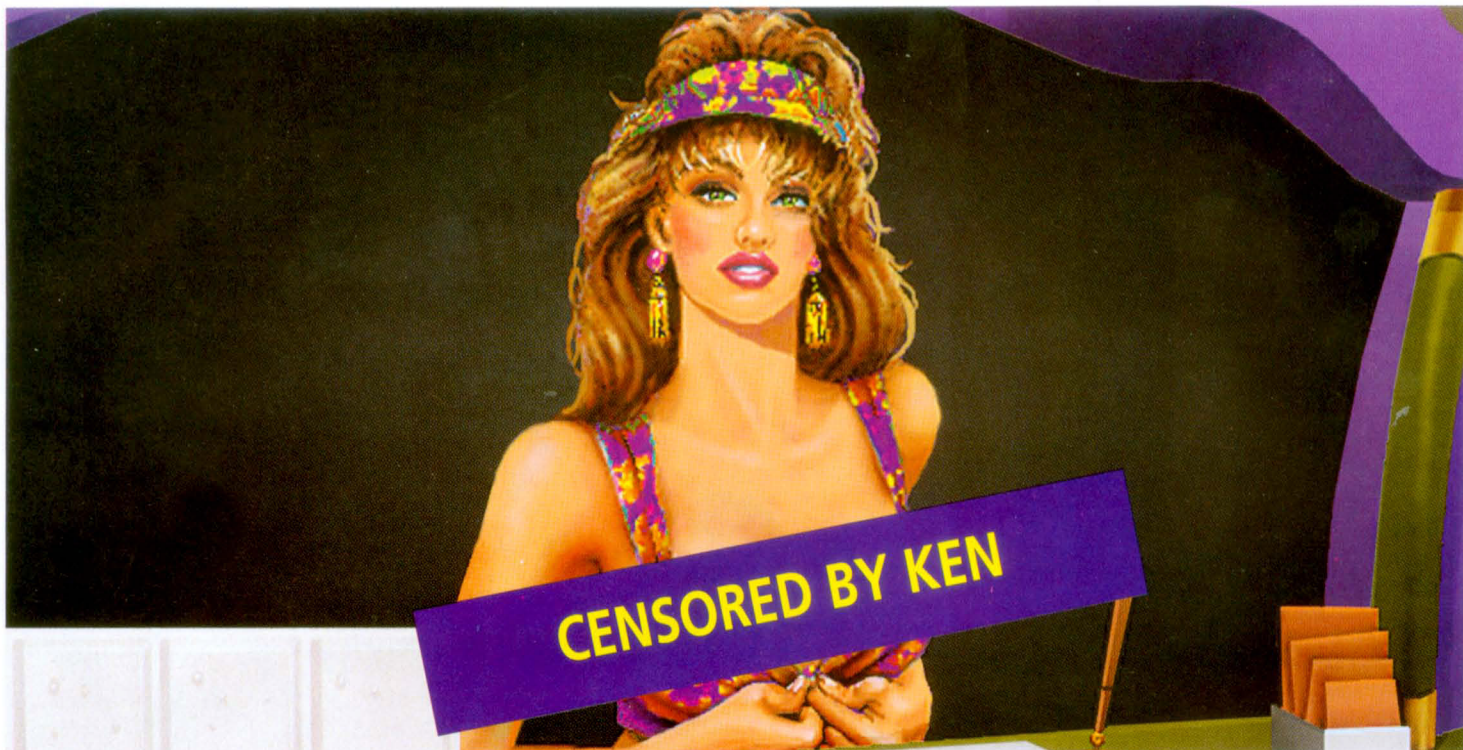
Larry Laffer is a man like that. I find him so attractive. I just love the way his gold chains swing back and forth when he lurches along in that awkward walk of his. And the way his leisure suit covers his paunch, but just barely. The way he parts his hair just above his ear and refers to his receding hairline as a "high forehead." His smooth, subtle pick-up lines. Ooh, if I could meet him on the beach I'd sure give him some mouth-to-mouth resuscitation!

I suppose some women wouldn't find him as appealing as I do. But I'm not like most women; I'm in a class

of my own. And I don't mean a make-up class, either! I'm completely unique, and I find Larry Laffer the most attractive man at La Costa Lotta Spa. Well, except for the lifeguard, the grounds man, the bartender, the dishwasher — come to think of it, let's just say that Larry doesn't make me want to jump out a window. Much. But then, I believe a man isn't defined by his clothes, or his looks, or his personality. A man is defined by what's underneath all of his fancy trappings.

As for my needs, I've seen how he looks at me. Larry will try to give me what I want. A red sequined dress would be a good choice. I think I've seen one here at La Costa Lotta. Larry can make me feel safe by providing me with something from his room, maybe something he finds on his pillow. When Larry has fulfilled all of my needs, I'll provide him with something he needs to achieve his quest.

I've been coming to this spa for years because the men here are so handsome and sexy. Take that guy over there in the corner. His name is Larry Laffer. He's been in here before, checking me out, trying to figure out what I want, what I need.



CENSORED BY KEN

Hello. The name's Gammie Boysulay. I've been working here at the La Costa Lotta Spa for quite a while. Officially my title is Head of Human Services and Customer Relations. But sometimes official titles don't really capture what a person actually does for a living.

The truth is that I spend my days dealing with schmoozers, boozers, and losers. I check them in, and I check them out. The worst ones are the creeps from the Stallions television show. Oh, you've seen


it. It's the one where pumped-up guys compete for dates with incredibly attractive women. Stallions' first prize is one week here at La Costa Lotta, and the guys who win are really buffed. Second prize is two weeks at La Costa Lotta, and the guys who spend two weeks here are — let's just say some of them put the "ugh" in ugly.

You're probably wondering why a gorgeous woman like myself got stuck schlepping nerds at this glorified fat farm. The truth is that I came to La Costa Lotta Spa for one thing and one thing only — the thing that makes life worth living — the thing that all women like me crave — yes, that's right: unlimited access to Dr. Swinebutt's Exclusive, Patented Cellulite Drainage Machine™. I can just picture myself lying on the table

with a cool, damp cloth on my head, eating a juicy orange and getting thinner, and thinner, and thinner!

Unfortunately, just when I started here Dr. Swinebutt was sued for malpractice (The liberal courts these days, really! You could hardly even see that claimant's scars!), and now that marvelous contraption lies dormant, unused, in disrepair. When I walk past the door to the salon I often shed a silent tear to think of the horrible waste of it all. The rumor among the employees is that a clever person armed with his toolbox and his intellect could fix that drainage machine in just a few short steps. I'd try to fix it myself, but the health spa attendant won't let employees into the salon.

So I've developed a plan. The guy in room 201 came on to me pretty strong when he checked in. He's one of the Stallions rejects, you know the type: short, dumb and homely. Anyway, just before I stuck him in 201, the worst hole at La Costa Lotta, I kind of hinted that I'd be really grateful if he could get Dr. Swinebutt's machine working again. Really grateful. Judging from his simian features and simple-minded leer I doubt he'll be able to fix the machine, but you never know. Larry Laffer might just be the man of my dreams, the man I've been waiting for all these months!

The man who can get me unlimited access to Dr. Swinebutt's Exclusive, Patented Cellulite Drainage Machine™. 

Larry Laffer might just be the man of my dreams, the man I've been waiting for all these months!

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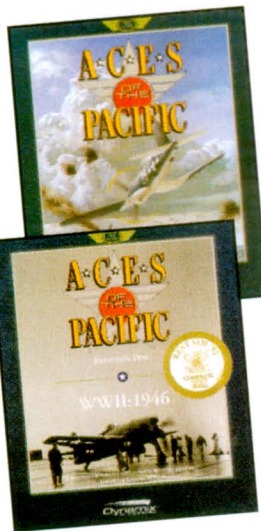


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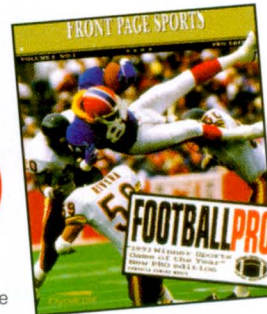


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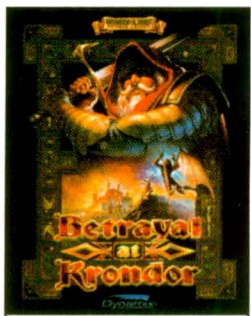
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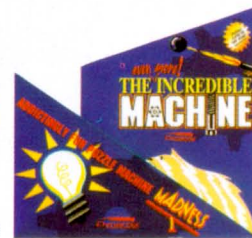
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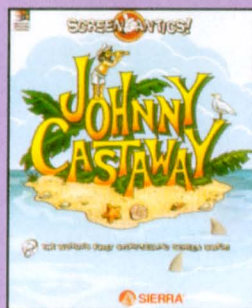
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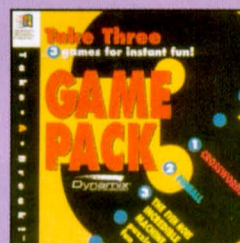
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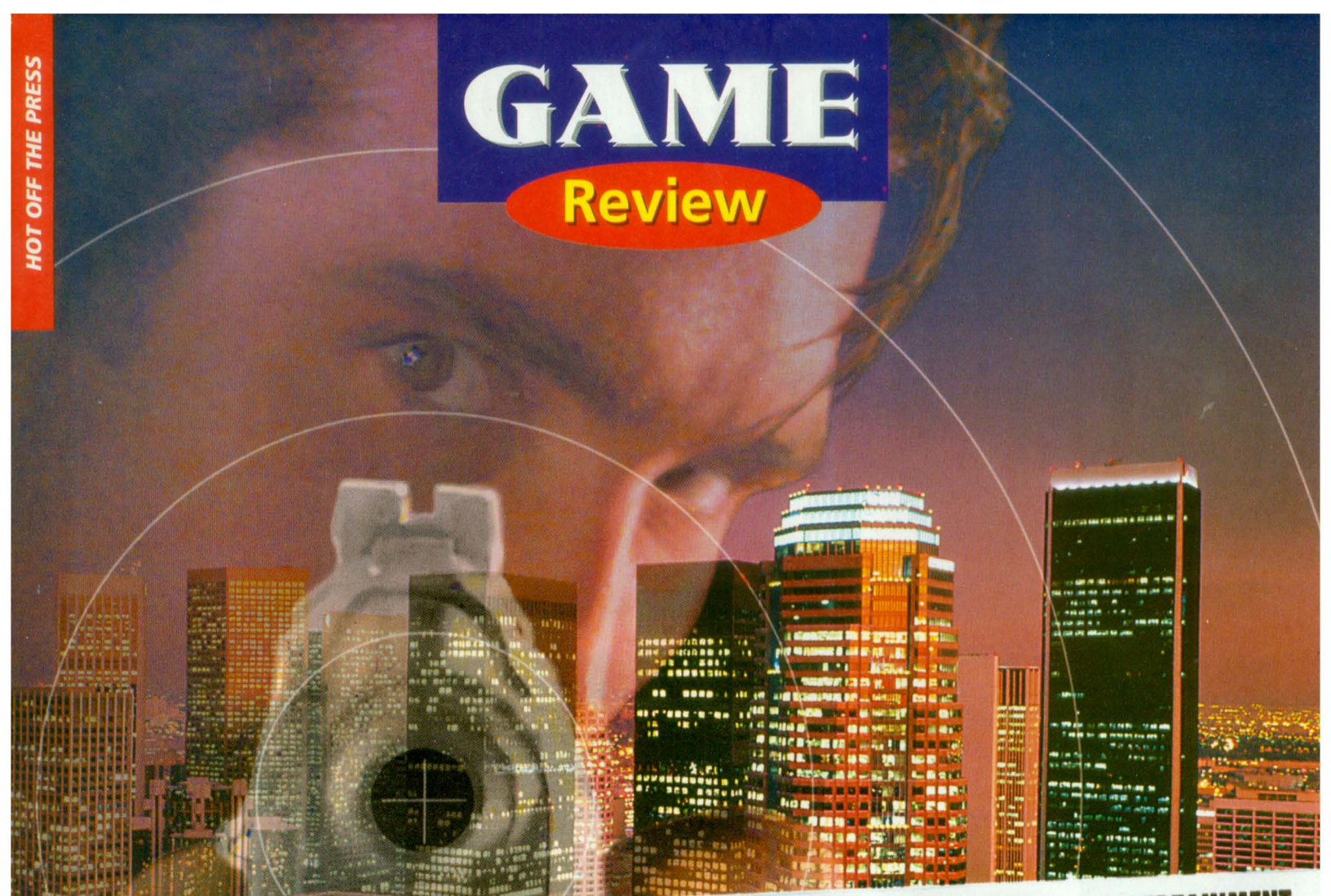
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GAME

Review



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homicid
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People
former L.A. police chief
video game

► ENTERTAINMENT

Daryl Ga game ol

By DAVID LANDIS
Gannett News Service

There's a tough new cop the cyberspace beat: Ex-geles police chief Daryl F. the co-author of a new c adventure game, "Police Open Season."

Out next week, "Season' On-Line, \$69.95) is a rol game that puts you in the a detective tracking down the killer whose victims incl partner.

It's the fourth game in Police Quest series, and with a celebrity co-writer his 15 years as LAPD ch was often controversial, didn't worry Sierra.

"We thought we'd go

e
nsultant for video game



Down Mean Streets With Daryl F. Gates

An Interview with the Controversial Man Behind *Police Quest: Open Season*, and a Look at the Game

Daryl F. Gates spent over 40 years of his life on the LAPD, almost 15 years of which were as Chief of Police. His book, *Chief: My Life in the LAPD*, was a #1 bestseller and is currently available in paperback. "The Chief" now hosts a two-hour radio talk show in LA every weeknight which constantly tops the ratings, and he makes speaking engagements all across the country.

So how did Gates, an admitted computer novice with little experience beyond large communications systems and police force budget programs, become the author of the latest in Sierra On-Line's *Police Quest* series?

The story starts back around the time Gates prepared for retirement from the LAPD. Ken Williams, president of Sierra On-Line, contacted Gates and asked if he might like to participate in the design of the latest *Police Quest*. Gates at first dismissed the possibility because he felt he didn't have the hand-eye coordination for video games, as he thought *Police Quest* games must be. But after looking at *Police Quest 3 (PQ3)* and a few other Sierra products, he realized that "these were not hand-eye coordination games, but a very sophisticated type of product."

Gates had his mind set on realism in the series even then. "There were things in *PQ3* that didn't quite match up with reality. So we pledged that when we did *PQ4* that, inasmuch as you can possibly do it, we would make a realistic game and align it closely with police life."

The Chief decided to tackle the challenge of game authoring and helped producer/designer Tammy Dargan decide on a plot from available plot lines already proposed. The final product is a gritty, fast-paced adventure in which the player takes the role of an LAPD detective as he investigates a series of serial murders in the course of a few days. "This is a real whodunit," Gates promises. "Everyone comes under suspicion. Detective work most often does not involve the use of your weapon, but instead the use of your brain."

Gates was able to embellish *PQ4* with a realism that even other police officers would not have been able to add, specifically because of his familiarity with police life in Los Angeles. He even made use of a location that made him cringe as Chief: a "cop bar" called The Shortstop.

"The Shortstop was a bar I was always bothered by because police officers would go in there and get in some kind of trouble. So the owner couldn't believe it when I sent Tammy

there with her crew to film it. That's only one example of the kind of realism that I was able to provide."

Gates provided Dargan with a policeman's manual, as well as the homicide manual, as sources for facts and procedures. He also arranged access to a number of locations, especially the LAPD stationhouse (Parker Center), for filming game scenes.

From the procedures to lifestyles, Gates opened up the library of knowledge that 40+ years on the force had accumulated in his head to the design team. "For example, *PQ4* gave me the ability to talk about what really takes place at crime scenes. I love police work and wanted to see what was going on in the field whenever possible."

Although many might find police work dangerous, harrowing and overly frustrating, the Chief looks back fondly on those many years. "It's a fascinating life. Some days can be routine and very boring. On the other hand, there's enough excitement scattered around to last a lifetime. You can't be in that business without having at least one interesting story almost every day of your life," he remarked. In *PQ4*, players



Gates coached the actors on accurate police procedures and weapon handling.



Exact investigation methods combine with a story ripped from today's headlines.

will be able to experience much of the frustration and challenges of detective work.

Besides his computer game input, Gates keeps busy with his radio show and frequent talks. "I enjoy speaking to various groups. I get out and meet different people and enjoy answering their questions.


"Meeting groups all over the country can be very revealing about our nation," he commented. "One of the things about me I've found is that no one 'sits on the fence.' They're either on one side of the fence and think 'he's great' or on the other side and think 'he's a great ogre.' It's fun in terms of my radio show because we actively search out people who are antagonistic toward me. It's nice to get a chance to spend some time with these people and try to turn them around about me and also influence their opinions of police officers."

Gates readily admits that he has little hands-on experience with PCs, but that is sure to change. "I'm just starting to learn about computers. I've been doing a lot of reading, talking to my radio show's producer, who built his own computer, and also playing some games," he revealed. Actually, *The Chief* is quite taken with *Aces of the Pacific*.

If he can get a handle on computers through games, that's even better. His wish is that players like *PQ4* too: "I hope they're excited about the game itself. I hope they'll also see how difficult a detective's job can be — just working from a crime scene, a body and very little evidence. I'm sure players will be frustrated too as the bodies show up."

Gates has left wide open the prospect of another Sierra project. Some have already reached the proposal stage. "I'd be delighted to do another *Police Quest* game," he said. "There are thousands and thousands of possible stories.

"I'm intrigued by this whole design process. This game has stimulated me to be more creative and I'm sure future games that I could have a part in would be even more realistic and exciting after my initial exposure to game design." The Chief will surely infuse any project with the reality of police life and the respect and love he so obviously has for the occupation.

"I always enjoyed being a police officer, even the toughest parts," Gates concluded. 

[Reprinted from *Electronic Games*, October, 1993. For subscription information, call 1-800-444-3334.]

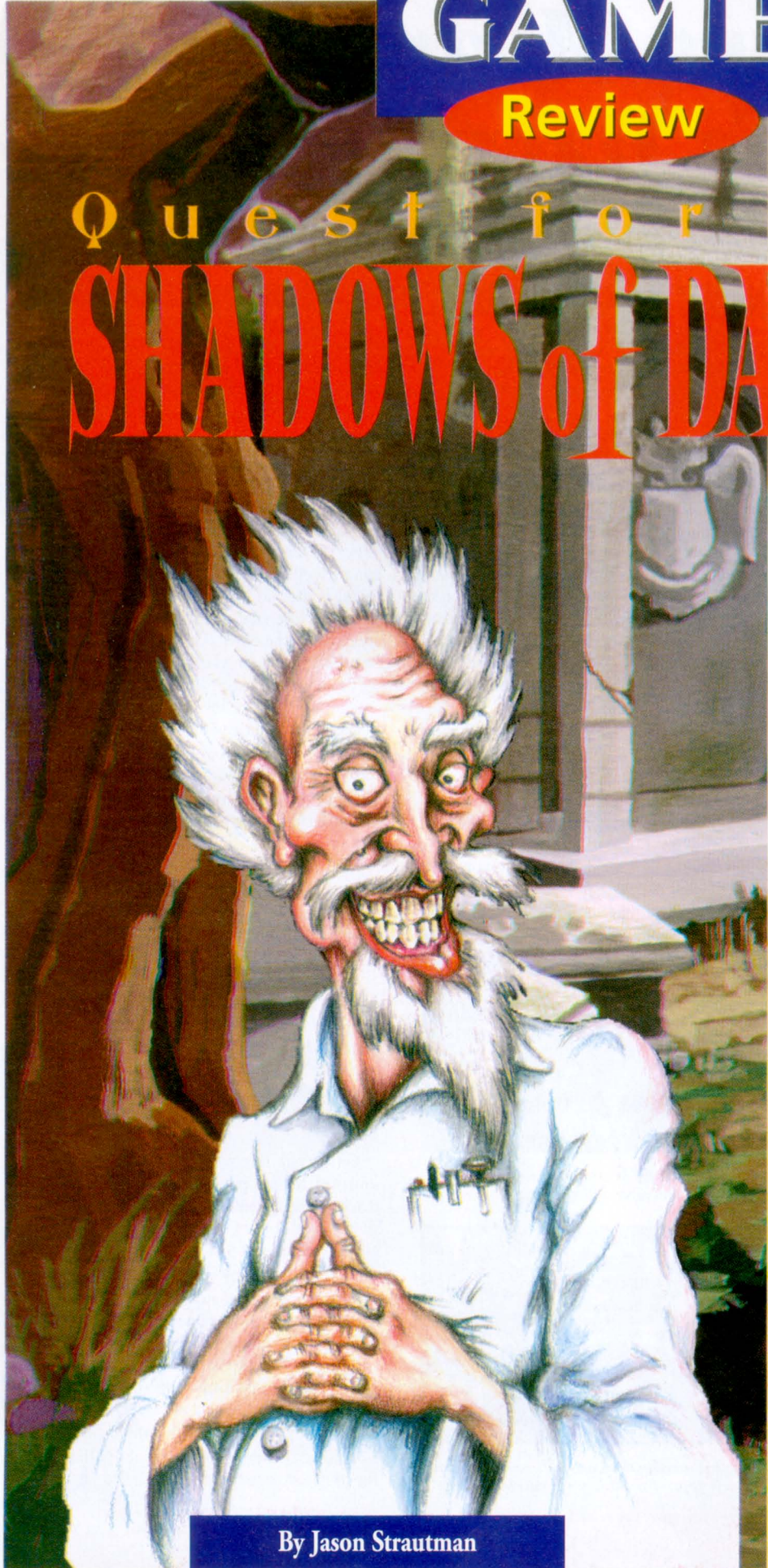
By Russ Ceccola

GAME

Review

Quest for Glory

SHADOWS of DARKNESS™



By Jason Strautman

In recent years as computer games have become more elaborate and complex productions, comparisons between the gaming industry and Hollywood have become more frequent. Such comparisons seem even more appropriate now than they had in years past, as television-like cliffhanger endings have started to appear in recent games such as Sierra's *Quest for Glory III: The Wages of War*. But unlike TV cliffhangers, then ending of *QFG3* left gamers with more to anticipate than the plot, since the latest installment of the series, *Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness* (*QFG4*), promises to offer advances in the interface that should prove almost as exciting as the story itself.

QFG4's story starts almost immediately after the end of *QFG3*, where our hero was suddenly possessed by a mysterious evil force and left to a then-unknown fate. The main character starts the current game near the town of Mordavia, in an almost Transylvanian-like part of the world, without any of his possessions or any knowledge of who or what transported him. The hero must then not only discover why he was brought to Mordavia and find his way home but also must confront new and old foes alike to free Mordavia from oppression and sluggish economy. Former archenemies like Baba Yaga from the first game of the series and Ad Avis from *QFG2*



If fighting with swords and sweat isn't your thing, try playing as the Magic User.

make return appearances in this installment of the series to complement vampires, a cult known as the Dark Ones, Mad Monks, and other potentially unpleasant characters.

QFG4 appears to be a bit darker than earlier installments in the series; the enemies are more cruel and vengeful than they have been in past games, and the sense of danger tends to be more impending. But this game cannot be considered horror in the true sense, since the Coles' trademark humor is liberally sprinkled throughout the text descriptions and dialogue. Comic relief comes mainly from the mad scientist Dr. Cranium (any relation to Corey Cole's title character of the Dr. Brain puzzle games is purely intentional) and his hunchbacked assistant Igor, but can be found just about everywhere else in the game as well.

In many senses, *QFG4's* icon-driven interface is identical to that of its predecessor and even the VGA remake of *QFG1*, but a series of somewhat subtle improvements prevent Sierra from falling behind its competition. Perhaps the most significant of the changes is full-screen close-ups during dialog; characters' faces now fill half the screen when they are talking, rather than the mere fraction that they took in earlier Sierra games. As was the standard in *QFG3*, players are able to choose multiple dialog paths from a menu during conversations. These paths are primarily used only for gathering information, and unlike some current adventures, the game does not appear to have any "wrong" dialog options.


Another significant change in the interface is the use of menus similar to dialog trees that give new meaning to the "do" or "hand" icon that has been used in all Sierra point-and-click adventures. Past games would simply assign meaning to an icon click; clicking on a door, for example, was almost universally used as a way of opening that door. *QFG4*, however, rarely makes assumptions about what the player wants to do and instead presents a menu with a list of choices that might apply to the selected item. A door is no longer automatically opened, and players may first choose to peer through the keyhole, listen to the other side, knock, or pick the lock. The hand icon is still assigned only a single

meaning when there is but a single alternative, so simple actions such as taking an item are fortunately not complicated with excessive menus.

As in all previous games of the series, players may create a new magic user, thief, or fighter character from scratch by selecting a general template and adding skills of their choice or they may import a character from any previous *Quest for Glory* game. Of course, *QFG4* features an additional set of spells for magic users, like "Aura" that protects characters from the undead and "Glide" that lets players walk their heroes across water. And thieves should no longer feel ignored, since they will have a Thieves' Guild hidden away somewhere around Mordavia.

Fighters, however, may get the most benefit from a new combat system that should be implemented once the game is finished. According to Sierra's promotional material, players should now be offered a choice of either arcade or strategic combat, so those with poor reflexes can still play the game from the fighter's point of view.

And while many adventure game authors have been content with inventory-based puzzles and perhaps the occasional combat sequence, the Coles have broken with tradition by adding a few logic-based puzzles, similar to what one might find in *Castle of Dr. Brain* or *The 7th Guest*. Difficulty level can be set through the control panel, so the puzzles will not interfere too much with pure adventurers who prefer inventory puzzles.

Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness appears to be a good combination of both innovative and familiar features. There will certainly be enough new options and fine tuning to prevent the interface from seeming stale or dated. But at the same time, the game is not so radically different from previous titles that it will be alien to experienced players; the humor, interface, and use of character statistics will all be sufficiently familiar to fans of the series. Even without these improvements, however, *QFG4* should feature a well-written and entertaining story worth the wait. 

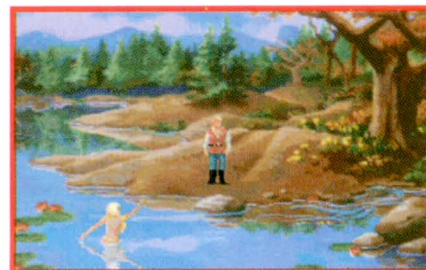
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**SATURDAY
MORNING
FEVER!**

GAME

Review



WILL DRIVE YOU LOONEY TUNES

Back in the early part of the century, artist Rube Goldberg created newspaper cartoons diagramming machines of fantastic complexity. His machines were typically “time-saving devices” that accomplished their goals through an outlandishly circuitous chain of events. It might start with an anvil dropping on a seesaw which propelled a mouse through the air onto a platform with some cheese which released a balloon which triggered a switch... all ending in the completion of a menial household task. Rube Goldberg’s machines became part of American folklore, leading to one of the stereotypes of the mad inventor — the father in “Honey, I shrunk the kids,” for example.

In Dynamix’ recent puzzle game, *The Incredible Machine*, the goal was to create incredible machines in the Goldbergen vein and to solve mechanical puzzles. In the puzzles, an item or group of items was missing from a machine, and it was the player’s task to figure out which item was missing from where. I showed this game to an engineer friend who immediately became addicted. He bought a copy and showed it to all his friends, leading to a chain reaction that brought productive work to a halt at a major naval yard. I wouldn’t be a bit surprised if the next propulsion system for battleships is just a wee bit more complex than it might have been otherwise.

Sid & Al’s Incredible Toons is the sequel to *The Incredible Machine* — and boy what a

sequel! I’ll be up front and admit my unabashed love for this game. It’s exactly what I wanted from a sequel to *The Incredible Machine*. The puzzles are more challenging, the animation and sound effects are hysterically funny, and there are a host of small improvements.

A Game With Character

Like *The Incredible Machine*, *Sid & Al* is a series of puzzles that begins with a goal and with some of the parts needed to complete the goal. The object is to choose from the pieces available and produce the desired result. The difference is that the machine “parts” are wonderfully drawn and animated cartoon characters. Whereas we were dealing with mostly inanimate and mundane machine parts in *The Incredible Machine*, we are now working with Sid Mouse and Al E. Cat, two animated creatures who look like washed up



rejects of a bygone cartoon era, each having the stereotyped animosity for the other’s species. In the puzzles, perhaps Al will have to catch Sid, or Sid will have to destroy Al. By placing the pieces together just so and pushing the “on” switch, a series of animated steps play out on the screen until the goal is reached, in its action looking like something Wile E. Coyote had ordered from ACME, though hopefully performing more effectively.

So where *Sid & Al’s Incredible Toons* bounds past the original game is in its character, or rather, its characters. Along with the titular stars, Sid and Al, is a supporting cast of toons including Bik Dragon, Eunice Elephant, and Hildegard Hen. Each character has a set of actions him, her or it will take under different circumstances. If Al sees a dead fish, he’ll lurch his overfed self over to it and scarf it down and spit out the bones. Al will also eat bananas and bubble gum. If he sees Sid, he’ll chase him. Dropping things on Al’s head get different reactions. Something heavy will make a small flock of birds circle his head, tweeting merrily. An egg will crack and he’ll do a slow burn, frying the egg. The variety of reactions and animations is a real treat. I’m sure there are many animations still lurking in this game that I haven’t seen yet because I haven’t put together the right combination of circumstances so far.

The supporting characters have a lot simpler reactions than Sid and Al. Bik Dragon spews fire when bumped, useful in lighting bomb fuses, heating teapots, or roasting one of the other characters. Eunice the elephant vacuums up peanuts and anything else in the vicinity of her favorite snack, and she also tosses objects and, of course, runs away from Sid the Mouse in terror. Hildegard Hen lays an egg if she’s

By Neil Harris

bumped, and the egg drops down onto something or someone.

Most of the reactions are logical and internally consistent within the game, and will be familiar to those of us reared on Saturday morning cartoon shows. There are a few that I have trouble with, mainly the fact that some characters and objects are arbitrarily immune to the effects of gravity. I mean really, an elephant is not affected by gravity but a mouse is? It's only a quibble really, because you get used to the rules in a hurry. If you care to read the manual, it's all there, but most of us will learn more from trial and error. It's more fun that way.

More Objects Than Carter Has Little Pills

One major improvement over *The Incredible Machine* is in the variety of the objects you have available. I counted 66 different objects, not counting the characters already discussed. Some of them are only slight variations of each other, like the five types of inclines and six types of walls, which vary in appearance and in how slick they are when something is sliding along them. Some items are unique. And some, like the gears, pulleys, conveyor belts, rope, electric switch and outlet, and teeter-totter are pretty much identical to the parts available in *The Incredible Machine*.

Some of the objects have interesting properties that can be adjusted. The Ratapult can be set to fire off one or multiple boulders. The timer can be set to go off immediately or to delay until a later time. Generally you have to

adjust these just right in order to bring off the desired result. One of my favorite new objects is the Chow-Man Motor. If some food drops into his tray, the Chow-Man scarfs it up, his chest puffs out, and he jogs along his treadmill. Sid ought to consider getting this kind of exercise.

The tunnel is another handy item. It comes in two identical parts, and a character going in one part will come out the other before long. I keep expecting a train to come out of one of them. Maybe I haven't hit a high enough level yet, or maybe the designers are saving that for the next sequel. A nice touch is that Sid puts on a mining helmet before going into the tunnel, and when he comes out the first thing that becomes visible is the beam of light from the helmet.

Nobody Said This Would Be Easy

While the previous game was a challenge, with a little perseverance (and maybe a few friends kibitzing over a few shoulders) it could be solved completely.

I find this game to be much tougher.

It's divided into levels. The first is called Cake Walk, and it's very simple, designed to demonstrate the basics of the different parts and get you used to the game. The next section, called All Brawn, No Brains, is about at the level of the puzzles in the prior game, requiring a lot of trial and error along with a good dose of inspiration.

From then on, it's time to sweat. The third level is called Really, Really Hard, and it's not named that way to make you feel good. On the earlier levels I had the stamina to solve many puzzles in each sitting. On this level, it's all I can do to get through one, after which it's time for a hot toddy and a good night's rest.

That's not all. There is an even tougher level — Looney Bin!, which might just send me there. After a while I get the feeling that this level was created just so Dynamix can sell hint books. Ten of the puzzles in this level can't even be attempted until all 90 of the other puzzles in all the levels



have been solved. At the end of all 100 puzzles there is some kind of spectacular show, or so the documentation says. I may never see it myself.

Toon It Yourself Kit

The designers would have been severely remiss if they didn't let players design their own puzzles using all these wonderful characters and gizmos. Of course they knew better. The HomeToons section gives you a blank slate and full selection of all the pieces to play with. You can even save your puzzles to disk and trade them with your friends or, as the manual suggests, upload them to your favorite on-line service for the rest of us to try — especially those of us still stuck on the Looney Bin! level.

The only shortcoming in the HomeToons section is that the game can't be programmed to understand when the puzzle has been completed successfully. That's a shame. Perhaps the designers can take this on as their own puzzle for the inevitable next generation game.


More Improvements

I mentioned earlier that there are many small improvements to *Sid & Al's Incredible Toons* compared to its predecessor. This game automatically saves your progress and eliminates the strange set of codes that saved your score in the older game. A score system with points based on speed of solving the puzzles was apparently judged superfluous — solving the puzzles is certainly reward enough for me.

The other improvement I'm very fond of is the screen dump feature. The game creates a disk file containing a screen dump when you hit the ALT-S key combination: a handy feature if you want to analyze a screen away from the computer. This would be very handy from inside a padded cell, although the psychiatrist might frown on it. On the other hand, solving the puzzle that sent me there might be therapeutic.

Finally, a special mention should go to the folks who put together the manual, Michael Waite and Richard Tunnell. The manual is well organized, fun to read and, with its cover parody of TV Guide and frenetic layout, in the spirit of the game.

Kudos Deserved

Jeff Tunnell and his co-designers, Chris Cole and Brian Hahn, have pulled off a winner here. *Sid & Al's Incredible Toons* deserves a place on your computer and will certainly show up on best game of the year lists. It's challenging to solve, fun to play, and great to just watch the animations and listen to the sounds. 

Reprinted from the February, 1994 issue of *Computer Gaming World*. For subscription information call 1-800-827-4450.

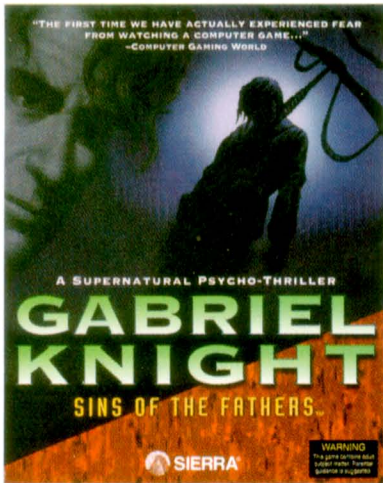


GAME

Hints

GABRIEL KNIGHT

SINS OF THE FATHERS™



Day One:

"I dreamt of blood upon the shore, of eyes that spoke of sin. The lake was smooth and deep and black as was her scented skin."

I'm in the attic of Grandmother Knight's House. How do I open the drawer to this clock?

After you read Heinz Ritter's book in the book shop, one phrase should stick out in your mind: drei drachen. If you look this phrase up in the German dictionary (you'll have to look several times) in the book shop, you'll discover it means three dragons. This is your clue to set the clock to 3:00 and move the dragon head to the top. To do this, operate the clock and move the hands to 3:00. Move the outer circle until the dragon head is at the top. Operate the windup key. You've now opened the bottom drawer of the clock.

I'm at Lake Pontchartrain looking for evidence at the crime scene, but I don't see any evidence. What am I missing here?

There are a few important clues at the crime scene. Start by looking at the marks on the ground. Then use your magnifying glass on the marks in the grass just beside the tree. (Look very closely and you'll notice the grass is textured slightly differently.) This will give you a close-up of a snake scale. Pick up the snake scale with the tweezers. Use your sketch book on the pattern in the sand. Finally, take some clay by the water's edge.

Day Two:

"A mask I wore as I approached, I was what I am not.

And though the pattern was unclear, its meaning could be bought..."

I'm at Jackson Square and I observed an artist drawing a sketch of the Cathedral. Am I supposed to do something with this artist?

Watch the artist lose his picture. (You may need to enter and exit this section of Jackson Square a couple of times.)

I'm hungry. Where can I get some money for a lucky dog?

Give the lucky dog vendor your gift certificate (from the cash register at St. George's Book Shop). Now you'll have a hot dog.

Hold it! I couldn't eat this hot dog. What am I supposed to do with it?

Give the hot dog to the young dancing boy near the vendor. Next, talk to the boy and tell him to get the drawing. Give the drawing back to the artist, then give him the six patterns from Mosely as well as the lake pattern.

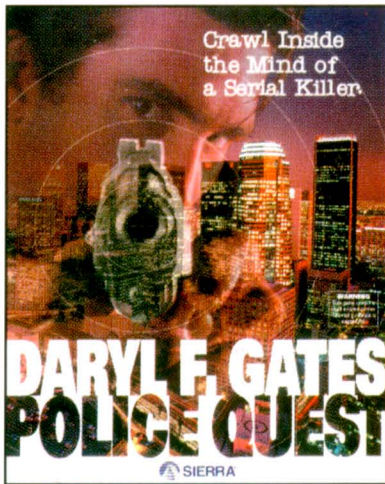
Wow, Moonbeam translated the voodoo message. How else can she help me?

Ask her about St. John's Eve, snakes, then her snake Grimwald. Next, ask her to demonstrate her snake dance. During her dance, use the Pickup cursor on Grimwald's cage. You'll take a snake skin. (If you don't have the topic "snakes" you need to revisit the crime scene and find something you've missed near the tree on the right side of the screen.)



GAME

Hints



POLICE QUEST OPEN SEASON

Day 1, The Alley

What should I do with the body of Hickman?

Look at the body. Use your notebook on the body to record the evidence. Use your chalk on the body to draw an outline around it. Look around the body for any clues.

Where do I get chalk?

The chalk is in the homicide kit in the trunk of your car.

Should I talk to the other officers on the scene?

Be sure you talk to everyone. One of the officers has something important to give you.

Day 2, Parker Center

Is there something I can do with this computer?

Use your Look icon on the computer to get a close-up. Enter your serial number and password, and find out everything you can. Read up on the gangs in particular.

Where do I get my password?

It's on the photograph of you and Hickman.

I've been out investigating around the city, but now the guard won't let me back into Parker Center.

Find your Parker Center ID in inventory. Use the ID on yourself. Now you can come and go as you please.

Day 2, The Morgue

Here I am in the morgue. What should I do?

Investigate. Look at everything. Look at the body of your partner. Be sure to use your notebook on him to record the information. Talk to the coroner.

Is there anything I need before I leave the morgue?

Yes. Look around the morgue assistant's area. Take Bobby Washington and Bob Hickman's packets of belongings.

Day 2, The Police Academy

What do I do here?

You're not scheduled to qualify until Wednesday, but you can get in some practice if you want.

Why won't Bert let me take the ammo?

You have to pay to practice. Use your wallet on Bert to pay him.

South Central L.A.

The little girl is talking to me, but she seems to want something. What is it?

Give the little girl your apple.

Bob Hickman's House

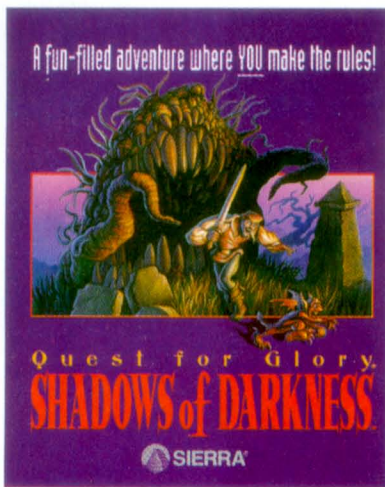
The little girl keeps shutting the door in my face.

Talk to her.



GAME

Hints



Quest for Glory SHADOWS of DARKNESS™

Here are answers to some of the most frequently-asked questions about *Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness*.

Katrina keeps telling me to improve my skills. How do I do that?

If you're a Magic User, learn five skills and face the Faerie Queen.

In any case, you'll have to pull off a daring nighttime raid in the castle.

How do I get into Baba Yaga's hut?

First, find the hut. The Gnome can help, as can the Leshy and the Gypsies. Talk to the bushes! Next, find a gift for Bonehead. A Ghost lost in the forest can help, but only after you visit her several times. She needs to know the truth. Finally, be nice to the hut. It's "chicken" at first, but you can use that to your advantage. Didn't you see some chicken feed outside town?

(Thief): What's the safe combination?

It's right there in plain sight — you're in good company. The trick is, not all of the letters are marked. Read between the lines.

(Magic User): The Faerie Queen and her court are killing me.

How can I fight back?

First, you have to survive. Summon the Staff, then cast a protective spell. Hmm, there's a new one in your list, provided by the Staff. Use it and Reversal (don't bother with Protection — it only helps against physical attacks), then use your spells. Take out a Faerie with Flame Dart, then go after the Queen. The Faerie Queen has Reversal, so only Frost Bite will affect her.

I'm trying to visit Tanya, but some monster keeps slamming the door in my face.

Due to Tanya's unfortunate skin condition, she tends to be a night person. Toby doesn't want you disturbing her beauty sleep, so won't let you in during the day. Come back at night.

I'm having trouble finding a suitable gift for Tanya.

Spend some nights at the Inn. Having trouble sleeping? Try visiting the common room after everyone human has gone to bed. If you hear a cry in the night, it pays to investigate thoroughly. Finally, if someone suggests you take something, you'd better do it right away.

How can I do some needed landscape work in the cemetery to help a friend?

If you're a Magic User, keep an open mind. If you're a Fighter, use brute force — hope you've been keeping up with your exercises! If you're a Thief, apply leverage. Examine that tree branch carefully, then use the appropriate equipment with what you see.



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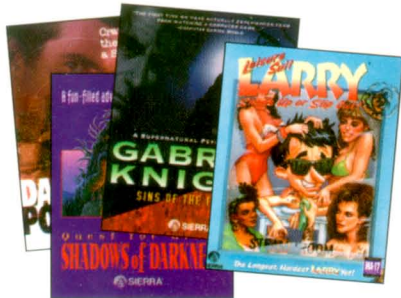
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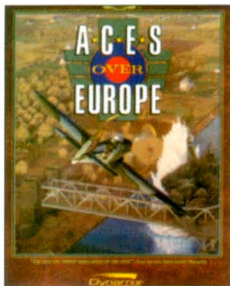


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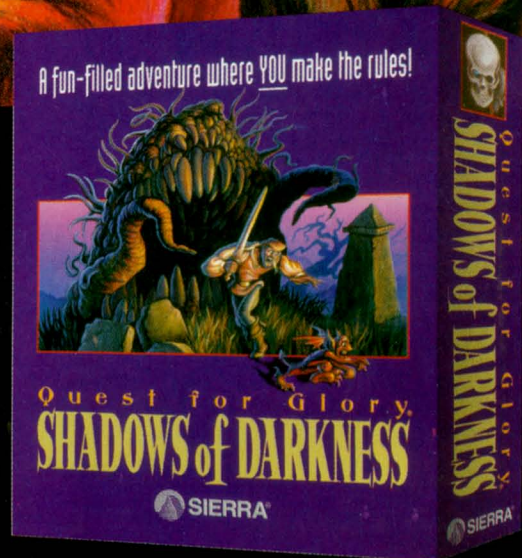


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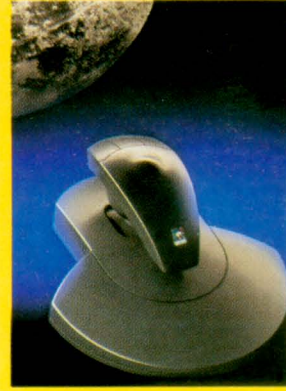
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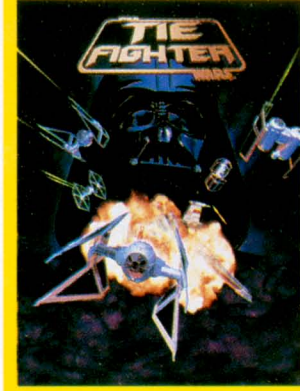
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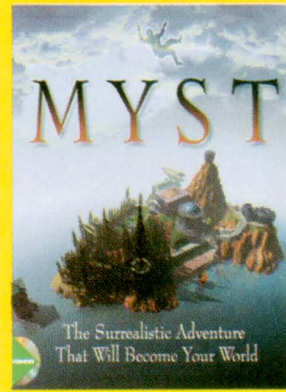
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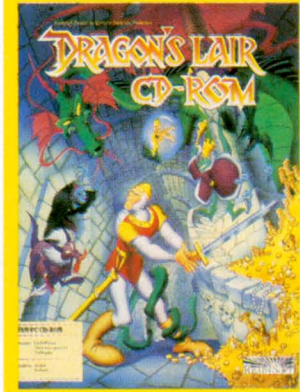
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GAME

Hints



LOST IN TIME

That's a cool poster, but I can't seem to take it. Am I supposed to get it?

No. But you can look behind it if you use a wet sponge on it. (You found the sponge behind a barrel by the opening. You used the lamp to look behind it.)

I found a knothole behind the poster, but it's plugged up. How can I look through it?

Do you have a corkscrew in your inventory? You can find it in the bilge behind the chain. Use the corkscrew on the knothole.

I looked through the hole in the wall and Yoruba gave me a knife. What do I do with it?

You can use the knife to help you get out of the hold and explore other parts of the ship. Have you tried using it on the post in the center of the room?

Well, I've done everything in the fisherman's cabin. But I seem to be stuck here. How do I get back to the manor?

Go out on the beach. Use the nuoc-mam on the piece of bread. Throw the piece of bread onto the roof. After the gulls knock the buoy off the roof, use the razor on it to cut the rope. Click on the chandelier in your inventory. It will change to an anchor. Attach the rope to the anchor to make a grappling hook. Use the grappling hook on the top of the cliff and you'll climb back into the manor garden.

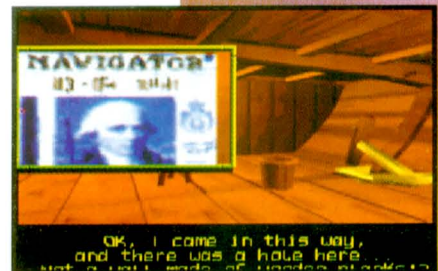
I'm in the vault and I want my secret treasure. Now how do I open that trunk?

Remember looking at the shipwreck through the telescope in the lighthouse? That ship had three symbols on the bow — a sword, a cannon, and a cannonball — in a certain order and color. These are your clues to opening this chest. Use the bottom buttons to change each color and the top buttons to change each symbol. For example, if the first symbol on the ship was a blue sword, click on the buttons to make a blue knife. If the second symbol on the ship's bow was a green cannon, click the buttons to make the second symbol a green pistol. If the third symbol on the ship's bow was a red cannonball, click the buttons to make the third symbol a red bullet. When you've changed all the symbols correctly, click on the lower right button to open the chest.

I see a large wooden box. How do I open it?

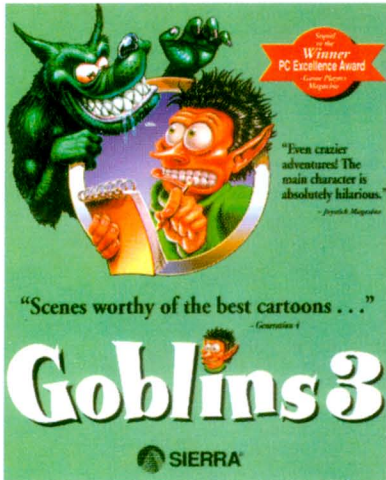
To open the large wooden box, you'll need: pliers, floats, copper wire, a small pipe, some water, a fire extinguisher, and a club (made from a piece of hose). You'll find a pair of pliers hidden inside the mast at the back of the room. Take them from the opening at the bottom. You got the floats from the fisherman's cabin. Copper wire came from opening the fuse box in the Manor. You've had the small pipe since you started the game. You can get water from the puddle on the floor. The fire extinguisher was beside the fireplace in the Manor.

Put the floats on the floor in front of the wooden box. Use the copper wire on the electric wire. This will make a shunt. Cut the electric wire with the pliers. Use the small pipe on the puddle to fill it with water. Use the small water-filled pipe on the lock. Use the fire extinguisher on the lock to freeze it. Break the frozen lock with your club (made from a piece of hose).



GAME

Hints



Goblins 3

Kiss your sanity good-bye when you go up against the mind-munching madness in the latest Goblins noggin-boggler. Queen Xina and King Bodd's kingdoms have been bickering over the Jewel of the World for generations. Blount is a reporter for the *Goblin News* in this latest demented installment in the award-winning series.

In this scene, Blount meets the beautiful Wynnona for the first time. Blount must neutralize the guards and free Wynnona. Is he goblin enough for the job? Of course not! You have to help Blount find the jewel, stop the war, rescue the beautiful Wynnona, and make his deadline.

Seven guards keep Wynnona prisoner. To make it through this scene, Blount must talk to Wynnona, and then decide to free her. To reach Wynnona, Blount uses the umbrella on the ascending warm air closest to the idol. He then puts his head through the opening to talk to Wynnona.

Blount can use the spring-loaded stones to move to different parts of the screen.

Hercules: hit him with the golf club.

Gromelon: hit him with the golf club.

Mac: give him the coin. When the coin falls on the ground and Mac kneels to pick it up, hit him with the golf club. Put the piece of toast in the helmet and crush it with the club; pick up the crumbs in the helmet.

Banzia: Put the crumbs in his collar. When he wiggles around, hit him with the golf club. Take his shield.

Kendo: Pick up the stone hand and offer it to him. When he looks at it, hit him with the golf club.

Zembla: Put the shield on the branch. Put some pepper on his back. When he sneezes, he'll knock himself out on the shield! Take the stick he leaves behind.

Django: Click Chump on Django. When he sticks out his tongue, pull on it. Use the stick as a ladder rung to climb above the guard.

Punky: Use Chump to distract Punky. When he moves one step forward, push the rock.

Now, wasn't that easy? Goblins 3 is available at your favorite software outlet, and your whole family will love it. But hold on tight to your sanity, or the goblins will get it!



GAME

Hints



Sid's Breakfast Bonanza.

Put a rug in the gap in the stone floor to the left of the mouse.

Put a banana to the left of the leftmost ladder so the mouse climbs this ladder.

Put an air mattress in the space between the rug and the stone floor with the stone glove.

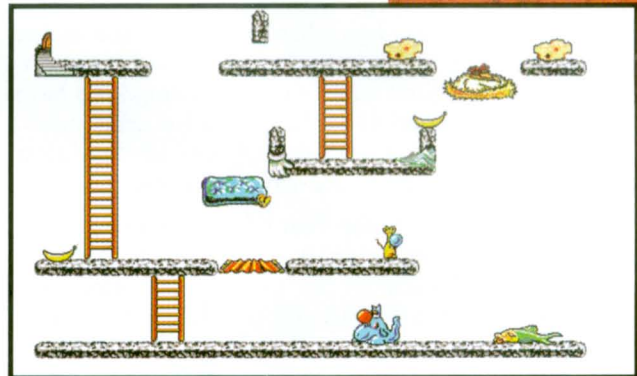
Put a banana on top of the stone wall to the lower left of the hen.

Put some fish on the stone floor below the hen so the cat eats the fish and stands directly under the hen.

The mouse climbs the ladder, falls onto the air mattress, bounces up, climbs the right ladder, and walks over the hen.

The hen lays an egg on the cat to complete the puzzle.

Bon appetit!



Tunnel Hopping

Put some cheese on the gear on the upper right log shelf to lure the mouse to fall.

Put some cheese to the left of the lowest ladder to lure the mouse up the ladder.

The banana and gum already on the screen will lure the mouse up more ladders.

Put some cheese on the small conveyor to the left of the cat.

Put some bombs on each of the bones to the left of the cat.

Put a switch under the upper left ball bearing and plug a timer into it, pointing at the dragon.

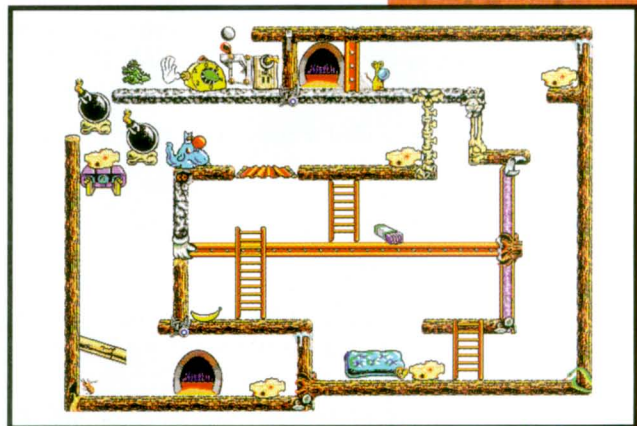
The timer activates and bumps the dragon.

Make sure the dragon blows up both bombs to get the cat out of the way of the mouse.

Make sure the cheese doesn't get blasted by the conveyor.

The cheese on the conveyor lures the mouse to fall to the lower tunnel to complete the puzzle.

Now wasn't that easy?



Yeeeeouch!!!

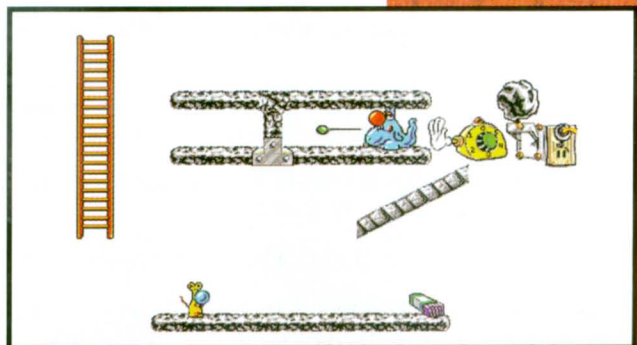
Flip up the switch to turn off the trap.

Put some gum on the bottom stone floor, directly under the cat.

Put a wide incline directly under the cat so its upper end is on the right.

The mouse blows a bubble, floats up, and turns the switch off to finish the puzzle.

Yowee!

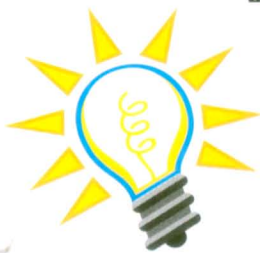
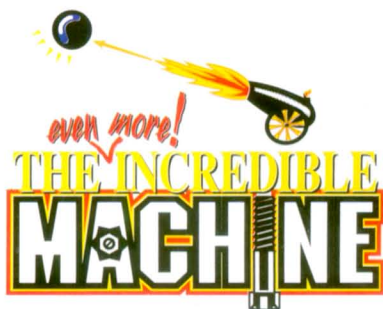




Crazy Kevin's

“Get Mel Home!” Contest Update

Puzzle Goal: GET MEL HOME!



PUZZLE
GAME OF
THE YEAR
-Computer Game Review



When Dynamix released its wild and addicting strategy construction toy, *The Even More Incredible Machine*, a one-of-a-kind contest shipped with the first 12,000 games. This Crazy Kevin's "Get Mel Home" Contest asked *ETIM* fans to build, save, and send in their trickiest puzzle contraptions for a chance to win some very cool prizes — including a FREE special edition version of *Sid & Al's Incredible Toons*.

The response to our creative challenge has been overwhelming. So, as the contest deadline approaches, we thought we'd call and ask some of you why you entered this crazy competition in the first place. It was fun talking to everyone, and the clear message buzzing back at us over the phone lines was that *The Even More Incredible Machine* is the best action/strategy game of all time!

Check it out:

"This game is great!! I really love it." —Ian Young, Bellevue, WA.

"I really like your game and want to win this contest. That's all that is needed to be said."

—Dustin Hoffmann, (no, not THAT Dustin Hoffmann), Lonedell, MO.

"Please pick my puzzle. Please pick my puzzle. Please pick my puzzle. Please pick my puzzle. Did I mention that your hair looks great?"

—Benjamin Files, Los Altos, CA.

"We designed this ourselves. Hope you like it!"

—Andrew (age 11) and Ryan (age 7) Gillette, Kensington, CA.

"My two children and I are absolutely addicted to *The Even More Incredible Machine*. We have logged more hours on this game than on any other of the many Sierra/Dynamix games we own."

—Chuck Baker, Glendale, AZ.

"I'm 10 years old and I like playing *The Even More Incredible Machine* a lot."

—Mike Mathis, Wyomissing, PA.

"We hope you enjoy our entries as much as we enjoy your creations."

—Dennis, Janet, Lynne, and Micheal Fujka, Bay Village, OH.

"I love this game!" —Karl Stamm, New Berlin, WI.

And now a quick 'heads up' for the first lucky 12,000 *ETIM* owners. Check out your game box. See if the contest entry form is hiding inside. There's still a little time left to enter. You could win \$500 worth of great Dynamix games. So, if you're sandbagging, cut it out. Get that entry in today.

Send puzzle entries to: *InterAction*, Attn: Kevin, P.O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA, 93614. Entries must be received by April 1, 1994. Grand prize winner will be notified on April 15, 1994. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of prizes.

TOP TEN GAMES

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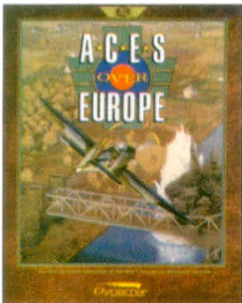
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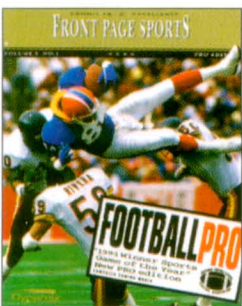
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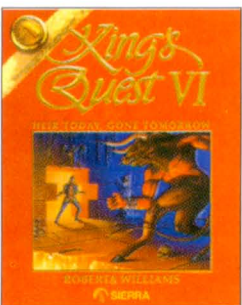
1. Aces Over Europe

"The best air combat simulation of the year!" — Shay Addams, *Simulation! Magazine*. Experience the intensity of aerial combat in the European theater of W.W.II. Following the award-winning *Aces of the Pacific*, *Aces Over Europe* is Damon Slye's most accurate and detailed simulation yet. From the beaches of Normandy to the war-torn ruins of Berlin, pilots will fly with the U.S. Army Air Force, the R.A.F. and the German Luftwaffe. It's an all-new aerial battle over land and sea as you strap into the aircraft that made history and take to the skies.



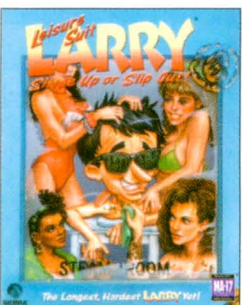
2. Front Page Sports: Football Pro

"1993 Sports Game of the Year: New PRO edition." — *Computer Gaming World*. It has all the action, quality, and bone-crunching realism of the original. It uses real NFL players and their statistics. The catalog of player animations includes smash-mouth, helmet cracking spins and flips. Pick your own uniform colors, improved "football smarts" of carriers and tacklers, an expanded number of playcall and Game Plan options, and improved overhead camera angle. *Football Pro* is everything you want it to be — and more.



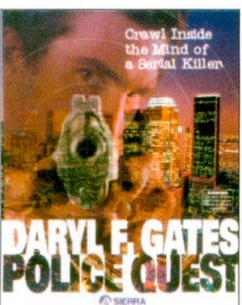
3. King's Quest VI: Heir Today, Gone Tomorrow

Enter the world of fantasy and adventure that has enticed millions of people the world over. Join Prince Alexander on his search for a princess in peril as you explore the largest, richest, and most challenging chapter of the best-selling series in the history of computer gaming. *King's Quest VI* is a mysterious and magical adventure for your entire family. Also available in multimedia CD-ROM and Macintosh.



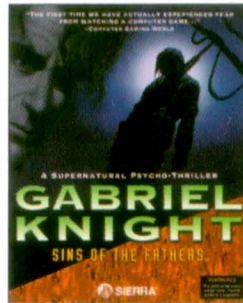
4. Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out

"Al Lowe has single-handedly undermined the moral fabric of an entire generation of computer users. He also created Leisure Suit Larry." Imagine being stranded in a luxurious resort, surrounded by nine breathtakingly beautiful women. Imagine throwing them your best pickup lines, watching them melt with anticipation and desire. Nah. On second thought, imagine you're Leisure Suit Larry. The most popular nerd in the history of computer gaming is back! Also available for Macintosh.



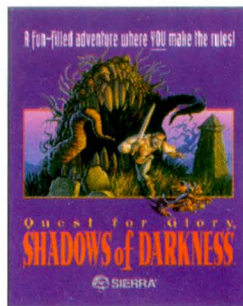
5. Daryl F. Gates' Police Quest: Open Season

Someone's on a killing spree, and it's up to you to solve a string of seemingly random murders. Some clues may bring you closer to the killer. Some lead down blind alleys. Find the killer before he strikes again; but make a mistake and you could be the next victim. Actual police procedures must be used in the pursuit of evidence, and all aspects of this simulation are brought to life with uncensored intensity. Because of mature themes, *Open Season* is not recommended for younger players.



6. Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers

"...a new star has just arrived on the adventure gaming scene." — *Electronic Games*. In this supernatural psych thriller, Gabriel Knight is the last in a long line of Shadow Hunters, those fated to fight the dark forces of the supernatural. Haunted by a centuries-old curse, Gabriel is tormented by terrifying nightmares. Now he must spend every waking moment scouring the side streets and back alleys of New Orleans for the key to his dark past. And when he sleeps — the nightmare begins. Adult subject matter; parental guidance is suggested. Also available on multimedia CD-ROM starring Tim Curry.



7. Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness

A fun-filled adventure where YOU make the rules! Dark magic has drawn you to Mordavia. Undead creatures walk the forest by night. Everyone you meet seems strange and uneasy. It's up to you to make friends, influence people, and unravel the mysteries of the Dark One — all before breakfast. Shadows of Darkness cover the land; it's time to be a hero again!



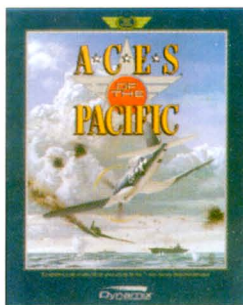
8. Stellar Fire Sega CD

With a breathtaking and visually stunning opening sequence, *Stellar Fire*, the hottest new title available on Sega CD, drops you in the middle of a mission so hopeless that all you can do is swallow your terror and blast your way toward the horizon. In a last-ditch effort to turn back the cybernetic demons, an elite, covert Stellar Force makes its way near the Draxons' home world of Arctura. Their mission is to destroy the Arcturan command base and Gir Draxon with it. A fierce dogfight with Draxon scouts wipes out all but one Stellar Fighter — yours. Your goal: to destroy the Draxons once and for all.



9. The Even More Incredible Machine

Awarded "Puzzle Game of the Year" by *Computer Game Review*. Toss cats over chasms with teeter-totters! Knock bowling balls onto conveyor belts with spring loaded boxing gloves! Do about a gazillion strange and cool things as you solve 160 different puzzles! To achieve each puzzle's goal, you build weird trip-lever contraptions by placing oddball parts (trampolines, monkey-motors, etc.) on the screen. When you combine the parts correctly, your machine's final movement completes the assigned mission. Also available on Macintosh.



10. Aces of the Pacific

Simulation! Magazine calls the award-winning *Aces of the Pacific* "the benchmark of the '90's for flight simulators." Step back into history as you take up the helm of historic war machines of W.W.II. You'll dogfight enemy aces, intercept bombers, and dive-bomb enemy carriers. Whether you choose to fly for America or Japan, you'll feel your heart race as you turn your enemy into spectacular mid-air explosions or clouds of smoke. Strap on your goggles...the Zeros are coming in at 12 o'clock high!



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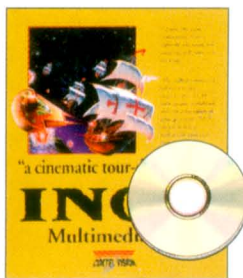


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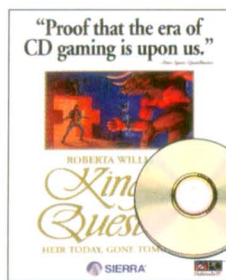
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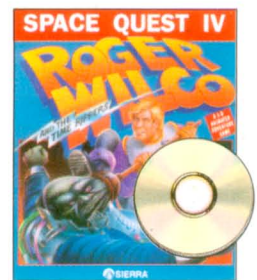
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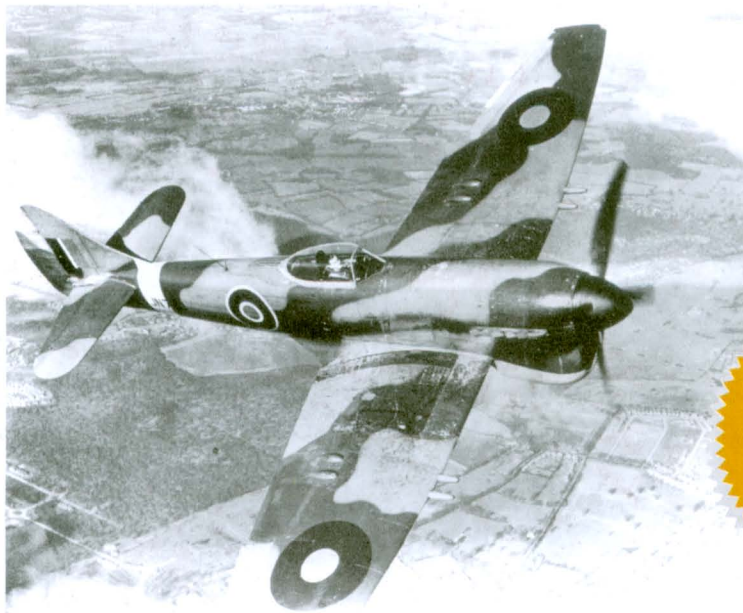
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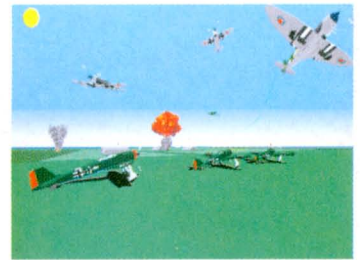


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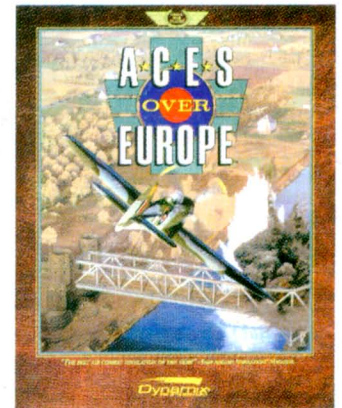
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