



The evil Captain Hook



Climbing the rigging on Hook's ship



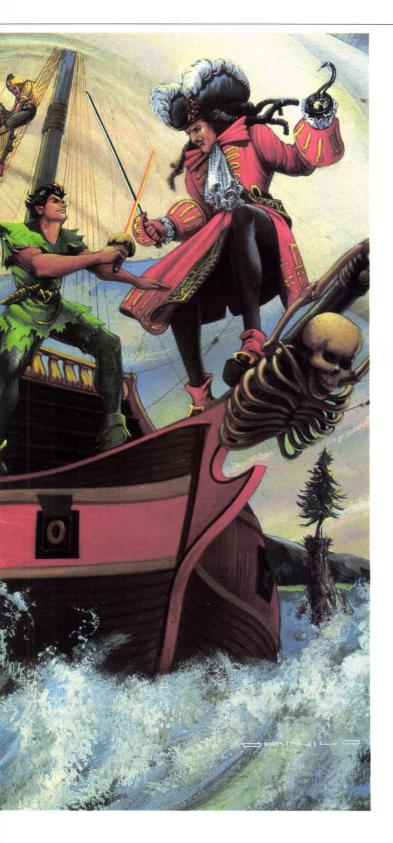
Walking the plank



Exploring the sunken ship



The fight with Rufio



GET HOOKED!

You've just boarded Hook's ship. Your blood is pumping and a chill races down your spine. You're about to do battle with the most infamous pirate of them all, Captain Hook, the fiend who's kidnapped your children and sworn never to let them go.

Suddenly Hook spots you and in one leap is at your throat. But with a quick spin you take flight over the sail and with a single thrust almost pin him to the mast.

As Peter Pan, this is the fight of your life. Everything that came before — your duel with Rufio, your dive to the ship wreck, even your battles against the pirates and creatures of Neverland — are nothing compared to this moment.

Hook, the video game. Multiple levels of incredible excitement. Fantastic graphics. Available now for NES and GameBoy.

Get Hook. Before Hook gets you!



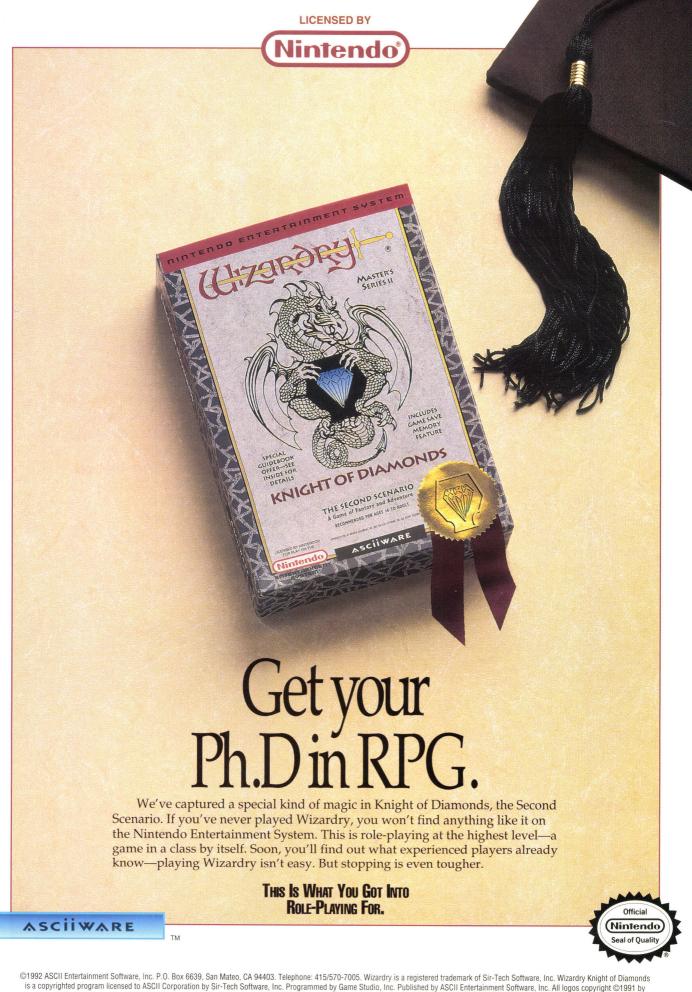


Dangerous territory









Cover: Acclaim's Krusty's Super Fun House will be released for both the Genesis and the Super NES simultaneously. Turn to page 34 for full reviews of both versions and see how they stack up to one another.

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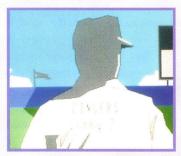
FEATURES

52

THE CONQUEST OF CRON: A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO MIGHT & MAGIC, PART II

by Clayton Walnum

We return to the world of Cron and show you how to add linearity to the game with maps that will guide you on your journey.



DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER: THE 1992 REVIEW OF BASEBALL SOFTWARE

by Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley
This year's crop of electronic nationalpastime simulations, though not
overwhelming, produced a broad
spectrum of hard-hitting titles. Take a
look at the games that bring all the
action home.

80

"REAL" GAMES: VIRTUAL-REALITY TECHNOLOGY YOU CAN PLAY

by Craig E. Engler

Find out what's behind the newest buzzword in electronic-gaming technology and what the future of electronic entertainment holds for us.



REVIEWS & PREVIEWS



34 VIDEO-GAME REVIEWS

Krusty's Super Fun House, Star Odyssey, Fire Hawk, Mutation Nation, Super Battletank: War in the Gulf, Double Dragon, Might & Magic, Fighting Masters, Arcana, Last Resort and Steel Empire.



62 GAMING ON THE GO

by Chris Bieniek

Lynx Casino, George Foreman's KO Boxing, Top Gun—Guts & Glory, Hydra, Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin *and* Spy vs. Spy—Operation: Booby Trap.

90

COMPUTER-GAME PREVIEWS

Rampart, Gods, Aces of the Pacific *and* Crisis in the Kremlin.



94

COMPUTER-GAME REVIEWS

Wild Wheels, Paperboy 2, The Rocketeer, Obitus, Home Alone, Volfied, The Simpsons Arcade Game, Knights of the Sky, Birds of Prey, Star Trek: 25th Anniversary and Castle of Dr. Brain.



EDITOR'S LETTER 6
READER MAIL 10
TIP SHEET 16
NEWS BITS 20
EASTER EGG HUNT 28
FANDANGO 86
INSIDE GAMING 88
ADVERTISER INDEX 96
GAME DOCTOR 112
COMPUTER STRATEGIES 114

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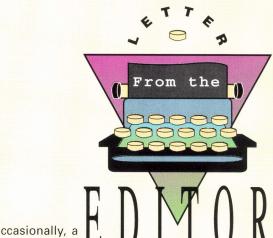
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Please recycle.



game will come along that hits you right off the bat. You know from moment No. 1 that it will take every spare minute of your time. It ruins your productivity, especially if you get a chance to play during the day, as we often do—hey, don't blame me, it's my job! Worst of all, you go face-to-face in the morning with a red-eyed monster in your bathroom mirror because of three simple

words that slay mortal gamers: just one more. Many's the time I've seen the sun come up because of "just one more."

Tetris is a game that comes to mind as fitting

this category, as well as *Pac-Man* and many of Atari's early arcade groundbreakers (*Space Invaders*, *Asteroids*, et al). For the past few months, I've been playing an addicting, public-domain solitaire card game on the Mac called *Seahaven Towers*. Oh, the hours I've seen go past.

The latest find for me is a wonderful program for the Mac called Spectre. In the vein of Battlezone, Stellar 7 and Nova 9 (the last two by Dynamix for computers), Spectre is a tank game. However, as enhancements, you can choose from three different views (through the windshield; above and behind your vehicle; or overhead), filled graphics or vector graphics and a variety of tank configurations, weighing shields, ammo and speed in differing amounts.

those using Macs in a network. This way, you can compete head-to-head, in teams or everyone for himself in a choice of three contests. It's pure adrenaline as you cruise the terrain in search of someone to blow up.

The really hot

Now, I didn't want to take up my column this month with a product review—Spectre is released by a small company, Velocity, and its

appearance passed us by—but it brings up two important similarities with all the other products I noted previously: simplicity and durable game play.

If Tetris had been in-

vented ten years ago, it would have been easy to do on an Atari 800 or Commodore 64 because it doesn't require a gigantic color palette or oodles of digitized sound or 3-D rendered graphics. Battlezone employed simple wireframe graphics. Pac-Man was a fairly easy game to design also.

What all these products have is a basic interface for the player, an easy-to-grasp goal and visuals that aren't so confusing as to discourage the player from playing it.

There's a lesson here: Companies can hit you over the head with specs about how their systems have more colors than the others and the fact that theirs boast stereo sound—ad nauseam—but, if the games aren't fun, there's not much to show off. Plain and simple.

-Andy Eddy, Executive Editor











...YOU CAN COUNT ON BART AND HIS HANDY SLINGSHOT...



...TO SAVE SPRINGFIELD FROM SLIMY SPACE MUTANTS...



...AND HOMER'S
"GLOW-IN-THE-DARK-DONUTS" TO HELP SAVE
THE DAY!

gross monsters are taking over the bodies of people living here... and they wanna build a weapon to take over the entire planet! Anyway, only I can see 'em 'cause of my X-ray glasses - I have to stop 'em by spraypainting things, getting radical on my skateboard, and generally being a nuisance.

So help me save the earth! BUY MY GAMES!

Thanks, man.

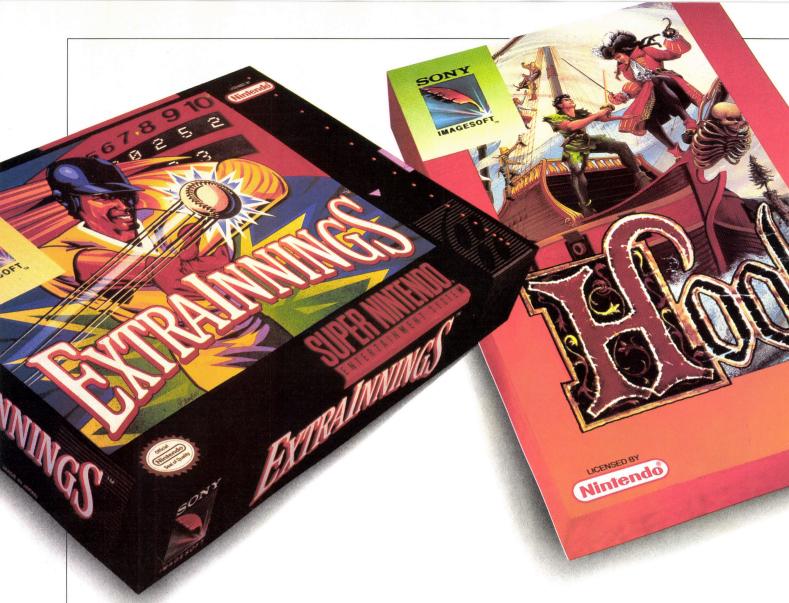








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ACTION

What do you want?

Finger-blistering speed? Eyeball-popping color? Total control? Gameplay so smooth you can cut it with a knife?

Well whatever it is, we've got it. And plenty of it.

Like awesome sports and incredible action/adventure games.

Check 'em out.
In Extra Innings, our

newest hit for the 16-bit, you call the shots and control all the action: the starting lineup, your batter's slugging power, the spin on the curve ball, even your player's dive for a shot up the middle.

With Soccer Mania, for GameBoy, you take the field against six of the world's toughest teams. Then it's your job to kick, pass and dribble your way to the world cup championship.

On the action/adventure front, for NES and GameBoy, both Hook and Hudson Hawk will



PACKED!

get your blood pumping.

In Hook, you not only do battle as Peter Pan with the pirates and creatures of Neverland, you

also board Hook's ship and square off in a duel for the fight of your life. (It's a good thing you can fly!)

> Hudson Hawk puts you in the shoes of the world's most famous cat

burglar. As The Hawk, you have to outsmart world-class criminals and sneak through traps, tunnels and airshafts to steal the secret device that will save the world from ruin.

And in SmartBall you'll enter the wackiest worlds imaginable, as you change your shape and slip, slide, slither and ooze your way through steamy tropics and urban battlezones.

So check out these actionpacked games from Sony Imagesoft.

If it's action you want, we've got it.





THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

First off, I would like to compliment you on a very intelligent and mature magazine. Unfortunately, the electronic-game hobby is looked down upon by some and even considered "kid stuff" by others. I'm a 19-year-old gamer who has been involved in the genre since the early days of the classic Atari 2600. Since that time, I have seen the hobby die like a phoenix and resurrect itself from its ashes. Now I am a proud owner of a Genesis and couldn't be more anxious upon the arrival of the CD-ROM later this year (I hope).

The reason I'm writing this letter is to show my thanks to the industry. Being one of the famous "latchkey kids" in the early '80s, I was more or less homebound after school. Even as I grew into my high-school years, video games were always a major part of my life. I'm not saying I never left the house—I had a normal life—but video games were my retreat when the "world" around me got too hectic. I hung out with my friends, went to parties, went on dates, etc., and I still do. Even if I do take my girlfriend to the local arcade, it's still a night out.

I like to think that video games helped to keep me out of trouble while I was growing up, so, while people I knew were out getting into tangles with local law-enforcement agencies, I was rescuing Princess Zelda or winning the NBA crown. I feel that with the right attitude and the sensibility to divide one's time, video games can be a positive form of enjoyment and learning—not a waste of time as many parents seem to feel. Besides, the future holds nothing but a life dominated by rising tech-

nologies. It only seems fitting that Sonic and Mario provide a welcome introduction into an electronic-filled environment.

To all the video-game companies, a heartfelt thanks is in order. I may be a 19-year-old "vidiot," but I had many hours of fun exploring the world they create for me. Also, to the staff of VG&CE, you deserve a round of applause for having a different level, not afraid to downplay a game if it deserves a thumbs down. In a market of magazines filled with nothing but ads

for games, you are truly a breath of fresh air. How many times can you hear that *Mario 13* will be great, even though *Mario 6* did the same thing two years ago?

—Pat Errico

Wanamassa, New Jersey PS—Even if this doesn't make your magazine, I'll be satisfied knowing it was read by someone with interest in its topic.

Thanks for your insights, Pat. We're sure your experiences will match those of many of our readers. The VG&CE staff certainly saw some of themselves in it.



BLAST FROM THE PAST

Dear VG&CE:

You've asked in past issues for our suggestions. Well, here's one I think you might like. How about a *This Month in Gaming History* column? Tell us about an interesting event that happened awhile ago, such as the day that the NES was released or when *Pac-Man*

spawned a song (remember "Pac-Man Fever"?). Give this idea some attention because I think it's a good one.

—Nathan Prout Trenton, Missouri

Indeed, it's a good idea that we'll take under consideration. Sure, the electronic-game history book is small, but it would be interesting to see what happened in that month five or ten years ago.



DOCTOR NO!

VERY MAD!! In the April issue of VG&CE, you let the Game Doctor voice his opinion on what he thought of all of the systems. Well, I own an SNES, a Genesis, an SMS, a Game Boy and an NES. I pretty much like all of them the same, but if I had to choose one of them, I would choose the SNES, with all of the special things it can do.

Another magazine said that all of the new SNES games have beaten the slowdown that was apparent in the first games. I felt that it was kind of offending what he said about the SNES, that it had no real good games except *Pilotwings*. I couldn't believe it!! If he thinks that a system is bad, let him keep it to himself.

It was Jim Einarson of Gloucester, Ontario, Canada, who said that it was the people's decision on what system we want. I don't think that the Game Doctor should try to influence other people to buy whatever system he thinks we should get. (If you don't

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Master Higgins is back in his wildest and greatest adventure of all! He leaps into action to defeat an army of guardian animals and monsters that protect the evil wizard, Dark Cloak! Join Master Higgins as he reaches new heights of excitement on his high flying skateboard. Speed through underground caves in a crazy mine car ride! Go from dangerous tropical shores to the belly of a whale - all in search of his final battle with the wicked sorcerer.

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- Terrible traps and gigantic villains await your next move!

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have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.) I realize that he was just doing his job, but it's not fair to all the other people who own SNESes; I'm sure that if Nintendo of America read this, they would be quite mad.

I really don't care if you don't print this. I just thought I would voice my own opinion on the subject. I hope not to see anything like that again, first of all because I know that the SNES is great and one of the best of all the systems, just like the Genesis. Second, if I see something like that again I might have to take away my subscription. I hope you read this and take action with the Game Doctor. I don't mean to fire him, but be careful of what you print, because it might hurt the people who own an SNES.

—Mike Goluch Glendale, California

Thanks for your views, Mike. We don't have any plans to fire or discipline the ol' Doc, because he's been hired to espouse his visions on the gaming world. He's entitled to say what he truly feels—and you know he will!—about the various systems, though we don't think he was trying to discourage anyone from coming to a different conclusion. Look at this month's Game Doctor column for some additional comment. Glad you enjoy your SNES. If you like it, that's all that counts, right?



OWNER NERVOUS-SNES

Dear VG&CE:

I recently purchased a Super Nintendo Entertainment System. I have spent more than \$1,000 on regular NES games. I was wondering if there will be any type of converter to play the 8-bit games on the Super NES. Thanks for your time.

—Michael Biafore Homeland, California

At present, Nintendo denies that there will be an NES adapter for the SNES. However, we have received word that at least one company is working on an adapter for the SNES that will play NES carts, and that it may be released as soon as late summer. The company has asked us to keep word down to a minimum until it is determined whether the product can be reliably manufactured and for a reasonable price. Keep an eye on VG&CE's News Bits for further developments.



SNES VS. GENESIS

I would like to say keep up the good work. You give straight reviews on games unlike others.

I would like to bring up the issue of SNES vs. Genesis. I own a Genesis and would like to raise a few thoughts.

- 1. The SNES does have some advantages, including more colors per screen, but what is the use if you don't use them and the games are slowed down (with the exception of *Pilotwings* and *Actraiser*, two of the best games I've ever played)?
- 2. The Genesis has better sound and a faster processor that eliminates slowdown (with the exception of *Mercs*, the worst game I've

Understand, I have nothing but respect for the SNES and Nintendo, but if you're going to make a system, make it right.

I also have a few questions:

played).

- 1. What are the games Accolade is producing for the Genesis, and how can I get them?
- 2. Will we see *Pilotwings, Actraiser, Smash TV* or *Lagoon* released for the Genesis?

—Eric Peterson Plymouth, Massachusetts

There's a lot to consider when a game system is designed, which has to be weighed against what you can sell it for—basically, what the consumer will allow you to sell it for. It's hard to get a good balance of an inexpensive console that is full-featured too. Also, from what we've seen, the SNES has better sound capabilities than the Genesis, but it's up to the game developers to put the hardware to the task.

To answer your questions, Accolade games for the Genesis appear under the Ballistic label, and include such popular computer titles as Hardball! and Star Control. If you take a look in this month's News Bits section, you'll see how the nonlicensed games created by Accolade have been under scrutiny by the courts. Though this isn't currently (as of this writing) affecting the supply of Ballistic games to your local software merchant, keep your eyes

open on the possibility of a decision that would prevent Accolade from selling nonlicensed Genesis games.

As for your other question, we contacted the companies responsible for the titles you asked about: Unless Nintendo starts a label for games on competing systems (like Atari did in the early '80s with its Atarisoft brand), we won't see Pilotwings on the Genesis. Neither Enix (Actraiser) nor Seika (Lagoon) have plans to bring their respective games to the Genesis at this point, though it's certainly subject to change as the companies evaluate the market. However, Acclaim, under its Flying Edge label for Genesis titles, will make Smash TV available for the Genesis, with an expected release date in September.

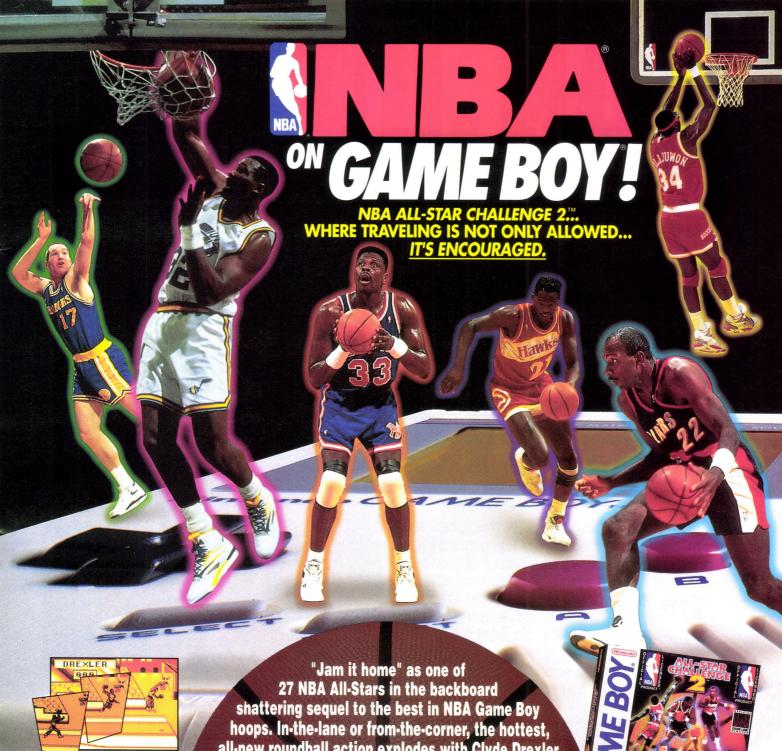


TURBO-TV AND CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

I've heard about a PC Engine LCD TV that was shown at the Tokyo Toy Fair (summer 1991). Do you know something about it? Do you think there will be a TG-16 version of it?

—Christian Alzieux Montreal, Quebec, Canada

According to our coverage of the Tokyo Toy Fair in TurboPlay Magazine (the August/September 1991 issue), NEC showed an LCD display that could easily go portable with a game system, however, it would cost you at least \$500 if you imported it from Japan. There are no plans at this point to bring the display to America. L





ROCK THE RIM IN THE **ALL-NEW SLAM DUNK** COMPETITION.



BEAT THE CLOCK IN THE **EXCITING THREE POINT** SHOOTOUT.

all-new roundball action explodes with Clyde Drexler, Dominique Wilkins, Chris Mullin, Hakeem Olajuwon, **Dekembe Mutombo, and more!**

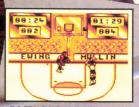
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- Outrageous Over The Shoulder Foul Shooting One on One Accuracy Showdown
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CANJORDAN SHOTOWN SHOPPING

"Larry's scary," says Michael. "Man, he's so consistent, never letting up. The guy's a threepoint machine with eyes all around his head. And he can hurt you in so many ways."

Bird: "Michael's unreal. You never know



what he's going to do. Basketball's never seen anyone

this creative. I mean, when he's on, you can't turn him off. Talk about hang time, Jordan owns the airwaves."

Jordan vs. Bird.™ The game designed by the guys who redesigned basketball: Michael and Larry. They've done everything you can in the sport. Scoring titles. MVP awards. All-Stars. Championship rings.

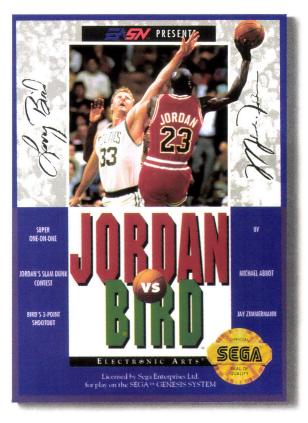
But they've never gone toe-to-toe like this before. Super One-on-One action. Larry's dead-eye

outside game against Michael's explosiveness. The dream match-up anyone would jump through

hoops to play. Don't miss what happens when these shooting stars collide.



Jordan and Bird—the modern architects of basketball—co-designed this game. So you know this one's for the record books.



Jordan vs. Bird scores an incredible three pointer: three events in one game. First, there's Super One-

on-One. You choose whose shoes you want to play in, Michael's or Larry's. You've got their authentic signature moves, sweet spots, and complete player control. Michael's aerial

assaults and steals. Larry's spins and radar shooting. Plus more long range bombs than the Gulf War.

Once you've settled the score, defy gravity in Michael's Slam Dunk Competition.
With ten classic Jordan jams like the Helicopter, Leap Frog, Fly Swat, Hula Hoop, and Stretch Air. The more daring the dunk, the more points you earn with

the judges and crowd.

In Larry's 3-Point Shootout, you fly with Bird from downtown. With 60 seconds to sink as many buckets

as you can. And money balls count double. Find your rhythm and you might just top Larry Legend's winning score of 22.

THREE ALL:STAR EVENTS IN ONE GAME.



Super One-on-One. The ultimate match-up. Jordan's aerial artistry vs. Bird's dead-eye shooting.



Jordan's Slam Dunk Competition.
Fly high, score higher. Five judges rule the court when Michael takes off in the Slam Dunk Competition.



Bird's 3-Point Shootout.Gobble up those 3-pointers like Bird and be the ultimate money ball player.

You know it's a major sports event because EASN's there to cover it. With your detailed stats at the end of every quarter. Instant replay. Even a "Bird's-eye" view from 3-point range.

Visit your local EA dealer or order by phone any time: (800) 245-4525. And conquer the only challenge that remains for Michael and Larry: Each other.



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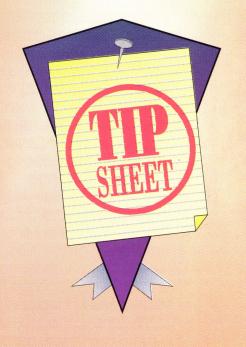
CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



best the ven player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COM-PUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed Tip Sheet to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to:

VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300 Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Attn: Tip Sheet



BY CHRIS BIENIEK

I've been playing SideArms on my TurboGrafx-16 for a few months, and it seems to be impossible to complete. Is there a stage-select code for this game or a way to raise the amount of credits?

—Robert Brown III Portland, Oregon

Sorry, Robert, you'll have to work your way through SideArms with good old-fashioned skill—and a lot of luck. There is a strange slow-motion mode, however: Hold down the I, II and D buttons while

pressing **RUN** during the title screen; but it makes the animation so choppy that the game is hardly worth playing this way. If you own a TurboStick (or another controller that offers a slow-motion feature), you may do a little better.

To make the most of the available options, you should try to choose your power-up items carefully. If you can pick them up in the following order, you'll be loaded up with as much firepower as the game will let you use at one time: three Orbital BITs, a Three-Way, a Full Auto, a Pow, two Shotguns, a Mega-Ballistic Laser (MBL), Transformation Alpha, another Shotgun, another MBL, another Three-Way and two more Pow symbols.

Easier said than done, but it's a strategy that you can work on in the very first level to take you a long way through the game. Don't forget that you can shoot at most of the power-ups to change them into different items.

By the way, you might want to hang on to that copy of SideArms—it's something of a collector's item these days. Not only is it the first TG-16 game to be released by a third-party manufacturer, but it's the only game ever released by Radiance Software in the U.S. under its own name. It's also out of print.





CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

I've been playing Taito's Wrath of the Black Manta on my NES for a long time, but I just can't kill the last boss in the DRAT headquarters. Can you please tell me which four Ninpo arts I have to use in order to destroy him?

> —Joseph Bejarano South Gate, California

El Toro, the boss in question, seems to be causing quite a problem for our readers—we received similar letters from Billy Day in Monticello, Maine, and James Carlisle in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, You'll need to use the Arts of the Spider, Missiles, the Shadow and the Fire Ring to take him out.

El Toro should usually be attacked while his back is turned. If you hit him while he's facing you, or if you don't use the four arts in the proper order, his life meter may reset and you'll have to start the procedure over again.

The first step is to use the Art of the Spider to burrow through the ground and pop up behind your enemy. Always be very careful not to come up directly beneath El Toro, which results in instant death! If you hit him in the back with a dart, his life meter will go down one block, but you'll need to hit him twice in order to get him to face you.

Next, use the Art of the Spider to move down again, but don't move back to the left—just go straight down and come back up on the right side of the screen. Once you've done this, you'll be able to hit El Toro in the head with another dart to knock his life meter down to three blocks, and he'll still be facing right.

Next, use the Art of the Spider to burrow back down and come up on the left side of the screen. As El Toro moves away from you, hit him with the Art of Missiles. He'll be hurt, and he'll turn around once more.

Burrow back around to the other side of the boss, and use the Art of the Shadow to create a duplicate of yourself. When your duplicate fires a dart, El Toro's life meter will be reduced to one.

For the final blow, burrow back to the left side of the screen once more and use the Art of the Fire Ring. The ending sequence is a bit disappointing after all that hard work, but at least you can finally say that you finished the game.

futting Green

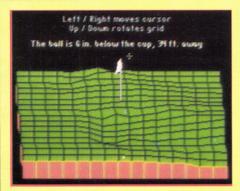
Distance:34ft Club: Putter











Electronic Arts' PGA TOUR Golf is a great Genesis game—with one exception. During the putting scenes, there's a "grid" to help you analyze the surface of the green. I've never been able to figure out how to read the grid or where to aim the cursor, etc., so I constantly miss putts over ten feet. Can you please help?

> —Joe Pederson Eau Claire, Wisconsin

The important thing to remember about putting in PGA TOUR Golf is that the topography of the green doesn't affect the path of the ball as much as your timing on the "stroke bar." Unlike many other golf video games, this one lets you hook or slice a putt, too. If you can get the power bar to stop on the "accuracy point" each time, that's more than half the battle.

To learn how to read the grid, check out the accompanying screen shot. I prefer to rotate the grid until the cup is directly above the ball (as shown).

Focus on the area between the vertical lines that are drawn on either side of the cup. If you look closely, you'll see that there are ten horizontal black lines between the ball and the cup. (This number will vary, depending on how far away the cup is.) If several of these lines slant up and to the right, it means that a ball putted in a straight line will veer slightly to the left. Conversely, if more of the lines slant upward to the left, the ball will slice to the right.

In our example, only two of the ten lines don't show any slope. Of the remaining lines, three indicate that the ball will go to the right, and five indicate that the ball will roll left. Based on that evidence, I've positioned the cursor slightly to the right of the pin, because the net effect of all of these angles suggests a mild curve to the left of the cup.

Finally, don't be discouraged if you can't sink every ten-foot putt! Not even the pros dare to take such things for granted.



GET REAL! Victory takes more brains than brawn.

Strategy Game Series

Romance I of the three Ringdoms I

Return to an age of chivalry and courage. A time when the fate of a dynasty was at stake. As a powerful leader, manipulate enemies of the emperor and expand your domain through shrewd strategy and military prowess. Command your generals

wisely and the glory will be yours! Only you can unify China!

*SNES, Genesis, PC, Amiga, NES



L'Empereur *PC, NES

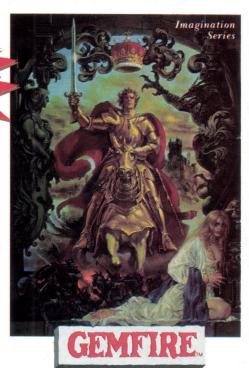


Uncharted Waters
*PC, NES

Catch the 16-bit power!

Capture the magical gems of the crown Gemfire and restore peace to an enchanted island!

> *NES Coming soon for Genesis

















COMPILED BY JOYCE WORLEY

SPA Picks Best Software

The Software Publishers Association (SPA) presented the 1991 SPA Excellence in Software Awards at a blacktie ceremony in Seattle, Washington. Software executives gathered for the event, which was highlighted by the awards ceremony and remarks from former Saturday Night Live star Jon Lovitz.

Entertainment products cited by the organization for multiple honors were Sim-Ant (Maxis) for both Best Educational Tool and Best Simulation Program, Sid Meier's Civilization (Micro-

Prose) for both Best Entertainment and Best Strategy Program, Kid Pix (Brøderbund) for Best Early Education and Best User Interface, and Lemmings (Psygnosis) for Best Entertainment (tie) and Best Action/Arcade Program.

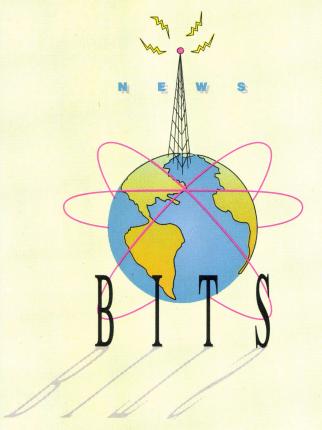




Bart Cothy

| Dana





Other winners were Reader Rabbit 2 (Learning Co.) for Best Elementary Education, Where In America's Past Is

Carmen Sandiego? (Brøderbund) for Best Home Learning, Martian Memorandum (Access) for Best Fantasy Role-Playing/Adventure and LINKS Championship Courses (Access) for Best Sports Program.

In addition to the awards selected by the

SPA membership, members of the press selected Critics' Choice Award winners. Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe (Lucasfilm) and Sid Meier's Civilization (Brøderbund) tied for Critic's Choice Award for the Best Consumer Program of 1991.

Commodore Promos CDTV Packages

Commodore has a special deal on two CDTV educational packages. Until June 30, 1992, the company is bundling their CDTV



player with software, in two specially priced offers.

The CDTV Library bundle includes the CDTV player, a disc caddy two-pack and reference software including The American Heritage Dictionary, The World Vista Atlas and The American Vista Atlas, all for \$869. According to Commodore, this is almost 50% off the suggested retail price for the individual components.

The CDTV Early bundle features the CDTV player and disc caddy, plus 13 early-learning software titles for children ages three and over. Titles include: The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Scary Poems for Rotten Kids, The Tale of Benjamin Bunny, Cinderella, Mud Puddle, My Paint, Heather Hits Her First Home Run and five more kid-pleasers. This package





is \$1,129 during the promotional period. The separate items have suggested retail prices totaling \$2,000.

TTI Lowers TG-CD Price

In a bold move, the newly formed joint-venture company between Hudson Soft and NEC has decided to lower the suggested retail price of the TurboGrafx-CD. Previously available for \$299, the CD-ROM drive will be available for \$149.99. "Our decision today means that a complete TG-16 CD system, including base unit and CD add-on, can be delivered for less than \$250," said Naoyuki Tsuji, president of TTI.

EA Sponsors Trivia Quiz, Windows Golf

Electronic Arts Sports Network (EASN) announced cosponsorship of a nightly Sports Trivia Quiz, scheduled to air on 75-plus radio stations. The Quiz will be part of the Sports Byline USA program, and winners will receive EA sports games for play on Genesis, SNES and IBM PC computers.





Ron Barr, host of the show, explained why the program has brought EASN on board: "Our listeners are passionate about all sports, and what attracted us most about Electronic Arts was that their customers also have a passion for sports."

In other news, Electronic Arts announced an early summer release date for the Microsoft Windows version of PGA TOUR Golf. The Win-

dows-compatible program features Super VGA graphics and an enhanced interface designed particularly for use with Windows. It also contains a new feature, the "Hole Browser," that lets the player take the role of cameraman.

Atari Moves Headquarters, Joins CompuServe

Atari Entertainment has expanded and moved to larger quarters. The Lynx marketer is now located at 500 Waters Edge Drive, Suite 310, Lombard, IL 60148.

Atari moved from California to Illinois in January of 1991. However, the addition of sales, distribution, merchandising and customer service made it necessary to relocate to larger space.

"We doubled the business last year, and we expect to double it again in 1992. In addition, we plan to create 35 new video games for the Lynx in 1992," said Dana Plotkin, vice-president of marketing for Atari Entertainment.

In other news from Atari, the company announced that a Lynx bulletin board service has been established on CompuServe. Users type the command GOLYNX, then exchange information with other Lynx gamers. There is a message board, data library, help files, game-solving tips and even graphic images of the other games. In addition, Todd Ellering and Jeff Kovach, Lynx experts, are on line every other day to answer questions, review games, give hints and provide Easter eggs.

To join CompuServe, dial (800) 848-8199, and ask for operator 198.

Sega and Prima Announce Winners of Cartridge Giveaway

On March 30, Sega of America and Prima Publishing held a drawing to determine the winners of their



"Secrets of the Games/Sega Genesis Cartridge Give-away." The contest was promoted in Prima's Sega Genesis Secrets, Volume 2. Game winners were selected by Sonic the Hedgehog, Sega's Director of Marketing Al Nilsen and Prima's Secrets of the Games editor Rusel DeMaria. Each winner will receive six Genesis games of his or her choice.

Atari Extends Lynx Value-Pack, Announces New Titles

Thanks to popular response at the buying level, Atari extended its \$129.99 special Lynx value package. It replaces the deluxe \$149.99 bundle, and includes the Lynx game sys-

tem, Comlynx communication cable, carrying pouch, six batteries and the *California Games* cartridge. Separately the items total over \$170. The basic \$99.99 Lynx system is also still available.

In other Lynx news, the company continues to predict it will have 50 games in the stores by mid-1992, and that the library will increase to 70 titles by year's end. New titles currently in development include Toki (from the coin-op), Crystal Mines II (a sequel

with 150 levels, plus 31 bonus levels), Super Skweek (color-tile changing with monsters), Hockey, Baseball Heroes, Rampart, Casino, Basketbrawl, NFL Football, Dirty Larry: Renegade Cop, Kung Food and Hydra.

Acclaim WrestlesWith New Markets

Expanding the company's European market, Acclaim

has entered into an agreement with entertainment giant Polygram. Under the terms of the agreement, Polygram will distribute Acclaim software in the United Kingdom. (Polygram, a subsidiary of Philips Electronics N.V., is one of the world's

biggest producers and distributors of recorded music.)

In a separate announcement, Acclaim revealed that, with the release of WWF Super Wrestlemania, it has become the first company to publish Super Famicom software in Japan that is completely American-designed, -developed and -programmed.

As of March 1992, Acclaim had sold over two million units of NES and Game Boy titles based on its license with the WWF (World Wrestling Federation).

Capcom to Develop Competition Joystick

Capcom USA has announced that it will develop and market the Competition Joystick, specifically de-

signed for use with Street Fighter II. The Competition Joystick features six buttons, 8-way directional control and a set of three rapidfire, turbo buttons. Capcom plans to make the joystick



available simultaneously with the release of *SFII* this July. Currently, no price is available for the Competition Joystick.

Sega Awarded Injunction Against Accolade

The Northern California District Court granted Sega a preliminary injunction against Accolade, stating that Accolade infringed on Sega and created the impression that its line of Genesis-compatible software was authorized by Sega. When the injunction becomes effective, it will prevent Accolade from developing or distributing Genesis games.

The specific problems concern the Sega trademark that comes on screen when an Accolade game cartridge is played on a Genesis III game unit: "Produced By or Under License from Sega Enterprises, Ltd." According to Alan Miller, CEO of Accolade, "When Accolade reverse-engineered the Genesis system, we had no idea that such a message would appear...." He went on to say, "Sega chose to include this message in its latest version of the Genesis system...on the asserted premise that the existence of the message would prevent piracy...in Taiwan."

Accolade filed complaints earlier this year against Sega with the European Communities Commission (ECC), an agency

continued on page 24

EAN

CAME BEST S

& AWARD

ULTIMATE STUNTMAN

"The graphics on this game are fantastic throughout. Overall Rating ****"

- San Francisco Examiner - Feb. 1992



MIG 29

"Strap yourself into the cockpit of one of the world's most deadly aircraft... Throttle back and accelerate to speeds in excess of Mach 2..."

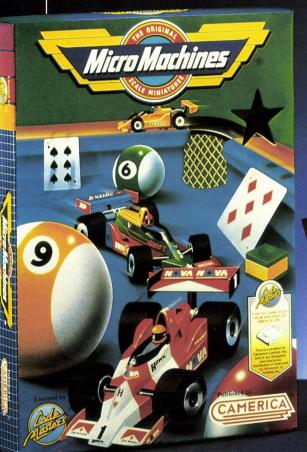
- Electronic Gaming Monthly - Apr. 1992



BIGNOSE

"... non-stop action... in a style that is entertaining and light hearted. The game keeps you involved every step of the way by making you read, think, plan and make choices... The graphics are outstanding..."

- San Francisco Examiner - Feb. 1992







MICRO MACHINES
BEST ACTION VIDEO GAME
1991

- Video Games & Computer Entertainment

MICRO MACHINES

"Everyone who plays this game is instantly drawn in by its challenging game play. At all costs, you should seek out this game."

- Video Games & Computer Entertainment - Feb. 1992



COMING SOON

BEE 52 "We have developed extra special technology to make this cute cartoony shoot-em-up set new standards in graphic and animation quality. An original enjoyable frantic-filled blast." - Codemasters

STUNT KIDS "We've created a game that's brilliant, fun and competitive for two players and equally as excellent as a one-player challenge. It's fun, frantic and so addictive you'll be hooked for ages."

- Codemasters

RICA'S

game!

WINNERS

"MicroMachines and Dizzy were the first two Camerica Games I played. Both have won awards and that's no surprise to me. They're both challenging, innovative and just plain fun!"

> - Thor Aackerlund **Nintendo World Champion**



DIZZY

"... tons of fun with great graphics and an engaging storyline."

- Game Players - Mar. 1992

arring "Dizzy" the U.K.'s

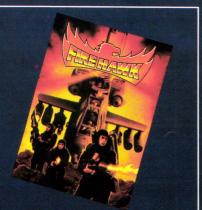
#1 Video game hero

"Too-cute-for-words... This game makes you expend your IQ points, and the music is funky." - Entertainment Weekly, Jan. 31, 1992

DIZZY BEST NES, GRAPHIC ADVENTURE GAME - 1991 - Game Players

GAME OF THE MONTH **FIREHAWK**

The newest, most sophisticated action game available. Players pilot the most devastating helicopter gunship in existence to fly seven dangerous and treacherous missions.





Came of the Month

CAMERICA

"Four games in one? Yes!... the newest in sports action... the option of playing four different and popular sports... all available on one cartridge. You can never get tired of this cart!" - Electronic Gaming Monthly - Mar. 1992



"... (all four)... Quattro Adventure Games work well and represent a good video game deal... (Super Robin Hood is) not easy to beat, but you'll have a merry time trying... (Treasure Island Dizzy has) Traps and natural hazards have you walking on egg shells... a brain teaser that's fun. Linus Spacehead is an addicting game that encourages you to rise to new heights... The Boomerang Kid pushes your jumping skills... to the max.

- Gamepro - May 1992

Helpline for Tips and Hints 1-900-RESTART (1-900-737-8278)

This call costs \$1.75 for the first minute and 90 cents for every minute after that. Callers who are 18 or under must get the permission of their parents first! U.S.A. only.

For order information - 1-800-827-7085 U.S. Residents only.

AMERICA AMES

EASY TO PICK UP. HARD TO PUT DOWN.

Camerica Limited, Inc. 3701 Commercial Avenue Northbrook, Illinois U.S.A. 60062

Camerica Corporation 3415 - 14th Avenue Markham, Ontario Canada L3R 0H3

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Camerica, Camerica Games are Trademarks of Camerica Corp.

CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 21

responsible for enforcing antitrust and unfair competition laws. Miller pointed out that the ECC has specifically recognized the right to reverse engineer, and he predicted that the preliminary injunction is a "temporary setback" and only the first skirmish in the Accolade/Sega dispute.

Super NES to Get Super Star Wars

Lucasfilm Games and JVC announced that their first Super NES game will be Super Star Wars. The same team that created the 8-bit titles Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back and Defenders of Dynatron City expects the new game to be available sometime in the autumn of 1992.





The designers are promising "mind-blowing graphics...incredible sound with CD-like music quality and realistic, digitized sound effects and voices."

Park Place, RAD Multimedia in Merger

Park Place Productions of Carlsbad, California, and RAD Multimedia of Oceanside, California, have formed a new enterprise called The Spirit of Discovery.

Park Place, best known for state-of-the-art entertainment product development, was a pioneer in filming for video games (Electronic Arts' NHL Hockey for Genesis) and created one of the first dedicated multimedia

studios, with filming platform. Rick Dyer, the director of RAD Multimedia, is best known as the creator of both the first laser-disc game, *Dragon's Lair*, and *Powercise*, the first computer interactive fitness equipment. More recently, he worked on the Sega holographic coin-op machine *Time Traveler*.

The Spirit of Discovery's first product, Draft & Print (\$99.95 for the IBM PC), called the ultimate drafting program, will be followed by an educational/entertainment line. Other products under development for autumn and winter release are a casino product, House of Dreams (a 3-D designer product for the home) and football, slated for early 1993. The new company is also working on a new coinop for Sega, Invaders 2000, to be distributed both as a stand-alone model and as a kit that works with the Time Traveler machine.

Tiger Goes Multi-System With Murder

Tiger Media, the company that created the first original multimedia game, Airwave Adventure: The Case of the Cautious Condor, has announced a new adventure in the series. Murder Makes Strange Deadfellows sets the user to gathering clues to solve the case. It's set in the home of an inventor/occultist who died in a fall on the steps of the mansion.





The game is said to hold hundreds of images, an original CD digital audio soundtrack and radiodrama-style audio that combines with hand-drawn, comic-book-style art.

Both Tiger games are available exclusively on compact disc, for the Commodore CDTV, Sun SPARCstation, Fujitsu FM Towns and Tandy 2500XL, as well as for the IBM PC with CD-ROM and Sound Blaster audio cards.

Upgrade Play It Again Offer

Play It Again, a company that's been buying and selling used video games since 1982, has a plan to move 8bit gamers into the 16-bit universe. The company will take your old console in trade toward a new 16-bit video-game machine. Play It Again will send either a new Sega Genesis System with Sonic the Hedgehog for \$120 or a new Super Nintendo Entertainment System with Super Mario World for \$140, in exchange for your old NES. (Both prices include the \$10 shipping and handling fee.)

The NES must be in clean, working order, with two controllers, power supply, TV RF switch and game system instructions. (Add \$10 for each missing or broken component, and \$1 for missing instructions.) Play It Again will also accept game cartridges in payment for the trade; the allowances for games depend on title.

Systems, payment and orders should be sent to: Play It Again, 67-25B 186 Lane, Flushing, NY 11365. For more details or price quotes, call (718) 229-1435.

New Games for Exercisers

Funex Inc. (118 W. Chestnut St., Lancaster, PA 17603; [800] 659-4386), creator of the Funex Motion Converter, has introduced a new piece of equipment, the RetroFit, which allows virtually any exercise equipment



to be used with the Motion Converter—even exercise bikes or rowers with no speedometers. The RetroFit retails for \$29.95.

Three new games work with the RetroFit. Final Quest Challenge II continues where the first adventure stopped, with intensified game play, new screens and backgrounds. RenMan requires the gamer to fly a helibike through time and new worlds to reach enlightenment. GeoQuest has the gamer helibiking around the world in a geography contest.

In the games, the exerciser controls the speed of the on-screen character by the speed of the bike (stepper, rower, treadmill or other exercise device). Products work with IBM PC and compatible computers.

Classic Pin Gets Sequel

Williams Electronics Games has announced a sequel to the 1985 pinball hit, High Speed. The new game, The Getaway: High Speed II, is by the same team that created Terminator 2: Judgment Day.

High Speed II introduces an opto-magnetic ball accelerator that speeds the ball along an elevated track. The





ball-shooter is replaced by a gearshift (which also functions as a controller during some parts of play) and a new electronic flipper system, which Williams is debuting with this game.

Other highlights include a rotating police beacon mounted on the cabinet, an

on-field traffic light, lots of sirens, engine noises and music by ZZ Top.

Inner Circle Takes RPG On-Line

Inner Circle Software is testing a new on-line entertainment, the Digital Dreams Network, to start an interactive role-playing game for modem users. Legends of Future Past supports up to 128 simultaneous adventurers who dial in via TYMNET or hook up via direct dial-in serial ports.

The gamer chooses sex and race (human, elf, dragonman, etc.), then uses magic and technology in the computer world. Interaction is parser-controlled; users type in their desires and the game database determines the result of every action. Game-Masters are on line to moderate the environment, which includes topography, geographical maps, weather patterns and a great many computer-controlled

characters. The network also has other entertainment services, special interest groups, bulletin boards, competitions and on-line chat mode.

Jon Radoff (creator of Space Empire) designed the new project. Prospective users dial (800) 937-7644. The charge is \$6 per hour on TYM-NET, or \$3 per hour for direct dial.



Mindcraft announced that The Magic Candle, the acclaimed fantasy RPG, will soon be available for the NES. Magic Candle III will be available for IBM PC users this autumn, and, under the Omnitrend label, Rules of Engagement 2 is scheduled for com-

puter play later this year.

New World Computing's Might and Magic III: The Isles of Terra continues the series through dungeons, desert isles and mountain peaks. It is now available for the Amiga computer.

Mallard is introducing FS-Pro, Scenery Enhancement Editor and Instant Facility Locator. It makes interfacing with Flight Simulator easier, provides a new flight planner and a ground-school mode. The Scenery Enhancement Editor provides new tools for realistic scenery designs, clip art such as oil wells, whales, hangers, blimps, balloons, etc., and the ability to create day, dusk and night effects. The Instant Facility Locator provides access to any airport, then finds any scenery and automatically loads it to the location.

Coin-Op Focuses on Battle

Midway's latest quarter-grabber turns a futuristic war into a campy video-game battlefield. Total Carnage, set in 1999, pits the player against an evil despot who's creating mu-

> tant life forms. To overcome, the player must rescue hostages and capture the dictator, pursuhim





through three battlefields. Armaments include high explosives and missiles, and the player faces the horrors of combat as typified by mines, flamethrowers, slime, runaway jeeps and nuclear time bombs.

Top Coin-Ops for **March 1992**

Figures courtesy of Re-Play magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

- 1. Terminator 2 by Midway
- 2. Super High Impact by Midway
- 3. Captain America by Data East
- 4. Sunset Riders by Konami
- 5. Double Axle by Taito
- 6. T.M.N.T. II by Konami
- 7. Steel Gunner by Namco
- 8. Spider-Man by Sega
- 9. Space Gun by Taito
- 10. S.C.I. by Taito

Best Deluxe Videos

- 1. Final Lap 2 by Namco
- 2. Steel Talons by Atari
- 3. Road Riot by Atari
- 4. Race Drivin' by Atari
- 5. Hard Drivin' by Atari
- 6. B.O.T.S.S. by Jaleco 7. Galaxy Force by Sega
- 8. Cisco Heat by Jaleco
- 9. Rad Mobile by Sega
- 10. G-Loc by Sega

Best Coin-Op Software

- 1. Street Fighter II by Cap-
- 2. Fatal Fury by SNK
- 3. Rim Rockin' B-Ball by Strata

- 4. Wrestlefest by Technos
- 5. Football Frenzy by SNK
- 6. King of Dragons by Rom-
- 7. Robo Army by SNK
- 8. Raiden by Fabtek
- 9. High Impact by Williams
- 10. Super Baseball 2020 by SNK

Top IBM PC Games for January 1992

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, D.C., based on sales data received from Software Etc., Electronics Boutique, Babbages and Waldensoftware.

Top 10 IBM PC Games

- 1. Civilization by Micro-Prose
- 2. Eve of the Beholder II by Strategic Simulations
- 3. SimCity by Maxis
- 4. SimAnt by Maxis
- 5. Falcon 3.0 by Spectrum HoloByte
- 6. Police Quest III by Sierra On-Line
- 7. Leisure Suit Larry V by Sierra On-Line
- 8. Mike Ditka Ultima Football by Accolade
- 9. Secret of Monkey Island // by Lucasfilm Games
- 10. The Chessmaster 3000 by Software Toolworks

Top 10 IBM PC **Education Games**

- 1. Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego? by Brøderbund
- 2. Where in the USA Is Carmen Sandiego? by Brøderbund
- 3. New Math Blaster Plus by Davidson
- 4. Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing by Software Toolworks
- 5. Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego? by Brøderbund
- 6. Reader Rabbit 1 by The Learning Company
- 7. Reader Rabbit 2 by The Learning Company
- 8. Treehouse by Brøderbund
- 9. Playroom by Brøderbund
- 10. Algeblaster by Davidson -

WHO'S SMILING NOW?



SUNSOFT of the Nintendo GAME BOY

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Nintendo Nintendo



Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!



Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up

D = Down

L = Left

R = Right

A = "A" button

B = "B" button

C = "C" button

Turrican

(BALLISTIC FOR THE TG-16)



Go to the options screen in the TG-16 version of this sci-fi blaster and move the arrow to "EXIT." Press the TurboPad buttons in this order: I, II, I, II, I, II, I, II, I, then press **RUN**. You'll get a new menu screen that allows you to select an invincible "CHEAT" mode.









Corrections

• In the April 1992 issue of VG&CE, we ran an Easter egg for Jaleco's Super NES shooter, Earth Defense Force, a code that was supposed to grant the player invincibility. This trick did work on advance copies of the game, but the code in question was removed from all copies of E.D.F. in the United States. Apparently, this egg traveled by word-of-mouth so quickly, even before the game was released, that Jaleco decided to pull the code to ensure that the average gamer would not be able to defeat the game in a single sitting. We apologize to our readers—particularly those who called and wrote letters to find out what had happened—and to the folks at Jaleco, who probably received their share of calls and letters as well.

• On a similar note, a typographical error in the May 1992 Easter Egg Hunt column caused almost as much confusion. To get to the sound test and stage select menu in Capcom's Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts for the SNES, highlight "exit" on the options screen, then hold L and START on controller two while you press START on controller one. Again, sorry for the mix-up.

"...step up to the plate..." - Game Pro

ROGER CLEMENS

"A baseball dream come true...!"-Nintendo Power

"...it looks like you're in center field.

A truly cool effect! "- Electronic Gaming Monthly

"...the most original NES baseball game..."

- Electronic Gaming Monthly



FEEL THE HEAT with the best NES™ baseball game!

"Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball is showing that it doesn't take 16-bit power to be successful"

VideoGames & Computer Entertainment

"All the excitement of a pennant race...unique perspectives allow you to see what the players in the field see!"

- Nintendo Power



OVER-THE-SHOULDER-FIELDING: The most realistic perspective ever!

Game players everywhere agree: Roger Clemens' MVP
Baseball's over-the-shoulder perspective, close-up shots of close plays
and pitching tips from "The Rocket" himself capture all the realism and
excitement of live baseball! Feel the Heat!









CLOSE-UP PLAYS AT THE BASE: players control the slide and tag.

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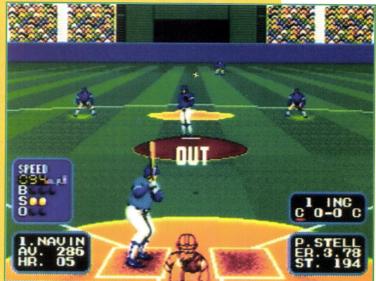
Tommy Lasorda Baseball

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)

2222

The next time you strike out in *Tommy Lasorda Baseball*, try this tip. Pause the game before the pitcher gets the ball back from the catcher—you may have to press **START** quickly several times before you can get it to register. Then, just press C to restart the game, and you'll see that the same batter is up with only two strikes—as if the strikeout never happened!

Our thanks to Tom McMurray of Garden Grove, California, for this valuable egg.





(NINTENDO FOR THE NES)



Matt Murle of Carlinville, Illinois, sent us a great Easter egg for this classic Rare Coin-It title. If you slither at top speed in a straight line through the very first level, without being stopped by running into any enemies, you'll just be able to catch a rocket ship that warps you to the eighth level. Great find, Matt.

















The Addams Family

(OCEAN FOR THE SUPER NES)



VG&CE contributor Zach Meston supplied us with this password, which will take you close to the end of Ocean's kooky SNES adventure:

BLS&P

Now you can simply walk into the music room and play through the game's final stage.



Crystal Mines II

(ATARI FOR THE LYNX)



Enter the password ZERO for a secret level that's loaded with dozens of bonus items. Make sure you don't miss the hidden chambers—and be careful which blocks you push.

What has four legs and flies?

Game Genie

(GALOOB FOR THE NES)



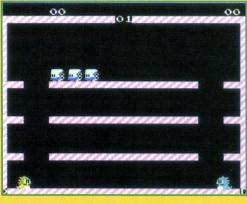
Simon Fitzpatrick of Lebanon, Indiana, has found a powerful variation of some of the codes in the Game Genie's Programming Manual and Codebook.

There are dozens of games listed in the Codebook that allow you to start with one, six or nine lives. Look up one of these games and type in the code for six lives, but substitute the letter E for the last letter in the code, and you'll start with 14 lives instead.

This tip is particularly helpful for titles like









Airwolf, Bubble Bobble and Castlevania II: Simon's Quest, which don't have codes that allow infinite lives. Note that the life counter in most of these games will usually display a strange character or a letter in place of the number of lives; this is "normal."





Might & Magic— Gates to Another World

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)



Here's an outrageously powerful tip that was discovered by Casey Smith of Oregon City, Oregon. It allows you to equip your party of adventurers with free experience points and superpowerful weapons at any time.

First, choose "View Character" from the noncombat menu. When the window appears that says "View which?", press and hold L, A and C, then let go of all three buttons at once. When the character menus come up, keep pressing L; then you'll see a lot of strange characters with incredible weapons and armor.

Now all you need to do is make these new characters trade their treasures to the members of your party. You can earn quick experience points by accepting the knight's quest, since you'll probably have immediate access to the weapon he asks for, and you can always sell the unused weapons for plenty of gold.

Great Easter egg, Casey. Keep up the good work.



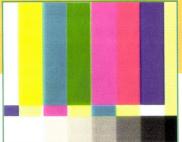


El Viento

(RENOVATION FOR THE GENESIS)



You can get a "color bar" test pattern to appear on the screen by pressing A, B, C and **START** when *El Viento's* Wolfteam logo appears on the screen. Our thanks to Garret Ulmer of Oxnard, California, for telling us about this bizarre egg.





NHL Hockey

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)







Here's a strange egg that was sent in by Stefan Gronsky of El Cerrito, California. To perform the trick, you'll need to select a twoplayer "teammates" game with penalties turned on.

When one of the players gets into a fight, watch carefully to see if the referee calls on the other player as a fight instigator. If the player you're controlling is called as the fight instigator, steer him away from the penalty box and start bumping into the walls. If you

keep trying, you should be able to move the player through the walls and make him skate through the audience!



Rush. For your Game Boy, of course.





CAPCOM

VIDEO

Krusty's Super Fun House

ACCLAIM
For the Super NES (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	FIVE	NG.	FD	GF						

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Krusty's Super Fun House is a game that benefits from Nintendo's kinder, gentler policy, which now allows licensees to release games on formats other than Nintendo consoles. The Super NES version of this game appears under the Acclaim label, while the Genesis version is under Acclaim's new Genesis-only label, Flying Edge. (Flying Edge?! Great company name—NOT!)

At the start of the game, our antihero, Krusty the Clown, has got a problem. His Super Fun House has been overrun by rats. Lots of 'em. The Super Fun House is a big place, with five sections and up to 14 levels in each section. Krusty has to clean out the rats in each level by leading them into some vicious rattraps—we're talking cruel and unusual rodent disposal. Along the way, you'll also have to avoid (or shoot) some nasty

enemies, like the Pink Flying Pigs and the Giant Goofy Birds. Okay, their names may not sound nasty, but believe me, they're nasty.

Fortunately, the rats are extremely dumb, and will walk in whatever direction you lead them. Unfortunately, it's not easy to lead the rats in the direction you want them to go. You've got to use a variety of different items to march the rats into the trap.

The most useful item (which you'll find in most levels) is a plain old blue block. Krusty can pick up and move the block to act as a stepping stone for the rats or he can use it to create a wall that the rats can't walk through. Krusty can even use blocks to create a step for a little extra jumping height to scale walls that are normally too high.

As you advance into the game, you will find more interesting items: kickable blocks, which you can kick, but can't pick up; super springs, which you can use for some massive jumps; blowers, which



Both the Super NES (this page) and Genesis (next page) versions of *Krusty's Super Fun House* are virtually identical, with only a slight difference in the graphics.









blow the rats in the direction they are facing toward; glass jars, which can hold rats and be used like the blue blocks; and others.

One game-play problem with Super Fun House is that you're never aware exactly how much damage Krusty has taken from enemies or how close he is to kicking the bucket. You can get an idea of the damage you've taken by not moving Krusty for a moment—if he's breathing heavy, he's about to die; if he's smiling, he's not—but an exact figure would have been more useful. You also don't know how many rats there are in the current level, or if you've gotten rid of them all. You just have to make sure you've done everything right.

My final (and small) complaint is that you only receive a password when you complete an entire section of the Fun House. If you run out of lives before finishing a section, you'll have to start that section all over again. I would have preferred to get a pass-



word after every level or at least every few levels. It's a real drag to have to play through a bunch of tough levels repeatedly, just to reach the level you died on.

The graphics are good, if a bit plain, and virtually identical in both versions. The SNES version has better graphics (a prettier opening sequence and parallax-scrolling backgrounds in some levels), and the SNES sound effects are slightly better, but the Genesis version is just as playable. The "feel" of the game is the same in both versions, and the puzzles are identical. The only major change is the passwords, which are different in each version.

Krusty's Super Fun House is an excellent puzzle/platform game that benefits from The Simpsons tie-in, but it would be just as much fun if it had a non-Simpsons theme. Kudos to Acclaim for releasing this great title on both major 16-bit formats!

—Zach Meston

Acclaim Entertainment/Flying Edge 71 Audrey Ave. Oyster Bay, NY 11771 (516) 922-2400

Star Odyssey

SAGE'S CREATION
For the Sega Genesis (\$69.95)

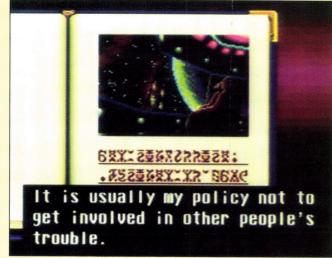
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Welcome to the Galaxy Union Empire, the member planets of which work together to provide protection for their citizens, as well as a galactic language and currency standard. Unfortunately, despite all good intentions, things are not going well in the Empire. Radan warships have been attacking star-faring vessels, throwing the member planets into fear and confusion. It's up to you to eradicate the threat and bring peace back to the Empire.

Your quest begins in the town of Glow, and like most role-playing games (RPGs),









stephorn engineer town; the next town.

there is much talking to townspeople and fighting to do. When you fight monsters, you gain experience, which increases your character's level. You also get credits, which allow you to purchase additional supplies, weapons and armor.

While Star Odyssey isn't a battle-heavy game, there is a lot of wandering from town to town required, talking to the same people repeatedly. With every new discovery you make in the game, any townsperson may have something new to tell you. Essentially, this means you must explore the same towns over and over, which may be frustrating to some players.

The towns, depending on their size, contain several types of shops and residences. Besides the townspeoples' homes, you can visit weapon shops, armor shops, hospitals, hotels, restaurants, banks and star ports, each of which offer some type of service to galactic adventurers.

There are many areas to visit in the Star Odyssey world. However, when the game first begins, your travels are strictly limited. Only by discovering new "keys" to offers newcomers to the RPG genre a gentle introduction into that realm.

Star Odyssey, by Sage's Creation, use with the transporter can you expand the area to explore. This makes Star Odyssey a mostly linear game, one that is perhaps more suited to novice adventurers, who have yet to hone their adventuring skills.

> There are only a few types of weapons and armor in the game, their effectiveness usually based on their price, with the higher-priced items being stronger or more powerful. Weapons include knives, ray guns, whips, bazookas and swords. Armor can include not only the conventional body armor, but also various types of shoes, gloves, knee pads, goggles and ribbons.

> Besides the weapons and armor, you can buy such items as power potions, which restore some of your hit points, and poison antidotes, which, of course, cure you after a poisonous attack. Other items you'll discover in the game include the pocket, which enables you to carry more items; the newspaper, which contains stories about recent events; and the Stephorn parts, which you need to get the towns' transporters operational.







It's so fast, it'll make your teeth rattle. So intense it'll make your toes curl. So action-packed, you'll go rocketing, blasting, and splashing your way through 8 stages in Thunder Spirits™, the Super NES™ Action/Arcade classic. It may take facing horrific 3-D creatures & multi-level scrolling. It may take a will of iron & nerves of steel. But you've got what it takes! Even if you have to hurl.

Rather than a traditional set of magical spells (which seem out of place in a science-fiction game), Star Odyssey features forces that can be combined for various effects. There are four force elements—Fire, Wind, Aqua and Zero—each of which has a level from one to nine. Combining the base forces in various ways creates a Cosmo Force that has a particular effect when invoked. These effects can be offensive, such as setting an enemy on fire, or defensive, such as restoring an adventurer's hit points.

Star Odyssey, while it offers little new to the genre, is a playable enough RPG that ought to please adventurers looking for a ticket to the stars. If you're new to RPGs, Star Odyssey offers a gentle introduction to what is rapidly becoming one of the favorite types of video and computer games.

—Clayton Walnum

Sage's Creation 12062 Valley View, Suite 250 Garden Grove, CA 92645 (714) 893-0309

Fire Hawk

CAMERICA
For the Nintendo Entertainment
System (\$43)

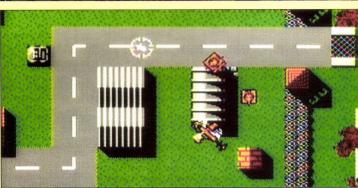
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

It's close to a year later, and I'm still recommending Camerica's *Micro Machines* to everyone who owns an NES. *Micro Machines* was created by a group called Codemasters, who use as their slogan, "Absolutely brilliant." Well, they're going two for two with *Fire Hawk*, also for the NES. Brilliant overstates it somewhat, but, like *Micro Machines*, *Fire Hawk* takes a fresh, imaginative approach to an old concept that's been begging for a new treatment.

You've got a number of helicopters, and you'll take a series of sojourns into enemy territory and dodge enemy fire in an attempt to rescue your men. You can then return to home base with each rescued







paratrooper or you can keep dodging and filling up the helicopter with as many as you can transport at once. If you get shot down in the process, you lose a helicopter plus any paratroopers currently on board.

So far, sounds familiar, doesn't it? Something like...Choplifter, perhaps? Exactly, but Fire Hawk goes off in new directions. You've got two kinds of ordnance (guns and bombs) that must be rationed, and you've got a huge map of enemy territory that's slowly revealed as you progress through the levels. You approach the game from two different angles: an aerial view for your approach to each awaiting POW, and a close-up of the action as you make the pickup while fending off incoming enemy choppers.

Scenarios—there are seven increasingly difficult ones—all begin and end aboard an aircraft carrier. After a short flight, you're in enemy airspace, and it's thick with antiaircraft weaponry, landing strips, railway... basically one huge military installation. The object is to follow the little directional arrow to the nearest paratrooper and cut a swath through the enemy forces to reach

...IT'S JUST THE BEST.



In the case of jet fighter games, it's not always a smooth flight from movie screen to Game Boy screen. Especially if you're looking for

a top-notch simulator.

Introducing TURN AND BURN.™ Its Navy F-14 Tomcat handles like the real thing when you answer the call to intercept and destroy enemy bogeys!

TURN AND BURN's got complete 360° rotation.





Dynamic aircraft carrier takeoffs and landings!

Fully-instrumented control panels. A HUD for enemy targeting. Radar and landing displays for smooth navigation.
Wing-mounted

50mm cannons. AIM-54

and AIM-9 air-to-air missiles. A sophisticated ECM system to confuse oncom-

ing warheads.
Actual in-flight
refueling. And
realistic midocean carrier
takeoffs and
landings that
separate the



aces from the raw recruits.

You won't find dogfighting like this in any other Game Boy title.

So don't be fooled by slick namedropping. If you want the movie, rent the video.



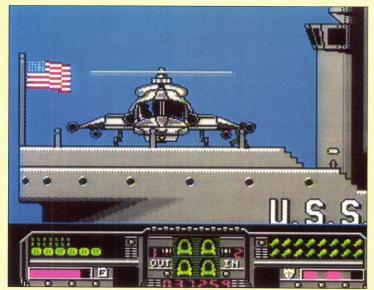
TURN AND BURN is the Game Boy jet fighter game that demonstrates definitive air superiority!

Designed by Dan Kitchen and Roger Amidon.





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Camerica's Fire Hawk contains seven levels that begin and end aboard an aircraft carrier, and become increasingly more difficult.

him (or her, if this is today's Army). Your ammo and fuel are limited, but destroying ground targets will net you all sorts of new ammo, greater weapon power and other valuable merchandise. Your shields take three hits before disintegrating. (Okay, so we're talking a slightly futuristic chopper here.) Trips back to base will refill and restore you partially.

Once you find a paratrooper, you hover momentarily before switching point-of-view to the ground. As a paratrooper races for the rope ladder, opposition forces fly in from either side. With your two automatic heat-seeking target sights, you fend off the attackers; the paratrooper boards; cut back to the overhead screen as you race to find the next trooper or, if you're a wimp, to run back home to Momma Ship and deposit your freight. Once you've dropped off—or inadvertently incinerated—all the paratroopers in a level, you advance to the next level: more paratroopers, more enemies, more ground to cover.

The graphics make no pretense of being digitized, but the slightly cartoon-

ish style is crisp and flicker-free. The music's got a great beat; you can dance to it. The toughest part of the game, by far, is getting used to flying the gunship. The controls are unusual—similar to *Micro Machines'*. But the result is a good sensation of momentum. I could also wish for a level select, but perhaps there's one in there that just hasn't been found yet.

I didn't enjoy Fire Hawk quite as much as Micro Machines; it simply got old a little faster, but it's still a better game than most of what's out there. Codemasters has added yet another classy, original production to Camerica's impressive lineup. Nothing against the NES, but I'd love to see what they can do with 16 bits and a CD-ROM.

—Josh Mandel

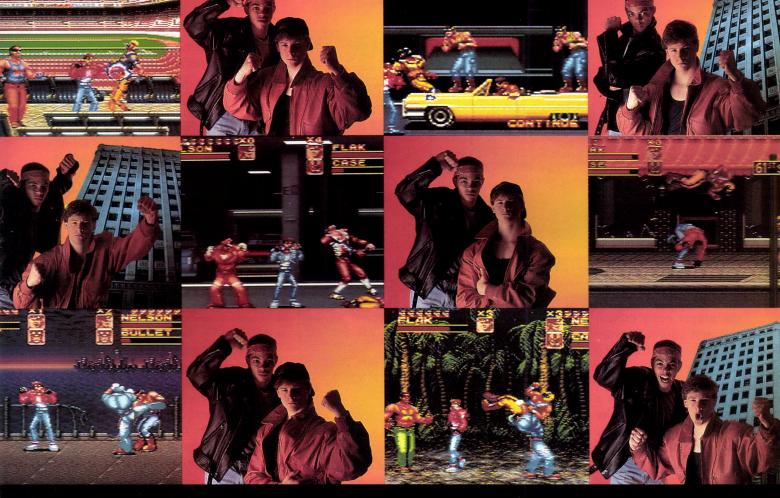
Camerica 3415 14th Ave. Markham, ON CANADA L3R 0H3 (416) 470-2515

Mutation Nation

SNK For the Neo•Geo (\$179)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

An explosion at a biochemical laboratory where illegal genetic experiments are being conducted by a mad scientist results in the population of the city being transformed into genetic mutants. You, the player, as Ricky Jones and/or



RALL TURSES

KICK SOME YOU-KNOW-WHAT!

Take back the streets with Rival Turf!™ The first simultaneous two player action game for the Super NES®!

game for the Super NES®!
The inner city "Brawl Brothers" are tired of punks takin' over the 'hood. They're out to clean up. And the result is a fast and furious fight of incredible two-fisted, "tag-team" street-fighting action

street-fighting action.
Get your licks in with ultra-realistic
street-fighting techniques: body slams, leg
sweeps, jabs, hooks, uppercuts and more.
Kick and punch your way through 6 stages
on dozens of super-realistic backgrounds.

Play simultaneously or go head-tohead against another player in the special "versus" mode. Or take on the street scum alone in the single-player mode.

This could be the toughest fight of your life. Better start swinging now!

The roughest, toughest streetfighting game ever!





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Johnny Hart, return home to discover that the entire city has been transformed into the Mutation Nation. That's the premise behind SNK's latest entry into the "guy game" beat-'em-up genre.

Mutation Nation's game play is presented in a sidescrolling perspective

similar to Capcom's Final Fight. There are six areas (levels) that the player must punch, kick and pound his way through in order to complete the game. All the action in the first five areas is located in a different part of the city (e.g., street, seaside, park and topside a semi rig), with the sixth area of the game taking place inside the biochemical lab building.

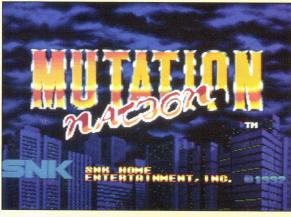
As the player traverses each area, a variety of biomutants will be engaged. Biomutants vary from the very bizarre, transforminginsect types to squidlike, humanoid mutants that look like they're dressed in L.A. Rams football uniforms. As is

typical of most games of this type, at the end of each level, gamers get to duke it out with an end boss. The final level is strictly comprised of all the previous end bosses, and, after defeating all of them, the final confrontation is with the transformed mad scientist who caused the mutations.

On-screen gauges indicate the player's remaining life force and power level (when using deathblow attacks), and deathblow item indicators show the current attack item and its usage time up game where players must punch, kick remaining. Deathblow and attack powerups can be found scattered throughout the levels. There are four special types of attacks: Spirit, Explosion, Thunder









SNK's Mutation Nation is a beat-'emand pound their way through six levels.

God and Tornado, and each can be used up to three times before it is exhausted.

Ricky Jones and Johnny Hart—the characters the player can choose between-each have a different deathblow capability. Ricky is capable of a continuous, high-speed kick, while Johnny can use a spinning, whirlwind attack nicknamed "The Break Dance Death." Using the character's deathblow will decrease his life force, so it wouldn't be wise to use these kicks too many times.

Mutation Nation's graphics and sound rank about average when compared with other Neo•Geo games in this category. There really is very little innovation to set it apart from the rest of the system carts, considering what the Neo-Geo is capable of.

Mutation Nation ranks third behind games like Sengoku and Burning Fight. Don't get me wrong, it isn't a bad game. It just doesn't achieve the status of the aforementioned.

I recommend that you rent Mutation Nation at your local video store before purchasing the title, just to make sure that it meets your requirements. Remember to "try before you buy"; it doesn't hurt to take a look at a game before dropping big bucks on a title that you might not like.

-Mike Davila

Super Battletank: War in the Gulf

ABSOLUTE ENTERTAINMENT For the Super NES (\$60)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

A number of observers of Operation Desert Storm wryly remarked how the war was fought like a "giant Nintendo game." Super Battletank: War in the Gulf brings to mind that saying "art imitates life-and vice versa." It's a video game based upon a war that was said to have been fought like a video game. The philosophical ramblings ("When does the game end and the war begin?" "Are the game and war one and the same?" etc.) may provide brain food for bored academics.

There are already Gulf War-themed titles, as is expected. But most skirt reallife facts of the event by using fictitious scenarios that happen to be set in the Middle East desert, or come across as an ambiguous "sequel" to Desert Storm. The results are weirdly apolitical settings where the enemy is a simple stock version of the powermonger dictator.

Super Battletank doesn't shy from history. It's very clear where and when the game is set: It's February 1991. After nearly a month of continual Allied bombing raids

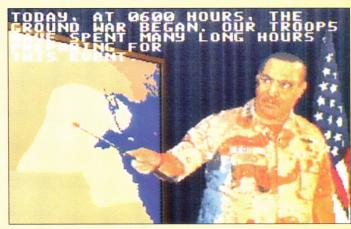
on the country of Iraq and Iraqi forces dug into Kuwait, the moment that the Allied soldiers have been waiting for all these months has finally come: Orders have been given to commence the ground assault from Saudi Arabia into Kuwait.

As the commander of an M1A1 Abrams Battletank, you're assigned a sector where you must enter and clear away Iraqi weapons. It's guaranteed that this "sweep" isn't going to be peaceful, since you'll be one of the first of the Allied army entering Kuwait. Inevitably, lots of things will be blown up—you just have to make sure it's not you and your tank that will be the ones going up in smoke.

Sectors are littered with any combination of Soviet T-62 tanks and Mi-24 HIND helicopters. Mines may be buried in the desert sand, so careful tank maneuvering is needed to avoid them. There are also the infamous SCUD missile launchers. Destroying these is a high priority.

The Abrams tank is armed with machine guns that are used for basic attacks on enemy ground weapons. They're also effective for clearing away mines. For long-distance assaults, the cannons can be adjusted to fire a shell toward a faraway tank or to blow HIND choppers out of the sky. Laser-guided shells make things easier as they lock onto targets and travel toward them automatically.

When things get really rough on the battlefield, your tank can release a smoke screen that will confuse most enemies. This helps when you need to pull your tank into defensive position, but daredevils might find this a devious, though rather risky, way to pull off an offensive maneuver.

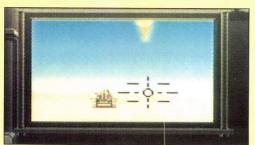


Absolute's Super Battletank contains digitized screen shots of Gulf War footage that is shown between missions.





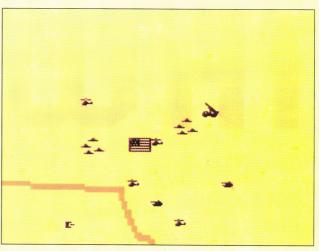




Super Battletank: War in the Gulf is set in February 1991, nearly a month into the continual Allied bombing raids on Iraq.

Covert Allied bases are available that you can drive into for the three "Rs" of tank warfare: refueling, repair and rearmament. The situation turns really bad, however, when you must invade the less friendly Iraqi strongholds, such as oil refineries, chemical weapon dumps, tank bunkers and so on. In these places, the odds are against you, so your tank must be fully armed and you totally prepared.

Digitized screen shots of Gulf War footage are shown throughout in between the missions. Likewise, enemy weapons



are scanned images, which gives the game a realistic edge. The best use of this technique is in the Iraqi strongholds. Needless to say, all of this great-looking stuff heightens play.

Generally, Super Battletank plays like a basic tank simulator. There's plenty of tank warfare action loaded here, appropriately presented with the sort of high-tech gloss that made Operation Desert Storm popular.

-Howard H. Wen

Absolute Entertainment 251 Rock Road, P.O. Box 116 Glen Rock, NJ 07452 (201) 652-1227

Double Dragon

BALLISTIC
For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Double Dragon is back yet again, this time on the Sega Genesis. And although the graphics and sound are slightly improved, many slug-and-kick fans may find that this version doesn't hold up too well.

The story's the same: You play the martial-arts expert, Billy Lee, as he tries to outsmart and outfight the dangerous Black Warriors, who were sent to kidnap Billy's girlfriend.

But whether you'll make it to the end, where you can rescue Marion from the evil Shadow Boss, depends as much upon which game options you choose as it does upon your fighting skills. How's that? Well, the options screen allows you as many as

six lives and six continues. The mathematically inclined will realize this means you can have a whopping 36 lives to lose in your quest for Marion and the Shadow Boss. Does this make the game easy? Let's just say that I rescued Marion on my first try—in only about 15 minutes!

Of course, if you want to get the most out of the game, you'll resist the temptation to make yourself what is, for all practical purposes, invincible. Sure you will.

The Genesis version of *Double Dragon* features all the usual fighting moves. You can make Billy punch, jump and kick, and, using various button combinations, you can also get Billy to slam his opponents with jump kicks, elbow smashes, knee smashes, shoulder throws, leaping reverse kicks, head butts, roundhouse kicks and uppercuts.

If you're looking for a long battle though, you'd better look elsewhere. There are only four stages in the Genesis *Double Dragon*. You start in the city slum, and then progress through the industrial area, the forest and finally to the Shadow Boss's hideout. Along the way, you'll face not only many types of Black Warriors, but also many obstacles, including cliffs, water, spears, spiked pits and more.

It wasn't obstacles that made the original *Double Dragon* a hit. It was the fun players had exchanging blows with a bevy of baddies. Some thugs you'll meet in this version include Willy, who is an expert puncher; Row-









The Genesis version of *Double Dragon* features all the usual fighting moves.

per, who likes to toss oil drums; Williams, who swings a mean bat; Linda, who tames her enemies with a whip; and Chintai. who is a martial-arts master. As with the preceding Double Dragon games, you can grab weapons the thugs drop and use them against their owners. You can also pick up oil drums, boxes and rocks you might find laying around. Bopping baddies on the beanie is a great way to keep them in line!

All in all, the Genesis version of *Double Dragon* offers little for your money. Even if you can resist the urge to give yourself 36 lives in order to ensure a longer-lasting game, you'll still have only four scenes through which to fight, which means you'll play those scenes over and over *ad nauseam*. This one is for die-hard *Double Dragon* fans only.

-C.W.

Ballistic 550 S. Winchester Blvd. San Jose, CA 95128 (408) 985-1700

Might & Magic: Secret of the Inner Sanctum

AMERICAN SAMMY
For the Nintendo Entertainment
System (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Okay, let's see...graph paper, munchies, caffeine, extra paper and pencils—looks like you're all set for some serious adventuring. These are some of the items that will prove invaluable if you tackle *Might & Magic* for the NES.

The stated objective is to find a fabled "Inner Sanctum," a lost Atlantis sort of place supposed to house many secrets. Your true objective is much more complex, as it consists of traveling through several towns, the dungeons beneath them, over mountains, through forests and into castles. There are quests to be fulfilled, secrets to be dis-



covered and, of course, monsters to be destroyed.

Might & Magic is similar in many respects to some of the role-playing adventure games that have already been on the market for some time—there are multitudes of weapons, armors, special items, magic, perspectives of dank, dripping dungeons and plenty of mean-tempered and hungry monsters ready for a quick meal.

Forming your party and getting started doesn't take long, as the characters are all pre-rolled, which lets the action start off right away. This differs from games where you often must reroll characters several times in order to make up a decent party (though even these characters may be changed in an area of the first town). There are different characters stationed within each of four towns within the game, which may be added for a party of up to six characters.

Experience points are what allow characters to advance in ability and gain more hit points. The gold that comes along with it enables them to buy better weapons and armor as they become available. Plan on spending several hours building up both,



American Sammy's Might & Magic: Secret of the Inner Sanctum is a very challenging and difficult game, placed within a nice package.

as your characters start out fairly weak and without any gold whatsoever. Other than a simple club, and a bit of food (yet another necessity for good health), you are on your own.

There are several places that need to be visited as you travel within each town: At the lnn, you may save your progress so far (via battery backup!), as well as sign up the above mentioned additional characters to complement your party. Needless to

LINKS 386 Pro version of our popular. Rivaled only

award-winning LINKS 386 Pro version of our popular, award-winning LINKS golf game offers many dramatic improvements that make playing LINKS 386 Pro more enjoyable – and gives you exciting new golfing possibilities!

SUPER VGA Graphics and 386 Power.

The new LINKS 386 Pro, featuring Harbour Town Golf Links, is the first golf game specifically designed for the graphic capabilties and computing power of your personal 386/486 computer system. SUPER VGA 256-color graphics at 640x400 resolution display breathtaking views of LINKS Championship Courses. Your friends won't believe that your computer looks so good!

Texturing of fairways, rough, sand, and other surfaces adds an extra level of realism.

Championship golf at your fingertips.

A lot of listening went into the new LINKS 386 Pro. Many of the new features and improvements were added in response to direct requests from LINKS users like you! An exciting new feature is our Unique Computer Opponent. Play a round of golf and save your game. The new LINKS 386 Pro recorded every shot you made. Send your game off to your buddy and he can play against you right on the screen, shot for shot, as if you were right there next to him! We've also included pre-recorded games from worthy opponents, statistics, a variety of game play modes and much, much more.

Male and female golfers.

You can use any of the 7 existing LINKS courses or upgrade your favorite course to the Super VGA version.

SCREEN CAPTURES BRRTON CREEK-FRZIO Address Skip DEFAULT Draw Straight Gimmie Rotate CLUB Grid Hole: 2 Par: 4 Shots: Profile Fade Ball to Pin: 97 YD. Chip User1 Setup Top Scores Drop

Over 345 combinations of viewing windows.

With the new LINKS 386 Pro you're not stuck with just one standard viewing window. With a few clicks of your mouse you can split the screen giving you a real-time reverse view of your shot to



the green or add a scaleable top-view that displays the flight of your ball. Scorecard, club distance chart, terrain profile and other panels give you the flexibility to display what you want to view while playing and you can change your viewing setup at anytime!



Award-winning graphics combined with 386 computing power!



say for this type of game, the "save" feature is the most important. Until your characters build up a bit of experience and hit points, you literally need to save your game practically after every battle. With no armor and a club, you just don't present that difficult of a snack for the average monster early on.

A blacksmith has weapons, armor and some useful miscellaneous items for sale, once you acquire a bit of gold. There are

purportedly over 200 different items that are scattered throughout the game, consisting of weapons, armor and other miscellaneous items.

The training grounds are important for character progression. When your characters have acquired enough experience, they will be moved up a level, awarded additional hit points and may be granted additional spell levels in some cases.

A tavern is also available for drinks and socializing with the local townfolk. Generous tips may also loosen their tongues to provide rumors to aid your quest.

There are two brands of magic active in the *Might & Magic* world. Clerics and mages each have 47 spells spread throughout seven levels of ability. These consist both of noncombat and combat types, for use in battle, medicine and transportation.

It sounds familiar to several games you've either seen or heard of before to be sure. *Might & Magic* compares favorably to the several that I have had experience with in the past, and improves upon them in several ways. Graphically, the game is superb. The monsters are all detailed and

by the game itself.



Real-time split screen views of your shot. Great for making your approach shot to the green.

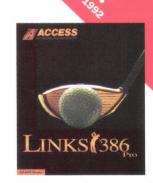
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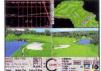


Wide, panoramic views giving you a better feel of the lay of the course.

Improved swing indicator for easier putting.

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Might & Magic is similar in many respects to some of the role-playing adventure games that have been on the market for some time.

appropriately hungry looking; and the 3-D passageways and catacombs are all equally excellent, varying considerably in appearance from place to place. No more grainy-looking walls and floors here.

The music and sound effects in the game are equally as polished, with the music changing as you proceed from one level to the next or from town to town.

Of course, these would all be rendered

inconsequential without good game play to go with them. Fortunately, everything meshes together nicely. The battery backup option is a must, but a built-in auto-mapping feature helps tremendously in making progress, though some of your own mapping and comments are still needed. The only thing that may irritate some players is the large amount of time needed to build up your characters to allow them to live long enough to even make it outside the city, much less to another town.

I nonetheless found *Might & Magic* a very challenging and difficult game, placed within a nice package. Not recommended for amateur role-players, however.

-Brent Walker

American Sammy Corp. 2421-205th St., Suite D-104 Torrance, CA 90501 (310) 320-7167



Fighting Masters' play control is super-responsive, giving gamers puppetlike control over their character.



Fighting Masters

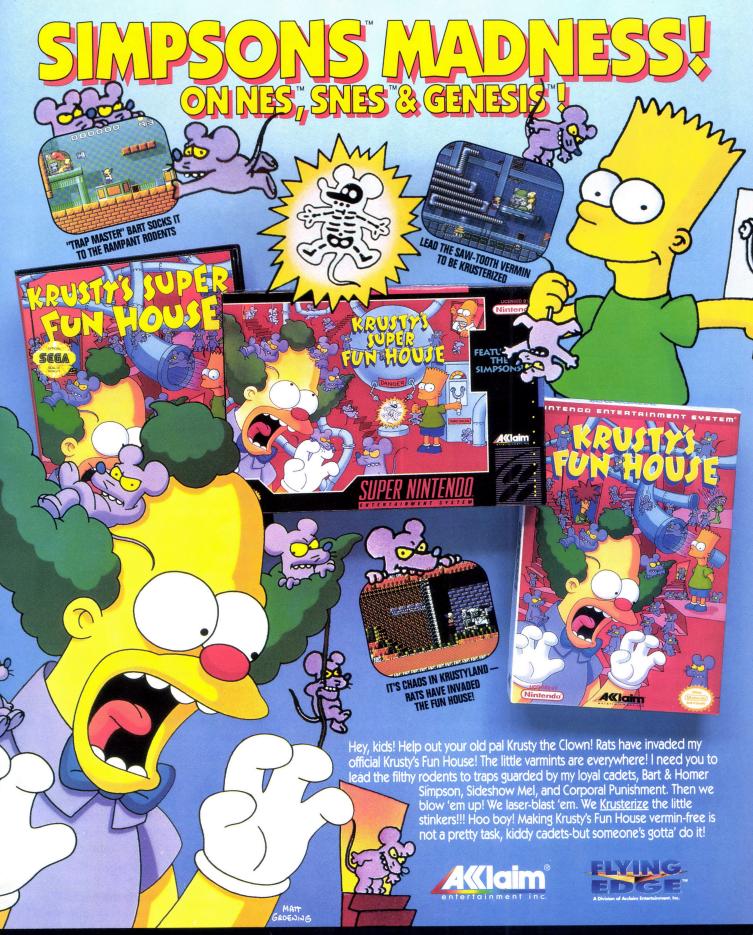
TRECO
For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

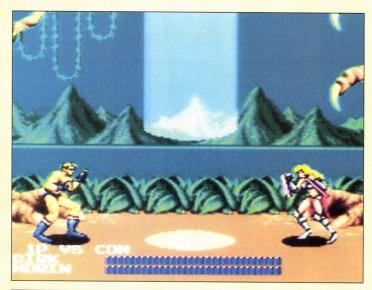
Lately, fighting games for the Genesis seem to be heading in two directions: Either they're intricate, impossible to control and about as much fun to watch as a bout between two over-the-hill heavy-weights, or they're simple, fast-moving and give you a real aerobic button-pressing workout. Treco's Fighting Masters falls into the latter category—no three-quarter perspectives, no "real-time" body movements, no "press 'up' twice and button A when you're two steps away and the power meter reads three," etc. Just good, old-fashioned bashing and punching.

The plot (do games like this really need a plot?) is minimal: An alien sun is about to go nova, and representatives of 12 races have to do battle to see who makes it onto the last ship out. You can choose to play as a human—the one in this game, rather unimaginatively, is named Dirk—but the real fun is in assuming the role of a creepoid extraterrestrial. The designers seem to have drawn heavily on earthly mythology here: There's a Hindu-like elephant being, a walking head that looks like something you might find on Easter Island, a winged Phoenix and a firebreathing green dragon.

Fighting Masters' game play, and to a lesser extent its graphics, earn it a technical KO over the competition. Without benefit of a manual, I was able to master the controls in a few minutes—even trashing a couple of opponents in the bargain! There's a wide variety of moves. though some, of course, are more effective than others. Each creature has one unique, painful-looking attack that wreaks special havoc on its opponents: For example, Morin, a pulchritudinous female alien, wields a razor-sharp scythe that practically slices her opponents in half. The play control is super-responsive, which in games like this means you can actually duck without consulting the manual first—once you get used to it, in fact, your creature fits you like a gruesome little hand puppet.



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As for the visuals, the combatants are smallish but well-animated, and they tangle it up convincingly—when one gremlin picks up another and cracks its gnarly spine (well, that's what it seems to be doing), the poses are revoltingly convincing. Even better is the weird, Altered States-like effect when a creature gets whomped: All you see is the outline of its body, the rest of it flashing orange like a cross between a nuclear holocaust and a TV picture in need of vertical adjustment. As an added, gratuitous touch, when you lose a match (which happens when you run out of those ubiquitous life bars) you get to watch your overjoyed opponent do a little jig over your lifeless, prone, apparently incinerated corpse. The sound effects are more than adequate, though I could have done without the constantly looped music. (What's the point of music anyway? Do the monsters hire a deejay to spin tunes while they duke it out?)

There are a couple of other things about *Fighting Masters* that could have stood a little improvement. First, there's



Fighting Masters' game play earns it a technical KO over the competition.

little else—make that nothing else—besides the one-on-one grudge matches; no chance to earn new abilities, no unexpected plot developments (it would have been nice to be ganged up on occasionally by two or three creatures at once), nothing. And second, if you play against the computer, expect your opponents to be extraterrestrial patsies—unless you opt for the "hard" setting, where you can expect to lose at least some of the time. Hey, if I ever meet any of these slimeballs for real, I don't want to be lulled into a false sense of security.

-Bob Strauss

Treco USA 2421 205th St., D-104 Torrance, CA 90501 (310) 782-6960

Arcana

HAL AMERICA For the Super NES (\$64.95)

SOUND/MUSIC		and the second	-	0.000					A CONTRACTOR	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Hack-and-slash adventures have always been popular on video-game consoles. The 8-bit NES library is filled with this kind of game, such as *The Bard's Tale, Dragon Warrior I, II* and *III, Might & Magic, Wizardry* and many more. These games all have one thing in common: You spend the majority of your time fighting hordes of big, ugly bad guys. *Arcana* is one of the first hack-and-slash titles to appear on the Super NES, and it has the same strengths—and weak-





nesses—as most other hackand-slashers.

Arcana takes place in the kingdom of Elemen, where civil war has broken out among the numerous kingdoms. The evil wizard Galneon has taken advantage of the chaos to kill King Wagnall and take over his domain. Galneon's ultimate goal is to resurrect the Empress Rimsala, who several hundred years earlier held Elemen under her "Reign of Evil."

You play the character of Rooks, the last of the Card Masters. The Card Masters stopped

Rimsala during her first incarnation, and your quest is to stop her a second time. Along the way, you'll meet up with Axs, a dwarf who fought alongside your deceased father; Teefa and Salah, the daughters of King Wagnall; and Darwin, a studly adventurer who loves to fight. (He sure picked the right game to appear in!)

Arcana takes the "Card Master" theme and runs with it; the graphics of the characters and monsters are presented as though they were playing cards. There are even four "suits" of cards: the elements of Earth, Fire, Water and Wind. One of the challenges in the game is learning how the elements interact with—and react to—each other.

Arcana's story line is broken up into five chapters. In each chapter, your goal is to explore several large areas and kill everything in your way. Exploring is made easy, thanks to the built-in auto-mapping function. You can call up a map at any time; the map





Good morning. Do your best today!

first hack-and-slash titles to appear on the Super NES.

shows where you are and where you've been.

The combat sequence is where you kill everything in your way, and where Arcana goes awry. There's simply too much fighting in this game. Instead of supplying some interesting puzzles or hidden areas, Arcana forcefeeds you battle after tedious battle. Combatintensive games need puzzles and hidden goodies to balance out the fighting; Arcana doesn't supply enough of either.

Some of Arcana's graphics are pretty cool. especially when you're walking through one of the myriad dungeons (the dungeons reminded me a lot of the Genesis adventure game, Shining in the Darkness). The graphics during the combat scenes are only average, however, and the spell effects are really disappointing. Casting a Fire spell results in a puny fireball zig-zagging across each enemy; an Earth spell causes a wimpy little shower of

boulders. The Super NES can do much better than this.

The music in Arcana is outstanding. Each location in the game has its own excellent musical score, although the combat sequence uses the same music every time, making it even more tedious. As with most games, Arcana's music becomes repetitive after awhile, but it's still well worth listening to.

The bottom line: If you want a game where you plow your way through wave after wave of baddies, Arcana is a dream come true. Adven-

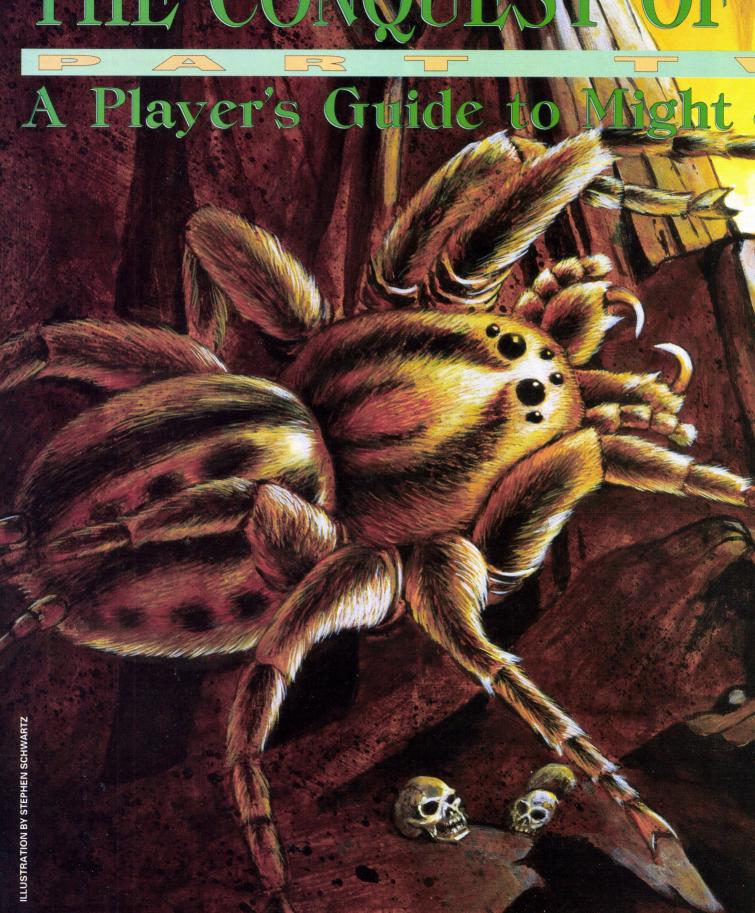
Hal America's Arcana is one of the turers looking for game play "depth" won't find it here.

-Z.M.

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continued on page 110

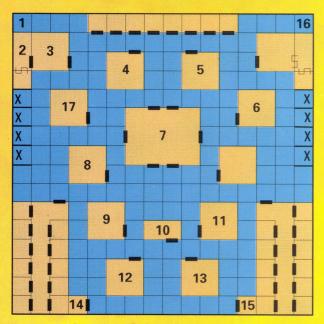
THE CONQUESTIOF



52 • JULY 1992

VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT





Atlantium

- 1. Cavern Entrance
- 2. Hirelings
- 3. City Jail
- 4. Drewnhald Ironworks
- 5. Carriage Inn
- 6. Boar's Tongue Tavern
- 7. The Collosseum

Door

- 8. Eleusinian Temple
- 9. Cabalist Mage Guild
- 10. Odysseus' Tongue
- 11. Island Training
- 12. The Olympic Trial
- 13. Hippomenes & Atlanta
- 14. Beautify Atlantium
- 15. The Mystic Portal
- 16. City Gate
- 17. Classic Key Shoppe









In the northwestern part of region C2, you'll find Corak's Cavern, a place filled with all types of undead. Your party members with clerical powers will get a good workout here.

REGION B2



Region B2 features some special locations, including a circus that can boost your attributes if you visit on days 140 or 170 and this grove for archers only.



Hidden away in the cavern is Corak's coffin, which can be viewed only by clerics and their thief helpers. The body, however, seems to be missing.



you step into t ransporters here will zap ou to different dungeons.



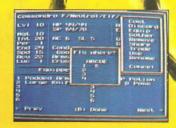
your intelligence ...can boost significantly



our auto-map off en adventuring in this any other area, for areathat matte



Then walk to area X2 Y9, where a spider will threaten to eat you if you can't answer his riddle. Answer KEYS, and then ...



...fly to region C1, and ...



...walk to area X1 Y1, where you'll meet this hermit, looking for his keys.



When you give the hermit the keys you got from the spider, you will receive 10,000 experience points.



Also in Corak's cavern, you'll find the fantastic Lloyd's Beacon spell.



The dungeons provide lots of adventures, but may be too dangerous for weak adventurers. If the going gets tough, use a Surface spell to skedaddle.



While region B2 has good things to offer, it also contains fearsome enemies. Griffins are especially deadly, changing your best fighters into stone.



The best part is that you can use the key trick over and over. Use your Lloyd's Beacon spell to set the hermit's location, then fly back to the spider to get more keys.



You can set the Llor Beacon spell to remembe most any location, and then return there instantly



In region B2, you'll find this fruit tree, which...



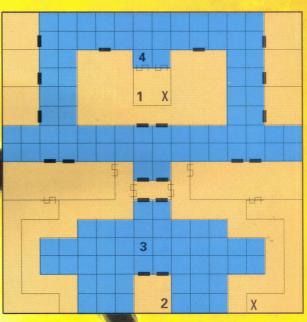
You may investigate certain areas you do...



VULCANIA



In the town of Vulcania, you'll find four statues that...



s Cavern Corak

- 1. Lloyd's Beacon 2. Corak's Body
- 3. Invisible Barrier 4. Exit
- Secret door

X Message on wall

EXPERIENCE POINTS!



Want to get a heap of free experience points? First, use the Fly spell to get to region A2.



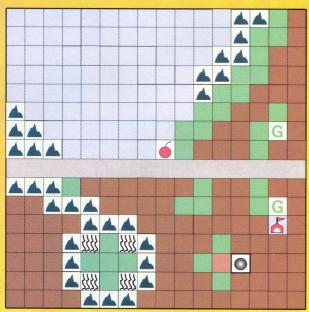
...be prepared for a tough

battle.

...when looked at in the right order...



...will provide a poem...





... containing important information about Cron.



The caverns beneath Vulcania are extremely complex.



Light forest \text{\tiket{\text{\te}\text{\texi}\text{\text{\text{\text{\text{\texi}\text{\text{\texi}\text{\text{\text{\texi{\text{\text{\ti}\tintt{\text{\text{\text{\texi}\text{\text{\text{\text{\texit}



Snow

Heavy forest A Circus

Fruit

Mountains Archers Only

Green message



And who left these valuable gems lying around



efore you're th his cavern, you'll find two ets of hirelings.



...to move through walls. Doors? We don't need no stinkin' doors!



can get Admit-8 passes that' gain you entrance to Corak's tomb in Corak's Cavern.



As always, you'll also face some tough enemies, like the wolves that'll pounce on you from the other side of this door.





...one tree gives you awesome speed...



...while another boosts your might into the stratosphere.



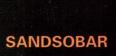
But, to take advantage of the fruit, you must avoid the deadly Royal Horsemen.



In the caverns, you'll run into some silly enemies.



You'll also find hirelings that you can add to your party lio a price).



Dou 146
Year 500
Focing E

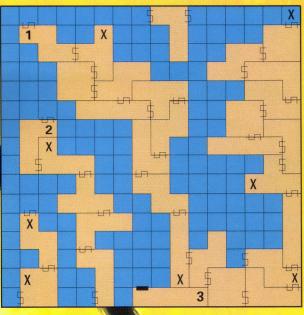
Covern Beneath Sonsobur

X Loc: 3
CC> Continue → View Hap

Sandsobar's caverns are a thief's domain. Though the caverns are complex...



...you can use a Teleport spell...



Vulcania Cavern

1. Hirelings

2. Gems

3. Exit

Door

\$

Secret door

Message on wall

X

You real none street short.

One will rip you off...



...and the other will increase your thieving skills.



In region D2, you'll find the Queen's orchard, where...



...magical fruit can increase your powers. For example...



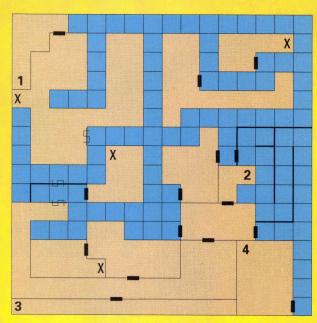
On a mountain, you can find a plaque that tells you about the various special quests each of your party members can try to complete for millions of experience points.



In other areas in region D2, you'll run into extraordinarily nasty creatures. Be prepared to run!



Mandagual's Keep looks like a great place for adventuring, but...



Sandsobar Cavern

- 1. Master Thief
- 2. Exit
- 3. Admit 8 Pass 4. Dog Whistle

- Door



Secret door X Message on wall



...when you step inside, you'll be faced with the keep's guards.



When you beat the keep's guards, you'll get tons of experience points...



Inside the palace, you have much exploring to do.



Each door in the ace may lead to treasure or danger—or



the castle guards will try to



ne unhappy queen offers a nt. Have you won the Triple



The palace holds some very strange enemies. If you want to beat these holy men, you might consider visiting the Queen's orchard first, in order to boost your power.



Most battles in the palace provide enough experience points and treasure to be worth the extra effort and danger.



In the Hall of Illusions, you'll find many interesting rooms, including...



...the Black Room, where...





as well as a generous supply of treasure.



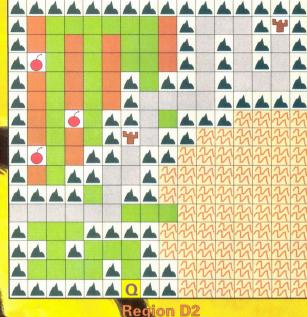
One of the best places in region D2 is Luxus Palace.



Travel-weary adventurers will enjoy the palace's jester.



In the palace's treasury, you can try to sneak out with gold,



Castle Road Grassland

ight forest

Vountains

Quest Plaque

Fruit



Many of the enemies in the palace give you a slew of experience points when you beat them.



Corak's apprentice has important information (or clerics wishing to restore Corak's soul to his body



100 "C" to Continue

...the Bishop of Black Battle has great rewards for Triple Crown winners with a black key.



While most of the enemies in the palace are fairly easily beaten ...



...some are extremely difficult. But, if you survive your palace exploration...



...you'll find more to do in the dungeon beneath the palace. And there's still a ton of adventures where these came from!

IF THIS IS WHO'S TRYING TO CONQ IS THE PLANET REALLY WORTH

Over the years, Infocom adventures have taken you all kinds of places to battle all kinds of characters. But there's never been an adventure quite like the full-color fantasy to save Earth you'll

> find in Leather Goddesses of Phobos II.



BIG VOICES! BIG MUSIC! BIG TROUBLE!

Sure, other games may drop clues about places

you go and things to find. But with Leather Goddesses of Phobos II, you get to actually see where you're going and meet who

you're talking to, in 105 locations on 3 different planets.

You can even hear 40 cast members and 90 minutes of crystal clear music, with our revolutionary LifeSize Sound EnhancerTM that connects to your stereo.



"Okay," you're saying,

Good question.

Uh-huh. Us too.

"but how is this game really different?"

For starters, when was the last

time you faced a villain who filled out a leather teddy like this?

ACTION. ADVENTURE. AND WEIRD, **PULSATING THINGS.**

You can play as Zeke, the beefy gas station attendant. Or Lydia, the earthy angel of Atom City. Or a strange, pul-

sating object that even our engineers won't get near.

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THE REAL BEAUTY
IS HOW MUCH FUN
YOU'RE GOING
TO HAVE.

Yes, it's a dangerous job. But heck, someone's got to do it. And

with these kinds of graphics and sounds, you could be battling these beauties for days. Even years.

But then again, considering all the dog-faced interplanetary villains you've had to face, it's not a half bad way to go.

Zork Zero Zork Zork II Zork III Beyond Zork Planetfall Deadline Moonmist The Witness Ballyhoo Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy Lurking Horror Enchanter Sorcerer Spellbreaker Suspended Starcross Staionfall Suspect Infidel





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CIRCLE #117 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

et's get right down to business—we've got an even balance between each of the three major portable systems this month, including the first releases from a new Game Gear licensee.

Hope your batteries are charged up, 'cause here we go....

Lynx Casino

ATARI For the Atari Lynx (\$39.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Lynx fans who are looking for a break from the nonstop, high-speed action of games like *Zarlor Mercenary* and *Turbo Sub* need look no further than Atari's latest release, *Lynx Casino*. This one's so laid back, it makes *California Games* look like nuclear warfare!

You start the game as an unnamed vacationer with \$1,000 in your pocket and an equal amount of credit. Trapped inside the Lynx Casino, you'll get a chance to play blackjack, craps, roulette, slot machines and video poker. You'll also run into a lot of strange people who say equally strange things when you approach them.

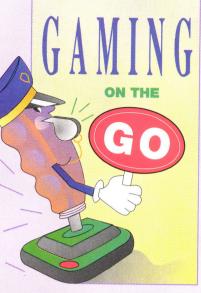
The control scheme is easy to learn,

and the instruction manual does a pretty good job of explaining the more difficult casino games. The graphics are above average, with large characters that are almost as tall as half of the height of the Lynx display.

Unlike HAL America's *Vegas Dream* for the NES (a full-fea-



Atari's Lynx Casino is a break from the nonstop action games that saturate the Lynx market.



BY CHRIS BIENIEK

tured experience that included everything from the airplane trip to drinking in the hotel bars), Lynx Casino relies almost entirely on the mechanics of gambling. The framing scenario seemed like a good idea, but the one-sided conversations amount to little more than a never-ending series of "in" jokes. Believe me, if you don't work in the video-game industry, you're not going to understand half of the dialogue.

Indeed, Lynx Casino is bound to get a better response from folks who have been to Las Vegas at one time or another. If you've seen the oddball tourists and loud carpet patterns that the game spoofs so deftly, you'll have a much better understanding of Atari's sense of humor. Younger gamers may be confused by the video-game adventures of a guy in a baggy suit, especially one who throws his money away and hangs out with Elvis impersonators while the part in his hair constantly changes sides.

Despite the low-key theme, the gambling scenes can be pretty exciting—particularly at the roulette wheel, where you can double your bankroll or lose it all in the blink of an eye. If nothing else, *Lynx Casino* fills yet another void in Atari's ever-expanding portable software library—and that's always good news for Lynx owners.

Atari Entertainment 500 Watersedge Drive, Suite 310 Lombard, IL 60148 (708) 629-6500

George Foreman's KO Boxing

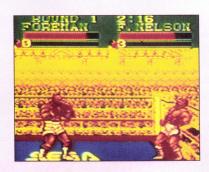
FLYING EDGE For the Sega Game Gear (\$34.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY						6			9	10
OVERALL									9	10

How many VG&CE readers watched Alex Stewart pound George Foreman's face into hamburger last April? Now you can carry the memories of that brutal beating with you wherever you go—with George Foreman's KO Boxing.

Seriously, this game does represent a milestone of sorts: It's the first in what promises to be a long line of Game Gear titles released by Acclaim under its relatively new Flying Edge banner.

Don't expect a lot of fancy options, because this one's a straightforward slugfest from start to finish. There are



only four boxers between Foreman and the heavyweight title, but there is a twoplayer, Gear-to-Gear mode that allows you to punch out a friend.

Ultimately, the lack of innovation is what hurts *KO Boxing* the most. The sideview graphics are just barely above average, as is the stereo soundtrack. It's also important to note that the lovable personality of the main character is not allowed to shine through. Well, there is a brief intermission between each round in which you can catch "Big George" wolfing down a cheeseburger, but that's the only time the designers used the former champ's charisma to make the game more appealing.

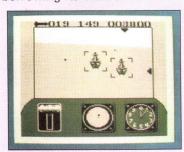
Just as Foreman won the Stewart fight, George Foreman's KO Boxing barely succeeds in its attempt to entertain the Game Gear owner. It's fun, but there will surely be better boxing games available for the Game Gear in the future.

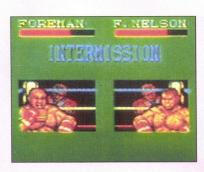
Flying Edge Inc. 71 Audrey Ave. Oyster Bay, NY 11771 (516) 624-8888

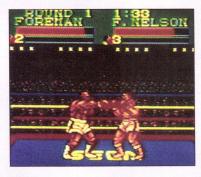
Top Gun-Guts & Glory

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Like most of Konami's early titles, the original *Top Gun* was a well-designed, exciting game. The first-person shoot-'emup—borrowing its theme from the film of







George Foreman's KO Boxing is Acclaim's first entry into the Game Gear market under the Flying Edge label.

the same name—was one of the first aerial combat simulators available for the NES.

Unfortunately, the designers of the NES Top Gun have long since left Konami and formed their own company, Natsume (Shadow of the Ninja, Spanky's Quest, et al.). So, when the time came to put together a Game Boy version of one of the most popular titles in Konami's history, the task was assigned to Distinctive Software Inc., who had delivered a decent Game Boy version of Bill Elliott's NASCAR Fast Tracks just a few months earlier.

This time, the results are not as good. Though the planes handle smoothly and the graphics and sounds are adequate, *Guts & Glory* just doesn't have the spark that made the original game so thrilling.

The Game Boy's small screen is partly responsible—each plane's control panel is too sparse to provide enough information to the pilot—but the game's shortage of appeal is mostly due to a lack of personality. The cockpit window is just a dull, square box surrounded by numbers. The background is much more detailed and better animated than Absolute's *Turn & Burn*—the only other Game Boy dogfight contest—but it comes with other problems, like the way your gunfire is always shown coming out *below* the horizon line, even when you're flying upside down.

Clean design and a variety of options give *Top Gun—Guts & Glory* enough kick to make it worthwhile, but it's not quite the explosive experience most gamers will expect it to be.

Konami Inc. 900 Deerfield Parkway Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510 (708) 215-5111

Hydra

ATARI
For the Atari Lynx (\$39.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Now *this* is more like it! After a couple of unspectacular Lynx titles, Atari has bounced back with *Hydra*, a faithful translation of the fast-paced Atari Games coin-op.

In this futuristic chase game, you'll assume the role of a Hydra courier whose job is to transport valuable cargo in a sleek hovercraft through a riverine war zone—like the Federal Express of the postnuclear Mad Max era. If you're familiar with Stun Runner, I can offer a much



Konami's Top Gun—Guts & Glory is a dogfight/flight simulator game designed by DSI.

clearer description: It's Stun Runner outdoors, with a network of rivers instead of tunnels, and with more weapons and the ability to fly for short periods of time. Oh, and the end-of-the-round robot mechanics have been replaced by a pair of buxom, bikiniclad young ladies.

Crisp visuals and a lively—if monaural soundtrack make Hydra a real treat. The pseudo-3-D effect of the rippling water is quite convincing, and the "boost" feature lifts your craft into the air for an exhilarating change of speed and perspective.

Like Toki and Xybots, this is another coin-op conversion that, despite the obvious hardware limita-

tions, sticks to the source material like chewing gum on a hot sidewalk. Nearly all based on the coin-op original. of the coin-op's elements are intact, from the title page to the Schwarzenegger lookalike on the weapon screen.

Though the key to the success of Hydra may lie in its faithfulness to the arcade original, its similarity to Stun Runner may hurt its chances in today's fickle, choosy market. But this game's brightly colored scaling graphics are so involving and atmospheric that it's hard to pass up, even if you already own the complete Lynx library.

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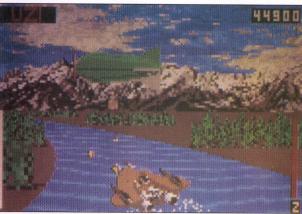
Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin

FLYING EDGE For the Sega Game Gear (\$34.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	morning of		1900000	and the same		otototo	COLOR COLOR		manage of	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Originally developed as a Master System version of Sega's Spider-Man for the Genesis, this challenging beat-'em-up has





Atari's Hydra for the Lynx is

Flying Edge brings Marvel Comics' most popular superhero to the Game Gear in Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin.





somehow found its way to the Game Gear as one of the first portable titles released by Flying Edge.

As Marvel Comics' most popular superhero, you'll jump, punch, kick and swing your way through New York City in search of the keys to disarm a huge bomb set by one of the web-slinger's greatest foes. On your way to that goal, you'll face a boatload of evildoers and gruesome creatures that includes some of Marvel's most malevolent masters of malice: Doctor Octopus, The Lizard, Electro, The Sandman, The Hobgoblin, Venom and the Kingpin of Crime himself.

The graphics are surprisingly good, with certain areas displaying a greater variety of colors than I thought the Game Gear was capable of. Though Spidey and his enemies are well-drawn, they do have an unfortunate tendency to move and react too abruptly. I mean, Spider-Man probably weighs about 200 pounds, but when he's punched or kicked by certain characters he sails through the air as if he's been smacked by a wrecking ball!

Happily, most of the features that made the Genesis version so enjoyable are still intact, like Spidey's ability to take photos of his enemies and have his alter ego sell them to the Daily Bugle for cash to buy the chemical components of his web fluid. There's not much happening in the audio department—the sound effects are severely limited, and the percussion is made up of the same Rice Krispies sounds as most other Game Gear titles—but there are some interesting stereo effects happening in the background music.

Overall, Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin proves to be a fine addition to the Game Gear software lineup. Even with three levels of difficulty to choose from, it's still noticeably tougher than the average game for this system. But if titles like Ninja Gaiden appeal to you, or if you're just a comic-book fan, you'll dig it.

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Spy vs. Spy—Operation: Booby Trap

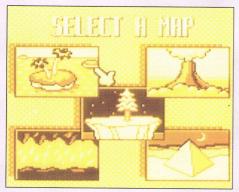
KEMCO For the Nintendo Game Boy (\$29.95)

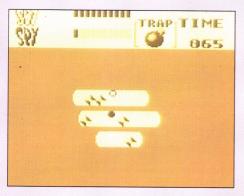
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Here's a blast from the past: First Star Software originally licensed *Mad* magazine's *Spy vs. Spy* characters in the mid'80s for a series of comical scavenger hunt games on the Atari 8-bit and Commodore 64 computers. This newly designed Game Boy title is patterned after *The Island Caper*, the second game in the series, and it's actually better than most of the existing *Spy vs. Spy* titles—including Kemco's own NES product.

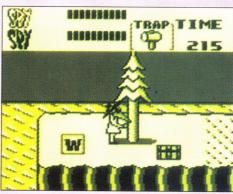
If you are not familiar with the Black Spy and White Spy, all you really need to know is that they are a pair of hawknosed secret agent characters who have been trying to outdo each other in the pages of *Mad* magazine each month since they were created by cartoonist Antonio Prohias in the '60s. In the game, they roam around in search of top secret documents while setting booby traps for each other.

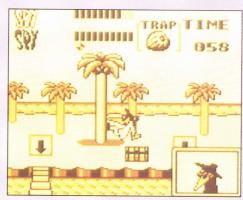
The thing that sets this game apart from a lot of Game Boy software is a strong sense of what the Game Boy is













Kemco's Spy vs.
Spy—Operation: Booby Trap for the Game Boy makes perfect use of the Game Link cable.

capable of-and what it's not capable of. The screen elements are stylish and eye-catching, but they don't overwhelm the player with so much detail that the definition of the characters and backgrounds becomes lost in a blur. Similarly. Operation: Booby Trap

makes perfect use of the Game Link cable for two-player action—a great idea, considering that the original game used a split-screen to show what each spy was doing.

The music and sound effects are equally well-done, from the playful music to the comical sound effects. Throw in a variety of playing fields and plenty of different kinds of traps, and the end result is a very enjoyable, very playable Game Boy cart.

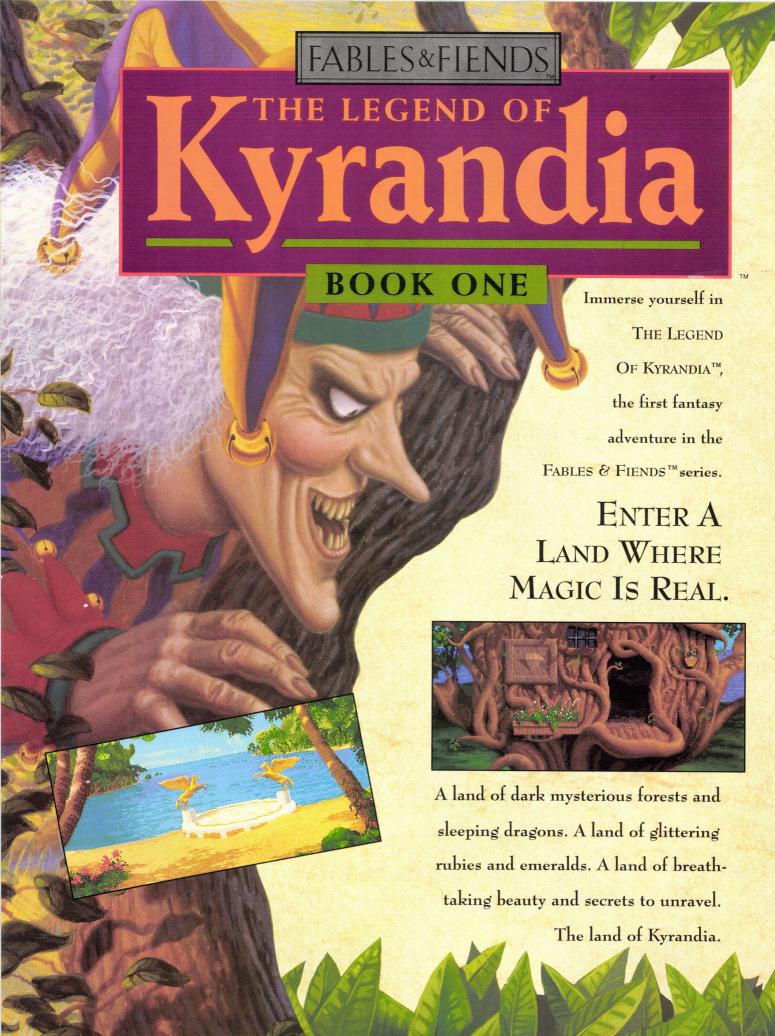
Kemco America Inc. Westpark–D 8415 154th Ave. NE Redmond, WA 98052 (206) 869-8000

ave you been holding your breath waiting for a realistic, full-featured sports game for the Lynx? Pick up our next issue for another installment of *Gaming on the Go*, and I'll give you the lowdown on *Hockey*—it looks like a good one. I'll also cover a puzzling word game and an RPG for the Game Boy, as well as the latest Game Gear happenings.

Reader feedback to this column is always appreciated. Send your comments and suggestions to: VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: Gaming on the Go, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Computer owners with

access to the DELPHI information service can also contact me via electronic mail sent to username VGCHRIS, or stop by the "World of Video Games" special interest group and drop me a note in the open forum.







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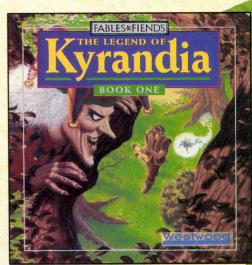


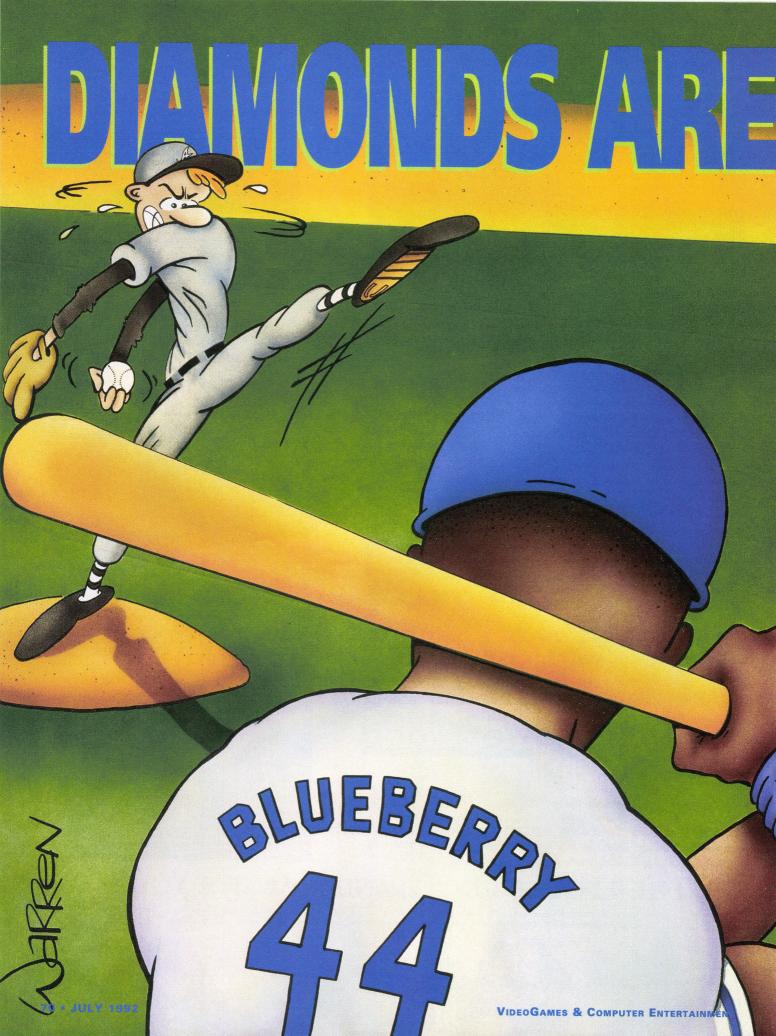
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THE 1992
REVIEW OF BASEBALL
SOFTWARE

long with death and taxes, one of the sure things in life is the yearly crop of new electronic baseball games. The first sniff of spring and a young gamer's fancy turns to thoughts of a new draft, how best to beat a fellow manager in a swap and which of the new 16-bit hardball video games is hottest.

Two of the best computer baseball games ever produced debuted last year, the first CD-ROM hardball simulation and over a half dozen new 16-bit video games devoted to the translation of our national pastime. And while the last 12 months did not produce an overwhelming quantity of new baseball titles, the quality per title was easily the highest in history.

THE DIGITAL DIAMOND: FULL-SPECTRUM COMPUTER BASEBALL

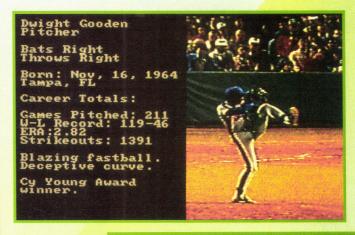
Fans of action-strategy and full-spectrum baseball simulations had a banner year, with four major, new floppy disk entries and the first original CD-ROM game. The CD-ROM contest is Fantasy Challenge Baseball, developed and marketed by Doc's Hi Tech Game Products. FCB uses actual footage of the available players, superstars from the '50s and '60s, taken from an impressive library of available clips. The program also employs multiple screens, with a display for hitter-vs.-pitcher confrontations and one for base running, defensive plays and crowd reactions. The 100 available players, including Mickey Mantle, Ted Williams and Willie Mays, are represented by what the designers call "Peak Stats." These peak stats represent personal bests in all categories, rather than any single-season or lifetime stats. Raw statistical information is then fine-tuned to compensate for any year-to-year or stadium-based anomalies.

FCB is presented as if the gamer were watching a TV broadcast, a task made easier by the fact that most of the footage was exactly that. It can be played as an arcade game, a stat replay contest or a full game simulation, which combines the two modes. The program also compiles and prints out all stats.

Fantasy Challenge Baseball will initially appear on the IBM PC CD-ROM platform, but additional SKUs are planned for the Genesis, CD-I, Macintosh and Amiga/CDTV. An additional disk featuring great players from the '70s and '80s is also in the works.

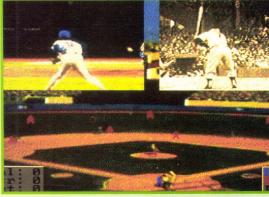
While CD-ROM is the hot new medium in town, owners of more traditional computer memory storage devices (e.g., floppy-disk

BY BILL KUNKEL AND JOYCE WORLEY



Fantasy
Challenge
Baseball, by
Doc's Hi Tech
Game
Products, for
IBM PCs and
compatibles
with CD-ROM.





No fewer than four baseball simulations that offer arcade, stat replay and play-and-manage modes appeared in recent months, two of them qualifying as instant classics.

Tony La Russa's Ultimate Baseball (SSI) and Bo Jackson Baseball (Data East) both blaze new ground in presenting the complete baseball package. Bo Jackson's graphics are slightly superior to Tony La Russa's, but the latter has the statistical edge over Bo Jackson.

Tony La Russa's Ultimate Baseball is nonetheless strong in both its statistical grounding and its visual presentation. Players are rated in 49 batting, 14 fielding and 44 pitching categories, and the game includes a program that permits drafting, trading and manual inputting of statistics. The graphics have a sharp, clean look, with flanking windows on either side of the main display to show any base runners. The main display uses a behind-the-batter perspective, with all relevant game data listed at the base of the windows. Gamers can opt to play a full or half-season, as well as a one- to four-game round-robin series.

Bo Jackson Baseball, by Data East, meanwhile, boasts powerful graphics



Above: Data East's Bo Jackson Baseball Right (top and bottom): SSI's Tony La Russa's Ultimate Baseball.

and the best game speed ever seen on an IBM PC baseball game. The visuals are realistic, capturing everything from the green tones of the stadium grass to the shadings and shadows on a player's uniform. The camera angles include a catcher's point of view for pitcher-vs.-batter confrontations and upper-corner windows that offer close-ups of any base

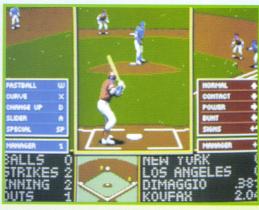
runners. After the ball is hit, the camera switches to the appropriate part of the field, where control is automatically assigned to the player in the best position to field the ball.

Bo Jackson Baseball also uses a unique play mechanic to simulate pitching, which includes a moving ball as the aiming mechanism. The ball moves left and right behind the player, and the point at which the ball is stopped is the spot the pitcher will try to hit. This ball moves faster as the game progresses, making it harder for the player to control and aim, thereby duplicating the effects of fatigue on the hurler. The gamer can also dictate ball speed and any breaking of the ball through a more conventional interface.

The only drawback this program has is the likely lack of future add-on disks. Data East is going through a tough period right now, and this otherwise superb game may wind up being abandoned. In any case, no stadium disks (only three are contained in the game package) or season disks have been announced as of this writing, and Data East has no current plans to produce any.

Al Michaels Announces HardBall III, from Accolade, is the third incarnation of the popular, action-oriented HardBall simulation and the first program to offer full-speech (simi-

lar to Sega's "Sports Talk" system) on a computer game. Some of the other options offered include a full 162-game season, complete with an allstar game, playoffs and a championship series. As a bonus, preexisting teams from Tony La Russa's Ultimate Baseball, Earl Weaver Baseball II and HardBall III can be imported over to this



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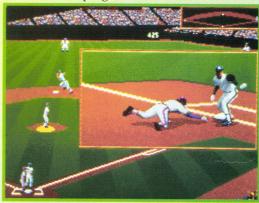
program. HardBall III rates players in over 25 different statistical categories, with the ratings and stats presented in an attractive, baseball-card format. It also retains the most popular features from previous incarnations, including the instant replay and highlight reel options from the second version.

The other new computer baseball program released in the past year was Earl Weaver Baseball II (Electronic Arts) by Eddie Dombrower. During the early stages of development this looked like the most promising of the new computer baseball games, with its CAD-style graphics and multiple camera angles. But the somewhat sloppy visuals were never cleaned up, and, if anything, seem uglier in the finished version than they had several months earlier. The animations have a somewhat herky-jerky look to them, especially the pitchers' movements, and on-screen in-

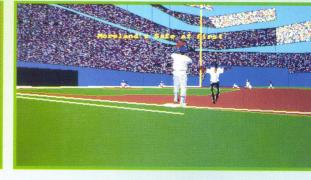
formation often disappears against the background of multicolored dots representing spectators. The game also suffers from the same sort of statistical vagaries that have plagued the previous versions of *Earl Weaver Baseball*, including numerous complaints about atypical performances from wellknown players.

On the other hand, users are provided with a positive feature in the form of modem downloads from the STATS on-line service, as well as a program that allows users to in-

Right and below left: Al Michaels Announces HardBall III, by Accolade. Below right: Electronic Arts' Earl Weaver Baseball II.







terface with Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheets. A Commissioner's Disk is required, however, in order to run drafts, make trades or customize team stats.

STAT REPLAYS ON COMPUTER

Speaking of drafts, trades and manually entered statistics, what year would be complete without a couple of new stat replay entries? Fantasy leagues were extremely popular during the past year, and gamers finally saw the "Grand Old Man" of stat replay software, the MicroLeague Sports Association, jump aboard the Rotisserie bandwagon with a program called MicroLeague Fantasy Manager. This handles every aspect of running a fantasy or Rotisserie league from the initial draft to the final standings. The program even allows users to download new stats directly from the USA Today Sports Center, with the first download free. Users lacking access to a modem can either input the stats manually or purchase weekly update disks directly from MLSA.

Other options include the ability to set up any type of scoring system; a selection of 14 offensive and 17 pitching options; and a simple, menu-driven interface. During drafts, winning bids are recorded on-screen, teams are displayed as they're being assembled and team owners are shown which positions they need to fill and how many units each owner has left to fill them.

MicroLeague's best-known program is also scheduled for an upgrade in the form of MicroLeague Baseball IV. Although not available at press time for preview, the game boasts digitized sound and VGA graphics, as well as an improved statistical base and download capability.

On the subject of downloads, baseball fans who also subscribe to the Prodigy service now have access to *Baseball Manager*, a stat replay game licensed by the Major League Baseball Players' Association and available as a Prodigy Custom Choice (i.e., it costs extra) selection. Users can opt



to play a full schedule with the 162-game (plus Championship Series) version of the game (\$119.95), or go for the Lightning League, a 54-game season (\$59.95). An electronic newspaper appears on-line daily,

and includes comments on the previous night's games.

MicroLeague Sports Association's MicroLeague Baseball IV (left) and MicroLeague Fantasy Manager (top).

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THE 1992 BASEBALLOGRAPHY

VIDEO GAMES

2020 Super Baseball (SNK for the Neo•Geo)

Robots take over the national pastime in the future, as they did to football in *Cyberball*. Instant replays, close-up sequences and play-by-play announcing highlight this contest.

Baseball Stars II (Romstar for the NES)

Sequel to the excellent *Baseball Stars* for the NES offers realistic graphics and the usual strategic options.

Extra Innings (Sony Imagesoft for the SNES)

Strong entry for the Super NES includes such unexpected extras as diving catches by fielders, visual cues (when the pitcher starts mopping his brow, he's getting tired) and head-to-head play. First-rate visuals and a user interface that allows extensive strategic input.

Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball (LJN for the NES and SNES)

Multiple camera angles and superb graphics highlight this baseball contest in the tradition of NEC's World Class Baseball and Sega's Tommy Lasorda Baseball. The Super NES version of the NES title is essentially the same game with graphics enhanced by 16-bit technology.

Ryne Sandberg Plays Bases Loaded 3 (Jaleco for the NES)

The third in the premier NES baseball series from Jaleco brings Ryno into the action. Superb graphics and interesting new features—including a 13-category rating system, five difficulty levels, a team editing option and a choice of three stadiums.

Sports Talk Baseball (Sega for the Genesis)

Over 500 major leaguers and Sega's incredible "Sports Talk" play-by-play voice technology make this action-strategy baseball simulation one of the year's most eagerly anticipated titles. Play an entire season, half a season or make a pennant run.

Super Bases Loaded (Jaleco for the SNES)

Action-oriented simulation combines behind-the-pitcher and top/down camera angles. The graphics are solid, and each player is rated in 13 skill categories. Unfortunately, many gamers will be frustrated by the lack of league or series play.

Super Baseball Simulator 1.000 (Culture Brain for the SNES)

It may not be realistic, but it certainly is flexible. Up to six players can compete in a season that can run from five to 165 games, each of which can be set at any number of innings. There are 24 teams, 432 players and six stadiums. Every aspect of the teams' composition can be edited, up to and including their uniform colors. There are three difficulty levels and 39 "ultra" plays, i.e., plays that evidence some super power on the part of the player involved. Nice graphics.

TV Sports: Baseball (Cinemaware for the TG-16)

Excellent sound and graphics are this game's strong suit, along with multiplayer options that allow up to four gamers to compete simultaneously. On defense, one player controls the pitching and the other handles the fielders, while taking turns at bat. The multiplayer mode is a real breakthrough, but the game is handicapped somewhat by the slow movement of fielders.

QUATTRO Sports (Camerica for the NES)

This four-in-one cartridge includes BMX Simulator, Pro Tennis, Soccer Simulator and Baseball Pro's. The baseball game is hardly state-of-the-art, but offers pitch selection and pinch-hitting, among other features.

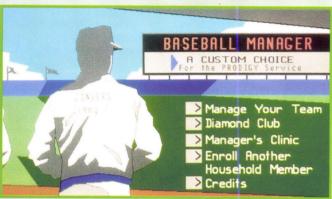
HANDHELDS

Baseball Heroes (Atari for the Lynx) Multiple, close-up camera angles, digitized sound and some great scaling sequences highlight this excellent Lynx title.

Batter Up (Namco for the Game Gear)

This somewhat crude-looking Game Gear offering does include





Prodigy's Baseball Manager is an on-line stat replay game licensed by the Major League Baseball Players' Association.

Prodigy also offers a Tryout Club for prospective members who want to know more about the game and its league structure.

Prodigy start-up kits cost \$49.95, and the basic service runs an additional \$12.95 a month. As of press time, approximately 70,000 of the million-and-a-half Prodigy subscribers had visited the Tryout Club. "You're not simply piling up stats," observed Prodigy's Brian Ek in discussing the game's popularity, "you're actually managing a team on a day-to-day basis." Although the 162-game season corresponds to the major league schedule, *Baseball Manager*'s draft actually takes place on or around opening day. This is done in order to build up three weeks' worth of statistics before play actually begins; a stat pool of this size is required in order to assure that all situations will have arisen at least once.

Among Baseball Manager's many fans, and perhaps the most devoted, is '70s rock singer Meat Loaf, who played in six different leagues last year while recording a comeback album.

Finally, fans of Dave Holt's various stat-oriented football games released under the *Micro Sports* imprimatur will want to check out his forthcoming baseball entry, *Pro League Baseball*. A stat replay game with fully animated action, it will be distributed by Interplay, but it was unavailable for preview at press time.

BASEBALL ON THE NES

The Bases Loaded games from Jaleco have traditionally been among the most impressive of the NES baseball simulations, and that holds true for the most recent entry, Ryne

14 teams, two stadiums and a choice of five- or nine-inning games. One or two players.

Clutch Hitter (Sega for the Game Gear)

Officially licensed by the Major League Baseball Players' Association (MLBPA) the game offers oneor two-player action and a selection of 26 teams to choose from.

COMPUTER BASEBALL

Al Michaels Announces HardBall III (Accolade)

The first game to bring a technology similar to Sega's Sports Talk to the personal computer. Options include a complete 162game season, including an all-star game, playoffs and a world series. The 25 different stat categories can be printed out, and teams from Earl Weaver II, Tony La Russa's Ultimate Baseball and Hardball II can be imported. Teams can also be selected from a library of prefabricated squads or put together via the Team Editor, with such neat visual touches as user-created team logos, uniform color and even individualized player faces.

Bo Jackson Baseball (Data East)

Acme's Bo Jackson Baseball is perhaps the most underrated sports game released in the last few years. The graphics, play and game speed are absolutely razor's edge. Fielders leap and dive, pitchers throw overhand and sidearm, and the pitching interface is marvelously innovative. Players are rated in 33 pitching and 16 hitting categories. Check it out.

Earl Weaver Baseball II (Electronic Arts)

Not an update (see Earl Weaver 1.5), but a total revamp that looked like a classic in the early stages, then seemed to fall apart as it moved toward completion. As with the original, this game attempts to be all things to all players, combining extensive strategy and arcadestyle action. Many players found the graphics unattractive, and the game's intriguing, CAD-type options seem to have misfired.

Fantasy Challenge Baseball (Doc's Hi Tech Products for CD-ROM)

The first computer baseball game to employ CD-ROM technology, this original design allows users to select from an impressive roster of great players from the '50s and '60s. Each player is repre-

sented by a library of actual film clips, with a separate window displaying base running, fielding plays, arguments with the umpire and crowd reactions. Each of the superstars is represented by "Peak Stats," instead of the usual single-season or lifetime statistics. This one- or two-player game offers arcade, play-and-manage and manage-only modes.

Tony La Russa's Ultimate Baseball (SSI)

Taut, superbly designed baseball simulation delivers what Earl Weaver II promised. The visuals are unique, but the presentation is quite similar to the Weaver games, as is the heavy statistical underpinning. The game can be played at almost any level of sophistication, from arcade game to pitch-bypitch stat replay to a hybrid of the two modes. Stats in abundance, including 49 batting categories, 14 fielding and 44 pitching, and the drafting/trading functions are included in the basic package. Additional disks now available include: Great Teams (1901-1968). A.L. Stadiums Disk, N.L. Stadiums Disk, Classic Stadiums Disk and Fantasy Manager. The latter allows users to draft any combination of divisions and leagues, assign them to stadiums, then select a manager "personality" from a library of classic manager types.

COMPUTER STAT REPLAY

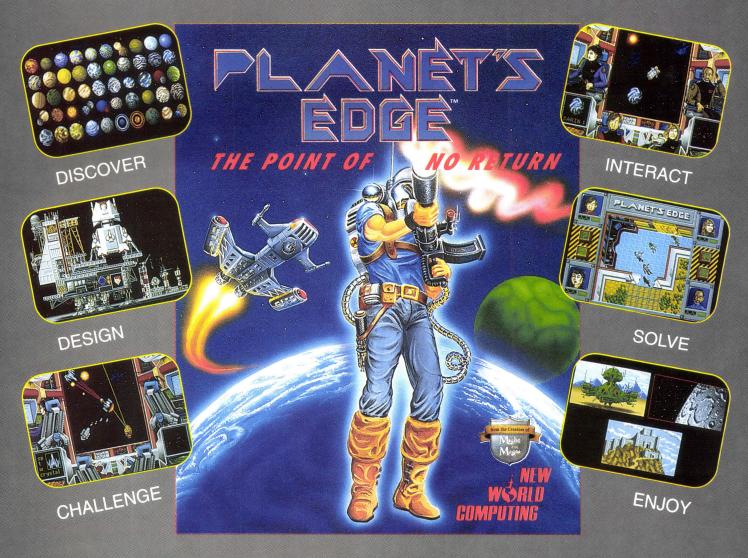
Baseball Manager (Prodigy Custom Choice)

Subscribers to Prodigy, the online telecommunications service, can draft and manage their own team against teams from around the country. And, if your schedule doesn't permit the playing of a full schedule, you can enter instructions and have the computer manage your team in compliance with your wishes, or play in a 54-game "Lightning League." The full season version costs \$119.95, and the Lightning League version is \$59.95.

MicroLeague Fantasy Manager (MicroLeague Sports Association)

Rotisserie and fantasy-league players will definitely want to scope out this invaluable utility disk for setting up and running leagues. A special feature allows users to link up with the USA Today Sports Center in order to download new stats every day, with the first download free.

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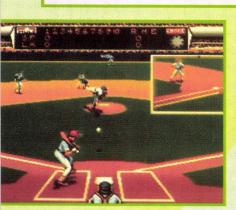
CIRCLE #121 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Jaleco's
Super
Bases
Loaded
for the
SNES
(top) and
LJN's
Roger
Clemens'
MVP
Baseball
for the
NES
(bottom).







Sandberg Plays Bases Loaded 3. As in most baseball video games, Sandberg's presence will be invisible to gamers, as Jaleco seems to have paid largely for Ryno's "endorsement."

The game reprises the strong player animations and digitized ballsand-strikes calls from earlier versions. This time around, however, there is no playoff se-

ries; instead, the gamer starts out with a score of 100, with points subtracted throughout the game for strikeouts, errors, etc. It has nothing whatsoever to do with baseball, but that's hardly anything new in the NES universe, where strange changes in baseball's rules and objectives are a tradition.

Other new baseball titles for the NES include Roger Clemens MVP Baseball (LJN), Baseball Stars II (Romstar) and QUATTRO Sports (Camerica), which is a four-in-one cartridge containing BMX Simulator, Pro Tennis and Soccer Simulator, in addition to Baseball Pro's. Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball boasts gorgeous NES graphics with a behind-the-batter perspective and smaller close-up windows tracking base runners. Baseball Stars II employs an elevated, be-

Gamers without access to a modem can order weekly "UpDate Disks" directly from MLSA. MLSA has since introduced a version with digitized VGA graphics.

Pro League Baseball (Dave Holt/Interplay)

A brand-new stat baseball game with animated on-screen plays from the creator of the Micro Sports football games, Dave Holt.

OTHER ELECTRONIC BASEBALL GAMES

VG&CE's list, complete with previous years' entries. For a more detailed description of the following games, consult the July 1990 and 1991 issues of VG&CE.

VIDEO-GAME BASEBALL TITLES

Bad News Baseball (Tecmo for the NES)

Baseball (Magnavox for the Odyssey²)

Bases Loaded (Jaleco for the NES)

Baseball Simulator 1.000 (Culture Brain for the NES)

Baseball Stars (SNK for the

Baseball Stars Professional (SNK for the Neo•Geo)

Bases Loaded II: Second Season (Jaleco for the NES)

Basewars (Ultra for the NES)
Bo Jackson Baseball (Data
East for the NES)

Great Baseball (Sega for the SMS)

Hardball (Accolade for the Genesis)

Home Run (Atari for the Atari 2600)

Interactive Major League
Baseball (LJN for the NES)

Legends of the Game (Bandai for the NES)

Little League Baseball Championship Series (SNK for the NES) Major League All-Star Base-

ball (Mattel for the Intellivision)
 Major League Baseball (Mattel for the Intellivision)

Major League Baseball (Nin-

tendo for the NES)

Pete Rose Baseball (Absolute

Entertainment for the Atari 2600) **RBI Baseball** (Tengen for the

NES)

RBI Baseball 2 (Tengen for the NES)

RBI Baseball 3 (Tengen for the NES and Genesis)

Realsports Baseball (Atari for the Atari 2600/5200)

Reggie Jackson Baseball (Sega for the SMS)

Super Action Baseball (Coleco for the ColecoVision)

Super Challenge Baseball (Mattel/M-Network for the Atari 2600)

Tommy Lasorda Baseball (Sega for the Genesis)

Tornado Baseball (Bally for the Bally Home Arcade)

World Class Baseball (NEC for the TurboGrafx-16)

HANDHELDS & STAND-ALONES

Baseball (Nintendo for the Game Boy)

Baseball 4 (Entex Select-A-Game)

Bases Loaded (Jaleco for the Game Boy)

Bottom of the Ninth (Konami Handheld)

Extra Bases (Bandai for the Game Boy)

Head-to-Head Baseball (Coleco Handheld)

World Championship Baseball (Mattel Handheld)

COMPUTER-GAME BASEBALL TITLES

APBA Major League Player's Baseball (APBA/Random House)

Championship Baseball (Gamestar)

Championship MicroLeague Baseball (MLSA)

Computer Baseball (SSI)

Earl Weaver Baseball/Earl
Weaver Baseball II (Electronic Arts)
Full Count Baseball (Lance
Haffner)

HardBall/HardBall II (Accolade) Major League Manager (UBX) MicroLeague Baseball/Micro-League Baseball II (MLSA)

Orel Hershiser's Strike Zone (Mastertronic)

Pete Rose Pennant Fever (Gamestar)

Fantom Manager (Fantom Manager)

Pro-Baseball Manager (Avalon Hill)

Pure-Stat Baseball (Software Simulations)

Radio Baseball (Electronic Arts)
Slugger (Mastertronic)

Sporting News Baseball (Epyx) Starleague Baseball (Gamestar)

Statis-Pro Major League Baseball (Avalon Hill)

Strat-O-Matic Baseball (Strat-O-Matic)

World Series Baseball (Data-Most)



hind-the-batter camera angle as its main display, with foldover-style flanking windows to monitor base runners. The game also features trading; single-game or league play; four stadiums; 18 teams, six of which can be customized; variable outfield formations; an error counter; and memory backup for league stats.

16-BIT BASEBALL

This year's most interesting action-oriented baseball video games appeared on the 16-bit systems. NEC released TV Sports: Baseball for its TurboGrafx-16; Sega announced Sports Talk Baseball for the Genesis; and no fewer than four baseball programs have debuted for the Super NES, including Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball (LJN), Extra Innings (Sony Imagesoft),



Super Bases Loaded (Jaleco), Nolan Ryan's Baseball (Romstar) and Super Baseball Simulator 1.000 (Culture Brain).

TV Sports: Baseball features strong sound and graphics and is playable by up to four human players simultaneously, with a pair of two-player teams taking on one another. On defense, one gamer controls the pitching and the other handles the fielding; at the plate, the players take turns. The game is slowed down somewhat by the sluggish Top (left and right): NEC's TV Sports: movement of fielders, and, despite the Baseball for the TG-16. title, there are very few TV-style frills or Baseball for the Genesis. camera angles. The main display is a Center right and above: Sony slightly elevated, behind-the-batter per- Imagesoft's Extra Innings for the SNES.





Center left: Sega's Sports Talk

spective, with separate windows in the upper-left and righthand corners devoted to base runners.

Sports Talk Baseball (Sega), meanwhile, is the first Genesis baseball program since Tommy Lasorda Baseball was released shortly after the system debuted several years ago. Sega's Sports Talk system, which features detailed playby-play, was first heard on Joe Montana II and has been universally lauded as a major breakthrough in sports gaming. Sports Talk Baseball features over 500 actual major league players and allows users to play a full season, half a season or just make a pennant run.

For whatever reason, baseball games have proliferated wildly on the new Super NES. LJN has produced a slicked up version of its NES game, Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball, for the Super NES, as have Jaleco and Culture Brain. Jaleco's classic Bases Loaded hardball series debuts on the

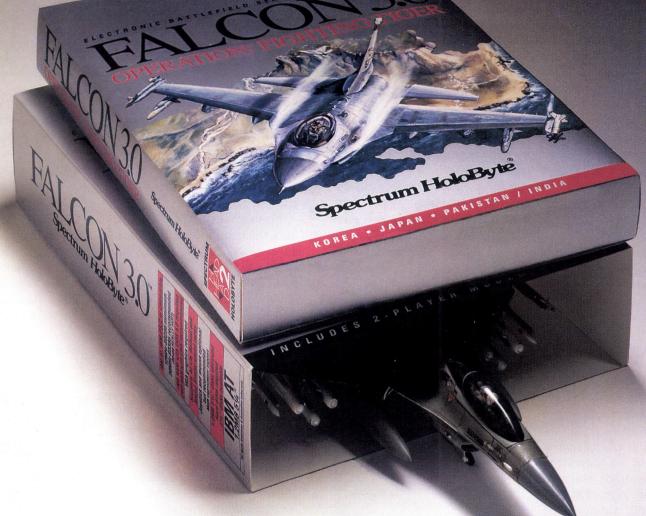
> Super NES with Super Bases Loaded, which combines behindthe-pitcher and top/down camera angles with players rated in 13 skill categories. Culture Brain's somewhat bizarre Super Baseball Simulator 1.000, meanwhile, uses an elevated, behind-the-plate presentation in conjunction with an extremely flexible interface and those ever- popular "ultra" plays, which provide players with temporary superpowers.

The first totally original baseball game for the Super NES is Sony Imagesoft's Extra Innings, a nicely designed program that lets the user choose among a variety of interesting options, including three stadium types, player substitutions, team editing, pick-off moves by pitchers and one- or two-player modes. The many interesting features include the ability of fielders to make leaping or diving catches and special animations that act as cues for the gamer-manager (for example, when the pitcher starts mopping the perspiration from his forehead, he's getting tired). Extra Innings also provides for an all-star game or a pennant race

FINAL STANDINGS

Baseball remains among the most popular subjects for electronic simulation. One of the first tests for any new computer or video-game system is almost certain to be a hardball game. With the Intel 386, 486 and 16-bit video-game technology now firmly established on these shores, we're likely to see quite a bit more digital diamond dust in the coming months. It's a Natural.

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magine you're playing a video game from the inside. The world you're in is a game field made of crude, polygon graphics with just enough detail to distinguish shapes. You can hear and see, but forget using any of the other senses. The object is to find your opponents and shoot them before they shoot you. You can look in any direction, move almost anywhere and fire your gun,

VIRTUAL-REALITY TECHNOLOGY YOU CAN PLAY

but you can't do anything as complex as a backflip. Not yet anyway. That's what Virtuality is like.

Virtuality is produced and distributed under a joint venture that includes W Industries, Horizon Entertainment and CyberStudio. It's the first commercially available video-game system to make use of total immersion, virtual-reality (VR) technology. That's the technology that gives you the perspective of being inside a video game, and it opens the door to what some people call "cyberspace."

Although there is no concrete definition of virtual reality—some would call *any* video game a form of virtual reality—it can briefly be described as a computer-generated,

three-dimensional world. The world is one that can be manipulated by the user and one in which people, or both people and computers, can interact.

For example, most flight simulators you play take place in some type of virtual world. Although you don't actually enter that world, you see it through a two-dimensional interface, usually a monitor. It's kind of like look-

Top: A joint venture between several firms, Virtuality is the first commercially available virtual-reality video-game system.
Right: Dactyl Nightmare is one of the eight Virtuality games currently available.





ing inside of a room through a window.

On the other hand, Virtuality makes use of an interface, which is known as a stereoscopic headset or a headmounted display (HMD). The HMD is a helmet or visor that holds two small video screens. When you put an HMD on, it's like looking at two tiny monitors, one in front of each eye. If

a scene is alternately flashed on one monitor and then the other, it will create the illusion that you're seeing that scene in three dimensions, much like an old View-Master reel. That makes putting on an HMD like stepping into a room rather than just looking in on one from the outside.

Furthermore, the HMD is equipped with sensors that track the motion of your head. If you look to the right, the displays will show you what is to your right in whatever virtual world you happen to be in. In the example of a room, you could look around and see what's on all four walls, or you could look up at the ceiling. Theoretically, there's no limit to what, or where, you can see when you're wearing an HMD.

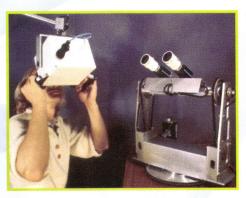
In Virtuality's case, the HMD is called a Visette. It uses two liquid-crystal screens, driven by an Amiga 3000 core unit with custom video chips made by Texas Instruments. The result of wearing a Visette and playing one of the games available on Virtuality does create the illusion of three dimensions. However, the images are somewhat distorted and grainy, taking something away from the experience.

IN VIRTUALITY

Currently, there are eight games available for the Virtuality system, all of which have been brought over from the United Kingdom. The one it seems most people have tried is called *Dactyl Nightmare*, originally titled *Nightmare* in England. It's a basic dodge-and-shoot game that takes place in a fairly small virtual world. To play the game, you first pay an operator \$4, which will cover a three-and-a-half-minute session.

The operator will assist you in donning the Virtuality gear, which consists of the Visette, a waist sensor and a joystick. The Visette clamps onto your head quite comfortably, though it's a little heavy and it tends to slip forward and obscure your view of the two displays. The waist sensor straps around your midsection, and it contains a holster that holds the joystick. Everything is attached to the base unit by cables that hang more or less unobtrusively off your body. You stand on the base unit itself, which is a small platform with a padded railing that encircles you so you won't fall off.

A sample of virtual reality in its early development stages. Photo courtesy of Fake Space Labs, maker of the NASA Ames virtual wind tunnel.



Once you're outfitted this way, which only takes a few minutes, the operator will start the game. Immediately, you'll find yourself on the playfield, the center of which is a



square platform suspended in space. There are no walls, but on each side of this play area there's a stairway. The four stairways lead up to four smaller platforms, which is where each player starts the game. There are no walls in *Dactyl Nightmare*, only an endless vista of space on all sides, with a few pterodactyls circling ominously overhead.

As far as controls go, to look around you just, well, look around. To see your gun, hold the joystick in front of your body and a "virtual" gun will appear inside the game. The position of the virtual gun to your virtual body is the same as that of the joystick to your real body. To shoot to the right, turn your real hand, which is holding the joystick, to the right and your virtual gun will also turn right. Pull the trigger to shoot. Your virtual bullets don't have much range, and rather than moving in a straight line, they sort of arc to their targets. It's more like lobbing than shooting, but, if your bullet connects with another player, it'll blow him up pretty effectively.

Besides the trigger there's only one other button on the joystick. Press it and you'll find the virtual "you" being propelled forward, accompanied by the echoing sound of footsteps. This is what passes for walking in the game, and it's the only way to get around. Wherever you're looking in *Dactyl Nightmare* is the same direction your virtual body is facing, and that's the direction you'll go if you "walk."

Aside from that, the only other movement you can perform is ducking, which is what the waist sensor is for. Ducking is useful for dodging incoming bullets and hiding behind the few and far between virtual objects that decorate the area.

Although this might sound like a lot, there isn't much to actually playing *Dactyl Nightmare*. Basically, you look and move around until you spot another player. This doesn't take all that long because the play area is relatively small. Once you have your target in sight, by which time your target usually has you in sight, the two

of you close and shoot it out. It's mostly a case of the more accurate shooter winning, although, if someone is a good dodger, they can avoid your bullets and give you a hard time. One interesting feature of the game is that periodically a pterodactyl will swoop down and grab you or another player. If it's you, you'll suddenly be lifted up off the ground and find yourself flying well above the playfield—until the video reptile drops you. Then you'll plummet to the ground and smash apart, which is just as bad as being shot.

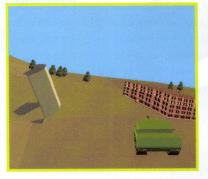
When you die, virtually that is, you'll instantly be reincarnated to play on and hopefully return the favor to your opponent. You can even shoot the pterodactyls if they come close enough. After the three-and-a-half minutes are up, the game will end, leaving you with the tallies of how many times each person was killed. That's it.

There are two big limitations to Virtuality that may turn players off. The first is the graphics. Besides being grainy and hazy, the video images just aren't very good. Because everything is rendered in crude polygons, it gives the game a blocky feel. Other players appear as little more than fleshed-out stick figures, and it's often difficult to distinguish what the objects in the game are supposed to represent. For instance, in *Dactyl Nightmare* it's sometimes hard to spot your opponents because the blockiness of the figures tends to blur with the blockiness of the background.

The other limitation of Virtuality is the games. While the game play is an excellent, if somewhat crude, example of total immersion technology, the games themselves aren't very inviting. *Dactyl Nightmare* is nothing more than a video version of Lazer Tag or Photon, and it's not a very good version at that. Only four players can play at one time, and the game takes place in such a small play area it's like playing in someone's living room. According to CyberStudio, the other seven games are also relatively sim-



Three sample screens from a VR work-in-progress called *Desert Strike II* that is being created by Visions of Reality. This will be one of at least ten games that will debut in arcades in 1993.





VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

ple, with players either having to shoot things or avoid things. Some of the themes are space and flight simulation, including hang gliding, driving and more shoot-'em-ups. Not a dazzling display for a new technology—but it is new. The good news is that these limitations seem mostly software-oriented, and they should diminish as programmers learn to deal with the new hardware.

BATTLETECH UPDATE

There's one other virtual-reality game consumers can play that suffers from neither of these problems. That widely known system is BattleTech, which has its home in the Virtual World Entertainment Center in Chicago. The difference between BattleTech and Virtuality is that the former makes use of a cockpit environment rather than having its players wear an HMD. While that doesn't place it on the cutting edge of cyberspace technology, BattleTech seems to make up for that lack in its game playability.

Jordan Weisman, the president of Virtual World Enter-

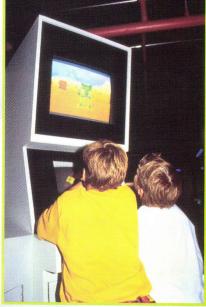
tainment and cocreator of BattleTech, said the intimidation factor of a cockpit, also known as a pod, enhances rather than detracts from its realism. Players who are



going to pilot a BattleMech (the futuristic robots gamers control in BattleTech) expect more than just a few buttons and a joystick. Their expectations are usually met and then some, as each pod contains over 100 controls, seven speakers and two monitors. While all of those controls are functional, the beginning gamer need only use four of them to play. This makes for a good combination of realism and accessibility that leaves most BattleTech players wanting to play again.

The cockpits have an even greater sensory advantage over Virtuality because they provide a tactile response to the player. Playing is something of a workout, and gamers often emerge from their pods with disheveled hair, wiping perspiration from their faces. In contrast, the players who unhook the waist sensors of Virtuality and slip off their Visettes seem relatively placid, as if they're contemplating the experience they just had. It's the difference between someone who knows what just happened and someone who isn't sure what has just happened.

The Virtual World Entertainment Center offers something else Virtuality can't: a heavy dose of theatrics. While the Virtuality units can be moved around much like an arcade game, the cockpits of BattleTech are stationary and



BattleTech, located at the Virtual World Entertainment Center in Chicago, makes use of a cockpit environment rather than having its players wear an HMD.







require a building of their own. That building has been put to good use, and entering it is like entering the world of 3025, complete with the appropriate props. It even has its own actors of a sort, as the center's staff wear BattleTech uniforms and address the players by their rank and call sign. For novices, there is an introductory video available in a

ready room describing how to drive a BattleMech, while, for the nonplayer, there are repeater monitors on the observation platform where action from the cockpit screens is rebroadcast.

Comparing these two virtual-reality systems is a bit like comparing pens to pencils. They're both trying to achieve the same end, but they're using different techniques and materials. Both games set out to transport players from the here reality of everyday life to the there reality of a particular game. Virtuality is banking on a purely technological approach that promises great things but is still too new to show true results. Tom Byron, the public relations representative for Spectrum HoloByte, summed up the CyberStudio view of things: "In BattleTech, you can separate your-



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And the kind of speed that's put Genesis in a league by itself. Go ahead, pick your squad and pick your game. You can go

Now key on your man. See if you can guard David Robinson. Take on his two-handed monster slam. Press him up and down the floor. Try to drive on his lane.

You lookin' for the video B-ball that's closest to the pros? David Robinson's Supreme Court from Sega Genesis definitely

The choice is simple. The choice is SEGA. Genesis gives you more than 150 hit games, hot titles like Sonic The Hedgehog,"





Leading the 16-bit revolution.

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self from the technology," Byron said. "Virtuality, whether it does that now, has the technology to make you part of the landscape."

Weisman, on the other hand, has an existing system using established technology that does exactly what it promises. He summed it up in his own way. "We're marketing a theme park in a box. They're (Virtuality) offering an expensive, beautifully made arcade game."

ON THE VIRTUAL HORIZON

These two systems won't have long to duke it out, however, as several other companies are planning on joining the fray. The Sense8 Corporation said it was working to develop virtual-reality video games with a company called Visions of Reality. Fake Space Labs, maker of the NASA Ames virtual wind tunnel, is also in on the deal, working on both hardware and software. Additionally, Sense8 said it was talking about a home-entertainment system, though it has no concrete plans in that area. It's interesting to note that Fake Space Labs had a virtual-reality video game on display as early as October 1990, during the Cyberthon conference in San Francisco.

Meanwhile, Abrams Gentile Entertainment, the maker of the PowerGlove, said it was working on a consumer version of a virtual-reality system. Its partners in the deal are SimGraphics and Texas Instruments, and the system will be based on a new technology, the Deflecting Mirror Display. This technology promises to drastically decrease the weight of HMDs—which is considered a major factor in bringing any such system into the home—while greatly improving the graphics resolution. It uses thousands of microns-thick mirrors, capable of being turned on and off in microseconds, instead of traditional CRTs or LCDs.

Not to be outdone, Virtual World Entertainment plans on opening five new million-dollar centers—each containing 32 cockpits—throughout Japan, Canada and the United States. The centers will feature additional games whose themes will stray from the tried-and-true, but heavily militaristic, BattleTech simulation. Instead, the new titles will concentrate more on the adventure side of roleplaying, including character development. These games will take advantage of new hardware planned for all of the Virtual World Entertainment Centers that will provide four times the resolution of the current system.

One of the upcoming simulations sounds particularly intriguing because it uses a two-tiered plot approach, and it forces gamers to make decisions with moral implications. The game is called *Hull Pressure*, and it involves eight players in mini-submarines sent to retrieve a much larger sub that has sunken in a deep trench. Six of the mini-subs need to reach the larger ship in order to rescue its crew. On the way down, the players discover the lost continent of Atlantis, and they must decide whether to explore it or continue with their mission. The former, of course, will cost the lives of the trapped crew members, but it appeals to the more adventuresome players. After this initial scenario is played and the sunken ship issue is resolved, gamers can return for sessions that just involve exploring Atlantis.

While CyberStudio didn't say it had games of such complexity in mind, it said more, and better, offerings are on the way for its Virtuality hardware. The company said U.S.-made games will be available as early as 1993, including ports of Spectrum HoloByte's popular flight-simulator titles.

Autodesk Inc., which pioneered computer-aided design software, said it wasn't doing anything specifically gamerelated. It did say the code for its applications could be used in game software, and that some type of game would probably be included in its developmental package. And, while VPL Research Inc., a big name in virtual reality, also has no plans to enter the gaming market, the company is working on something called a "data suit." Such a suit, if sufficiently sophisticated, could conceivably both give and receive tactile responses to and from the body. That means a player at rest could be made to feel as if he were actually walking or running. So, while ducking is about as complicated as things will get for now, in the future you can expect to perform feats as difficult as a spinning backflip. At least in cyberspace.

VIRTUALITY

All of these new developments are great, but where can you go to get your hands on this stuff? Following is a list of locations that Horizon **Entertainment, the company** distributing Virtuality in the U.S., has provided. At the time of this writing, the locations were current, but you should contact the operators directly for more information. Also, more locations are being negotiated on. If all else fails, you can contact Horizon Entertainment directly at (800) 455-8746.

Union Station Virtuality™ Center 500 St. Louis Union Station St. Louis, MO 63103 (314) 421-6655

University of California Recreational Center MLK Jr. Student Union Center Berkeley, CA 94720 (510) 642-3825

Quarters 206 Main St. Kirkland, WA 98033 (206) 889-2550

Spaceport Bloomington 104 S. Indiana Ave. Bloomington, IN 47401 (812) 336-1312

Spaceport Woodbridge Center 110 Woodbridge Center Dr. Woodbridge, NJ 07095 (201) 636-4600

Time-Out on the Court 6697-A Springfield Mall Springfield, VA 22150 (703) 971-6064

Time-Out on the Court Los Cerritos Center 334 Los Cerritos Center Cerritos, CA 90701 (310) 402-9259

Virtual Reality Productions P.O. Box 46555 St. Petersburg Beach, FL 33741 (813) 528-1000

Also, BattleTech hasn't yet opened any other locations, but that is subject to change. In the meantime, if you are in the Chicago area, check out BattleTech at:

BattleTech Center North Pier 435 E. Illinois St., #334 Chicago, IL 60611 (312) 836-5977

1991 Game Boy Game 1991 Game Boy Game 1991 Game Player's Magazine Game Player's Magazine 1991 Strategy Game 1991 Strategy

(And maybe a few of your friends, too!)

Here's your chance to wipe the smiles off those annoying happy faces once and for all! In FaceBall 2000, "Have a Nice Day" takes on a whole new meaning—in first-person perspective, with 3D graphics and 360° maneuvering!



WATCH OUT! They only look happy!

Get into your Game Boy...

And we mean *into!* FaceBall 2000 is a new virtual reality game. You don't just *see* your character, you *are* your

character. Feel like you're actually inside your Game Boy as you move through CyberScape's more than 70 treacherous mazes — or the Arena, in fast-paced rounds of high-tech combat.

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Sure. You can take on the Smiloids alone. But with your Game Link™ cable or Four Player Adapter, those faces can belong to your friends! Play one-on-one, two against two, or free-for-all!



More than four times the fun with the Four Player Adapter!



It pay\$ to play together.

Don't miss your chance to get up to \$5 back with our multiplayer rebate! You'll find all the info inside your FaceBall 2000 package when you open it up for the game of your life! But hurry. Some of your friends might be buying FaceBall 2000 right now. If they get in too much practice without you, the smile that gets wiped might be your own!



A whole new way to get into your Game Boy.

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CIRCLE #125 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

The Best Games in the World™



ast columns have stressed the joys of publishing your own electronic-gaming fanzine. I've described the rewards in glowing terms, offered some practical advice and assisted in the compilation of mailing lists.

If this has created the erroneous impression that personal publishing is the only way to go, then I apologize. You'll have to excuse the enthusiasm of a guy who has published a thousand or so fanzines, starting at age 17.

The announcement of *Megazine* shows that fans are learning the value of cooperation on projects. Look for an early review of this amalgamation of seven regular fanzines in *Fandango*. I hope it doesn't stumble over the same obstacle that undermined the late, lamented *Cyberbeat*; too many editors can lead to lack of leadership and miscommunication.

The next step beyond setting up unwieldy editorial boards is to let the best editors and publishers fulfill this function while everyone else concentrates on writing and drawing. A single editor can be editing, typing and so forth while a committee would still be debating every little matter, via costly phone or slow-moving mail.

Contributing to fanzines rather than publishing them makes good sense for many fans. Not everyone has the time, money and equipment to produce a regular fanzine. Contributors get free copies of the publications in which their work appears, and they still get the ego satisfaction of standing on the paper soapbox and giving the electronic-gaming world their opinions.

Getting started as a fanzine contributor is as simple as sending for some fanzines. Find one that seems congenial to what you want to write (or draw) and contact the editors. You can send a sample piece or just strike up a correspondence and see where that leads. You'll have all the outlets you want for your fanwork.

Video Game Monthly #3 Ben Leatherman

10 Palo Verde Lane Globe, AZ 85501

No listed price—No listed frequency
Seven pages

Ben's dedication and enthusiasm can't be questioned, but he might do better to concentrate on contributing to other fanzines, at least at this time. *Video Game Monthly*, an optimistic title as well as a pretentious one, is printed on one side of the sheet in two typefaces. It even has some handwritten passages. That's what I call commitment!



Getting It Together

BY ARNIE KATZ

But Ben would probably have less frustration and more fun if he put publishing on the back burner and started writing for other fanzines. His reviews of *Star Wars, Metroid* and the coin-op *Street Fighter* would read about the same if they were in someone else's fanzine—except that they'd be presented more attractively. Dan Soloman, who provides a lengthy examination of *Bonk's Adventure*, would also be a welcome addition to many other staffs.

The Panic Zone #5

Chris Larson

3217 23rd Ave. SE Rio Rancho, NM 87124

\$1-Monthly 24 pages

Chris, who sometimes uses the name "Vapor," brings a punk rock sensibility to the electronic-gaming fanzine field. His writing is occasionally sloppy, sometimes misguided and always entertaining. Besides plenty of short video-game reviews, the current issue has a lengthy letter column, a generous portion of fanzine reviews and a provocative article discussing the state of the Sega Master System.

Chris has lots of opinions—even compared to the typical fan-ed (fanzine editor)—and he is fearless in expressing them. Sometimes he is both arrogant and misinformed, but I'd rather get a lively fanzine like *Panic Zone* than a drab "by-the-book" fanzine. If you'd like to try a publication that looks at gaming's sacred cows with commendable irreverence, try a sample

of this; and ask Chris about *Megazine*, since he's an editor of that one, too.

The Shape of Gaming to Come

Darren A. Krolewski

12311 Conservation Trail Utica, MI 48315

\$5 for six issues—Bimonthly
16 pages

Darren, another of Megazine's editors, uses his editorial to take issue with Matt Porath's in a recent Mindstorm. Porath advised fans to forget about publishing, because there are so few potential subscribers. "The wide selection of fanzines is what makes fandom fandom," Krolewski rebuts. He goes on to say almost exactly what I would've; that fandom is not a quest for subscribers and profits, it's a hobby. That means that the reward is the sense of accomplishment that comes from doing the fanzine and the entertainment value of the fanzines. letters of comment and contributions received in response. And needless competition among fanzine editors, who should be helping and supporting each other, isn't going to make electronicgaming fandom more fun for anybody.

Lots of short, but perceptive reviews, a preview of the "super gun" arcade-quality home system, Tim Slomka's outstanding computer-gaming column and a host of other well-written and informative features complete this excellent fanzine. This has become one of my personal favorites, so it gets an unqualified recommendation.

Digital Press #4

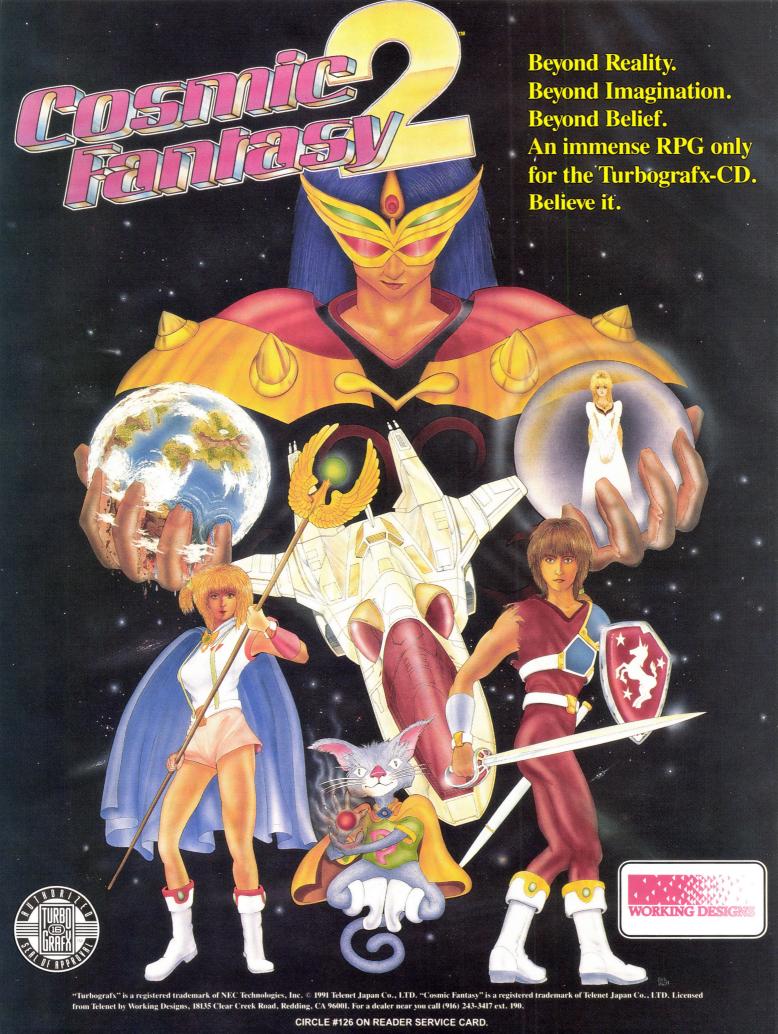
Joe Santulli

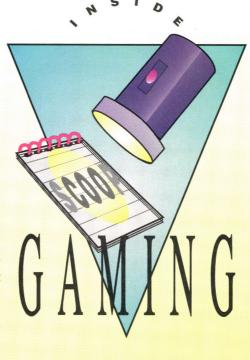
29 Cupsaw Ave. Ringwood, NJ 07456-2919

\$1.25—Frequent 20 pages

About the only thing I don't like about this literate and well-produced fanzine is its somewhat impersonal air. Editor Santulli should come out from behind the pseudocorporate trappings and give us more of the obviously appealing personality behind *Digital Press*.

Joe is one of the most creative editors in the fan press. The graphics mix diagrams, decorative type, cartoons and small screen-shots to produce a fanzine that invites the reader into every page. The articles are also inventive, including pieces like "Whatever Happened To?" about hardware and software that never quite appeared. Digital Press is prejudiced against computer gaming, but even that can't destroy this fanzine's overall fine standard.





BECOMING INVOLVED IN PRO GAMING

ARNIE KATZ

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month, Arnie offers some career advice for would-be pro gamers.

o you want to be an electronicgaming professional. I don't blame you. I've been at it since the late 1970s, and there's nothing else I'd rather be doing to earn a living. The hours are long and the deadlines are many, but I wouldn't trade what I do for anyone else's job.

A lot of folks have asked me how to get started in electronic gaming. Simple answers are in short supply, mostly because the consumer interactive electronic entertainment field is barely 20 years old. In fact, the real period of opportunity didn't dawn until 1978, when Atari and Magnavox introduced their programmable video-gaming consoles.

This industry is so new that clearly defined career pathways haven't had time to fully emerge. There are some patterns that are obvious to anyone who talks to a few professionals, but there's no speedway to an electronic-gaming career.

The closest analogy may be to the film business. Every actor, director and technical person seems to have a unique story of how they broke into Hollywood. Still, I think I can offer some general guidelines.

The first thing is to decide what, exactly, you'd like to do in electronic gaming. This is a business of specialization. Even Chris Crawford no longer tries to do everything unaided, like the game authors of the 1970s and early 1980s. Although it's good to be a little flexible so that you can take advantage of opportunities

as they appear, there's a world of difference between a programmer and a designer. Having a goal in mind makes the necessary planning much easier.

If you want to be a programmer (or some other type of technical specialist), becoming competent in that discipline is the top priority. A college degree in computer science isn't a bad idea, and there are now many schools in every part of the country, and in every possible size and setting, that offer such courses of study.

A word of warning about school: If you want to program games, you can't stop with classroom learning. Sometimes people make fun of programmers for being socially awkward and inexperienced in life. It's not surprising that some techies exhibit these traits, since the good ones dedicate so much time to mastering their craft. Spending hour upon hour at the keyboard, locked away in a bedroom or computer-center cubicle, leaves little chance to learn social interaction.

Programmers shouldn't neglect user groups as a source of computing knowledge. There are a lot of hobbyists who can teach a trick or two. Don't become infected with the piracy bug, though. Stealing someone else's work is a poor prelude to producing your own. When you turn professional, you won't want anyone taking away your livelihood with unauthorized copies, so treat other people's programs that way right from the start.

What about shareware? I don't recommend messing with subcommercial programs unless you are still a few years from entering the work force full-time. In that situation, a shareware or public domain program can showcase your ability and possibly even help you network with people with whom you might want to work in the future. The quality gap between public domain and commercially distributed games is so great, however, that "underground" and "groundlevel" publishing seldom have proven to be a springboard to big-time success the way they have occasionally proven to be in the comic-book field. Can they propel someone into ownership of a small software company? That's a valid question, but one for another installment of *Inside Gaming*.

Developing a demonstration disk is a good step for a programmer, graphic artist or computer composer. In many ways, this is a better career move than working on a large, amateur project. A prospective employer may find it hard to differentiate your work from the contributions made by other members of the team. If you're going to collaborate on a demonstration game, make sure everyone on the team has distinct, nonoverlapping functions.

Few institutions of higher learning teach electronic-game design, and I would not suggest such a curriculum in any case. My English literature degree did nothing to prepare me for either facet of my career (game design or magazine writing/editing), but I think it made me a more aware and analytical person.

The toughest part about becoming a game designer is getting the opportunity to actually design a game. Design, like many forms of writing, suffers from a lack of respect in some quarters. Just as many folks have the mistaken idea that, because they write in English, they are writers, it's a sad truth that many games are designed by people who, though they love games as ardently as any

VG&CE reader, have no particular ability to create a play-experience. The more progressive publishers have learned to appreciate the special abilities of the designer, but the education process is not yet complete.

As a consequence, don't expect to get far showing a portfolio of design proposals and specifications to a publisher. I'm sure someone has gotten hired that way, but I haven't met that person yet.

Game design, as a career, must be approached obliquely and with subtlety. The short-term goal is to get a toehold in the industry and to put yourself in a position where *someone* who has the authority to fund a project will give you a shot.

The best way to accomplish this depends on what your other skills might be. If you are a superb game player, product testing, game counseling and quality assurance (Q.A.) are routes to that all-important first job. Q.A. can be especially fruitful because it gives you a chance to write analytical reports for the same executives who organize the company's next wave of projects.

If you are a good writer, consider electronic-gaming journalism. It is very hard to earn a living wage as a free-lance contributor, but opportunities to sell reviews and even features abound. This is something that can be pursued part-time until the writer impresses enough people to get

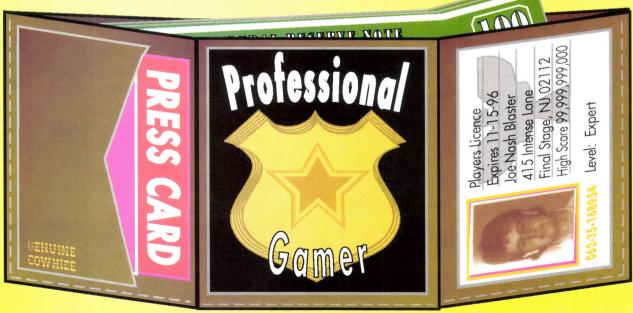
assignments from video- and computer-game companies.

You may want to try to work freelance writing into a staff position at one of the magazines. Such positions provide steady income as well as greatly increased contacts with industry representatives.

This is the direction Joyce Worley, Bill Kunkel and I took. We built a reputation for our knowledge of games and their composition. Eventually, companies in the electronic-gaming industry became receptive to using us to critique, fine-tune and design video and computer games.

As mentioned in this month's Fandango column, electronic-gaming fanzines are also a good way to start, particularly if you aren't quite ready to crack the words-for-cash market. Several fanzine writers and editors have already received professional work, and that number will grow rapidly through this decade. It may be especially appropriate for those whose analytical faculties exceed their writing skill.

A career in electronic gaming requires a lot of commitment. The artistic rewards are great, and there's even some money, but this is not a way of making a living for those who want to go home at 5 p.m. and forget the office. Most gaming professionals succeed because they are dedicated, as well as talented.





Rampart

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Version Previewed: IBM PC

The popular Atari coin-op in which players compete to construct fortifications, position cannons, then repair any damage in the brief rest periods between battles has finally arrived on the home front. Electronic Arts' PC version of Rampart is extremely faithful to the original, with solitaire, twoand three-player versions. In the one-player mode, the gamer chooses a castle to defend from seagoing marauders, positions up to four cannons, and the battle begins. The player fires at the heavily armed ships through the use of a cursor, somewhat similar to the play mechanic used in the old Atari classic Missile Command in that it is necessary to "lead" the ship slightly, since it takes time for the cannonballs to reach their moving targets. The battle ends when either all the ships or all the cannons are destroyed. The user then has a very brief period to rebuild his fortification. The game supplies randomly shaped wall sections that can be manipulated Tetris-style in order to fit them into the castle's perimeter.

Previously available as a coin-op and as a Lynx game, *Rampart's* emphasis is on playability.

In two- or three-player computer-game contests, the players battle it out among one another, competing to become the ultimate medieval Overlord.

Rampart is a lot of fun, with a nice blend of strategy and arcade-style action. The graphics won't knock your eyes out, but they are simple and easy to work with, and quite comparable to the coin-op original.

-Bill Kunkel









Superficially, Gods, by Konami, might seem like another hackand-slash sidescroller, but a look a little further reveals surprising depth.

and weaponry, pick up bonus objects and store them in inventory, solve puzzles, find hidden rooms and even sport with the denizens of the underworld. Best of all, everything can be accomplished through the exclusive use of a joystick, including an extremely clever inventory access interface.

As mentioned above, the graphics are guite beautiful, with lots of special effects and great audio. The art is somewhat reminiscent of the work of the famous underground artist Richard Corben, and the entire look of this program is first-rate.

Aces of the Pacific

DYNAMIX Version Previewed: IBM PC

Aces of the Pacific is the latest entry in Dynamix' "Great War Planes Series," which includes such classic air combat simulators as A-10 Tank Killer and Red Baron. Ace simulation designer Damon Slye, creator of such past hits as Arctic Fox, Stellar 7 and the other "Great War Planes Series" games, looks to have reached a new plateau with this entry set in the Pacific theater during World War II.

The game offers all the now-standard options found in top-of-the-line air combat simulators, including the ability to fly a full career as either a Yank or a Japanese flier. Less ambitious sky jockeys, or those pressed for time, can opt to go one-on-one in dogfight-style action against an impressive list of legendary air aces.

What will really blow away armchair pilots, however, are this game's absolutely

Gods

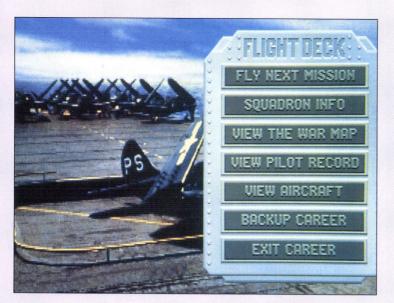
KONAMI Version Previewed: IBM PC

At "first look," Gods, the latest entry by the famous Bitmap Brothers, might appear to be yet another mindless hack-and-slash side-scroller with slick graphics, great music (by Nation XII) and sound effects. But look a little further and the game reveals some surprising depth.

The player is cast as Hercules, making his way to Mt. Olympus through four levels, each comprising a trio of sublevels. Typically, there is a boss—actually, in Gods they're known as "guardians,"—to be overcome at the end of each level. But, again, Designed by Damon Slye, Aces there's a lot more here than meets the eye. of the Pacific is a top-of-the-line Players can acquire various types of armor air combat simulator.







stunning graphics. With the possible exception of the forthcoming Strike Commander from Origin, Aces of the Pacific is the most realistic-looking game of its type ever produced. For pure visual drama, this game may have no peer whatsoever. Scenes of fighter planes careening unsteadily through clouds of smoke billowing up from the blazing deck of a wounded aircraft carrier produce the kind of vision that has never before been witnessed in the world of computer combat simulators.

Fans of air combat programs will pick this game up almost as a reflex, but even nonpilot types will want to give *Aces of the Pacific* the once-over. Its visual power and user-friendly interface should give it extremely wide audience appeal.

—В.К.

Crisis in the

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE
Version previewed: IBM PC

Crisis in the Kremlin, by San Francisco business consultant Larry Barbu, is the first program in which the player becomes prez of another major world power—notably the USSR. Believe me, no matter how tough it may be to run the U.S., keeping Mother Russia and her satellites in line makes the U.S. Presidency seem like a stroll through a park on a spring afternoon.

This geopolitical simulation, with plenty of multimedia-style animation, faces the problem of how to salvage the Soviet economy: Do you take a hard line, go radical or try to find a middle ground? Next, the political, economic and social policies must be determined, after which you should find a nice cozy bunker and hang out for awhile.

Dynamix's Aces of the Pacific contains absolutely stunning graphics.

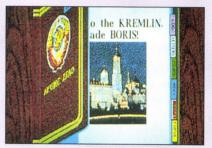
In American-style political simulations, after all, the worst thing that is likely to happen is being voted out of office at the first opportunity. Soviet leaders face rather more catastrophic implications if the system starts to break down: Food shortages lead to riots and perhaps even epidemics!

The visual presentation is extremely slick, with an easy-to-use interface, including television footage of news events in progress. The AVCR even lets you watch the food riots over and over again—in slow motion!

The objective of the game is to stay in power for 30 years, but the way things look when the game begins, most players will feel lucky to survive for 30 days!

Crisis in the Kremlin is an intriguing, original game that will prove both extremely educational as well as great fun for politically oriented gamers.

—В.К.



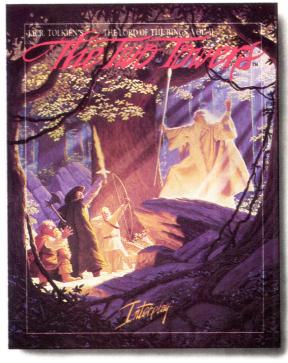




In Crisis in the
Kremlin the
player is
challenged to
lead the
disintegrating
Soviet Union
into the 21st
century.



TOLKIEN'S EPIC MIDDLE-EARTH TRILOGY CONTINUES!





THE LORD OF THE RINGS, VOL. II J.R.R. TOLKJEN'S

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All the color and imagery of Middle-earth comes to life with stateof-the-art, 256 color VGA graphics, a new and enhanced interface, full musical score, digitized speech, and colorful animations.







MS-DOS Screens Pictured.

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 Full screen, 256 color VGA graphics
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To order The Two Towers TM , call 1-800-969-GAME.

The Two TowersTM is available for MS-DOS machines at

\$59.95. Coming soon on Amiga.

Interplay Productions 3710 S. Susan, Suite 100 Santa Ana, CA 92704 (714) 549-2411

The program is published with the cooperation of the Tolkien Estate and their publishers, George Allen & Unwin (publishers) Ltd. The plot of The Lord of the Rings, characters of the hobbits, and the other characters from the Lord of the Rings are ⊚George Allen & Unwin Publishers Ltd. 1966 1974 1979 1981 © 1991 Interplay Productions. All rights reserved.

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Wild Wheels

OCEAN SOFTWARE Versions: Amiga (\$49.95) IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

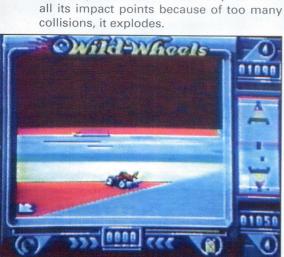
Wild Wheels is set in the 21st century, that catchall century where all our dreams (and many of our nightmares) seem to reside. In this version of our future, the soci-

ety has discarded oil-fueled vehicles in favor of electricand solar-powered cars. Somewhat inexplicably (since saving gas is the goal), the discarded vehicles are utilized in a wild arena sport.

The player starts with 1,000 points to buy a starter car, then accumulates points through rounds of play against a similarly outfitted opponent. As the totals grow, better cars are available, as well as weaponry,

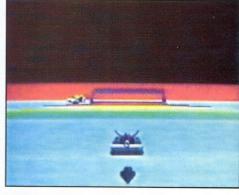
armor and other upgrades won during competition. Each side controls a strike car and a

fleet of four robot vehicles of the same class. Play starts when a giant ball is tossed into the arena; the object is to maneuver the ball into the appropriate goal by bumping it along, in a wild team sport that is a little like football crossed with car wars. Ramming dispossesses the ball from any vehicle, and when any car loses

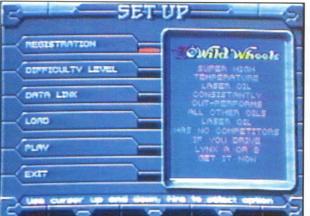












The competition in Wild Wheels is fierce: Somewhat similar to bumper cars, the vehicles careen around the arena, while trying to put a giant ball in the goal.

The competition between the teams is fierce, and the round ends when either side's last strike car is destroyed. Somewhat similar to bumper cars, the vehicles careen around the arena trying to hit one another, at the same time trying to get a bead on the ball to sink one into the goal.

Many options and variables keep the

game engaging. Players can choose one of the preset formations for their team's starting positions or set them up to suit. The cars on each team have different functions: in addition to the strike car (operated by the computerist), the robots are categorized as "killer" (programmed to destroy the strongest member of the other team), "blocker" (always tries to shield the strike car), "fetcher" (collects the ball and passes to the strike car) and "guard" (protects the home team's goal). The player can use any combination of types to make up the team.

From time to time, electronic tiles appear on the floor of the arena, and the player can accumulate the items they represent by driving over them. Some of the goodies are an acceleration suit (needed to drive some of the fastest cars), new tires, weaponry, fuel, repair credits, immobilizers (stop the opposition's robot cars), a rest tile that replaces worn parts and a killer tile that destroys the opponent's strike car. The items are kept for future use or, at the end of each round, sold for added score points. There are also traps, like the vector tile that sends the car spinning off in a random direction.

The bird's-eye view (from just behind and above the strike car) can be modified from close up to medium and distant. An overhead view is also available. The graphics, while not outstanding, are nonetheless adequate for this action game. The cars are well-drawn, and the arena itself is polygon fill that provides a good background for the hot driving. The action is most attractive viewed from the close-up perspective; however, it's a little easier to play from the medium or distant views, since they show more of the arena field.

Icons depicting the items available frame the active window, and a radar screen gives a view of the entire arena, with the position of each car on both teams, the ball, the electronic tiles and any road hazards (e.g., ice). The current score and number of cars available to each side are below the radar screen.

The joystick-controlled game operates smoothly, though it's tricky to handle the little speedsters as they careen around the field. Yet the action is enthralling enough to make bad drivers come back again for another round, and practice does bring improvement.

The music and sound effects are merely acceptable. There's a pleasant opening theme, and most in-arena actions are accompanied by appropriate beeps and boops. A little more music throughout and better roars and crashes would certainly add excitement.

A save feature lets players work their way up through the classes to the top cars, a lengthy procedure, but each round of play is quick and satisfying. This is a program that a player can come back to again and again, every time there's even a few minutes to devote to gaming.

—Joyce Worley

Electronic Arts 1450 Fashion Island Blvd. San Mateo, CA 94404 (415) 572-ARTS Mindscape's Paperboy 2 adds some new features to the original, such as being able to select the gender of the onscreen delivery person, new

bonus areas and various

supernatural horrors.









MINDSCAPE
Versions: Amiga (\$49.95),
IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Atari's Paperboy coin-op was one of those original game concepts that comes along all too infrequently in the gaming world. Equipped with bicycle-style handlebars as a controller, and grip-mounted action buttons, the game turned on the unique idea of the player-as-paperboy, tooling down a series of suburban streets, avoiding obstacles while deftly flipping newspapers onto subscribers' porches.

Paperboy has since been translated into virtually every available electronic format, from video games to computers and handhelds, and has proven sufficiently enduring to produce a sequel, Paperboy 2.

Paperboy 2 grafts a number of interesting elements onto the original. On a cosmetic level, the user can play the game as either a paperboy or a papergirl. Visually, new obstacles and bonus areas supplement a game environment that transcends the linear streets of the original, making the gamer steer in several different direc-

tions while completing a loop of adjacent blocks. In addition, the player can toss the newspapers either left or right, a fea-





continued on page 98

ADVE	RT	IS	ER I	N D	EX
Advertiser	Page #	RSC #	Advertiser	Page #	RSC #
Absolute	38-39	113	Interplay	93	127
Access	46-47	116	Jaleco	41	114
Acclaim	7, 13, 17,		Koei	19	107
	29, 49	103	Micro Marketplace	117	133
ASCII Entertainment	4, BC	102, 138	Namco	IBC	137
Boston Traders	117	132	New England Services	101	129
BRE Software	117	134	New World Computing	75	121
Bullet-Proof Software	85	125	Ocean America	77, 118	122, 136
Camerica	22-23	108	Sega Corp.	83	124
Capcom	31, 33	110, 111	Seika	37	112
Champion Glove	43	115	Sligo Video	117	139
Culture Brain	115	131	Sony Imagesoft	IFC-3, 8-9	101, 104
Electronic Arts	14-15	106	Spectrum HoloByte	79	123
Game Dude Club	103	130	Sunsoft	27	109
Hudson Soft	11	105	Tengen	65	118
Infocom	60-61	117	Virgin Games Inc.	67, 68-69	120
Infonet	99	128	Working Designs	87	126

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ture mostly of interest during the bonus rounds. There's even a two-player mode that lets both gamers compete head-to-head during those bonus rounds.

Another modification to the original idea, however, is of more dubious value: The player's route is now inexplicably under siege from a variety of supernatural horrors, including a slimy, green paw that periodically emerges from sewer drains to swat a life out of the user's delivery surrogate and lawn gargoyles that hurl fireballs into the street. The problem with this is subtle but undeniable: One of the most appealing things about the original game was the fact that its setting was realistic almost to the point of being mundane. The idea of an arcade game set against a suburban backdrop was oddly compelling, and the arbitrary addition of a rogues' gallery of monsters to the stew has an unsettling effect on the dynamics of the entire contest.

Otherwise, the game works pretty well, and fans of the original should find enough new wrinkles to keep them amused. The graphics are solid if unspectacular, and the game play is good, while the sound effects and background music are fairly thin.

So, if you aren't overly disturbed by the idea of delivering papers to a suburban neighborhood infested with monsters, *Paperboy 2* has a job for you.

—Bill Kunkel

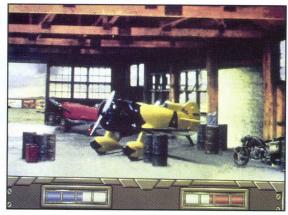
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The Rocketeer

WALT DISNEY SOFTWARE
Version: IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The story line of Disney's newest software release loosely parallels that of the movie. The player assumes the role of Cliff Secord (the Rocketeer), who unwittingly becomes a hero in the name of love by using the Cirrus X-3 rocket pack to rescue his girlfriend from Nazi henchmen. These are the things that great pulp fiction are made of, and one might expect a fair amount of roleplaying in a game based upon a successful reprisal of an old Republic serial. Nevertheless, the computer version eschews the role-playing element in its entirety, focusing









instead on four action arcade sequences that portray some of the highlights of the film.

The first episode, entitled "Pilot" focuses on traditional pylon air-racing, as practiced at Bigelow's Air Circus. The player's goal is to win two consecutive heats to fly the rocket pack in the main event. Three separate planes are available, each having different acceleration and cornering ability. Two perspectives are offered in this sequence. The first is a slightly top/down side view, which preserves the depth of field necessary to negotiate the pylons. The second perspective is a chase-plane view located in a small window in the lower-right corner of the screen. This screen is most helpful when trying to pass other planes, but should be avoided at other times.

The second arcade sequence, "Shootout," is exactly what the name implies, a pitched gun battle inside an aircraft hangar. Unfortunately, our hero is in the foreground without benefit of protective cover. Meanwhile, the Nazi's are lurking in every corner and popping up to fire in groups of two or three, widely spaced on the screen. Players position the cursor with the joystick during the scant seconds each target appears and returns fire. Unfortunately, joystick response for this section seems too slow. This section dredges up some harrowing memories for anyone who remembers the old Atari title Gangster Alley.

The remaining two sections of the game, "Chase" and "Rescue," are fairly straightforward horizontally scrolling shooting

contests. In the former, the player controls the Rocketeer against Nazi rocket men, bombs and missiles. In the latter, our hero is inside a prototype aircraft, the "Locust,"

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CIRCLE #128 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

and must shoot down Nazi aircraft, V-2 rockets and little dirigible mines that, although deadly, have an undeniable cuteness to their appearance. Well, it's Disney after all.

The cut scenes between each arcade sequence use a comic-book panel format and some superb digitized speech that comes across especially well with the Disney Sound Source. (There is an acknowledged problem with the quality of the sound breaking up when using a Sound Blaster card.)

The graphics are clever and well developed, with great animation techniques that reflect well on the Disney trademark.

As mentioned earlier, in some sections the joystick control is not fast enough to meet the challenge. In other sections, the player icon actually gets in the way because it's too large.

Despite the polished presentation of the subject matter and the outstanding graphic treatment, the biggest thing that Rocketeer lacks is replay value, something that astute gamers must consider prior to purchase.

-Ed Dille

Walt Disney Computer Software 500 S. Buena Vista St. Burbank, CA 91521 (818) 560-1000

Obitus

PSYGNOSIS

Versions: Amiga (\$49.99), Atari ST (\$49.99), IBM PC (\$49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	(S	EE	TI	ΞX	T)					
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The differences between computer games and video games are constantly shrinking. But, while most translations are from the former to the latter, Psygnosis has seemingly tried the reverse. They created a simple fantasy exploration game with an abundance of graphically different items, but none of the mathematics usually rampant in RPGs. They also utilized the graphic detail possible with a PC and game-like concept to added a run-jump-and-shoot segment. a computer platform. The result is a potentially beautiful game in desperate need of cohesion.

Obitus is the story of Wil Mason, a professor in medieval history whose Volvo breaks down one rainy night in front of a mysterious tower. He's transported to Middlemere, a magical version of his historical specialty. Awakening with only a bow and no arrows, his task is to find ammunition, keys, potions, food and, most importantly, a way home.

Play occurs in three types of settings: maze, parallax and interior. Most findable objects are located in the 3-D, first-personperspective maze sections. The backgrounds are nearly identical throughout each maze, but when the character turns, the view rotates rather than switching to the next screen. The tunneling effect of high-speed travel through mazes is especially impressive.

Nonplayer characters encountered frequently have items to trade and information to pass on. More often they stand in the middle of the path and need to be killed. Object animation is extremely simple and one rule applies: If it's moving. then it's attacking. Player strength level is critical in combat because, once reduced to one-half its maximum value, your strength free-falls. It's much better to eat

an apple with each wound rather than expend one's entire stock of potions trying to stave off an impending death.

A computer compass is on hand, but with the maze sections' eight directions of travel possible, compulsive mappers will feel vindicated. For those who'd prefer to waste excessive time traveling rather than pick up pen and paper, the mazes are at least small.

Parallax sections are left-right scrolling arcade segments where Wil runs from maze to maze. Here. character actions are limited to running, jumping, crouching, shooting and switch-









Psygnosis' Obitus bucks a trend by bringing a video-



ing weapons. Most creatures take more than one shot to kill, so players can either waste their most powerful ammunition or bounce their way through. But even with the most skillful aerial somersaults, all the parallax does is reduce health and ammunition for no discernible reason. Catapults and floating specters are nice, but so is survival. What's worse is that some lead nowhere and players survive their journey, only to have to rerun the same gauntlet. It's wise to save the game before going through a parallax.

The final locations are interior sections, a curious blend of the maze and parallax. All player commands, including sleep and eat, work here, and the player character is visible in linked (not scrolled) castle rooms. The halls contain fiery torches and tapestries on the walls that can't be used, making the interior sections elaborately decorated, trap-laden hideouts. Travel in interiors is mostly east-west, with just enough north-south movement to confuse both mappers and pen-free players.

While *Obitus* supports hardware such as the Sound Blaster, it has no sound rating because the basic computer's speaker is silent. It's understood that game developers need to devote a greater part of their programming time to hardware that can truly capture the desired sound, but leaving the basic machine silent is inexcusable.

Obitus is flawed, yet it offers some intriguing segments. If Psygnosis learns from Obitus' mistakes and produces a sequel, it could be incredible.

—David S. Moskowitz

Psygnosis 29 St. Mary's Court Brookline, MA 02146 (617) 731-3553

Home Alone

CAPSTONE Version: IBM PC (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Slap your hands on the side of your face and scream "Yeeeowww!" Home Alone, the computer game, is now available for owners of IBM PC systems with EGA graphics or better. And, while the game draws its theme from only a small segment of the hit movie, it may be computerists' only chance to help Kevin Mc-

Capstone lets you try to guide Kevin McCallister through his family-less house, all the while setting traps to trip up bungling burglars Harry and Marv, in Home Alone.



Callister outwit those infamous and inept burglars, Harry and Marv.

In the computer version of *Home Alone*, the player must place traps all over the McCallister house in order to slow down and eventually defeat the Wet Bandit Gang. To achieve this goal, the player needs to be quick on the joystick and keyboard, as well as devious in placement of the traps.

The game is divided into two phases. In phase one, the player runs through the house, picking up items and placing them as traps. Items the player can use include a variety of toys, firecrackers, tar, paint,

grease, kitchen utensils, a blow torch, a bowling ball, a tarantula (*shiver*) and more. There are 25 trap items in all.

There are complications, of course. The player can carry only three items at once. In addition, items can be placed only in certain locations. For example,

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CIRCLE #129 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



In Home Alone, Kevin can use his BB gun to trigger certain traps or to slow down the intruders as they work to taking over the house.

some items must be put on the floor, whereas others must be balanced above a door. It takes a while to learn the layout of the house and to figure out what item needs to go where. Finally, the player has only one hour of

game time (a little over five minutes of real time) to find and

place all the traps.

MATON OME BALON

When the hour runs out, the burglars arrive. Kevin must draw them from room to room, avoiding the traps while luring the intruders into them. During this phase, Kevin can use his BB gun to slow his pursuers and to trigger certain types of traps. The top of the screen shows where both burglars are, but it still takes fancy footwork to stay out of their grasp.

Unfortunately, Kevin gets no second chances. After the player has labored long, carefully placing traps, the game might end almost instantly after a burglar pops onto the screen. Escaping Harry and Marv while luring them into traps takes a lot of practice. One life just isn't enough on the concept of its to get into the game. It's frustrating for the player to spend over five minutes get into its simplicity and placing traps, only to have to start all over with one touch of a burglar. This gets boring fast.

Home Alone can be played using keyboard or joystick. But, when using a joystick, it still requires the keyboard to grab and place items. For this reason, phase one of the game is best played with the keyboard, whereas phase two plays best with the joystick. Keyboard operation in phase two is so clumsy it's sure to turn your hair gray.

Home Alone's graphics are nicely drawn and detailed, and many scenes include digitized photos. The music, while not exactly inspired, is pleasant enough.

Those gamers familiar with Taito's Qix of arcade fame will no doubt take right to Arcade Masters' Volfied, which builds predecessor, but first-timers will addictive nature also.



Moreover, the program supports Ad Lib sound for those equipped with a compatible sound card.

All in all, though, Home Alone offers little entertainment, quickly becoming monotonous. It doesn't stand up well to repeated playings. Now, maybe if the game included a phase three and a phase four and....

-Clayton Walnum

Capstone 14202 SW 136th St. Miami, FL 33186 (800) 468-7226

Volfied

ARCADE MASTERS Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Commodore 64 (\$29.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

It's a special treat for players when games are available for more than one format and doubly so when the game is a conversion of an arcade game hit. That's the situation with Volfied, Taito's seguel to Qix (pronounced "kicks"). Brought to America from Europe via ReadySoft, Volfied takes the original concept of Qix into exciting new areas of game play.

Volfied is more of a level and bonus arcade game than the arcade game that addicted so many gamers in the early '80s. Players must remember Qix to appreciate the advances in game play in Volfied, but familiarity with the earlier game is unnecessary to enjoy the new one.

Qix received so much attention in its time because it was a flexible game that players could get good at, but never beat. It required the player to move a ship around the perimeter of the playfield and



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Volfied's graphics are quite glimpses of the next level as you reveal more and more of the playfield with your rectangles.

draw rectangles to enclose more and more of the playfield. A swirling shape, interesting, showing you the Qix moved at random within the remainder of the playfield. The object of the game was to contain the Qix in less than 25% of the playfield. As the space got smaller, the Qix moved more haphazardly and it got tougher to draw a rectangle without touching it or the perimeter-riding creatures, which meant loss of a player's life.

Volfied takes this basic concept and builds on it. The object of the game is the same, although the playfield, twirling monster, additional creatures and percentage for completion change from level to level.

The 16 levels represent layers of the planet Volfied that have been corrupted by an alien interest. The ultimate goal is to remove each layer to save the planet. Completed rectangles reveal that portion of the playfield background on the level below, a neat graphics effect.

The other major change is the addition of power boxes that appear and disappear on each level. The contents/function of the power boxes is completely random, so luck figures prominently into Volfied. The poorly presented documentation sheet features a poster on the other side, but does not identify the possible power boxes. It takes experimentation to learn that the "P" box stops the level timer; the "L" box gives the player's ship laser fire to eliminate creatures other than level bosses; the "S" box speeds up the ship; the "T" box freezes all enemies for a short time; the "C" box destroys all enemies except for the boss; the "1-up" box gives the player an extra life; and the star box gives the player's ship triple-fire capability that takes out all enemies, even the boss.

Volfied is a lot more fun to play than the older game because of the boxes and vastly different levels. The variety keeps the game moving. The game is not a stroll in the park; this is difficult, even for a skilled player. The best strategy to use, despite temptations otherwise, is to make long and thin rectangles that extend the

width of the remaining playfield area. This strategy halves the exposed area and sets up a trap for the boss. Also, surround all boxes as soon as they appear. Some appear in groups. Try to capture them all at once for maximum points and powers.

Volfied jumps light-years ahead of Qix with regard to graphics. The background of the next level peeking through the contained area offers a visual measure of how much more needs to be done and makes Volfied more captivating than Qix, which only changed hues for the rectangles every few levels. Animation of the colorful monsters, especially the boss, is fast and unpredictable. Sound effects and music are spread thinly throughout the game, but heighten the tension of play.

To clear up any confusion, Taito's Ultimate Qix for the Genesis is the same game as Volfied for the computer, although the video game is better graphically and musically. Regardless of this, computer players should be happy to know that Volfied brings Qix into the '90s, with a whole new challenge!

-Russ Ceccola

ReadySoft 30 Wertheim Court, Unit 2 Richmond Hill, ON CANADA L4B 1B9 (416) 731-4175

The Simpsons **Arcade Game**

KONAMI

Versions: Commodore 64 (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Konami has had a number of successes in the arcades with large-cabinet, fourplayer games, most notably its Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles series. A few months ago, Konami took its successful approach over to another popular group of cartoon characters, the Simpsons. It was hard for anyone to get close to the machine when it first came out, and it still maintains its popularity today. The game was a hit mostly because of its colorfully animated screens, goofy characters and neat sound effects and music.

It was a smart move when Konami brought The Simpsons Arcade Game to home computers. It retains all the fun of the original—and saves your quarters, too!

The Simpsons Arcade Game is a multiple-level romp through the Simpsons' universe and their town of Springfield. The goal is to save baby Maggie from the criminal who just robbed a diamond from the jewelry store. As he leaves the store, he bumps into the Simpsons and the diamond flies into the air, only to be caught Arcade Game, brings to disk the by Maggie in her mouth in place of her pacifier. The criminal (who looks a lot like Smithers, the assistant to Springfield nuclear power plant boss Montgomery Burns) grabs Maggie and leads the rest of the Simpsons on a wild-goose chase that shows off the locations and characters in and around Springfield. There are eight levels in the game, plenty for the joystick jocks to handle. Truthfully, it is just as much fun to watch the characters do their thing (not unlike a Simpsons episode) as it is to play the game.

Unlike the original quarter-eater, The Simpsons Arcade Game for home computers only supports one or two players. The gamers select Bart, Homer, Lisa or Marge as focus character, or put together a two-player team with any combination of the family members.

Each of the Simpsons has his or her own special way of attacking game enemies: Bart spins on his skateboard, Lisa flips her jump rope, Marge hits with her vacuum cleaner and Homer uses his powerful fists. When teamed, certain charac-

ters have additional moves. For example, Homer and Marge collaborate to perform a devastating barrel roll. These two-player moves require more control, but are doubly effective as a single attack and especially useful against the big bosses at the end of each level.

Joystick control is best for The Simpsons Arcade Game. The characters move quite fluidly. One joystick button is for attacks, the other is for jumps. High jumps are the most effec-

tive and safest way to eliminate enemy characters. While in the air, most enemies can't touch the on-screen ego. Plus, the Simpsons stay in the air for a relatively long time, even longer if the button is held down.

It is important to watch the energy gauge at the bottom of the screen. When it gets low, hunt for a tree. If you hit the tree repeatedly, apples fall out that can restore energy. Other characters in the game have food and special weapons.

The animation and graphics in The Simpsons Arcade Game are wonderful; the game truly looks like an interactive

Konami, with The Simpsons same scrolling hilarity that created lines of gamers and filled coin boxes at many arcades.







cartoon. There are lots of sight gags, unusual characters, colorful screens and wacky locations—and all in beautiful, 256-color VGA, too. The eight levels are: Downtown Springfield, Krustyland, Springfield Discount Cemetery, Moe's Tavern, Springfield Butte, Dreamland, Channel 6 and The Burns Mansion. Evervone's favorite characters, from Otto the bus driver to Apu the convenience store worker, make an appearance, as well as Simpsons creator Matt Groening's

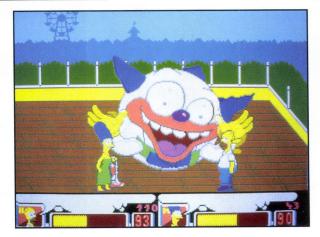
(pronounced gray-ning, by the way) character Binky, from his Life in Hell comic strip.

On the audio side of the senses, The Simpsons TV show theme, by Danny Elfman, plays throughout the game, along with other atmospheric music—just enough to keep your ears busy without being bothersome. The only element of the arcade game missing from the home version is the digitized voices of the Simpsons characters. This is not a major loss, but could have been added with a little programming ingenuity.

The Simpsons Arcade Game is exciting, fun and the right difficulty level for players of all skills. My only complaint with the conversion is that the designers didn't provide a save option. Once you run out of lives, the game is over and you have to start over again.

The Simpsons Arcade Game is a must-buy for all Simpsons fanatics, as well as for players who enjoy goofy, surreal entertainments. -R.C.

Konami 900 Deerfield Parkway Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510



(708) 215-5100

Knights of the Sky

MICROPROSE Versions: Amiga (\$59.95), IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

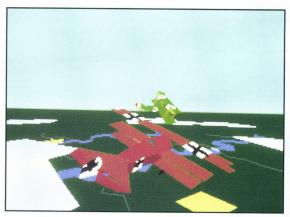
"An elegant weapon of a more civilized age...." Obi-Wan Kenobi's description of a light sabre in 1977's *Star Wars* might well have been a melancholy musing over the fighter planes of World War I. Little more than flying machine-guns, these aircraft were deceptively simple, and the only IFF system available was called eyeballs. No fire-control computers, no radar, no heat-seeking missiles, no afterburners, no...well, no anything, really.

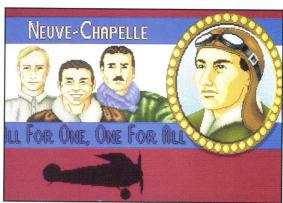
Previously, Amiga pilots longing for the early days of air combat had only Cinemaware's brilliant *Wings* and Three-Sixty's well-intentioned *Blue Max* to choose from. Now, in addition to Dynamix's *Red Baron*, which is superb on the IBM but substantially less so on the Amiga, there is Micro-Prose's *Knights of the Sky*, which may just be the Amiga World War I flight simulator.

Knights of the Sky sees the player's character advance through the ranks, become a feared and respected ace and eventually retire at the war's end, thanks to a generous "resurrection" option.

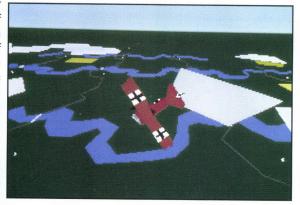
Jaunty piano rags accompany lavish information screens where pilots keep abreast of the latest news from the front in between missions. The effect is a seamless re-creation of days gone by.

In typical MicroProse fashion, Knights offers the player complete control over the simulation. To begin with, pilots may train in any of 20 different aircraft—the cream of the crop from both sides of the conflict. A multitude of views are available, from both inside and outside of the cockpit, although one standard cockpit graphic is used for all planes. Five skill levels assure even the most timid of pilots a rich and rewarding career. Purists will scoff at the tactical views, zooms and auto-landings, but most gamers will revel in the









excitement that World War I had to offer a young pilot. Control is mainly by mouse or keyboard for wing weenies, and by joystick (digital or analog) for those who prefer a more authentic flying experience.

The main menu offers four options—

flight training, dogfights with enemy aces, modem play against a friend or the headlong plunge into The Great War. Like pilots of that era, players may only fly aircraft as they become historically available, and even then only the best pilots get their pick of the newest machines. But the most important element in Knights is speed. While not exactly smooth as silk, it's by far the best of the bunch, and even at the highest level of graphic detail, the frame rate remains quite respectable. Unlike those other World War I simulations, the missions begin and end on the ground. Pilots take off from a home base and, with any luck, return to it. Whether it's a routine patrol, recon escort, fighter interception or balloon busting, once in the air

there is never a dull moment. Come to think of it, there aren't many dull moments on the ground, either.

Knights of the Sky continues Micro-Prose's tradition of melding historical accuracy with stimulating game play. Tallyho, chaps!

-Scott Wolf

MicroProse 180 Lakefront Drive Hunt Valley, MD 21030 (410) 771-1151

Birds of Prey

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95),

IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Birds of Prey is one of the most comprehensive flight/combat simulators ever designed for a home computer. Allowing the player to fly no less than 40 different types of aircraft, it effectively simulates most of the aspects of an air campaign, including air supremacy, bomber escorts, troop drops, tank busting and supply missions. As with most flight simulators, it takes considerable dedication to master the complexities—but the results are well worth the effort.

Each campaign is tied to a pilot. To start a new campaign, a new pilot must be designated. The pilot can fly any of the aircraft, thus pursuing the various stages of combat that make up a real air war.

Next the pilot must be assigned Side A (NATO weapons) or Side B (Soviet weapons). The next step is to select one of 12 varied missions. If the player expects to successfully conclude the war, many different types of missions must be flown. The most appropriate mission can be surmised from the graphs that detail the relative air and ground strength of the two sides and the tactical map of the battlefield. For example, if ground strength is falling on the player's side, it is probably best to begin troop drops and close (tank killer) support. If the player's side is suffering heavy losses at airfields, some bomber strikes against enemy airfields and air supremacy missions are in order. There are no hard and fast rules, but strategies become fairly clear after playing for awhile. Games can be saved so that an entire campaign doesn't have to be finished at one sitting.

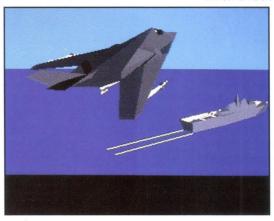
All aircraft for the selected side are available for every mission, although, of course, some are completely inappropriate. Menu selections can limit the aircraft available to only acceptable ones, which makes selection easier. The player then needs to arm and fuel the aircraft. All these steps are easily done from menus and buttons.

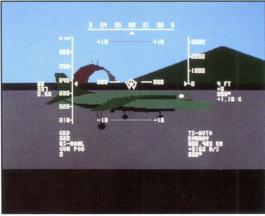
Once these preliminary steps are taken, it is time to take to the air. The default view is from the cockpit, showing the instrument panel, but about a dozen other views are available, including a variety of

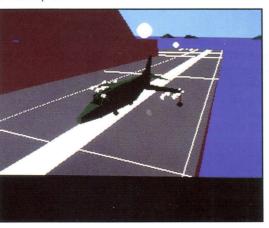
external angles, "fly past" views, even missile camera view. The cockpit view includes a HUD (heads up display) that shows the most important information (altitude, enemy locations, etc.) so that the pilot need not take his eyes off the action. However, there are commands available to have the pilot turn his head to look around.

Flight is not particularly easy, as there are many commands to learn—almost every

Birds of Prey, from Electronic Arts, is one of the most comprehensive flight/combat simulators ever designed for the home computer, featuring 40 different aircraft and a high level of difficulty.







key on the keyboard has a function. Further, these modern birds are complex—there are many different radar modes and HUD modes to learn, and each is appropriate under certain conditions. For example, the radar mode "Track While Search" searches for and tracks a specific enemy target more accurately than "Range While Search," but RWS will give earlier warning of multiple targets. The radar can identify ground targets (appropriate for ground attack missions), and a navigation computer allows the player to set waypoints (destinations) for the automatic pilot.

The player can choose targets manually or allow the computer to pick them. Of course, the appropriate weapons must be selected from the plane's arsenal and fired when a lock is obtained.

There's a lot of difference in how the planes fly. The F-16, for example, is a remarkably nimble fighter that is almost impossible to fly using the joystick—a single click of the stick typically causes much more flight correction than the player had anticipated. The KC10, on the other hand, is a lumbering transport that is much less responsive and easier to fly. Be sure to clear the air of enemy fighters before taking one up, however.

Birds of Prey monitors the joystick, keyboard and mouse at the same time. The mouse is the best control device most of the time, and there are also a fair number of menus accessed by pressing the mouse button. These menu items double for most of the keyboard options, which reduces the number of keystrokes the player needs to memorize.

The graphics in *Birds of Prey* are very good, with shaded 3-D planes and ground installations. The amount of detail shown can be varied to quicken the animation speed, but the animation stays smooth even at the highest graphic detail level. The sound is limited to engine noise, a few alarms and explosions; it's good, but not impressive.

Birds of Prey has a great deal of variety in it. Combined with the excellent graphics, it has long-term staying power. It does have a fairly steep learning curve, but that is true of any simulation package that tries to do a realistic job. Helping in the learning department are some options like

varying difficulty levels, an "easy flight" option and screen menus.

Despite its high level of difficulty, EA's *Birds of Prey* will fascinate the serious armchair pilot.

—Dave Plotkin

Electronic Arts 1450 Fashion Island Blvd. San Mateo, CA 94404 (415) 572-ARTS

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

INTERPLAY
Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

You didn't have to be a Trekker to enjoy the TV space opera that boldly took viewers where no one had gone before. And you don't have to be a fan of the show to like Interplay's game based on the famous license.

The final product takes adventurers on seven missions: Demon World, Hijacked, Love's Labor Jeopardized, Another Fine Mess, The Feathered Serpent, That Old Devil Moon and Vengeance. While seven missions doesn't seem like a lot, expansion disks providing new challenges are promised for the future.

Copy protection is in the form of a graphical password. A target destination (a Federation planet in trouble) must be found on a chart in the documentation (the planets are numbered and named, so it's relatively easy) and then the corresponding point of light on the on-screen navigator's chart. After this, travel between planets is represented by a noninteractive scene depicting the *Enterprise* going into warp.

The hallmark of *Star Trek: 25th Anniver-sary* is game play. Interplay's command icon interface is a joy to use, and the seven Trek-like missions should please every dyed-in-the-wool Trekker more than any other type of adventure. Even non-Trekkers will enjoy the stimulating puzzles.

At the end of each mission, points are awarded based on the percentage of tasks completed. The scoring system encourages thoroughness, because points accumulate from mission to mission, and it is easier to complete the game if the player has accumulated as many points as possible.

A hard disk is required, and installation takes more than an hour.

Interplay's Star Trek: 25th
Anniversary takes the
player—whether a Star Trek
enthusiast or not—through seven
varied missions of enjoyable
game play.





The minimum system required is a 10 MHz IBM PC AT or compatible. The specs say 640K of system memory is necessary, but, in actuality, 550K is sufficient. I saw no substantial improvements in performance with 832K of expanded memory; in fact, even in the quarter-screen "bridge viewport," the movement of stars and spacecraft was not smooth. The background graphics are artistically drawn, and the animation of bitmapped sprites is good, but at times the animation routines seem to be pulling directly from the hard drive, rather than memory. This results in uneven animation during off-ship excursions. These flaws hold back an otherwise excellent effort in the graphics.

Mouse, joystick and keyboard are all supported, but mouse is preferred, especially when using Interplay's command icons. Even in the space flight/combat mode, the use of a mouse is recommended—not only does it place ship movement, phasers and photon torpedoes at one hand, it allows the player's free hand to issue other essential keyboard commands, such as raising shields or arming weapons.

The music could have been better. Apparently, at early stages in the development of the game, the plan was to use digitized sound effects. That plan was scrapped, and even the packaging had to be fudged to reflect this change. Synthesized effects of very good quality were substituted, although, without access to digitizations, real voices are conspicuous by their absence.

Space flight/combat enthusiasts will find the already familiar environment of the *Enterprise* a bona fide magnet. Although several previous *Star Trek* games navigated this route before, *Star Trek*: 25th Anniversary goes further toward making the adventure more real than any program has gone before.

-Frank Eva

Interplay 3710 S. Susan, #100 Santa Ana, CA 92704 (714) 545-9001



Castle of Dr. Brain

SIERRA ON-LINE Version: IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Puzzles and brainteasers have been around ever since man learned to write and draw. From word twisters and mazes to jigsaws and cryptograms, puzzles stir the imagination and let people use their knowledge to solve problems.

Corey Cole's Castle of Dr. Brain, the puzzle-solver's horn o'plenty, takes a new approach. Puzzles pop up linearly in a series of rooms and rely heavily on logic and manipulation of interesting objects, such as a programmable robot, a time clock and a bookshelf combination lock.

The puzzles make good use of the basic Sierra point-and-click interface. They increase in difficulty as the game unfolds a loose plot that puts the player next in line to be Dr. Brain's lab assistant. Puzzles range from solving a magic square and programming a robotic arm, to picking up objects in a maze, recognizing constellations and guessing words in a game of hangman. The large variety of challenges keeps *Dr. Brain* interesting. There is absolutely no repetition.

Puzzles are grouped into a room or area by theme. For example, timing puzzles are placed in the time clock room. Between floors, players must navigate a fairly simple maze with a tiny robot to reach the door to the next level.

Solution of major puzzles provides the player with certificates to be used in a sort of endgame puzzle. More importantly, completing a brainteaser awards the player a hint coin. The coins may be used to buy hints whenever the player gets stuck; however, this aid is not without cost. Every time a player uses a hint coin, the score goes down. The best players should be able to finish *Dr. Brain* without any hint coins. However, the hint coins help to eliminate the frustration usually found in such a linear game; in this one, players won't get stuck for more than a few minutes.

To make this an even greater value, there are three difficulty levels. The standard and expert levels build upon and make harder the puzzles in the novice version of the game. They translate to three times the fun and encourage replay.

Dr. Brain is a visual treat. Each room features gadgets and gimmicks that come to life at the click of a mouse button. The painted backgrounds are colorful and each

Castle of Dr.

Castle of Dr.
Brain, from Sierra
On-Line, takes the
timeworn concept
of brainteaser
puzzles and brings
it to the computer
screen.

area of the game takes on its own look. There is a ton of animation in the game to surprise and delight the player. The castle itself is like a giant Rube Goldberg device, the parts of which are the various sections of the game. With its fun look and varied scenes, *Dr. Brain* is both pleasant to watch and entertaining to play.

Sound effects and music are also important to *Dr. Brain*. From the castle entrance Simon-type music memory game to the bleeps and blips that signal success in the programming section, sound effects provide part of the fun. Music acts more as a reward than a significant game element. Various tunes accompany the action and usually play after a puzzle's solution.

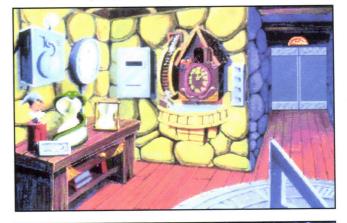
To get players into the spirit of the challenge, Sierra packaged Muriel Mandell's Fantastic Book of Logic Puzzles in the game's box. Ironically, the book's puzzles are tougher than *Dr. Brain*'s.

Castle of Dr. Brain is a celebration of logic puzzles. It is so addicting and fun that a sequel, The Island of Dr. Brain, is already far into the design stage.

Dr. Brain has everything the avid puzzle-solver could possibly want collected into a well-organized trip to the heart of the good doctor's castle.

-R.C.

Sierra On-Line Inc. P.O. Box 485 Coarsegold, CA 93614 (209) 683-4468





Last Resort

For the Neo · Geo (\$179)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The fate of the world is the subject of many a video game, and, certainly, SNK's Last Resort is no different. It takes place in the year 2920, and what's happened is not a pretty sight. Centuries of industry and transportational needs have taken their toll on the planet, rendering the once-healthy planet as depleted and stark. Efforts have turned to colonize space as a new home for the 90 billion residents.

Unfortunately, a computer virus has taken over the main CPU at one of the colonies—and it's threatening to do more than wipe out a hard drive or two on someone's birthday. Genocide is in the air, but the infected machine isn't targeting a specific race, creed or color for extermination, but rather the whole human population. Slowly, colony after colony is cleaned out. A bevy of robot warriors are constructed and let loose to do the computer's bidding. And they do their job well.

As with most video games, you have the mission to destroy all that is evil. In Last Resort, you are just that: the final chance against the growing virus and its mechanized minions. Jumping into your fighter craft, you set out to rid the robot threat, fingers poised on your fire button.

Once your start playing Last Resort, you'll immediately see a resemblance to an old classic, Irem's R-Type. Certain improvements have been made over R-Type's droid module that attaches to your ship and can game, featuring a decent, but not be fired at oncoming enemies: Mainly, you have more opportunity to send it out in any direction. Because the pod in Last Resort rotates freely around your ship (it will go in the opposite direction from the one you move your ship in), you can target a robot and launch the pod away by holding down the "A" button for a couple of seconds to charge up, then releasing the button. There are also two forms of pod, depending on what color a power-up is when you grab it: one that deflects off of enemies and the other that slides along the terrain. Both do a good job of wiping out adversaries that lie in their paths.







SNK's Last Resort is a well-designed overwhelming, use of the Neo • Geo's extensive sound and graphic capabilities.

The other improvement is that you can, with a tap on the "B" button, lock the pod at any point around your ship, which is nice when you have to rapid-fire it at a boss and don't want to hassle with trying to get it in a particular position repeatedly and quickly. And the pod's invincibility comes in handy when you use it like a shield.

Last Resort is a welldesigned game, featuring a decent but not overwhelming use of the Neo•Geo's extensive sound and graphic capabilities. However, while Last Resort is an easy game to jump right into and play-it only utilizes two of the controller's four main buttons, and use of the pod requires minimal practice—there are a number of problems that plague the player throughout.

Most obvious above all other glitches are occasional slowdowns when there is a lot of action on the screen. Imagine traveling through a wave of

oncoming bullets, then suddenly having those bullets speed up. Similarly, there are a couple of sections when flicker causes your ship to disappear for seconds at a time. This is very disconcerting, and not at all beneficial to your survival. It's also not what you expect from the high-octane Neo•Geo system.

The biggest disappointment is in the game-play category. Last Resort is a somewhat short game-it only features five levels-but its size is contrasted by its very difficulty. It's not easy to finish this contest. At times, you'll find yourself swarmed with enemies, missiles and bullets, with seemingly no exit path and too much going on. (Where's a hyperspace button when you need it?)

There are even some disparities between one- and two-player games: Those playing in two-player mode will find it easier to make it through, though losing your droid will quickly drain your continues in some spots; a solo gamer will find himself getting killed and thrown back to the same position over and over, until he's out of continues.

Last Resort is a well-intentioned game that will provide players with lots of shooting enjoyment. However, it's a game that could have been improved with an eye for long-range duration rather than sheer momentary quantity.

-Andy Eddy

SNK 20603 Earl St. Torrance, CA 90503 (310) 371-8555

Steel Empire

FLYING EDGE For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

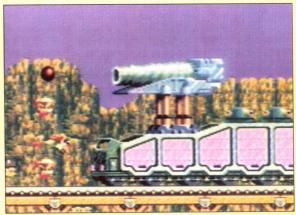
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

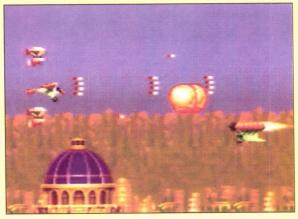
Steel Empire's setting is its main plus. It's an homage to the literary works of Jules Verne. The time is the late 1800s, but things are quite different in this alternate reality. Giant airships cloud the skies in this whacked out Industrial Age known as the Age of Steel. Thanks to this premature advance in technology, apparently, the world has been conquered by airmen known as the Motorhead Empire. No motivations are specified, but these folks are definitely the bad guys.

Like most good-guy alliances, the Republic of Silverhead has only a few aircraft left to use to bring down the Motorheads' biggie air fortresses and help you save the world. You have a decision between two types of air travel to select: an agile yet vulnerable biplane or a more resilient though slower zeppelin.

Both aircraft fire frontward and back and throw lightning bombs that obliterate most enemies on the screen. Some destroyed enemy ships leave behind the expected prizes that boost your weapons and other capabilities when they're picked up. Special ones to note are those that increase your







homage to the literary works of Jules

craft's "upgrade" levels. The more this level increases, the more powerful vour craft's firepower will be.

This title deserves as much imagination in its game play

and graphics as was expended on its premise. Motorhead aircraft consist of airborne farm tractors, overblown blimps, fortified yachts and other far-out vehicles you wouldn't expect to find in the air. But the graphics are not as detailed or eccentric as the enchanting idea. Your airship and Motorhead's attacking squadrons are too small to reveal anything unique about their design.

Though there are seven levels, the play is a better example of videogame recycling than good execution. The same giant bad guy aircraft are thrown at you at a stage's end-just after every few levels. The only difference is that the colors have been changed and it

Flying Edge's Steel Empire is an requires quite a few more shots to destroy these overbloated colossuses.

> Steel Empire is a shooter that makes you wonder whether game designers understand what "repetitious" means, or if they have completely lost touch with what's already out there. Not to end things too negatively, Steel Empire isn't all that bad. Yet it isn't a wham-bam spectacle for the money, either-woefully so when it is matched against its similar-playing cousins.

> > -H.H.W.

Flying Edge 71 Audrey Ave. Oyster Bay, NY 11771 (516) 922-2400



The Wonderful World of O's & A's!

BY
THE GAME DOCTOR

machines, and the developers must play to each machine's strength while compensating for its weaknesses. As for which version is "better," there is simply no hard-and-fast rule. One machine might be better for high-speed contests, another might have technology that makes it a superior system for FRP games. All I can say is read the reviews and check out the playfield photos on the back of the box, along with any other information. In other words, check out the games on your own and see which looks better to you.

- 2. Several companies are indeed preparing boxing simulations, including the *Champions Forever* boxing games slated to appear on multiple systems and, of course, Electronic Arts' impressive 4-D Boxing.
- 3. CD-ROM is simply another memory storage medium, like a floppy disk, ROM cartridge or, in the long ago and far away, audio cassette tape. Computer information can be stored on the same CDs we play music on. CD-ROM technology doesn't make a game "better" in and of itself. The advantage of CD-ROM, however, is that the discs can store tremendous amounts of audiovisual data, especially compared to previous media.

question

Usually, I agree with your most humble opinion a hundred percent, but, in your April column, you really blew it! In the "Q&A Quickies," you gave glowing reviews for the Turbo-Grafx-16 and the Genesis, but for the Super NES you said something to the effect that the Super NES "was a disappointment to many people, and, even though it came out two years after the Genesis, it showed no marked technical superiority over the Genesis." As an owner of all three systems, I disagree.

—Mitchell Kryzek Middletown, Rhode Island



Mitch then went on to rattle off the usual parade of available colors, sound ratings, etc. First off, my review of the TG-16 was anything but "glowing," including such remarks as: "If you like side-scrolling shooters and adventures, this is a mighty nifty machine (priced very nicely) with plenty of basically generic arcade contests. How long NEC and Hudson (TTI) will continue to support this machine is anyone's guess, but it hasn't exactly taken the U.S. by storm." Glowing? I suspect NEC would beg to differ.

As to my comments about the SNES, they were written in December '91, at which point the games being shown, with the exception of *Pilot Wings* (which I mentioned in the write-up), were generic, 8-bit products inflated to 16-bit capacity. Nintendo and its third-party developers have produced some strong products since then, but I hold to my opinion that the original product rollout for the SNES was extremely weak.

question

I need help in finding where to get my *Sonic the Hedgehog* Genesis

'm afraid the complete and unexpurgated saga of *Tetris* and how it came to be released in this country by *two* publishers proved to be a much larger story than I anticipated. After talking with several of the primary players in the deals, I was amazed to find that even they were confused by details of the case.

However, as longtime readers of this column know full well, once the Doc sinks his choppers into an issue, he's tenacious as a brindle bulldog! So, while "Tales of *Tetris*" will not appear in this installment of *Game Doctor*, it is coming. I have several key interviews scheduled over the next few months and soon—soon, I tell you!—the entire story will be revealed. In the meantime, let's go to some Q & A action!

q u e s t i o n

First, I'd like to congratulate you on the straight and honest answers you give to the fascinating questions you receive. I just have a few questions:

- 1. If you own both the SNES and the Genesis and a game is made for both systems, is the software the same, or do the programmers do something different to make it worth buying both games? If not, how do I know which one to buy? (Please, not the safe answer about how it depends on an individual's taste. Could you please be a little more specific?)
- 2. Does Electronic Arts or any other publisher plan to make a decent boxing game?
- 3. What exactly is a CD-ROM? How exactly does it make a game better?

—Fadil S. Thompson Forestville, Maryland

a n s w e r

1. SNES and Genesis versions of the same game, while generally created by the same developers, are totally different programs. The Genesis and SNES are very different game repaired. If you have any info, it would be very helpful. Thank you.

—Francisco Estep Oceanside, California



Several possibilities here. If the game seems otherwise in one piece, it is possible that the contact pins are dirty. Several companies make cleaners that do a fine job of ridding your contacts of that awful gunk that builds up along the bottom of your cartridges. Another possibility is that somebody stomped on it, smashing the casing. Believe it or not, you don't actually need the cartridge casing to run a game. If nothing is broken but the case, strip off the rest of the plastic, which will leave you with the circuit board. It can be inserted into the game system and should run just fine.

The final possibility? It's broken. In this case, take it back to the store where you purchased it.



I just bought the TurboGrafx-16 a few weeks ago. All my friends say it stinks and isn't in style anymore. Most of those friends own a Genesis. They even told me that TG-16 isn't even 16-bit! Is the TG-16 a hundred-percent 16-bit system, or is it just another stinky video-game system?

—Andy Silva Sunrise, Florida



I wouldn't be quite so pejorative in my judgments, Andy. The TG-16 is a reasonably priced system that's been around for quite a few years, and it's unrealistic to expect it to be comparable to state-of-the-art video-game systems. But "stinky"? Hardly.

To answer your question, however, the TG-16 uses a 16-bit chip to run its graphics, but its CPU is, in fact, only 8-bit. Hate to be the one to have to tell you this, Andy....

I totally detest the Game Genie. It takes everything out of a game that games are made for. It really doesn't leave anything for you to do. It is said (rumored) that the Game Genie messes up your games. They will play okay

for a good five minutes, then the screen will start to peel away and all you are left with is a blank or frozen picture and a little flashing red light. It can't be my game or my Nintendo [Entertainment System]; I've cleaned both hundreds of times, and it only happens on the games my friend uses the Game Genie on.

So, does the Game Genie mess up Nintendo games? If so, how? By the way, I would like to see *Game Doctor* cover more Game Genie Q's.

—Steven Connell Gregory, Texas



First off, Steve, I must tell you that I heartily disagree with your evaluation of the Game Genie. It's my opinion that Nintendo's obsession with sidescrolling, kill-the-boss games has created a new type of player. In the old days, gamers played Asteroids, Missile Command, Space Invaders, etc. not to see how fast they could "conquer" them, but because they were fun. Today's player is obsessed with getting through a game as quickly as possible. As a result, we have a generation of sharpshooters who can blow through the toughest games in hours. The games, therefore, have to be set at unrealistically high levels of difficulty, which means younger kids, parents, etc. have no chance in the world of playing through these games. And, since Nintendo refuses to give us flexible difficulty levels, I don't see anything wrong with Galoob providing themand neither did the courts.

Moreover, the only folks I hear complaining about the Genie are the superplayers who feel they "don't need" the advantage. Well, fine for those 2%, but what about the rest of us? Nobody is going to force you to use the Game Genie, but, if you've purchased a cartridge and want to see as much of it as possible, is that such a terrible thing?

Finally, on to the question of a Game Genie doing damage to your NES hardware or software. In the first place, if you've been cleaning your system and games "hundreds" of times, that could be part of the problem right there. Also, if you're getting your games back from a friend in a damaged state, it's possible that something other than his Game Genie is at fault. After all, considering the massive amounts of time and money Nintendo spent trying to find something, any-

thing that the Game Genie might do to harm the NES, it seems pretty unlikely that they missed something.

I'd go watch your friend play—he might be one of those people who eats ice-cream cones while he plays video games.



Does Nintendo have any plans for an adapter to play NES carts on the SNES? I would be more likely to invest in the new system if I could still make use of my NES carts.

> —K. Allen Memphis, Tennessee



Unfortunately, so far Nintendo remains opposed to the idea of releasing an NES adapter for the Super NES. Nintendo feels that if you already have an NES, why would you want another one?

Q & A QUICKIES

Alex Austin of Willits, California, wants to know the difference between bit-mapped and digitized graphics. Digitized graphics are produced by running an optical scanner over a photograph or drawing. The art is then transformed into digitized images, which can be reproduced through the computer. Bit-mapping refers to the process of creating images pixel-by-pixel.... Helpful reader Glen T. Rogatschnig of British Columbia, Canada, notes that a Game Doctor reader was looking for RGB cables, and he's found a source: Redmond Cable, which carries SNES, Neo•Geo and Sega cables, among others. On the West Coast, call (206) 882-2009; East Coast folks ring (615) 478-5760. Thanks, Glen! Finally, gaming stalwarts Jayson and Laura Hill of Knoxville, Tennessee, held the Eighth Annual Hill Video Game Invitational on March 14! Did last year's Golden Joystick winner, Dwayne Barrett, recapture the honors this year? Stay tuned for the results!

And that about wraps us up for this issue. I shall continue investigating the story of how two versions of *Tetris* appeared in the U.S.

Remember, send those questions, comments and corrections to: *Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

Building a World With Bard's Tale Construction Set

INTERPLAY Version: IBM PC

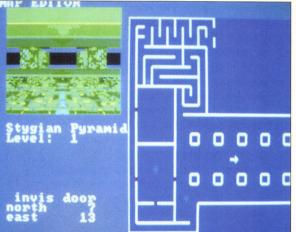
Players who are unfamiliar with the Bard's Tale series have their work cut out for them when they undertake world-building with the Bard's Tale Construction Set. Fortunately, it seems unlikely that anyone would undertake such an enterprise if they had not already thoroughly explored that program. It takes a major investment in time to learn what the Bard's Tale world is all about; it's not a piece of cake.

Inevitably, with any piece of software of this magnitude, there may be features missing. For example, it was disappointing to find that, although the Ad Lib sound card can be configured for music, it is the lowly PC internal speaker that is used for sound effects. The action screen has no directional compass. Some obstacles do not become visible in the 3-D window until the adventurers move forward into them. And even though the construction set was successfully launched from within *Windows*, the sample game had to be launched from a clean DOS environment.

The first step before creating a world, even for experienced players, must be reading the documentation. In this case, the manual offers less than 40 halfpages of worthwhile instructions and assumes a working knowledge of Bard's Tale. Normally, the best place to start using a construction set is to play the sample games, but, strangely, general rules of game play and instructions relating to mouse movement in the 3-D window are absent. If necessary, go back to the original program for a game









session to relearn details of game play before you undertake the *Construction Set*.

Even after the game mechanics are mastered, the unschooled may find such construction-set definitions as "trap flag" baffling: "If the party has a trap zap spell running, a bard is playing Sanctuary Score or a thief makes his disarm trap roll, then an appropriate message is printed and execution of this special square stops." The best suggestion, therefore, is to experiment with the sample files by going into each module (item, spell, monster and map editors) and working with it. Just take the first level and make a few alterations; then playtest the level to see the results of the alterations. (Unfortunately, sound is not played in test mode.) View the beautiful, 64-color, VGA pictures included in the generous artwork library, and decide if they are sufficient for

your needs. If not, create your own, using Deluxe Paint Enhanced or Deluxe Paint Animator.

Next is a story line, or storyboard. Start by creating a goal and then build a set around it. Translate this into specific areas to be traveled (castles, dungeons, sewers, etc.). Make copious notes about every phase of the quest, right down to the most minor details, including the logical placement of traps, monsters and treasure. Use graph paper to plot out a 22 x 22 grid, and draw some pencil tests of area layouts. (This is the same grid layout as the construction set's "draw map" screen.)

Once your sketches are computerized, start creating your items (weapons, armor, etc.), spells and monsters. Remember that the defaults can always be used, or adjusted, rather than creating everything from scratch.

Finally, add "specials," which are actions based on conditions specified by the game creator. These are created with BASIC-like English com-

mands (one per line, up to a maximum of 20 lines per special, and any combination of 30 different specials per map).

After all of these phases are completed, the author must fine-tune the creation, a time-consuming procedure that involves checking and rechecking every element. When the wrinkles have been ironed out, "build the game," which is something the software does for you.

This particular method of utilizing the Bard's Tale Construction Set results in an executable file that can be passed on to friends or uploaded to the local BBS, without special permission from Interplay.

-Frank Eva



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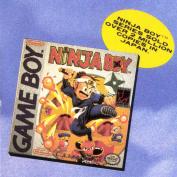
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Seeing the Underworld Through the Eye of the Beholder II

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS Version: IBM PC

Gamers who played the original *Eye of the Beholder* are set for a treat: The sequel is much larger and more thought-provoking. On the other hand, it is difficult to survive very early in the game.

The biggest chance to get a handle on things right away is to import the four best characters available from the original game (but keep in mind the traditional party mix of two fighters, cleric and mage). Imported characters bring all their hard-earned weapons and possessions with them, which is a distinct advantage in the underground section of the Temple Darkmoon.

Failing this, the next best option is to hand mold some superior characters for the initial foray. Keep a mix of races, regardless of one's preference for half-elves or whatever, because it increases the chances of being able to read the writing on the wall...literally! Valuable passages of text are scattered here and there, and the gamer wouldn't want to miss a single word.

The first area for exploration is the woods around the temple. The large number of wolves located there will serve to familiarize new players with the combat interface before they find themselves confronted by four or more nasties in a narrow hallway. In the forest, the player eventually stumbles upon an old woman who will point the way to the temple.

Upon entering, one is greeted by a pair of clerics, one female and one male, who seem pleasant enough at the start. Searching the area yields no other exits except for that from whence you came, so discerning players will rightfully conclude that the clerics are not as they seem. After disposing of them, the gamer is able to enter the underground chambers of the temple.

Front-rank fighters should use a weapon in each hand, as soon as enough are available. It is sometimes advantageous if one is an edged weapon and the other a blunt instrument, like a mace. The latter comes particularly in handy in dealing with the seemingly endless stream of skeletons to be defeated in the underground. Turning undead is still an option, but, at this point in the game, clerical levels may not be high enough to make a substantial impact.

When exploring, be very alert to teleportation traps and make sure that all





levers and buttons are not only marked on the map, but that their positions are annotated as well. Manipulating these may have no discernible effect in one's current location, but, only half a dungeon away, things may be happening. This can very often require each game player to backtrack and change the setting of these devices in order to get into a needed area.

It is possible, when necessary, to return to earlier portions of the

game, for example, to obtain missed objects. There is one exception. The gamer must have the green hammer before being branded with the mark of Darkmoon (which occurs in the first tower immediately after the underground). Failing to get this mark precludes entry into the third portion of the game (second tower). The major goal in this portion is to obtain the crimson key, which unlocks the third and final tower.

Combat in the confined passageways is substantially different from that of the gold box series games, especially when it comes to area-affect spells. It is much easier to misjudge a spell and turn one's front rank into toast in the process.

NPC selection is crucial to success. Only two may be added to the party, and either passing one up or releasing a currently held NPC causes him to disappear from the game forever. Call it binding arbitration if you will, but it imposes a little more consideration into player decisions in an area that is often overlooked. It is definitely a much better option than the training halls of the gold box series, where one can recruit a character of opposite alignment and basically feel justified about murdering him for his goodies.

Finally, as one might expect, it is always prudent to save often. Toward the end of the game especially, it is a good idea to save after each combat.

-Ed Dille

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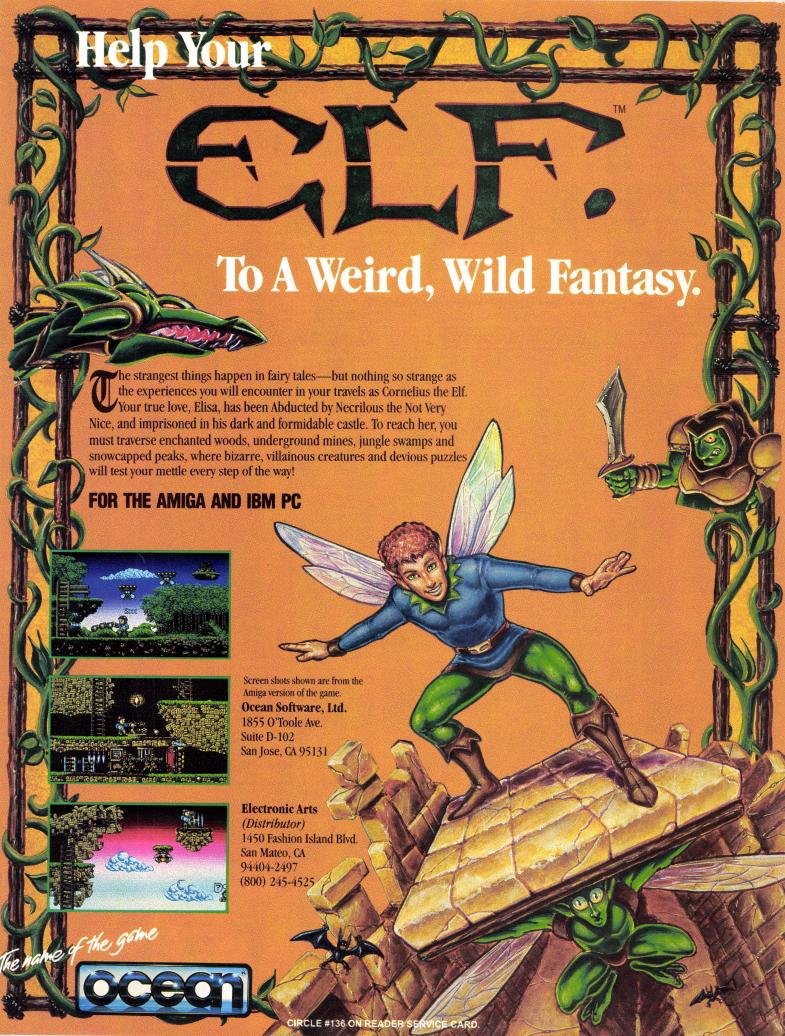
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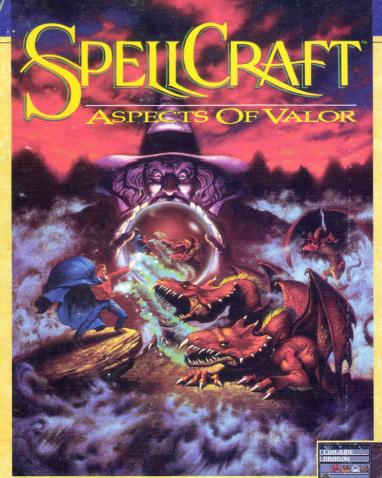
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