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fails, they will die.

To restore the fleet to operational status, you must find and replace the Energy Flux Decoupler, locate the Inhibit Lock and place it on the bridge, and finally, increase all on-board systems to 80-percent efficiency or greater. These repairs take enough time without freshly thawed and vicious xenomorphs roaming free, but you must rush to beat the steady climb of radiation, as well. To add to the complexity, Spacewrecked doesn't much improve the standard "lost in a maze" perspective common to subterranean fantasy games; as with dungeon walls, the often nondescript corridors of a damaged ship can befuddle even careful players. No one wants to waste valuable time stalking down look-alike pathways.

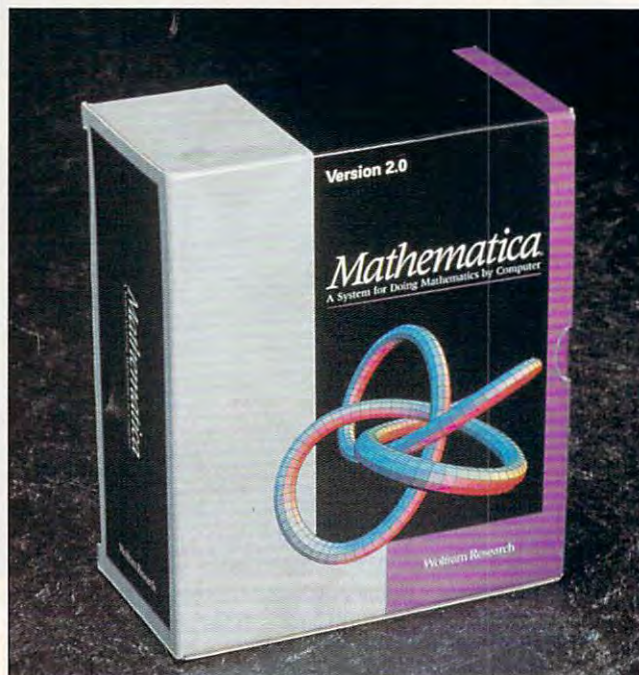
As systems fail, expect even more aggravating problems. The lights may shut down, necessitating flares or flashlights. Fortunately, the crew left a great deal of valuable hardware scattered about; you need only live long enough to collect it. Half the fun of this game involves picking up technological trinkets and attempting to wedge them into the always restrictive inventory slots.

The most valuable knick-knack? A flamethrower. This weapon may not have worked well for the crew of the Nostromo, but it works fine here; the larger targeting sight counteracts the game's simulated jitters. Sights for blasters and handguns twitch constantly, making a direct hit on an enemy difficult. Plenty hard to complete without artificially induced nervousness, Spacewrecked would not miss this annoyance in the least.

You might think that a so-

phisticated team of robots on your side would even the overwhelming odds. They will, but first you have to find them, program them to do your bidding, and sometimes recharge them. With the proper cartridges installed, these helpful droids will scan for life forms, fight for you, and

Blue and glowing, the Spacewrecked introduction sequence seems to promise great visuals to come, but only cartoonish aliens and simple objects follow. Suspenseful theme music plays just after the game loads; unoriginal sound effects accompany the game itself.



Whether it's used to calculate complicated problems or convert data for research, Mathematica occupies a category all its own.

heal you besides. A program could send them to the far end of a ship to carry out a specific function or to simply shut down.

While the programming screens will make perfect sense to a long-time computer hobbyist, they might give pause to a layman. On the other hand, successfully teaching the robots their lessons might illustrate some programming essentials—not a bad tradeoff for the initial confusion—and, with practice, the daunting assortment of programming and inventory interaction options becomes second nature.

Together, however, these aesthetic details neither add to nor detract from gameplay. Fans of task-oriented maze games will enjoy themselves here; space opera enthusiasts shouldn't expect it to be an epic.

DAVID SEARS

IBM PC or compatible; 640K RAM; EGA, MCGA, VGA, or Tandy 16-color; mouse or joystick; supports Ad Lib, Roland, and Tandy sound—\$19.95

GREMLIN
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MATHEMATICA

I've seen hundreds of software packages, and at times I've been thoroughly impressed. But I have to tell you: Mathematica transcends the category. It's a complete solution for performing mathematics by computer. I won't be able to tell you everything about the program; even its 958-page textbook left plenty of room for personal exploration. But I can give you a short tour, and I hope you're as impressed as I am.

The easiest and possibly most useful way to use Mathematica is as a numerical and symbolic calculator. Type in a question, and out pops an answer. Sure, you can get answers to problems like $5 * 7 + 4$. But more important, you can get answers to problems like $\text{ArcTan}[\text{Sin}[45] * \text{Cos}[12]]$ without breaking a sweat.

You can develop your own functions, too. If you need something special, all you have to do is define exactly what the function does. It can be as many lines as needed and as complex as necessary. And the most surprising feature is the graphical plotting of practically any mathematical function that can be represented graphically.

The strongest reason to use Mathematica is for scientific applications. You can use the program to generate solutions for a wide range of problems. I'm involved in medical research on facial expressions. The data I have is in the form of captured pictures. Plugging formulas that were developed for this purpose into Mathematica and instructing the program how to read the data from disk, I was able to reduce the picture

SPACEWARD HO!

The Conquest Game of the Stars.

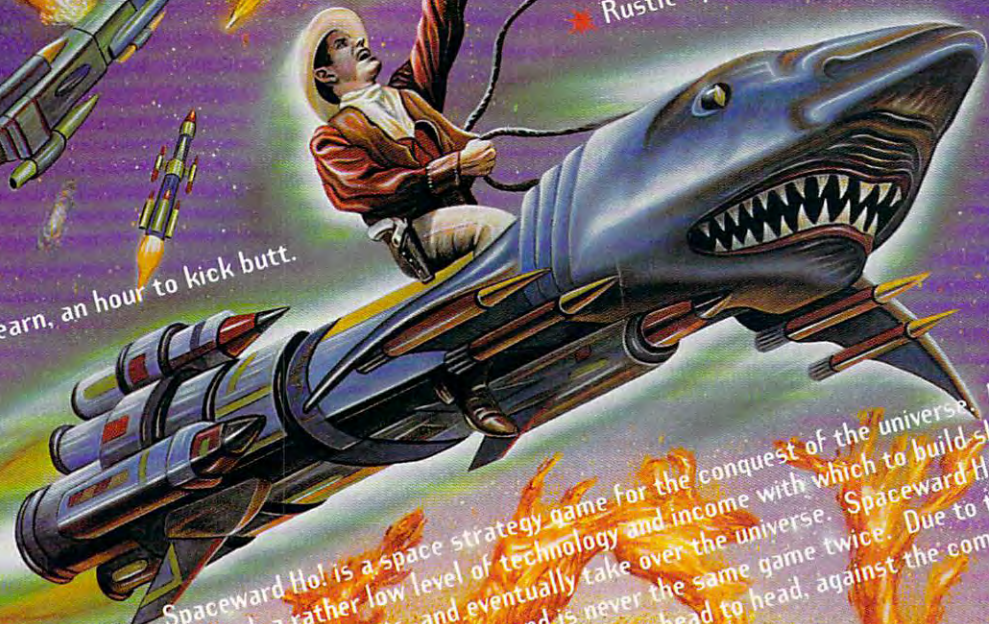
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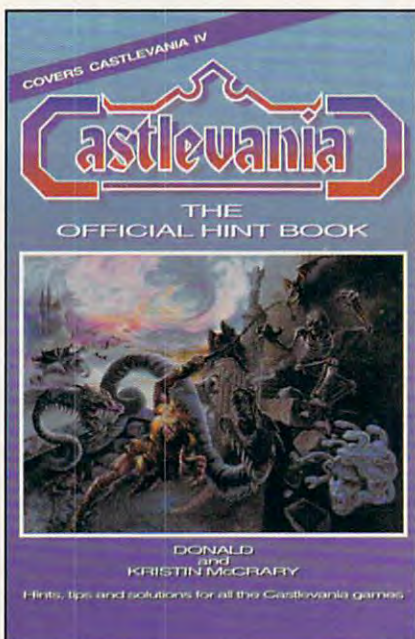
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Here's the official hint book for the popular series of Nintendo games from Konami. This is the book that tells all. Includes background information, complete maps, tips for defeating the enemies, concise descriptions of each of the weapons, and solutions to each of the *Castlevania* adventures, including the new Game Boy adventure, *Belmont's Revenge*.

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REVIEWS

files to simple outlines of the major facial features.

Of special interest for analyzing facial expressions are the eyebrows. When they're reduced to simple outlines, they're easy to quantify. Once this is done, tables of data for different pictures allow the people doing the analysis to have nice, convenient sets of data for comparison.

If you run a business and want more numeric help than your spreadsheet can provide, think about using Mathematica. It'll let you easily create special functions for anything you can image. Financiers can design special amortization schedules. All that's necessary is entering the formula, typing in the numbers to process or reading them from an ASCII file on disk, and then letting the program work its magic. Before you know it, you'll have your table.

I ran Microsoft Works and loaded in my personal budget spreadsheet. I then saved it to disk as an ASCII file. After running Mathematica, I used the function that loads a list of numbers from an ASCII file into a variable list. Then, the BarChart3D function gave me a graphical display of my budget. You can also view pie charts, 2-D bar charts, and line graphs.

These graphs are great for business presentations. The program saves to a PostScript file that can be converted to film or 35-mm slide. You can also use a capture program that saves as PCX.

If you're in the education field, I'd also recommend Mathematica. In a classroom situation you can generate endless illustrations of your subject matter. I taught geometry for six years. During that time, I got proficient at creating examples at the chalkboard. If I'd had Mathematica, I could've simply prepared the formulas in advance and then typed in sets of numbers during class. There would've been no down time for the students while I created examples on the board.

Before you rush out and buy the package, let me warn you of a few things. First, you won't learn how to use it overnight. For me, it was about as difficult as a course in mathematics. This program is so powerful that there's a lot to learn.

Second, even though the documentation is good, it's not adequate for novices. It doesn't walk you through the program step by step. Besides the large, well-written, textbook-style manual, I would've liked a thorough tutorial that did some handholding.

Lastly, the interface for the version 1

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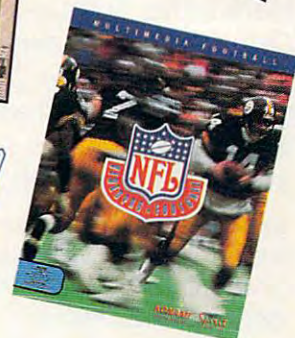
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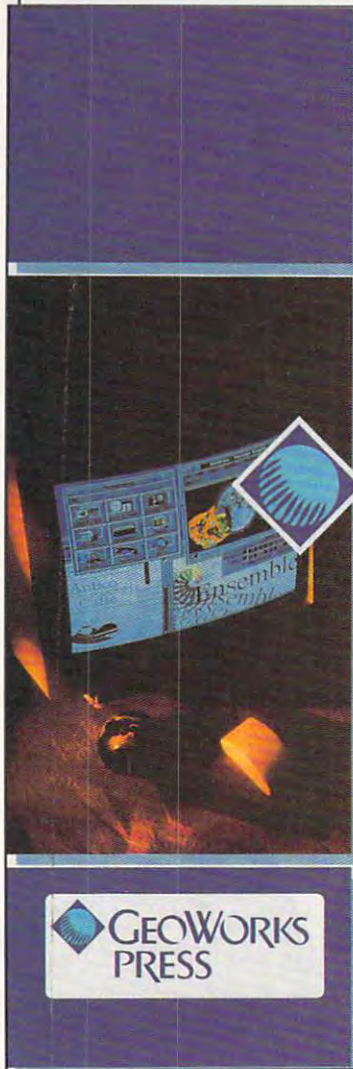
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REVIEWS

have is a bit primitive. It's a simple, command line-style interface. If you can order the Windows version, do so. There's even a Macintosh version that uses a graphical interface.

Even with the caveats mentioned, I'd recommend this program to all those who need to do math on their computers. You won't find anything else that's as complete as this. For its technical merits and worthiness I can only say, "Bravo! Well done!"

RICHARD C. LEINECKER

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ARE WE THERE YET?

OK, let's be honest: If you're not into crosswords, word searches, and jigsaw puzzles, you may find *Are We Finished Yet?* a better title for this game. But if such brain pickers interest you, *Are We There Yet?* is a challenging, educational package.

The Mallard family wins fourth place in a cereal company's sweepstakes and receives much more than a prize from the box. Leaving the white picket fence behind, they travel the nation with their award, a handy coupon book for U.S. tourist traps. They can move from one state to another only after solving some problems. Making this trip is what the manual calls the typical American family. The hardworking Drake Mallard isn't home much. The mom thinks she may be turning into her own mother (how fitting that the only name listed is Mom), while the daughter, Tiffany, holds a personal vendetta against both parents for not ending her name with an *i*. Blip, the younger brother, finds hand-held videogames and rubber vermin vastly fascinating. We don't see much of these folks, however, since solving the two puzzles in each state forms the bulk of the game.

After choosing a state, the Mallards are given such basic information as state nickname, capital, and points of interest. Then they select one of the two tasks, each pertaining to an actual event or place. Players encounter 23 kinds of puzzles ranging from crosswords and mazes to Hangman and Concentration. At each stop, a pull-down menu gives instructions for over-

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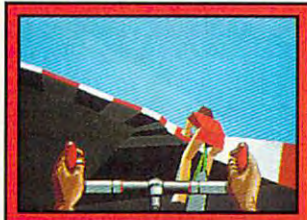
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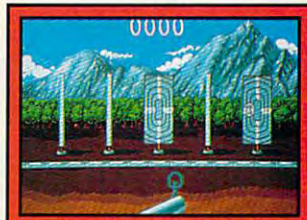


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coming the obstacle. In Virginia, the Mallards venture the Great Peanut Tour (a winding bicycle route) and collide with the Kaleidoscope Festival in Lynchburg. The manual suggests how each puzzle fits with its event or place. For the Rattlesnake Hunt in Pennsylvania, the Sentence Search answer reveals why it's a good idea for participants to check their lunch bags (hint, hint). You're allowed to choose from several highlighted states in any order you want, but you can't move on to another group of states until completing the first.

As the family moves along, it collects souvenirs that appear during the final challenge when the back of each piece reveals part of another jigsaw. Any souvenirs it hasn't collected don't appear on the screen, thus making the game harder to solve. Luckily, the clue book provides answers to all puzzles and lists the souvenirs, in case you miss them on your own.

While the more than 200 puzzles are educational, they also require patience and a considerable amount of "brainery." In fact, before actually starting the game, the player must piece together a map of the United States. Warning: These tasks move rather slowly without a mouse. Both the game's creators and I recommend using one, though it's possible (but somewhat frustrating) to play with a keyboard. Also, saving puzzles as you solve them prevents having to start over later, although you have to load the finished puzzles one by one to move on.

This may not be an action-packed game, but the

sound effects and colorful graphics liven up still screens, providing a more interesting atmosphere for solving crossword puzzles than you'll ever find in the newspaper. For anyone who enjoys the challenge of thinking games, *Are We There Yet?* offers enough to fill

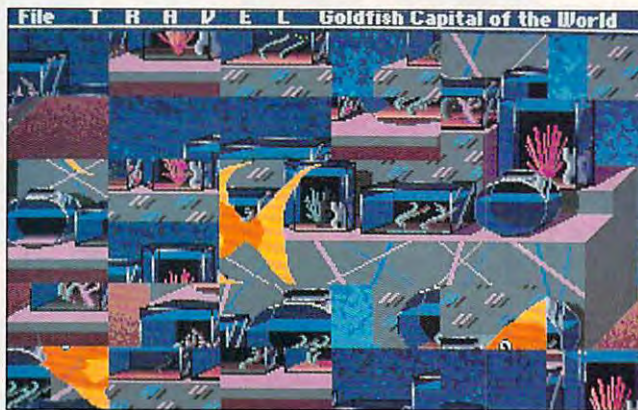
DOS," I cheerfully took the software . . . and then let out a long sigh.

Admittedly, I was a perfect candidate for the job. Next to the people at COMPUTE (and most of COMPUTE's readers), I'm not extremely computer-literate. I can boot the machine, get in-

ple, straightforward language. You don't have to deal with a lot of jargon, and the jargon used is explained. I learned a thing or two from almost everything I read, but there were two lessons that proved especially helpful to me. One is called *The Basics*, which deals with DOS, Windows, disks, file use, and hard disk management. The other, *Automation*, threw in an explanation of the *autoexec.bat* and *config.sys* files (which I thought was just great, because I had always wondered what those "bat" and "sys" things were that seemed to be in every directory I saw).

Professor DOS, on the other hand, performed a few small miracles. Before the Professor took over, I could barely format a disk without asking for directions. Now, I know what a disk operating system does, why operating systems are necessary, and why I should know how to work with DOS. I can write small batch files, use wildcards, make and delete directories, change my *autoexec.bat* file, and perform many other tasks that make it a lot easier for me to deal with files.

Just like *PC Instructor*, Professor DOS starts out with basic information about the PC, but it takes you all the way up to using the shell, the Editor, and a barrage of other advanced commands and techniques. The tutorial is careful to point out the differences between DOS 5.0 and previous versions and shows you how to work with DOS 5.0's new features. It also includes *SmartGuide* for DOS, a huge online reference guide. Although DOS comes with a help feature of its own, *SmartGuide* makes a good companion, especially for beginners. That's be-



The family taking the tour in Are We There Yet? contributes little, but the program has good crosswords and jigsaw puzzles.

hours and some interesting tidbits that may someday help you win *Trivial Pursuit*.

TRACY MYGRANT

IBM PC or compatible, 640K RAM; serial mouse (for PS/2 models 25 and 30); VGA, hard drive, and sound card recommended—\$24.95

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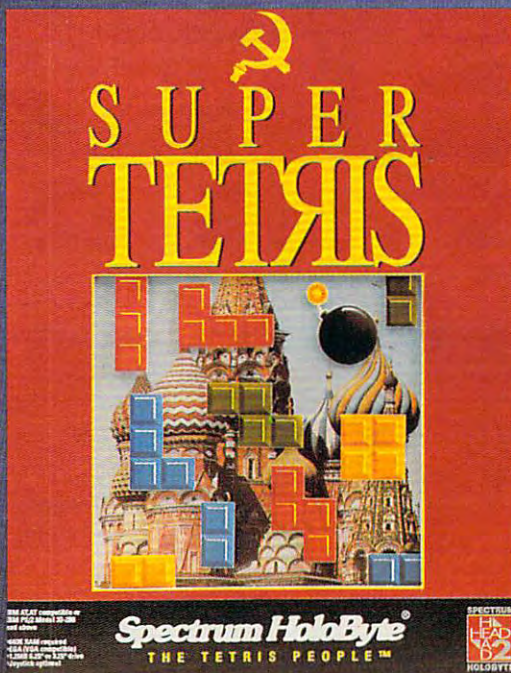
PC INSTRUCTOR, PROFESSOR DOS

I dread online tutorials. Just the thought of being affixed to my seat for however long it takes to "enter" and "space" my way through a program brings me to tears. So, when I was asked to review *PC Instructor* and *Professor DOS*, two programs designed to "help you understand everything you need to know about PCs and

to whatever program I need, and once I'm dealing with software, I'm home free. But ask me about DOS or memory or (God forbid) PC history, and I'm speechless.

Now, it's a different story. Before doing the tutorials, I was interested in learning more about computers, but I didn't even know enough to find out where I needed to start. *PC Instructor*, although it didn't answer every last question I had about computers, gave me a great base to build on. Question marks don't fly around in my head anymore when I hear people talking about CPUs, computer speed, drives, and ports. Dealing with bits and bytes isn't as painful as it was before, either, and I finally know the difference between a PC and a PC clone.

PC Instructor covers everything from PC history to software to networks in sim-



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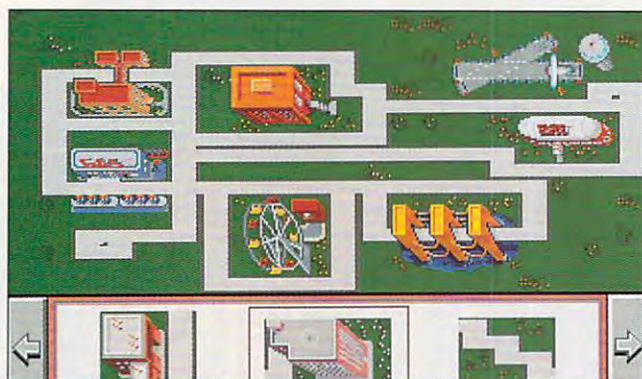
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cause it looks less intimidating, is easy to work with, and contains minirefreshers from the tutorial.

So how do PC Instructor and Professor DOS do all of this wonderful teaching? Just like a book would. The only difference is that the pages appear on a computer screen, they're more colorful, and a few graphics and sounds are thrown in to make reading more interesting. Then, to make the information easier to deal with, the tutorials are divided into sections, and each section is split up into related lessons. The lessons appear in pull-down menus that you pick and choose as you please, and although it took me about 20 minutes to get through one lesson, how fast or slow you go is totally up to you.

Although both programs are great teachers, I experienced two small problems as I made my way through them. First, I found them difficult to follow at times because I couldn't tell when new information had been added to the screen without having to reread everything else. The screens usually changed colors or layouts when new information was displayed, but there were more than a few times when no noticeable changes occurred, and that got to be a bit nerve-wracking after a while.

Then there was the monotony. I'd have to say that PC Instructor and Professor DOS don't exactly "captivate the user's attention through creative use of graphics, sound and color," as their makers claim. There is a chance that you may get a little bored, and boredom doesn't make for learning. The only suggestion I have is to break up the



You can build a town with Stickybear Town Builder, but you sure can't control the roads; too bad—an airport would be nice.



With Stickybear Town Builder, you'll have a hard time figuring out which way to go and an even harder time going there.

sessions instead of trying to tackle them all in one sitting. That way you won't get bored, and you'll pay more attention to the screen and less to your yawns.

After you learn how to deal with the little glitches, PC Instructor and Professor DOS can be fantastic learning tools. Even if you aren't crazy about online tutorials, these are worth a try.

DANIELLE BEST

IBM PC or compatible; 512K RAM for PC Instructor, 256K RAM for Professor DOS—\$49.95 each

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STICKYBEAR TOWN BUILDER

Let's see. . . I'll put the restaurant with flashing neon sign here, the hospital over there, and the airport on the opposite side of town. Think there's room anywhere for an amusement park with a Ferris wheel?

So begins Stickybear Town Builder, a city construction set for five- to ten-year-olds. Starting with a bird's-eye view of a grassy plain, youngsters pick and place up to 14 buildings from the 30 different pieces supplied. The city automatically adds the roads needed to link each piece to the town center. It's the random na-

ture of these roads—with their weird bends, dead ends, and zigzags—that gives Stickybear towns their unique appearance.

Once built, towns are intended to be the back-grounds in two driving games—Take a Drive and Find the Keys. Use the arrow keys (up, down, left, and right) to guide the car around your town map. But don't expect a free trip. Both games have very specific goals. In Take a Drive, your task is to guide the car to the location that matches the picture on the bottom of the screen. Since each correct visit increases your score, you'll want to get to as many places as possible before time and fuel run out.

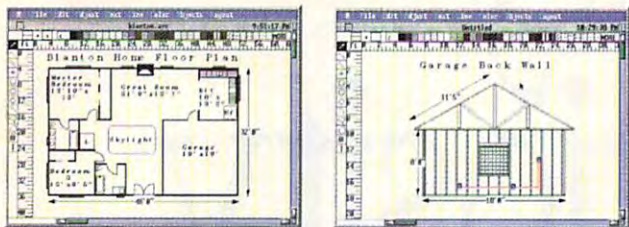
Decidedly more challenging is trying to locate the 12 hidden keys in Find the Keys. Vague directional hints appear on the on-screen compass and are repeated using standard directional notation (north, south-east, etc.). As the car moves around town, the hints change to reflect the new relative location of the target. Employing as-the-crow-flies logic, the clues help determine which building is the final destination, but figuring out which road to take is a bit harder. It's somewhat akin to being asked to drive to the Empire State Building or the Golden Gate Bridge when you see it in the distance; you may often feel that you can't get there from here!

But what happens after you've found the keys or visited all the locations? In 1985, the Apple II version of Stickybear Town Builder offered extremely simplistic text rewards ("Good for you. You found it."). In the 1992 MS-DOS version, digitized audio tracks of the same

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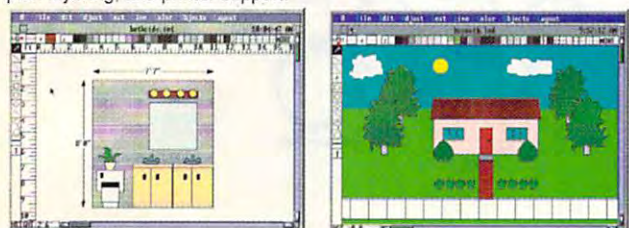
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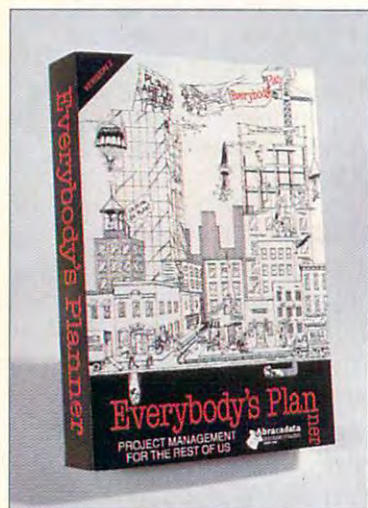
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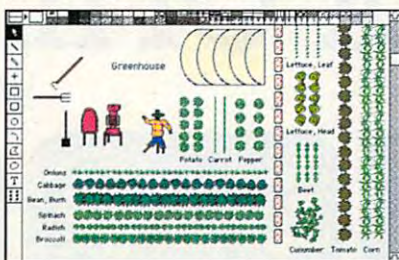
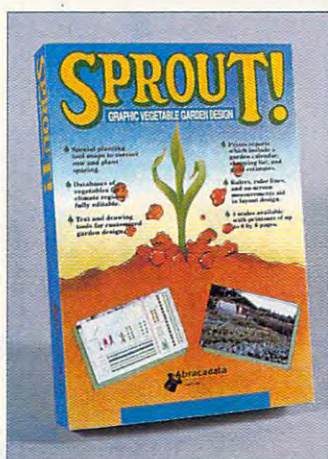
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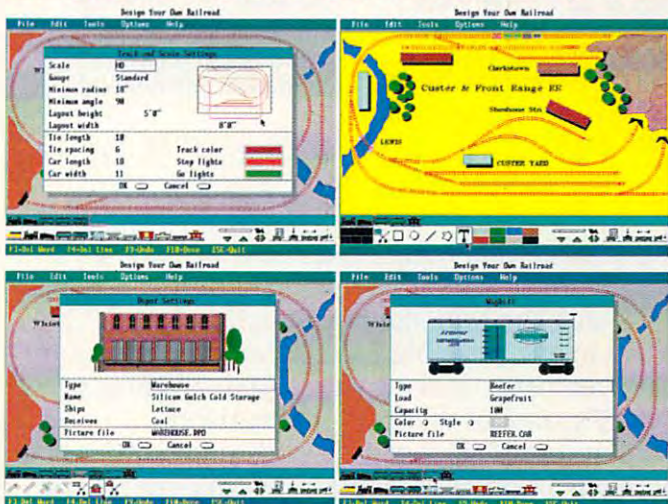
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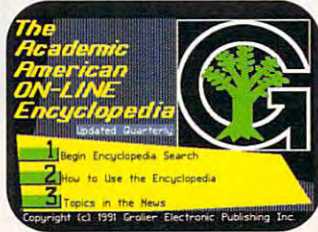
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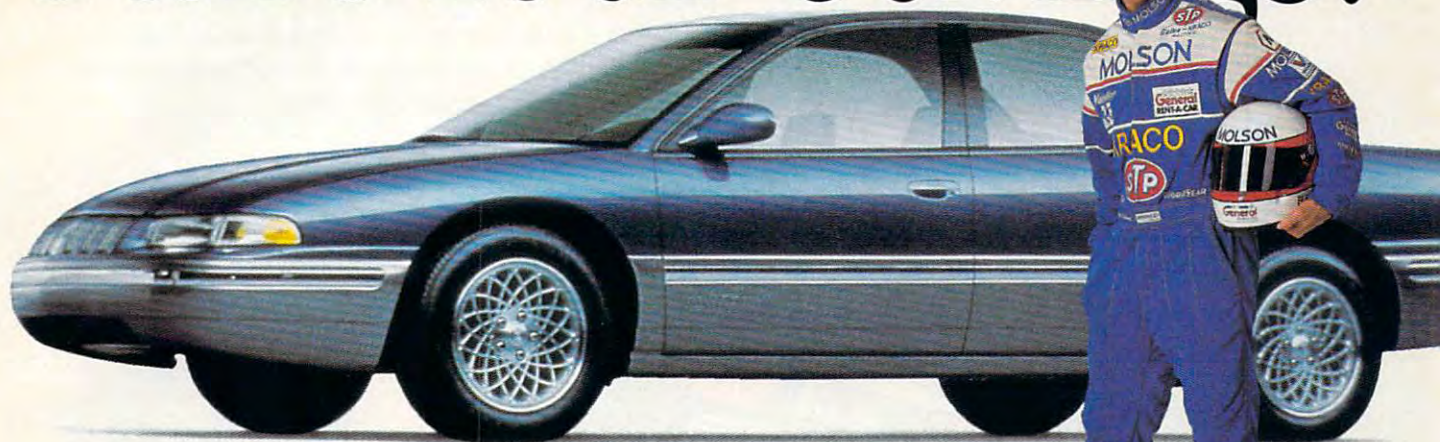


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comments have been added, and the box design has been changed to proudly proclaim that it's Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, and Sound Source compatible. Unfortunately, the sophistication of the target age group has changed in the intervening years, making even simple digitized comments seem old-fashioned. Where's the fancy animation, showy music, recordkeeping, or Hall-of-Fame routine? Not here, that's for sure.

Even the interface is annoying. Using arrow keys to steer from an overhead view was awkward in 1985; for the program to use the same interface in 1992 is unforgivable.

It's tough when the times seem to pass a great publisher by. In the mid 1980s, Stickybear software was the best. The colors were the brightest, the animation the smoothest, and the humor—well, kids of all ages chuckled at the things that crazy bear family did.

Unfortunately, Stickybear Town Builder, while great in its time, simply can't compete with games offering the sophisticated graphics and responsive interfaces that are expected by today's young computer users. Stickybear Town Builder still sticks out—but now it sticks out in the wrong places.

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Out of these changes has emerged the fax card, which can allow you to send and receive fax documents from your PC to a fax machine or another computer with similar equipment. Fax/modems have become so popular and inexpensive that sales of modems without fax capability have dropped to almost nothing.

The leader in fax/modem software for Windows has just released a DOS

version of its award winner. Delrina Technology's DosFax PRO brings us the power, reliability, and ease of use that made WinFax PRO sell at a rate of one copy every minute.

DosFax PRO can be used as a stand-alone product and is for people who prefer DOS to Windows. You can also use it in conjunction with WinFax PRO if you jump back and forth between DOS and Windows applications.

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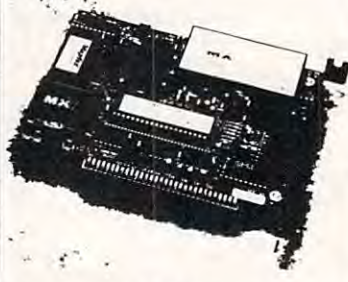
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An illuminated power indicator is embedded into the Relisys logo at the lower left front of the monitor, and knobs for adjusting vertical size, horizontal size, horizontal phase (centering the image from right to left), brightness, and contrast are located at the bottom of the monitor's display.

The RE1422 has a noninterlaced display, which makes it capable of working with a huge number of video adapters and GUI accelerator cards in the extended video modes. I encountered no problems running my Truevision Video VGA with Overlay card, which uses a Tseng 4000 chip set backed by 1MB of RAM, in 1024 x 768 resolution with 256 colors noninterlaced.

The overall image quality, color separation, and clarity of the display are good, even when viewing complex graphics and very small fonts. Moiré patterns and strobing, however, are partic-

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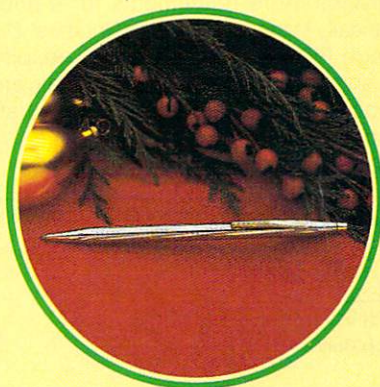
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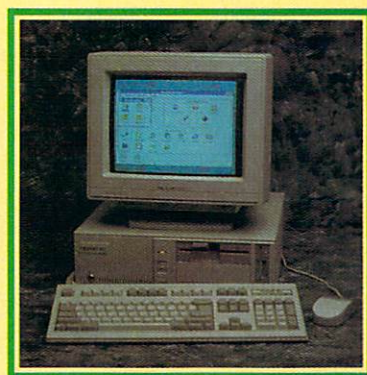
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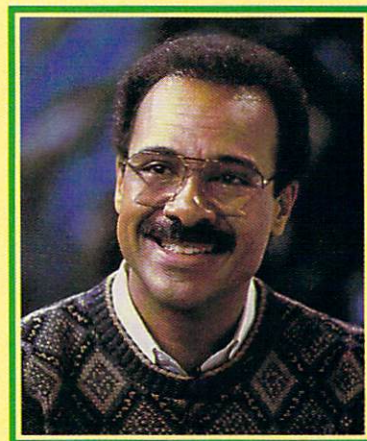
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ularly pronounced with some graphics patterns. Working on a monitor with these shimmering patterns and flickers can be highly fatiguing to the eyes, although some adjustments to the brightness and contrast controls lessen the effect in many instances. The RE1422 also exhibits a tendency toward blooming (getting thicker) at the ends of thin lines and rules and ghosting (images persisting).

Switching from text to graphics mode and back again in DOS applications causes a noticeable bounce as the screen images change; this bouncing phenomenon is not present when running or switching applications under Windows, however, since the video stays in graphics mode throughout the Windows session.

Corner-edge resolution isn't as sharp on the RE1422 as on some other monitors, but cost-conscious purchasers shouldn't see this as a major shortcoming unless they intend to do very intricate full-screen CAD projects or other applications that require pristine focus across the entire screen. For such power users, the more expensive, larger-screen monitors would probably be a better choice.

It would be unfair to compare this monitor on a point-by-point basis with others costing at least twice as much; you'd expect better performance and perhaps more refinements for a substantially larger investment. But most average PC users will find that, despite its shortcomings, the RE1422 delivers good value and performance at an affordable price.


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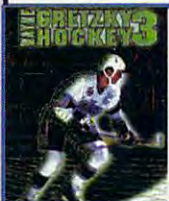
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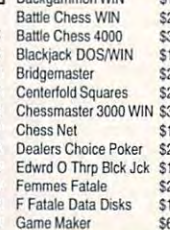
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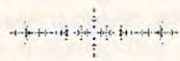
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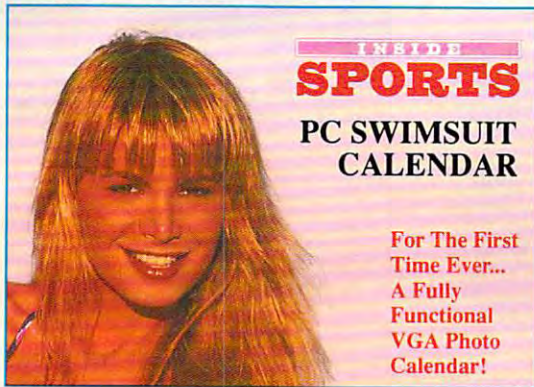
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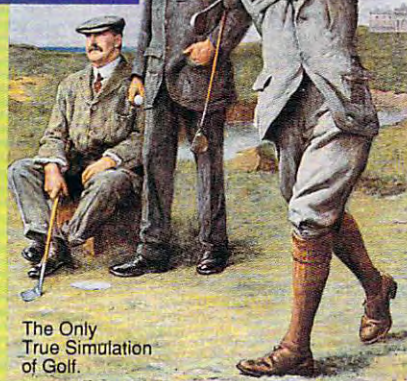
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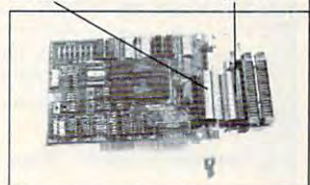
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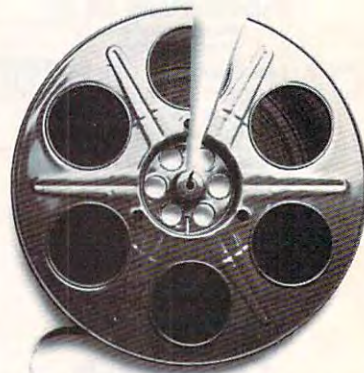
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NEWS BITS

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A map to the future, the rebirth of Ad Lib, virulent virus construction sets, the sound of music, and quickening your bills with plastic money

No More Map Folding

Possibly bringing a TravTek-like computer (see COMPUTE's August 1992 "News & Notes") a bit closer to the consumer is a Texas inventor's new vehicle accessory, the E-Z Finder. The compact, portable electronic device for your car "presents road maps in a clear, easy-to-read manner" and allows you to pinpoint routes surrounding your destination immediately without scanning an entire map. The only crook in the highway is finding a manufacturer to take the product off the drawing board. For now, Invention Submission of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is holding the blueprints.

Sound Byte

The Ad Lib Gold 1000 sound card (Ad Lib Multimedia, 220 Grande-Allée East, Suite 850, Québec, PQ, Canada G1R 2J1; 418-529-9676), the first sound card you can buy with the new Yamaha Magic chip set, is finally on the market. The card allows for stereo sampling at 44.1 kHz per channel and has three different filters to suppress crackling and popping for noise-free operation. Optional add-on modules allow for surround sound, telephone answering, and voice mail, as well as SCSI interfacing to CD-ROM and other peripherals. The Ad Lib Gold 1000 retails for \$299.95.

Controlling the Infectious

The Virus Research Center of the International Computer Security Association (Suite 33, 5435 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20015; 202-364-8252) is calling for legislation to quash virus-authoring software and books.

Last July, a hacker calling himself Nowhere Man released version 1.00 of Virus Construction Laboratory, a slick, professional product in-

tended to write a variety of viruses that resist debuggers and can contain up to 10 of 24 preprogrammed effects such as clear the screen, cold reboot, corrupt file(s), erase file(s), lock up the computer, drop to ROM Basic, trash a disk, and warm reboot. According to the VRC, most of the viruses are undetectable by today's antivirus products. Creating a new virus takes just a few minutes with a virus construction kit. David Stang, Director of Research at the VRC, says such products are destined to make today's virus problems look like "the good ol' days."

While *infecting* a computer with a virus can be either a misdemeanor or a felony, depending on the severity of the crime and the state in which it's committed, the U.S. currently has no laws to deter computer virus authors.

Pop Goes the Software

R.E.M. sets the mood for your newest role-playing adventure. Linda Ronstadt belts out a torch song as the theme to a Hitchcock-type mystery game. Don't be surprised if it happens soon. Software producers who've settled for using generic music by unknown artists because of the prohibitive fees and complex negotiations involved in using popular songs can now bundle those big-name recordings with their software. The landmark turnabout in this traditionally tightfisted industry comes from Warner Special Products (111 North Hollywood Way, Burbank, California 91505; 818-569-0500), which is making available to the consumer electronics industry and computer software producers the master recordings of more than 50 artists for CD-I and CD-ROM.

Warner Special Products, the licensing agency for Time

Warner Music Group, says it looks forward to working with CD-I and CD-ROM software producers and creators and is rushing to keep up with the needs of multimedia by eliminating a great deal of the red tape that's always surrounded master-use licensing fees. WSP is offering a special low licensing fee of \$300 for segments up to 30 seconds. In addition to R.E.M. and Linda Ronstadt, the list of artists includes Travis Tritt, the Doobie Brothers, Anita Baker, James Taylor, Ice-T, and others.

Credit Where Credit Is Due

Intuit (155 Linfield Avenue, P.O. Box 3014, Menlo Park, California 94026-3014; 415-322-0573), publisher of the Quicken series of money management software, has joined forces with Primerica Bank and VISA U.S.A. to bring you the Quicken VISA card. Each month, card holders receive an electronic statement directly into their Quicken software, either on disk or via modem (whichever is preferred). In less than ten seconds, Quicken's new IntelliCharge feature reads the statement and categorizes and records all credit-card transactions. You get a complete spending record on your PC without typing in anything. The IntelliCharge statement is delivered free for the first six months; after that, the charge is \$3.00 a month for modem delivery or \$4.50 a month for disk delivery, either of which is billed annually. There is no annual fee. The Quicken VISA card carries a variable interest rate of 8.75 percent above the prime rate. Currently, the card's rate is around 14.75 percent—less than some other major credit cards. Applications for the Quicken VISA card with IntelliCharge are available from Intuit's customer service at (800) 756-1855. □

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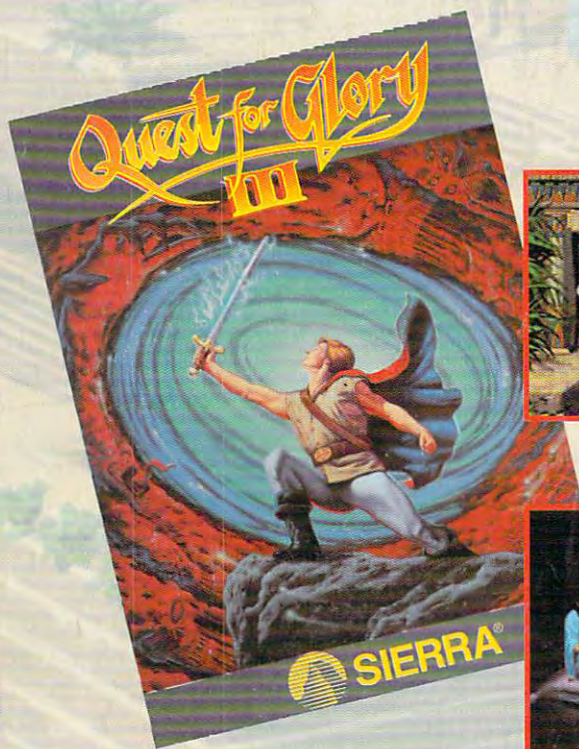
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