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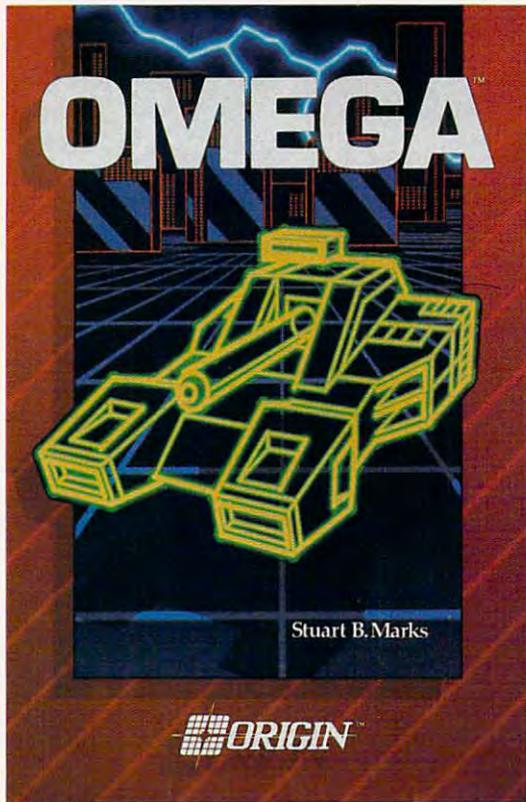
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ENTERTAINMENT



ORIGIN'S INNOVATIVE SOFTWARE WARFARE BRINGS PROGRAMMING TO THE FRONT LINES. DESIGN A FLEET OF ROBOT TANKS FOR KICKS AND CONQUEST.

developer has produced a truly interchangeable game; MS-DOS, Macintosh, Apple II and IIGS, Amiga, Commodore 64/128, and Atari ST owners can design tanks on their favorite system and send them into battle on any other system. For that alone, Origin deserves a lot of praise.

Also praiseworthy is Origin's embracing computer programming as an entertaining enterprise equal to arcades or adventures. At first blush, programming a robot tank may sound daunting or, at best, tedious. But soon you're poring over your routines like an inveterate hacker, even though you may have never written more than a dozen lines of code in your life.

Programming is at the heart of *Omega*. It's the only control you have over your tank. No fire buttons. No function keys. (You can seize manual control during a battle—but only if you've programmed in that option!) The game challenges you to think through the conditions and confrontations your tank may face, and to provide your cybernetic warrior with the logic for dealing with them.

The game's documentation presents a concise overview of logical thinking, complete with flowcharts, that goes a long way toward simplifying program design. The huge manual is well conceived. It carries you through the basics and then into the complexities of Cybertank Command Language, Origin's name for its plain-English programming language.

Before you can write the artificial intelligence (AI) that will guide your tank, however, you must configure its various hardware elements. You're constrained here by budgetary parameters (start off with 1000 credits) that increase with your skill level in 1000-credit increments.

All of your hardware options have been carefully considered. You select from items that include a variety of armor, engines, fuel supplies,

Armageddon will be easier tomorrow. We can stay home and send out cybernetic soldiers to do our fighting for us.

That scenario underlies Origin's *Omega*, a game that has you playing the role of a cybertank engineer for the Organization of Strategic Intelligence. Your job: to design, program, and dispatch sophisticated robot tanks into a bloodless battlefield. No blood, but plenty of sweat. Skull-sweat, to be specific. In order to make your tanks competitive, you must program them intelligently. Your tank becomes your proxy in battle. The more intelligent, the better its chance of victory. A small, smart tank just may be able to outfight a big, dumb tank.

Perhaps best of all, *Omega* doesn't limit your battles to your own computer screen. You can pit your tanks against those designed by your friends (or enemies, or even total strangers) no matter what computer they have or how far away they live. By disk or by phone wire, you're always on *Omega*'s firing line. At last, a

COMPUTE! CHOICE

KEITH FERRELL
AND PETER SCISCO

INMEMENT

weapons, and scanners. Each item affects your tank's total performance as well as influencing the way the parts work together. Heavy armor, for example, requires more fuel to move around the battlefield than does light armor. An explosive weapon like a gas-plasma charge takes longer to load and fire than does a turbo laser. Optional hardware—available only when you've risen fairly high in the security ranks—includes fuel-conservation devices, remote scanners for hunting enemy tanks, repair kits, defensive shields, and more. If you can use it, *Omega* has it.

But it's not enough to load your tank with hardware while staying within your budget. You have to know how to use your tank's attributes, too. And that's where the game's AI programming comes in.

We can't stress enough that *Omega*, no matter how it appears at first glance, isn't a game for programmers only. Sure, you have to write code. But the game designers provide the tools that make programming fairly simple, especially for novices.

Foremost among these tools is a library of prewritten routines. If your programming skills are weak, or if you're a novice at logical thinking, you can include these routines in your

tank's AI and be ready to fight in short order. You can edit any capsule routine to modify it to your tastes and strategy. You can embed subroutines, write your own routines and save them as capsules for use in other tanks, and even view the routines used by the tanks *Omega* includes with the game.

The devious (or lazy) tank designer will find it simple to steal routines from the tanks Origin includes. Among these metallic monsters is a particularly deadly number programmed by Richard Gariott, a.k.a. Lord British, himself. In one of our battles, Scisco's Goathead tank (a lumbering giant with a maniacal disposition) consistently fell prey to Ferrell's Elvis5, a swift guerrilla fighter later dis-

covered to have incorporated some of Origin's more clever routines. You won't have to worry about someone borrowing from your routines, however, because each tank is protected by the user's password, which you enter during the startup process.

If you decide to write an original program or to modify some of the capsule routines, *Omega*'s excellent text editor is invaluable. You can cut, copy, and paste with ease, as well as include capsule routines with the click of a button or the touch of a key. A search-and-replace command would be a nice addition, as would the ability to import ASCII text files (for tank logic written at work). But Origin makes up for these limitations with its push-button programming palette that includes the most commonly used commands. You can write an effective, if rudimentary, program using



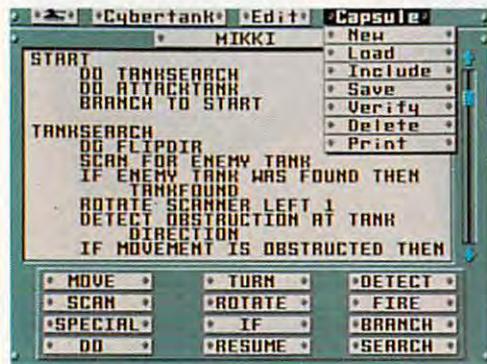
Mikki scores a direct hit on an enemy cybertank.

only your mouse, joystick, or arrow/enter keys. In short, you can assemble almost an entire program while hardly touching the keyboard.

The benefit of this approach is that you can learn in increments. Finish a tank program, for example, and a debugger tells you if there are any problems. Not sure how a program works? View it concurrently with the tank itself. In this mode, the program text scrolls on one side of the screen, showing you the commands that the tank is executing, as your tank performs its maneuvers on the other side of the screen. This is an excellent way to study how effectively your tank moves around obstacles, for example.

With your tank's body configured and its programming completed to your satisfaction, find out how your work measures up. Before you can send your offspring to war, its "intelligence" must pass muster. This process, *authorization* in *Omega* jargon, is where your program is debugged. If an error is found, you are notified on-screen. Exit the authorization process and you are returned to the edit screen at the point of error.

After you pass authorization, you're ready to roll onto the battlefield. You can test your tank against *Omega*'s best on predesigned fire zones (Austin, Houston, and a claustrophobic little scenario called Small),



Victory rests with the smarter tank.

you can design your own simulations and include your new creation in them, or you can send the tank to your friends. You're ready for war, no matter where.

You can also present your tank for evaluation, which is how you get promoted, earning more money to build deadlier tanks. An evaluation consists of ten one-on-one battles, just your tank and one of theirs, chosen to match your current level. To advance to the next level, you need to win seven of the battles.

You've designed your tank. Its AI is authorized. You're ready for your first battle. And while programming is key to winning your wars, you should

know that weaponry will carry you a long way. In the lower levels, the right combination of hardware can outfight *Omega*'s tank. You can pass some evaluations on the strength of your gun. (This approach falls apart pretty quickly once you're past level 5. By then *Omega*'s tanks are smart and strong.)

As the battle begins, the edit/design screen gives way to the battle screen, which is split into two parts: On the left is an overhead view of the battle, with your tank holding the center position. On the right are several monitors that gauge the damage inflicted on your tank, its fuel and weaponry supplies, the number of battles fought and won. From overhead, you watch your tank as it scans for the enemy, following the pattern your program demands. Search patterns, attack and retreat strategies, and tracking patterns are all included in *Omega*'s capsule routines.

At first, the battlefield graphics may disappoint you. There's not much, if any, differentiation among the various tanks. Animation is a bit twitchy, and terrain is two-dimensional.

That disappointment quickly fades as you realize how *Omega* gives you a window onto tomorrow's battlefield. The action resides in the tanks' logic rather than in their appearance. Watching one of your tanks move around the battlefield, scanning for the enemy, all the while conscious that the enemy is scanning for *you* is almost hypnotic. Depending on the placement of the tanks at the start of the battle (manual or random), searches may take some time. To make the search go faster, you can switch to a satellite view, in which the tanks are represented by blips and move much faster than on the closeup screen. Go back to the main battle screen when your tanks are in close proximity and watch the fireworks.

When the fight begins, the tanks tend to simply dig in and slug it out, especially at lower levels of logic. Weapons are represented as spherical projectiles (for explosive devices) or as shafts of light (for lasers). Sound effects on the PC version are quite limited. Origin should consider supporting one or more of the sound boards now available.

In its effort to create a realistic illusion of a futuristic cybertank design center, Origin occasionally goes too far. While the opening screens, with

the security check and retina scan, are fun and fuel the game's futuristic feel, an inconsistent tendency to label disk drives *slots* may confuse some players. This problem isn't major, but it does extend to the documentation. The game's quick-load reference guide, however, can help you find your way around.

Omega's screens on the whole lack strong visual effects. What you see throughout are metallic-gray screens with drop-down menus, push buttons, and windows for your text entries. This results from the nature of the game—designing tanks and writing programs is text-intensive.

The lack of visual effects, however, doesn't detract substantially from the game. *Omega* engages your mind, not your eyes. This is no arcade-action game for twitch-wristed vid-heads. It's more like a chess game in which you get but one move.

Like all fine games, *Omega* fulfills expectations while it encourages possibilities. For example, it would be exciting to see the battle unfold from the tank's perspective, leaving the overhead view for clearance evaluations and debugging. Origin does expand the definition of *group entertainment*, however, through use of a special BBS it has set up for nationwide warring.

A visual display during the hardware design process would also enhance the game. Picture a spinning graphic of your cybertank, taking on the attributes you assign it and displaying them for your inspection. Or, imagine these cybernetic soldiers rolling across the field accompanied by a full Wagner score.

It will be interesting to see if Origin expands this kind of programming game beyond the field of combat. A noncombative scenario would offer nonwarring gamers a chance to explore their own programming skills.

All these wishes are mere speculative observations. Origin has given no indication that it intends to pursue any of these avenues in a future release of *Omega* or any other game it has on the boards. But it's fun to think about. That's the mark of a good game—it unleashes the imagination. □

Omega

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GAMEPLAY

O R S O N S C O T T C A R D

From the beginning—from the days of *Adventure* and the earliest incarnations of Zork—one of the chief drawbacks to story games on the computer has been that those who can't type very well can't play very well.

Now, I'll admit that this made me feel quite smug at first—my Mom was a hundred-word-per-minute error-free typist as I was growing up, and that was the standard I tried to meet. The result? Typing is as natural to me as speaking. So all that typing to get through a text adventure didn't bother me one bit.

That was then. This is now.

See, with a text adventure you *read* the action—you type, and the computer types back at you.

But with an animated story game, you *watch* the action, so you don't want to be typing your way through the game. You want to *act*.

Imagine how much fun it would be to drive a car if you had to type in the instructions. "Turn left." "Stop at the 7-Eleven." We wouldn't put up with it. The pleasure of driving comes from the fact that the car seems like an extension of ourselves; it feels as though we move, and the car moves with us. It feels, ultimately, as though the car were somehow hooked into our brain.

So it is with a nonverbal interface for a story game. Even those of us for whom typing is as easy as breathing appreciate a game that feels as though *we're* performing the actions directly, as though our figure in the game were wired directly to our own heads.

Here we come to the game *Loom*, designed by Brian Moriarty, formerly of Infocom, now of Lucasfilm Games. It's a fantasy, complete with dragons and magic spells—but it's like nothing you've ever seen (or done) before.

The story begins to unfold with an impressive half-hour audiotape, which tells how Bobbin was born under dangerous circumstances among

the guild of weavers. As he grows up, he has to learn something of weaver magic, which consists of short melodies played on a musical distaff.

And that's how you work magic in the game. You learn short melodies and plink them out on the distaff in the lower left corner of the screen. The audiotape contains a couple of short melodies; you'll learn more as you work your way through the game.

The fabric of the universe is unraveling, and, as the only child ever born of the magical Loom, only you have the power to fend off disaster. To do this, you must learn secrets from other guilds—the shepherds, the glassmakers, the blacksmiths.

As you pursue your quest, you never type a single letter—which is only fitting, considering that few characters in Bobbin's world know how to read. You move through the gorgeous landscapes by pointing to the place you want to go—Bobbin always knows how to get there.

(I get tired of characters who can't seem to walk without my constant attention.)

Loom is a work of storytelling art that can stand up well to comparison with other such arts—film, television, drama—without losing its value as a

game. The audioplay at the beginning helps immerse you in the tale; the terrific pictures and realistic animation sustain your interest and belief; and the interface is so natural and intuitive that you feel as though you have actually lived through Bobbin's life.

Loom is not as interactive as, say, *Rocket Ranger*. You don't start out with a map of the world and go wherever you want in any order you want. But the story is good enough that you'll rarely notice how you're being channeled through the sequence of events. As with Lucasfilm Games' adaptation of the popular *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Loom* usually offers more than one solution to each problem.

In fact, *Last Crusade* does something I've wanted to see for a long time. If you come into the game bent on quick, violent solutions, you'll end up playing a violent game. If you come in with a more clever, puzzle-solving style, you'll end up playing a subtle game of wits. You can win either way. The game becomes what you want it to be.

That's a level of interactivity that almost no other games have achieved before—responding to the player's moral choices, not by punishing bad behavior, but rather by letting players experience the moral universe they seem to want to live in. When a game allows *that*, it has the possibility of making the player a true participant in the creation of the story.

By the way, *Loom* and *Last Crusade* are the last story games from Lucasfilm that I'll be reviewing for a while. The very things that I've praised in this column have led me to collaborate with Lucasfilm on what we hope will be a new generation of storytelling games.

In the meantime, I'll continue to write this column, telling you what I think is good—and bad—in the world of computer games. If anything, working as a designer myself will help me be all the more aware of remarkable achievements by the best of today's game designers. □

NEW GAME INTERFACES

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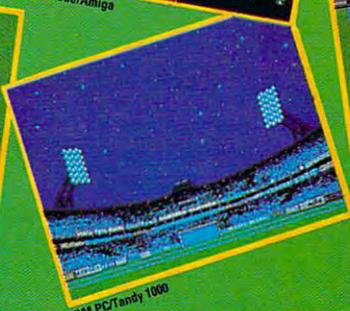
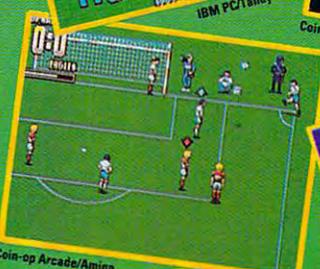
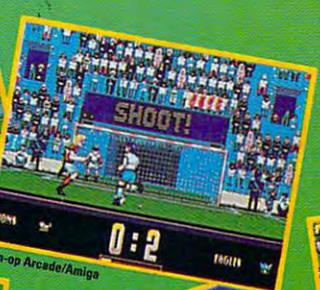
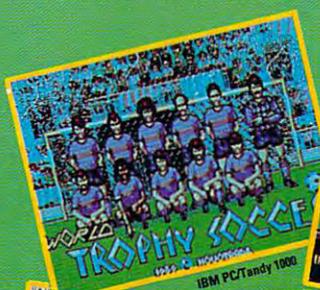


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NIGHTMARE ON GAME STREET

Shay Addams

One dark and stormy night, Pete Scisco called from *COMPUTE!*: "You're our last hope, Shay. We've sent three reviewers to the House on Haunted Hill, and they've all vanished—not one returned to write up the gruesome events of *Uninvited*, let alone report on *Maniac Mansion* and *Twilight Zone*. I should have known from the start to assign a piece on horror games to someone from the Addams family."

So into the gloomy night I lurched, the full moon rising eerily over my shoulder as I made my way to the decrepit old house on the hill. Glowing eyes peered out from every window, and the front door screeched when I pushed it open, then slammed shut behind me. In the entry hall, I surveyed a moldy stack of computer games. What had I gotten myself into?

Whether by magic or sheer luck, I survived the night, the next day, and the rest of the next two weeks. And I had to escape from some of the most horrific situations yet seen in the computer world. These are the games that Freddy Krueger would play if he had a computer on Elm Street.

When you play these four games, you may not be as lucky. So, in addition to all the morbid minutiae on the computer games, I've included clues to some of their most difficult puzzles.

Uninvited

And so begins my tale. From the entry hall hung with cobwebs, I headed for the first open door, slammed it, and locked it. From the corner of the room came an eerie glow. There sat a computer, cloaked in the thick cloak of Gothic atmosphere that could only mean one thing: The computer was running *Uninvited*.

Onscreen, the ominous house on the hill is reminiscent of the old Bates' place in *Psycho*. Inside, you'll find your little brother, but, take it from me, you'd better be prepared for the host of ghosts, fiends, and devils, too. Their idea of hospitality is to rip your body into a bloody mess.

Before rescuing your brother, you have to deal with the wayward wizard who haunts the place. You need to master a few spells of your own. You'll discover magic words like *Abraxus* and *Magisterium* as you examine books and other items in this possessed piece of real estate. The spells are vital to solving several puzzles, but, to cast them, you must form sentences with the correct magic words. Other problems, such as unlocking doors, hinge on rounding up keys and other objects and then figuring out how and where to use them.

ICOM plans to release an EGA version of *Uninvited* this fall, so the graphics will look a lot sharper and more colorful. In the CGA version, the game shows the main scene in a large window, which you can't move or resize. When you open an object, a fresh window opens to show the object's contents, which can be moved by grabbing them and dragging them to

or from another window. You can open an envelope, for example, and slip the letter into your wallet.

Instead of typing commands such as *examine rock*, you click on an object in the picture window, then on a command in the menu bar above. The Operate command offers additional freedom—with a few quick clicks you can use an object in one window to affect an item in another. Color distinguishes objects worth investigating from those that are purely ornamental.

A small map always shows the current room's doors, which you may pass through by clicking on the door in the main picture or on the corresponding door in the small map. You can examine something by double-clicking on it, an extremely convenient feature. Devised by ICOM Simulations, this style of game interface has been dubbed *interactive graphics*.

Spot animation enhances some scenes—such as those in which a devilish imp dances across the room, taunting you with a key that you've just got to get your hands on. Sound and music are minimal, and the EGA version doesn't support any music boards, either: Still, the fluid interface, solid logical puzzles, and something's-lurking-around-the-next-corner feel make *Uninvited* most inviting. And the lady who stuck her rotting face right up to the screen was the only ghoul in any of these games that made me actually jump.



Beware of the rotting lady, the scariest ghoul to leap out of *Uninvited*.

Maniac Mansion

The zombie that crawled in through window of my safe haven, however, was even scarier than that woman in *Uninvited*. Just when I thought I was a goner, my hand hit a secret button, and a hidden door opened. The dim passageway was illuminated by a lone computer running *Maniac Mansion*.

Whenever some TV character approaches a basement door, I always know there's an axemurderer waiting on the other side. *Don't go in there alone!* I always shout. But do they listen? No, and that's why they're dead now and can't play computer games like *Maniac Mansion*—a game that quickly turns into a riotous send-up of slasher and science-fiction films.

In a secret lab in the mansion's basement,

NIGHTMARE



Rescue your girlfriend from Dr. Fred's dastardly clutches in *Maniac Mansion*.

a mad scientist plots to take over the world. Dr. Fred's plan requires sucking the brains out of your teenage girlfriend. From seven neighborhood pals, you pick a pair to join you in your rescue mission. *Maniac Mansion's* most distinctive feature lets you control three characters and send them to different locations. To solve some puzzles, however, the characters must work together. Depending on the characters you choose, there are as many as five ways to solve the game. While exploring the mansion, you'll bump into other members of Dr. Fred's bizarre extended family: Weird Ed, Nurse Edna, the Purple Tentacle. There are enough oddballs to make the Addams' family look like yuppies. Fright turns to laughter when, for example, that bright red liquid oozing from the refrigerator turns out to be ketchup.

Maniac Mansion is an animated adventure. You move a character around the screen, grabbing things, examining them and so on. Following ICOM's lead, the Lucasfilm interface has 14 verbs in a menu below the picture. By clicking on these actions in concert with items in the picture, you Pick Up, Open, and Use things. The New Kid command permits you to hop from one character to the next.

As your character reaches the edge of the screen, the picture scrolls smoothly to show the rest of the room you're exploring. *Maniac Mansion's* 3-D graphics reduce the flat feel that you find in other graphics adventures because your character can walk from back to front as well as from left to right in a room. Cutaway

scenes help the plot unfold by showing what's happening in other parts of the house. Simple background music and sound effects entertain your ears, while visual effects enhance the action for your eyes: Shine a flashlight in a dark room, for example, and you'll see only the illuminated square where the beam falls. The interface, graphics, and warped comedy make *Maniac Mansion* a must-explore for fans of both horror and humor.

Don't Go Alone

Laughter was furthest from my mind, though, when a flock of vampire bats stormed me in the secret passageway. I hit the tunnel stairs as if my pants were on fire, and when I got to the second floor I ducked into a bedroom. Another computer. Another game. I should have taken my mother's advice when I told her about this assignment: *Don't Go Alone*.

That's the name of Accolade's latest fright fest, and you'll be surprised to find all the monsters and evil spirits that inhabit the house called Nostrodomo. Your grandfather swears the house is haunted, and all you need to do is prove him right and defeat the Demon of all Demons that's causing the trouble. Proving your grandfather right may not seem tough, but no one will believe you unless you defeat the bad guy.

You and your team of four experts—chosen from a list of 16 characters, including scientists, psychics, and adventurers—must explore the house, wiping out spirits, ghosts, and demons as you go. Each of your team members react differently to each creature. Characters go from scared to petrified, and, if they get too terrified, your whole team is transported to a new section of the house. Ultimately, you could all face the same fate as your grandfather: You could go insane with fear.

Your success depends on the mental strength of your team, not the physical prowess. You rely on chemical formulas that work against spirits. You also learn how to recognize possible allies from the world of ghosts and ghoulies.

Like many of these other horror games, *Don't Go Alone* is driven primarily through direction icons and other graphics devices. You can drag out your mouse, pull out your joystick, or tap away at your keyboard. ▸

Hints for the Haunted

To decode boldfaced answers, count one letter back. A complete solution and maps to some games are available in the *Quest for Clues* series, published by Origin.

Uninvited

To get the key in the entrance hall: Operate **lfmg** on **mfgu dibjs**. Operate **by** on **mfgu dibjs**. To operate the doll

in Master Bedroom: Say "**Tqfdbo lfbgpe Bcsbybt**." To open the safe in lab: **tfwfouz-ojof**, **gpsuz-lfwfo**, **fjhiuz**.

Maniac Mansion

To get wall-safe combination: Send one character to Weird Ed's room. After Ed takes him to dungeon, send someone to Ed's Room to open the **qjhhz cbol** and get a **ejnf**. Use the **ejnf** in the slot on the telescope, press

the right button to turn it to the right, and use the telescope to read the combination.

Dream Zone

To the crowd in the bar, say **Esjolt** are on the **ipvtf**. When you meet Hairy and Grajunk, give Hairy **dboez** and give Grajunk **hvn**. In the key tower: Swap **spdt** with **lfz**.

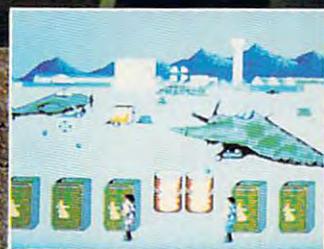
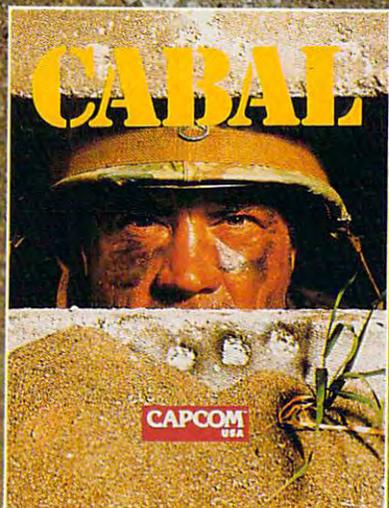
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See your favorite software retailer to enlist in the excitement. Or for more details, call Capcom U.S.A. at 408-727-1665. Act fast so that "another one" is one of them.



Cabal Screen Shots.

CAPCOM®
USA

NIGHTMARE

Dream Zone

I was so absorbed by the secret formulas that I didn't notice the giant, oozing sponge making for me like a slug with a vengeance. I could see a ladder to the attic, and I took it as my only escape. Among the rafters, resting in some massive cobwebs, a computer flickered like a torch as it booted up *Dream Zone*.



Save yourself with a little psychotherapy and a lot of courage in *Dream Zone*.

In this Serling-esque game, a recurring nightmare drives you out of your mind, so you visit the renowned psychiatrist, Dr. Fraud.

The shrink explains that a monstrous demon seizes control of your mind when you fall asleep. Then the good doctor gives you a sleeping potion with one unusual side effect: Unless you slay the demon tonight, you'll stay in your nightmare zone forever.

Besides the doctor, other characters help or hinder your quest. You gather clues from some characters. From others, you must render assistance as you tiptoe through this dreamscape's creepy castle, church, and circus. Some people are as unfriendly as others are helpful, and the

variety of the cast—as well as the vividly colored graphics and spot animation with which they're depicted—are *Dream Zone's* hallmark.

The parser is a simple verb-noun affair. You can execute many actions, however, by clicking with your mouse on one of ten buttons below the picture, then on an object in the scene. Click on the Get button, for instance; then click on an object. For players who prefer keyboard control, the function and cursor keys have also been dedicated to these actions. You can type directional commands or click on the appropriate icon to move from room to room. Novices will value the Visible Objects option, which displays all movable items in icon form and distinguishes them from background elements.

Dream Zone's great graphics, colorful characters and locales, and hassle-free interface make this nightmare so much fun, I didn't want to wake up.

Back to the Safety of Home

The House on Haunted Hill wasn't going to give up easily. Just because I'd made it to the attic didn't mean it couldn't chase me one level further. Sure enough, a headless ogre was quietly chewing on a hockey mask. I slipped onto the roof before he could catch my scent. I climbed to the edge, looking for a drainage pipe or rose trellis to help me down. But none appeared. So, finally, I resorted to the direct approach: I jumped.

I don't know who scraped me off the front sidewalk. I don't know who got me into my warm, safe bed. All I know is this: Next time Pete calls me with an assignment, the article better be about a Hawaiian-luau simulation. ☐

Shay Addams, a fearless champion of the weird and the eerie, edits and publishes game tips in the Questbusters series.

Where to Find These Evil Spirits

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IBM PCs and compatibles with CGA, EGA, Tandy 16-color, or VGA—\$39.95

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(312) 232-1984

Dream Zone

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Apple IIgs—\$49.95
Atari ST—\$49.95
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All formats—\$24.95

Quest for Clues II

All formats—\$24.95

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Building B

Londonderry, NH 03053
(603) 644-3360

Uninvited

Amiga—\$49.95
Atari ST—\$49.95
Commodore 64/128—\$34.95
IBM PC with 512K; CGA; mouse
recommended—\$39.95
Macintosh—\$49.95
Mindscape
3444 Dundee Rd.
Northbrook, IL 60062
(312) 480-7667

The program isn't copy-protected, but you can only install it on a hard disk twice.

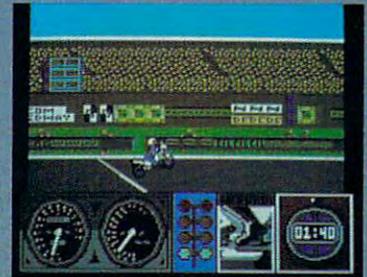
SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN

Better watch out!

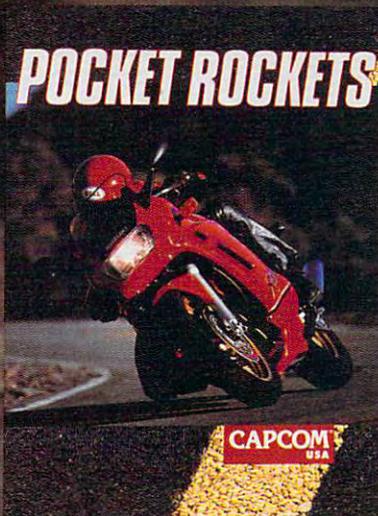
After a test ride on *Pocket Rockets*, the high-speed motorcycle simulation game, Santa picked up a new sleigh that will make this year's rounds faster than ever. And whether you've been naughty or nice, you could win this Suzuki 600 Katana during "Santa's Sleigh Giveaway" in January.

Meanwhile, experience all the thrills and spills of high-speed racing with machines that take you from zero to 60 in under four seconds. Already gaining critical acclaim, *Pocket Rockets* lets you choose from four of the quickest, most exotic bikes on the planet. The action's as real as the adrenaline you'll feel.

Then, enter "Santa's Sleigh Giveaway" from Capcom U.S.A. Besides the chance to win a new Suzuki motorcycle, you could get a Bell full coverage helmet, or Capcom computer game software. Look to enter in all Capcom computer game packages or visit your favorite computer game retailer for more information. Capcom's belated Christmas giveaway is just around the bend so don't miss out on your chance to win!



LEFT: Try your skill against the clock with a couple of laps around the test track. RIGHT: Drag racing demands a quick wrist and fast shifting. Just don't blow the engine!



SWEEPSTAKES RULES How to Enter:

1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Fill out and mail official entry found in package or you can enter by hand printing your name, address and zip code on a 3" x 5" piece of paper and mailing it to CAPCOM Santa's Sleigh Giveaway, 3303 Scott Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95054. Enter as often as you wish. Each entry must be mailed separately by JANUARY 15, 1990. No mechanical reproductions of entry will be accepted and all mail-in entries must be received at the above address by JANUARY 31, 1990. No responsibility is assumed for lost, late, misdirected, or damaged entries.
2. Prize winners will be determined by means of a random drawing to be conducted by an independent judging organization whose decision shall be final. All prizes listed will be awarded, but there can be only one prize winner per household, group or organization. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. Approximate grand prize retail value is as follows: Suzuki Katana \$4,495.00. Winners will be notified by mail by FEBRUARY 15, 1990 and may be required to execute affidavits and advertising release. Taxes on prize winnings are solely the responsibility of the winners.
3. Sweepstakes is open to U.S. residents except employees of CAPCOM U.S.A. and their immediate families, its subsidiaries and affiliates, its advertising and promotional agencies, and the judging firm. Prizes won by minors may be awarded to parent or legal guardian. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All Federal, State and Local regulations apply. For a list of major prize winners send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to CAPCOM Santa's Sleigh Giveaway Winners List, 3303 Scott Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95054 by MARCH 31, 1990.

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GAMESCOPE

H I N T S A N D T I P S F R O M O U R R E A D E R S

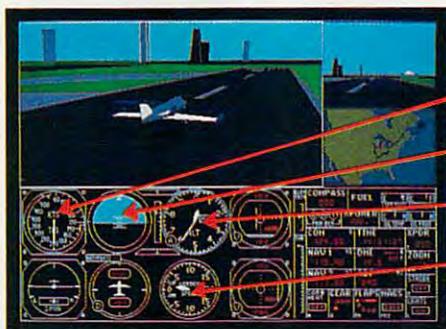
You're ready to turn in your scarf and flight goggles. During flight training, you've managed to crush a Cessna's landing gear, demolish a Lear jet, and drive an F-14 Tomcat off the end of a carrier's runway and into the Pacific.

Don't despair. You don't need pilot's training to fly a flight simulator. You just need a firm grounding in the fundamentals of flight—before you find yourself firmly grounding another plane into the tarmac.

Before you take to the skies, check your program manual and find four vital instruments: the airspeed indicator, which shows if you're traveling fast enough to stay in the air; rate of climb/descent indicator, which will let you know whether you're about to make a gentle landing or feel a sense of oneness with the runway; altimeter, handy during landing and while trying to avoid mountains; and, most important, the artificial horizon, which indicates the attitude of the aircraft relative to the ground.

To take off, advance your throttle slightly and point your plane straight down the runway. When you're lined up, go to full power. When you've reached takeoff speed (about 70 knots on a prop, 150 on jets), pull gently back on the control stick. The airplane will begin to climb. Watch your airspeed—if you're flying an F-16, you can climb straight up with no problem, but a Cessna will lose speed, stall, and plunge toward the ground if you climb too sharply. If your speed starts to drop, push the stick forward a bit.

Climb to 3000 feet and level off. Push the stick forward until the artificial horizon is centered (you'll see equal amounts of ground and sky on the instrument) and throttle back to about 70 percent. Once your speed steadies, you may notice you're still climbing. Don't push the plane's nose down to stop the climb. Contrary to instinct, you use your plane's throttle



Important Instruments

to control climb and descend. Reduce your throttle setting slightly until your plane is flying straight and level.

Fly straight for a while and practice using throttle and pitch to adjust your speed and climb. If you want to speed up, point the plane's nose down slightly. You'll notice your airspeed picking up, but you'll probably see your plane start to lose altitude, too. Compensate for the altitude loss by increasing your throttle setting.

When you're ready to attempt a landing, push right on the stick and begin a 180-degree turn back toward the airport. Don't bank too sharply, or you'll find yourself losing altitude. When you've completed the turn, it's time to start your descent. You'll be doing a visual landing.

Reduce power, but keep the plane's nose up. When your speed drops to about 30 knots over stall speed, lower your flaps one notch. Adjust your throttle to maintain airspeed. At about six miles out, begin your descent by gradually decreasing your throttle. Watch your rate of climb indicator and maintain about a 500-foot-per-minute descent.

Your goal is to touch down near the threshold (where the runway starts). There's an easy trick to doing this. Line the threshold up on the bottom center of your wind-screen. If it appears to move up the wind-screen, you're descending too fast. Add power slightly until it seems to stay in one place. If you can master this little

trick, your plane will practically fly itself onto the runway.

As you enter the last leg of your approach, make sure your landing gear is down and keep a close eye on the altimeter to make sure you have enough altitude. Make shallow turns until you're directly aimed at the runway. Use your rudder pedals for minor course adjustments.

The final landing procedure is called the *flare*. At about 30 feet above the runway, begin pulling back on the stick *slowly*. Your goal is to be flying straight and level just before you touch down. Your plane will begin to slow, and as it does its nose will drop. Pull back on the stick to keep your plane flying a foot or two above the runway. Your plane should lose speed until it's no longer able to fly, and it will stall and touch down. Once you're safely on the ground, cut your throttle and hit the brakes. If it doesn't look like you have enough runway to stop, gun the engine, take off, and go around again. An aborted landing isn't as embarrassing as driving your plane off the runway and into a lake.
Denny Atkin

If you have game tips or shortcuts of your own, we'd like to hear from you. Send your tip, no matter how brief, to COMPUTE! Feedback, P.O. Box 5406, Greensboro, North Carolina 27403. If we publish your suggestion, we'll send you a gift. □

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REVIEWS

EXPLODE GRAPHS, BAT WITH EARL, FLY BY CHUCK, TACKLE ISSUES, TRACK RECORDS, RACK 'EM UP, HOBNOB WITH HOBBITS, BATTLE MECHS, AND FACE FISH.

PERSPECTIVE JUNIOR

A picture is worth a thousand words, the saying goes. If this is true, then *Perspective Junior* is the *War and Peace* of PC software. This presentation-graphics program includes features usually found only in packages costing several times its \$149 retail price. And *Perspective Junior* sports a user interface so intuitive that you'll be creating and printing presentation-quality graphics within an hour of installing the program.

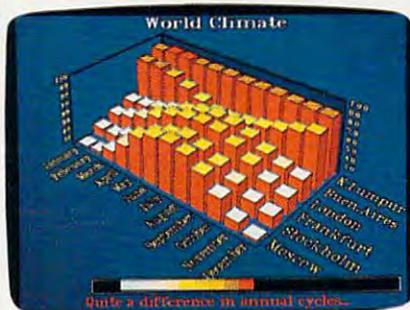
Installing *Perspective Junior* is a breeze. The installation program asks what type of display and printer you have, and then it configures itself accordingly. *Perspective Junior* supports the installation of multiple printers, allowing you to use, for example, a dot-matrix printer for draft copies and a laser printer for final printouts.

When you start *Perspective Junior*, a sample graph is displayed along with a listing of top-level options, which are selected using function keys. These include setting a graph type, changing the viewing angle for a graph, accessing the program's Data Manager, printing and storing files, and customizing the program to match your operational preferences. Top-level operations and their associated function keys are listed either across the top of your screen or down its left side, depending on the keyboard configuration you specified during installation.

Pressing the F5 function key, for

example, calls up the program's Data Manager, which you use to enter the information you want incorporated into a graphic: data values, headings, legends, titles, and the like. The row/column format of the Data Manager's data-entry table should be familiar territory for anyone who's ever worked with an electronic spreadsheet.

After entering values and/or text into the data-entry table, you specify which row/column cells should be applied to specific elements of your graphic. For example, you could tell *Perspective Junior* to use a text string entered in row 1, column 1 (R1C1) of your data table for the main title of the current graphic. Likewise, you might specify that the numeric values stored in a block of cells be used as the base data for this graph.



Add depth to your bar graphs with *Perspective Junior*.

In addition to manual data entry, *Perspective Junior* lets you import data from a number of popular PC programs directly into its Data Manager. Compatible file types include WKS or WK1 files (from *Lotus 1-2-3*), DIF files created with *Microsoft Excel*, *Multiplan SYLK* files, and ASCII files.

Perspective Junior operations are dynamic: Any changes you make to a

graphic's underlying data are immediately reflected in the graphic itself.

This dynamic interaction greatly simplifies the process of creating and editing a *Perspective Junior* graphic.

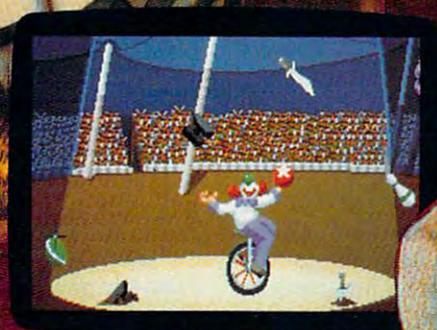
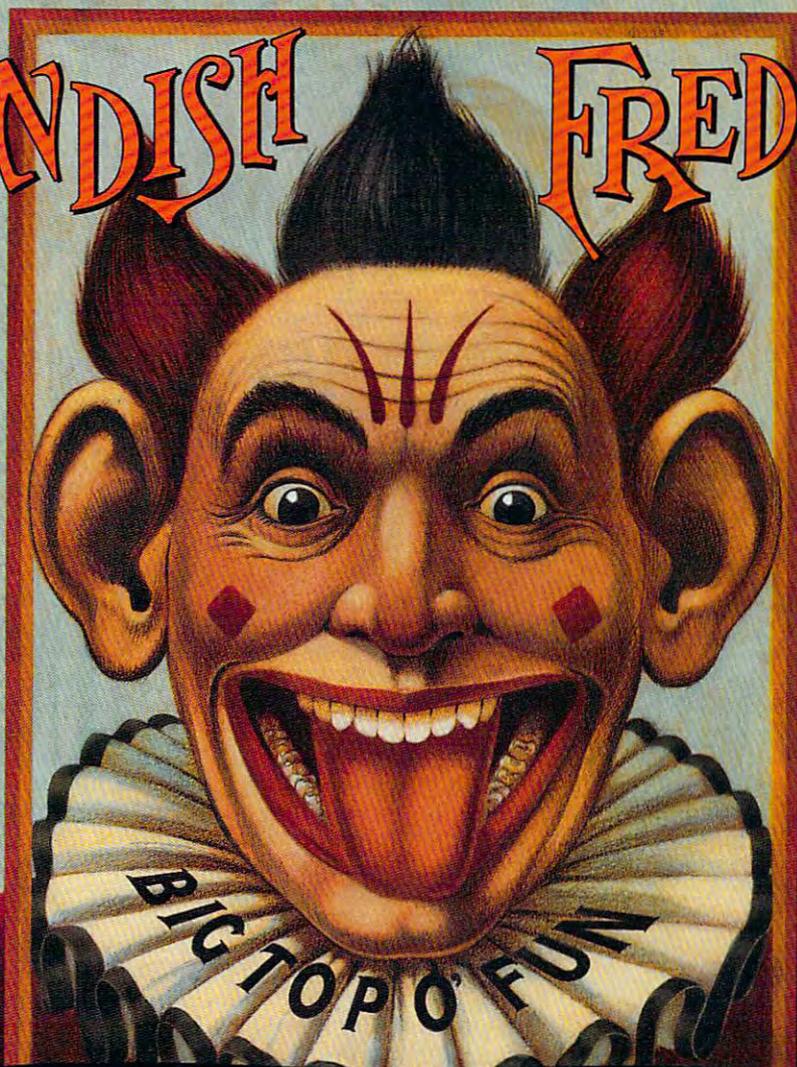
When you finish entering your initial information into the program's Data Manager, for example, pressing the Escape key returns you to the top-level options screen and replaces the original sample graph with one that reflects your data table's current contents. If you then return to the Data Manager, edit the data table's contents, and go back again to the top-level screen, *Perspective Junior* automatically revises the current graph to reflect these changes. Similarly, pressing the F1 function key to access the Graph Type option and select a different type of graph causes *Perspective Junior* to immediately redraw your screen using the new graph type. Refining a *Perspective Junior* graph or chart is such a simple procedure that there's a chance you'll go overboard: Try not to enhance a graphic to such a degree that form obscures content.

Once you've finished designing a chart or graph, the image can be sent to your system printer or plotter. The program includes two special print drivers that allow you to print *Perspective Junior* charts and graphs to disk as image files in either GEM or TIFF format for export into programs such as *Ventura Publisher* or *Page-maker*. A special *Options Pak* (\$79), also available from Three D Graphics, includes additional plotter support and special drivers for converting your graphic images into 35mm slides.

Perspective Junior also allows you to organize multiple charts and graphs into a computerized slide show. Once created, a slide show can be looped to cycle through itself unattended, mak-

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ing it an ideal tool for automated sales presentations.

The program's manual walks you through each step required to design, create, revise, and print a chart or graph. It includes a separate chapter on the program's SlideShow Manager, as well as a comprehensive and well-organized index that lets you easily locate information on specific program features and operations.

Perspective Junior packs a lot of power into a \$149 program. Even if you're only beginning to experiment with presentation graphics, you can't go wrong with *Perspective Junior*. It's a program that should meet your needs far beyond the experimentation stage.

JACK NIMERSHEIM

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EARL WEAVER BASEBALL 1.5

**FAST
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Numerous software companies have tried to create the ideal baseball game, to find the balance between an arcade-style game and a statistics-based simulation. Electronics Arts' *Earl Weaver Baseball* is one of the best, but the new version is better.

The enhancements include a bigger viewing area focusing on the pitcher and batter, a new keyboard interface that allows players to move through the startup menus and game options easier, getting to the on-field action quicker.

What sets *EWB* apart from the others is the feeling of actually managing a team. You can warm up pitchers in the bullpen, position fielders, and call for a mound conference. Other nice touches include the ability to play in current, historic, or imaginary ball parks and print out lineups and box scores. An optional commissioner's disk lets you set up your own league, teams, and ball parks. Additional player-statistics disks are also available, including one for the 1988 season.

The only drawbacks are the lack of realistic sounds and the inability to control your fielders (you only direct their throws). Otherwise *EWB* repre-

sents an excellent mix of strategy and action. I'm sure we'll see others attempt to best it, which is good news for computer baseball players.

MICKEY McLEAN

IBM PC and compatibles—\$39.95;
\$44.95 for a 5¼- and 3½-inch combination package (upgrade for \$17.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling and original manual cover)
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Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Dr.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2.0

Remember the good old days when you could pick up a flying game and zoom through the sky without knowing anything about aerodynamics? If you could wiggle your joystick up, down, left, and right, you were off into the wild blue yonder. But some of us demanded more, some of us wanted (gasp) realism. So we ended up with true flight simulators based on civilian aircraft and real flight characteristics, and jet-fighter games based on military aircraft, with compromises favoring handling over the excitement of combat.

Finally, *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* came along to bridge the gap. While it lacked combat scenarios, the program simulated both military and civilian aircraft, each with very realistic flight characteristics. Many pilots said this program had more of a realistic feel than any other program, including Microsoft's *Flight Simulator*.

However, the original version of *Advanced Flight Trainer* had a somewhat outdated feel. The biggest problem was poor graphics support—*AFT* was one of the last CGA-only games. Electronic Arts locked onto this and other problems and launched *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* which supports EGA and VGA graphics.

New graphics show up everywhere. First to catch your eye are the new cockpit designs. World War I biplanes and high-tech jet fighters no longer share an identical cockpit lay-

out. The outside views have been enhanced with more realistic terrain features and race-course layouts. And from the outside, a P-51 now looks like a P-51, not a box with a propeller.

You can watch your flight from every imaginable camera angle and use videolike effects to change your perspective and zoom in or out. You can also choose these views after your flight, using the Replay function. This improved feature replays the entire flight, and you can fast-forward to the interesting part and then go back and see it again from another angle.

AFT 2.0 adds even more choices to the wide variety of aircraft you could fly in the first release. The original version included 15 diverse aircraft, including the Sopwith Camel, the SR-71 spy plane, the Cessna 172, and the Bell X-1. Now the count is up to 18 as you can go for a spin in the new F-117A Stealth Fighter, take an experimental plunge in the X-15, or try your hand at a dead-stick landing in the Space Shuttle.

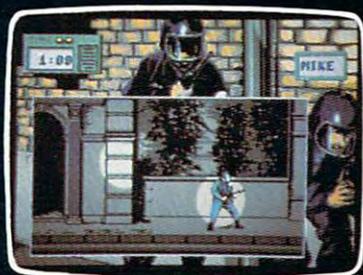
With the new planes come new locations. Six new race courses, including the famous Reno Unlimited, offer plenty of low-altitude challenge, as well as occasional carnage. The program keeps track of your best times through the gates—if you make it that far.

Besides the races, there are also several locations to test your nerve and skill. Two that have kept me awake long after I should have crashed for the night are the Canyon and the Bridge. In the Canyon, you fly down between two twisting lines of mountains, which is not as easy as it sounds. The Bridge is even more fun. Here you fly a figure-eight pattern; you first fly under a suspension bridge and then come back around and fly directly over the roadway, avoiding the suspension cables on both sides of you. It's a neat place to fly when things are getting a little too serious. Try whipping under the bridge in the Space Shuttle, then putting her down in the middle of the river to get you back in the right frame of mind.

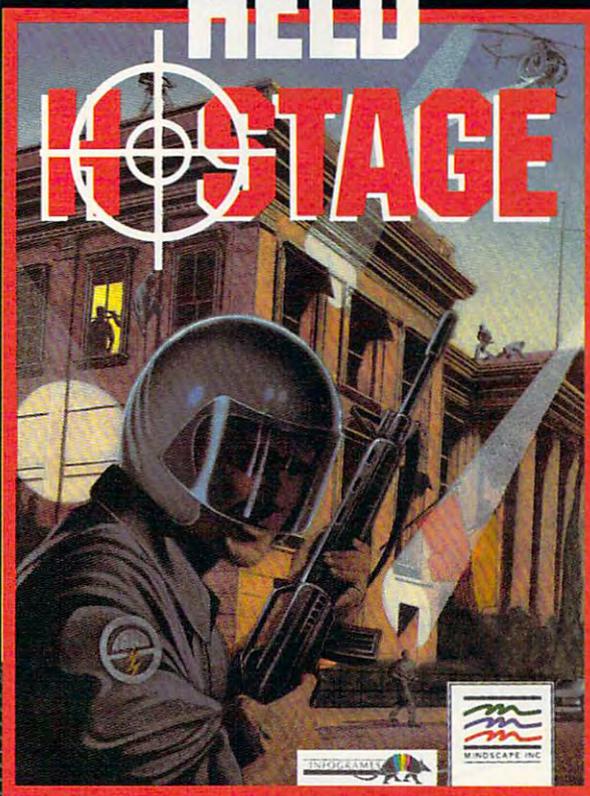
Unfortunately, the improvements in *AFT 2.0* come at the expense of screen update speed. Players with slow XT computers will have control problems. Even more frustrating is the lack of consistency. The refresh rate speeds up and bogs down, depending on what's onscreen. It's hard to get a good feel for how an aircraft handles when an aileron roll takes roughly twice as long when the screen is crowded. Even on my 10-MHz AT clone, the Thunderbirds and Blue Angels scenarios are almost unplayable.

Had Electronic Arts called the

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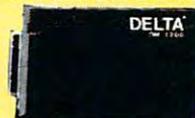
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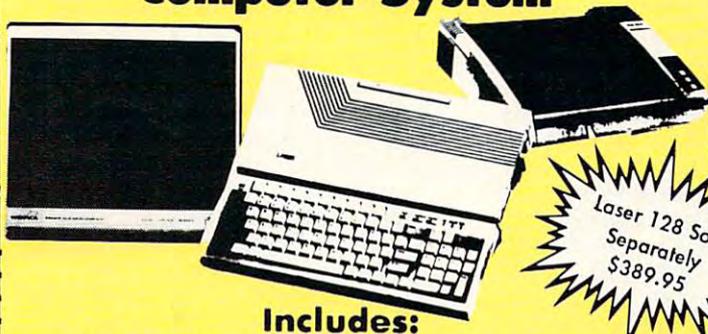
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game *Chuck Yeager AT* and marketed it for fast AT-class machines and higher, they would have gunned down most of this criticism.

If you have a fast machine and liked the first version or are a fan of flight games in general, I'm sure you'll be impressed with the great graphics and unique features in *AFT 2.0*. But if your computer operates at 8-MHz or less, the remaining copies of version 1.0 have been marked down to less than \$20. That could be the best software deal in town.

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UNDERSTANDING AIDS & ALCOHOL

There's more to education than math drills and learning your ABC's, and educational software is beginning to branch into more serious, controversial areas. Substance Abuse Education has released a series of programs dealing with topical issues, including AIDS, babies and infant safety, sex, teen pregnancy, alcohol and substance abuse, and smoking. I looked at two of these programs, *Understanding AIDS* and *Alcohol*. *Understanding AIDS* doesn't include a printed manual. Instead, upon booting the disk, you see several short introductory screens. When you get to the main menu, start with the first item, the instructions. The online instructions are thorough, and I had no trouble operating the program.

The second menu item lets you learn facts about AIDS. There are eight submenus that cover almost everything currently known about the disease. You can learn about the history of the disease, who is at risk, how AIDS is spread, how to avoid getting the virus, and current methods of treatment. Sensitive issues are dealt with frankly, using precise terminology.

After learning the facts, you're given the opportunity to take a self-test. The program updates your score on the screen as it quizzes you on your understanding of the previously covered material.

Understanding AIDS has many

strong points. The online glossary of terms is very informative, as is the online manual. I learned some interesting facts about AIDS-treatment drugs currently being tested. Although this information has been published elsewhere, it was handy to have all the facts in one place. You're given immediate feedback to your responses, and the program is entirely self-paced.

One of the strongest areas of the program was the references-and-resources section, which contained hotline numbers and other ways to obtain additional information or help.

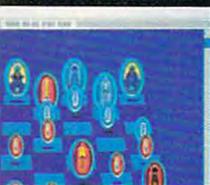
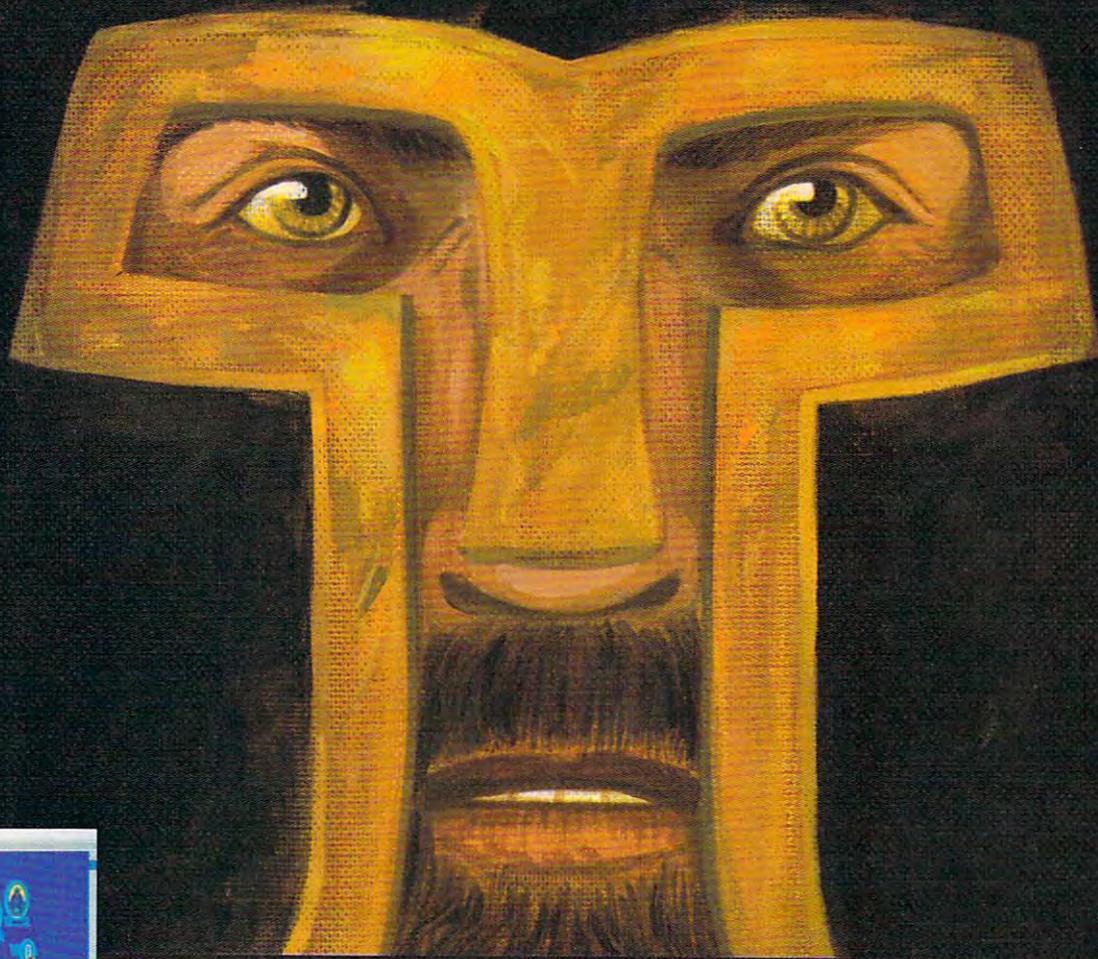
As a teacher, I'm passionately in favor of education in the areas covered by Substance Abuse Education's software. However, I'm concerned with the level of maturity needed to take advantage of this package. Although the AIDS issue is far too serious and important to be presented in a game format, software designed to replace a textbook by simply presenting the material on a computer screen can't compete against flashier programs.

There is almost no interaction with the program, other than typing an occasional *yes* or *no*. The software is comprehensive, factual, and direct, but it didn't hold the interest of the eighth graders I used it with. The same test questions are given during subsequent uses of the disk, although the program varies their order. Furthermore, many of the questions are variations of the same scenario. The authors have created one of the most intelligent programs on the market, but they've used no imagination in doing so. The issues addressed are highly serious; arcade-style graphics would be inappropriate. But to get a message across, you must first capture your audience's attention.

SAE's *Alcohol* program is geared toward a young audience. The program is designed to help answer questions or correct misconceptions teenagers may have about the use of alcohol. The format remains about the same as that of the AIDS program, except this time a great effort was made to incorporate interesting graphics screens. For instance, facts about how alcohol enters the bloodstream or affects the brain are accompanied by excellent graphics depicting the passage of the alcohol. These graphics are frequent, varied, and interesting. The program requires significant interaction from you.

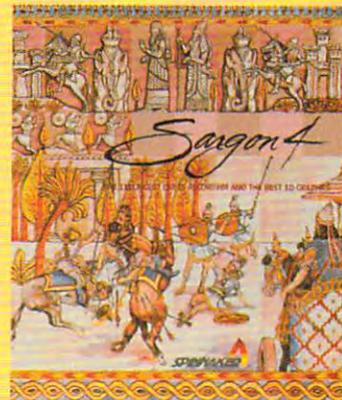
Using this program, you'll cover a lot of information pertaining to the use and effects of alcohol. Most of the information is fascinating; for instance, the program includes descrip-

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tions of how alcohol's effects can vary depending on your body weight or recent food intake, how initial pleasant feelings may progress to severe mental and physical impairment, and of the laws pertaining to driving under the influence and statistics on alcohol-related traffic deaths.

The program treats teenagers as adults. They're encouraged to make their own decision about whether or not to drink. It helps them determine what constitutes normally harmless social drinking and what types of drinking behavior can lead to problems.

A feature I liked was the statement of the publisher's goals for your completion of the software. They were numerous, nonjudgmental, and thorough. Also, there is an option to enter any special questions you have. These questions can be looked over by a teacher or parent who can then help find solutions. Plan to spend at least an hour if you want to cover all the material on either program in one sitting.

Although I was disappointed with some aspects of *Understanding AIDS*, I feel that it and the *Alcohol* program are still worth buying. The issues dealt with here are important, and if one of

the programs in this series helps someone decide not to drink and drive, or if it helps someone realize what AIDS is so he or she can treat the issue more intelligently, then the money for the programs is well spent.

KRISTEN STERNBERG

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FOR THE RECORD

Face it, our lives are filled with clutter. Consider for a moment the number and types of critical items each of us is required to remember or keep track of on a regular basis: birthdays, anniversaries, emergency telephone numbers, tax records, insurance policies, loan repayment schedules, automated-teller access codes, automobile registra-

tions, Social Security numbers. The list goes on, and on, and on, ad nauseum. Think about it too long and the sheer bulk of data and details associated with this so-called Information Age threatens to overwhelm you.

Before surrendering your sanity, however, you should know that help is available. *For the Record*, from Nolo Press, is a nifty, inexpensive book-and-software package designed to help you manage all the minutiae associated with life in the late twentieth century.

At the heart of *For the Record* is the program's preprogrammed database. You use this database to record and track information in 27 major categories, ranging from Business Interests to—I'm not kidding here—Death Plans. *For the Record* further divides each major category into 1-18 subcategories. Category 24, Personal Information, for example, includes subcategories for Employment History, Military Record, Past Residence and Marriage, among others. In a true tip of the hat to our modern culture, there's even a subcategory called *Significant Relationship*, in which you can record important dates and other items relating to a nonmarital, live-in liaison.

4

5

6

HELP OUR KIDS KEY



Kids are key to America's future. And so are computers. By the year 2010, virtually every job in our nation will require some computing skills. That means preparing all of our youth today to take on technology tomorrow.

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The Computer Learning Foundation is a non-profit organization that's taking the lead in computer literacy efforts nationwide. We're bringing together companies, state departments of education, national non-profits and local groups.

Our Computer Learning Month in October is a focus for thousands of community and classroom programs. We've involved millions in discovering the benefits of computing.

All data entry occurs at this subcategory level. Here, you actually create a record by entering information into predefined data fields. The information requested is specific to each subcategory. In the Military Record subcategory, for example, you enter such information as Branch, Service Number, Date Entered, Date Discharged, Rank Achieved, Commendations, and so on. You can create an unlimited number of records for each subcategory. Although all fields are predefined, *For the Record* is fairly comprehensive in the types of information requested in its subcategories. Should you feel the need to expand on a given item, there's a Notes feature that lets you attach up to a full screen of text to individual records.

A recurring theme in virtually every subcategory is the Location of Documents field. This field symbolizes the overriding rationale behind this program. When used properly, *For the Record* lets you create and maintain an index (for want of a better metaphor) to the various items and information that, taken together, comprise your life. If, for example, I needed to quickly find my son's birth certificate, a quick look under the Your Family category would reveal

The screenshot shows a window titled 'Child's Guardian' with the following fields and values:

- Child's name: Sarah Meredith Heron
- Personal guardian: John Reynolds McCormack (Phone: (415) 555-1478)
- Address: 1233 Tierra Vista Way, San Rafael, CA 94022 (Eva: (415) 555-8271)
- Is the personal guardian named in your will? yes no
- Is the financial guardian appointed in your will? yes no
- Financial guardian: Betty Randolph Ketchum (Phone: (415) 555-1786)
- Address: 1304 Evergreen Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94110 (Eva: (415) 555-2324)
- Does your will establish a trust for the child? yes no

At the bottom, there are icons for 'F1', 'F2', 'F3', 'F4', 'F5', 'F6', 'F7', 'F8', 'F9', 'F10', 'F11', 'F12', 'Print', 'Cancel', and 'OK'.

For the Record's 300 data screens ask you all the right questions.

that the document is stored in our safe deposit box at the local bank.

After records are entered, it's a simple matter to generate a printout of the information. You can choose to print a single record, all records in a specified category or subcategory, or the complete contents of a database. (Be warned, however, that this last option can literally take hours if your recordkeeping is anywhere near comprehensive.) Any notes attached to a record are included with that record during a print operation.

For the Record is totally menu-driven. Selecting a category from the program's Main Menu displays a sec-

ond menu, listing any subcategories associated with that item. If the subcategory for which you are entering data contains information that might be related to other subcategories, the program displays an <XREF> message at the bottom of the screen. A single keystroke calls up a listing of these ancillary subcategories. If you're unsure of a specific operation, online help is available. Though not context-sensitive, the program's help messages are comprehensive and well organized.

For the Record supports multiple databases. You might, for example, create a second database for those business-related items you wish to isolate from your personal records. To work with a file other than the default database, you simply include that file's name on the command line when you load the program. For added security, you can even assign password protection to individual categories within a database.

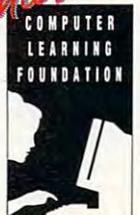
Unfortunately, all is not perfect with this program. *For the Record's* manual is loaded with useful information on both program operations and a wide range of topics relating to the items recorded in your databases—information management, investment advice, financial issues, and,



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in some cases, legal considerations. Unfortunately, the writers place most of the responsibility for tracking down that information squarely on the user's shoulders. The manual's table of contents doesn't include page numbers, a major oversight. Even more unforgivable, its index is nothing more than a listing of subcategory headings, cross-referenced to the category (Main Menu item) under which they appear in the program.

My only other major complaint with the program is its lack of printer support. The MS-DOS version demands an Epson, an IBM-graphics, or a compatible printer. The Macintosh version works only with an Image-writer, Laserwriter, or compatible printer. Luckily, my Okidata Laser-line 6 can emulate an IBM graphics printer, or I'd have been out of luck.

Despite these two complaints, I like *For the Record*. It has superimposed some welcome structure on my previously chaotic recordkeeping habits. Sure, a traditional database program could accomplish the same thing while allowing for greater customization. But why should you invest the time, energy, and programming skills required to accomplish this? The good folks at Nolo have already done that work for you, anticipating 95 percent of your needs in the process.

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SLOW-HAND POOL

Depending on if you have the time and the patience, *Pool*, from Heartland Software, may be your game.

This billiards game for the PC offers colorful graphics, easy playing instructions, simple commands, and a variety of game scenarios. But if you decide to play, bring something else to do because, without the suggested math coprocessor, shooting the cue ball is a new adventure in waiting.

Pool comes with a brief instruction book, but it's hardly necessary. Commands at the bottom of the screen tell you pretty much all you need to know. You can choose either

eightball or nineball pool or one of several practice screens.

In the normal game mode, you choose the difficulty level of your game, your shot, the angle, and the ball speed, and you can add English. Commands to aim your shot are handled by the directional arrows. Your shooting strength ranges from a soft touch, 1 on the keyboard, to a stronger 5. The strongest shot, used mostly in breaking, is 0. Press the F9 key and you can play Iowa Fats, the computer opponent.

Heartland Software recommends a math coprocessor or a fast 286 or 386 for fast action. I played the game on a 12-MHz 286 machine. Breaking for a game of eightball regularly took more than a minute as the computer calculated angles and speed. As the game progressed and balls were eliminated, waiting time decreased. Although *Pool* has realistic play, the pool-hall feel is lost during the long delay.

JEFF SLOAN

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RETURN OF THE DINOSAURS

Dinosaur alert! The pressure is on to save your friends and neighbors from prehistoric destruction. Professor T. Rex has invented a Time Transporter and unwittingly turned a dinosaur loose to terrorize your town. Now there's a crack in time and you have only one week to save your hometown in *Return of the Dinosaurs*.

Everyone relies on you to unravel the clues and to identify the escaped dinosaur by name, by period (Triassic, Jurassic, or Cretaceous), and by the place where it lived. Once you know which dinosaur is on the loose, use the Time Transporter to return the creature to his proper place in the past.

As you travel around the town, people send you messages laden with cryptic clues and hints about the dinosaur, plus a lot of town gossip you'd be better off ignoring. If you can decipher the information properly, you'll move to the next location without delay, saving time and money. With

four graphics settings to explore, there are plenty of places to look. To get your next message, you might have to open a bank account, sit in the movie-house balcony, or talk to some men repairing a silo on a farm. You might even get to sail toy boats in the pond at Museum Park.



Send this wandering thunder lizard back home in *Return of the Dinosaurs*.

Jot down each clue about the dinosaur in your online electronic notebook. You'll need at least three pieces of information to identify the dinosaur at level 1 and more as you move up toward level 4. When you think you have enough information, consult the DinoFile database. Use the search and sort routines to eliminate the dinosaurs that don't fit the clues. When all the facts are in, you should be left with just one name. Read about that dinosaur in the database to find his proper period and place; then use the Time Transporter to send him home.

Don't think of *Return of the Dinosaurs* as just a graphics adventure game; it also offers significant educational value. The creatively written messages force you to read carefully and to think intuitively before taking the next step. At the lowest level, the messages are simple, requiring only modest inference. But as play progresses, properly interpreting the messages becomes much more difficult. Not only must you decide where to go for the clue, but you must also use indirect hints about objects you have to buy and places you have to visit before you pick up the next clue. A snarling dog, for example, implies that you should pick up dog food from the market. Use the food to lure the dog away from the person with the next message. If you make many mistakes or forget what you've read, you'll end up wandering aimlessly around town, and the week will end before you've returned the dinosaur to the past.

It's the DinoFile database that really sets *Return of the Dinosaurs* apart. This extensive database contains a wealth of data about 70 different dinosaurs. There are 15 fields of

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(CGA)=requires color graphics card

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information, including diet, locomotion, size, weight, English name, and notes of interest. You can search by key words or by specifying your own search string. The Make the List Smaller option performs *and* searches, but *or* searches aren't supported. Among the other options are a handy Back Up command to undo a selection and a List option that lets you look through the fields manually. The DinoFile database remembers the results of your searches and sorts, even after you've returned to the play mode. This makes the program much easier for young people to use, and it comes in very handy if you forget the name of the dinosaur that has escaped while you are halfway to the Jurassic period.

To gather your clues, you'll need money. There's food to buy and buses and taxis to pay, and using the Time Transporter can be expensive. You can find money lying around, but the best way to earn cash is to use the DinoFile to answer questions for the local newspaper. That's not so easy, though. Solving the harder questions definitely requires a sophisticated approach to the DinoFile.

I have only two complaints about this otherwise excellent program. For some reason, there are 19 special-use

keys, many with similar functions at different times. A more unified approach to the interface would make learning the program a whole lot easier for users of any age. Also, several of my testers found the use of nonstandard database commands in the DinoFile somewhat frustrating. While they did eventually learn how to get around in it, they spent a significant amount of time on personal instruction.

Return of the Dinosaurs combines educational content with attractive graphics in an entertaining and exciting game. Using the DinoFile gives you plenty of practice in the sophisticated application of a database even as it provides information about dinosaurs. *Return of the Dinosaurs* will be a popular program with the young people in your house or classroom. Ask nicely, and they might even let you play!

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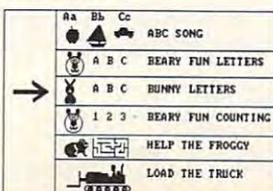
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comes to bat, the program displays a personal statistic. The statistics range from simple batting averages to RBI rankings on a team. As in every good drill and practice, everyone gets positive feedback. And if a particular player hasn't gotten a question right for a while, the program doesn't report a bad statistic—it improves the odds of getting one right by asking a previous question.

Drill questions must be selected carefully. It's the challenging questions that make the game fun. To keep

All Star Drill exciting, teams should have about a .300 batting average. Keeping the students' morale up when they are missing two out of three questions may be difficult, but the program's attractive graphics, sense of competition, and positive feedback make a big difference.

Where does the drill material come from? This program is designed as a review tool for material students have already covered in class. Before letting the kids onto the field, you must design your own multiple-choice

or short-answer questions and input them into the program. While the multiple-choice format is more difficult for a teacher or a parent to design, it makes for the most exciting play. An excellent review strategy would have individual students design question disks for each other, or classes could challenge one another.

All Star Drill's question editor is straightforward, but it has some irritating limitations. Questions are identified only by number, and there is no way to see which numbers have already been used or to match questions with numbers without printing or manually going through the entire file. Also, the input routines in *All Star Drill* are inconsistent. ESC accepts changes in one mode, and puts a strange character on the screen in another. Even worse, it's impossible to edit a question without retyping the entire entry.

Teacher controls on timing would be very helpful as well. Students have 20 seconds to respond to a short-answer question and 30 seconds to pick the right answer to a multiple-choice question, regardless of difficulty, subject matter, or previous scores. Questions are always asked in the same order, with no way to handicap a better player. This makes it difficult to have a fair game between a parent and a child unless the rules are modified manually, perhaps requiring the parent to deliberately miss every other question.

All Star Drill is best used in a classroom. With a teacher experienced in running review sessions of this type, the program will provide the score-keeping facility needed to keep the game moving. Teachers who don't have a bank of short, open-ended or multiple-choice questions available must either purchase one of the pre-made question disks or be prepared to spend significant amounts of time writing, testing, and typing in questions. If you're a busy parent searching for an easy-to-use drill-and-practice program for your children, look elsewhere. There are other programs available that are more suitable for home use and which will give you better drill-and-practice value for the money.

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WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH

Just last year, my six- and seven-year-olds and I, reading night after night, finally finished J. R. R. Tolkien's nearly 1200-page saga, *The Lord of the Rings*. In the right hands, I thought, this would make a fantastic computer game.

Now comes *War in Middle Earth*, a strategy game that's a happy mixture of *The Lord of the Rings* and *Balance of Power*. What better way to revisit Middle Earth than to entice my boys away from their familiar realms of split-second joystick fluency and lure them back to the peculiar narrative, legend, folklore, and geography we'd discovered with Tolkien?

The instruction manual has been compiled with articulate care, with only a few typos to the contrary, and with admiration for Tolkien. It includes an alphabetical listing of the place names you'll find on the accompanying grid map and of the people

and races of Middle Earth. You'll need to know, for instance, something about hobbits, rangers, orcs, trolls, dwarves, elves, and the fell force of Nazguls and Balrogs.

To win the game, you must guide the hobbit Frodo to Mount Doom, where he must destroy a magic ring of great power before the evil Wizard Sauron gets it. The Ring can only be destroyed within the Crack of Doom, where it was forged by Sauron himself.

If Sauron's minions capture any three of the good forces' fortresses or seize the Ring and return it to their stronghold at Barad-Dur, it's all over for Middle Earth. But if you can bring the Ring to Mount Doom, you win.

You control the game using the mouse, joystick, or arrow keys. You can watch the game in three views: animation, where you see 80 animated monsters, heroes, and armies close up against thousands of digitized backgrounds; campaign, a detailed scrollable map with forces identified as figures or shields; and full map, allowing you to pinpoint power positions (your forces are blinking blue dots, evil powers blink red, and neutral powers blink green).

You begin in the animation view,

where you see Frodo walking east of the Shire with Sam and Pippin. Since Gandalf, the magician, isn't there to meet (and protect) the hobbits, it's best to head east to Rivendell, where you can catch up with him. As you meet friends and strangers along the way, you can stop and talk to them or continue on.

Onscreen icons let you control game speed, save and restore games, reveal positions of troops, indicate evil forces, direct soldiers under your command, view character status, and move from one map view to another.

It doesn't take a genius to discover that your armies will do better on neutral territory than they will at enemy strongholds. Main characters can fight even after they've been wounded, but armies either survive or die as a unit. You may manually decide when to charge, engage, withdraw, or retreat; or you may allow the computer to randomly control combat.

If you do win, don't expect any fireworks. The anticlimax is surprising considering the dazzling animation and artwork in the rest of the game.

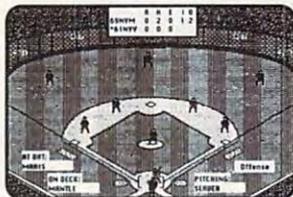
But this is an exception in an otherwise impressive game. This is not only an excellent strategy/adven-

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Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception, is another in Infocom's new line of role-playing, graphics adventures. While traditional role-playing games put you in charge of a half-dozen gold-hungry, monster-slaying warriors, sorcerers, monks, and dwarves, *Battletech* starts you off with just one character—Jason Youngblood, an aspiring MechWarrior. As the game progresses, Jason can form alliances with other MechWarriors and add new characters to the party.

Your first objective in *Battletech* is to guide Jason through cadet training at the Pacific BattleMech Training Facility. Success earns Jason the title of MechWarrior with the Commonwealth Corps and prepares him to command his own BattleMech. The BattleMech is equipped with a variety of on-board weapons such as lasers, short-range missiles, and submachine guns. In addition, Jason can modify his Mech with better armor and more destructive high-tech weaponry such as particle-projection cannons and flamers.

To guide you as you play Jason, the game screen is divided into three windows. The largest shows an overhead view of your characters and the surrounding terrain. A smaller window displays descriptive battle reports and occasional animated closeups of

the action below. A third window lists your characters and indicates the strength of their attributes—body, dexterity, and charisma—in small bar graphs.

During Infantry or BattleMech combat, this list of characters is replaced with an action menu. Use this menu to move your character, select weapons, scan for other Mechs, target specific enemies, fight, or flee if you find yourself heavily out-gunned. Throughout the game, all selections are made with the cursor keys or the standard numeric keypad to highlight the desired menu choices. The game doesn't support a joystick or a mouse, but the menu system is so easy to use that you won't miss them.

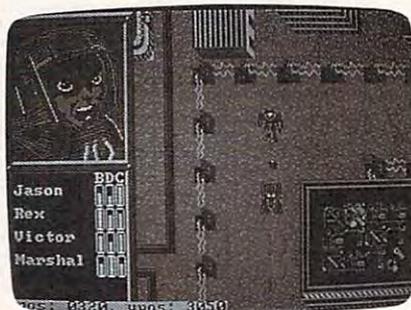
As you find in most role-playing games, as Jason, you must accumulate wealth so you can buy many of the items and skills your characters need. You start with just 35 money units and, although money can be earned in the *Battletech* arenas, you gain true wealth only by investing wisely in the stock market. You can spend money on combat classes that will improve your proficiency with bows and blades, pistols and handguns, or rifles and submachine guns. Or choose medical and technical training so you can tend to the wounded and service-damaged Mechs.

I like *Battletech* partly because you can customize the way you play it. By selecting Change Game Settings from the main menu, you can increase the movement rate of your characters from one space per keypress to two or even four spaces per keypress. This helps Jason move quickly through large open areas. Another option lets you select combat speed. Similarly, you can adjust the frequency of animated outtakes during combat. Also, before most battles you can ask the computer to control Jason's Mech. Although this option may be useful against humans with machine guns, for serious battles with heavily armed Mechs, you're better off controlling the action yourself.

Battletech stands apart from most other role-playing games because it includes several automated, noninteractive sequences. These provide background information and move the plot along. For example, early in the game, Jason is sleeping at the barracks between training missions. He's awakened, it seems, by alarms signaling a hostile takeover of the citadel by Marik terrorists. He infiltrates the complex and is about to attack the Marik leader when he really wakes up. He had been dreaming. Later, Jason finds himself in a weapon store during

a holdup attempt; this time, however, it's no dream. Fortunately, Jason has developed the skill and courage necessary to foil the robbers. Out of gratitude, the shopkeeper rewards Jason with some much-needed weaponry.

As you'll discover, when you complete your MechWarrior training and begin venturing away from the training center, the world of *Battletech* is huge and it can take weeks, perhaps even months, to explore all of it. However, surprising plot twists, along with *Battletech's* colorful graphics and



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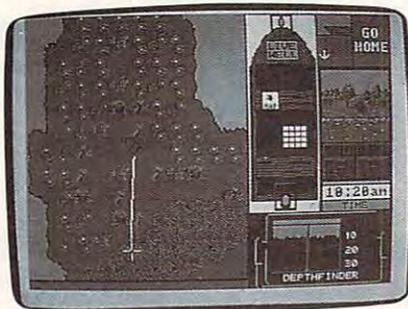
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"Don't get too highfalutin with me. But I know what you mean. You can jig, you can bottom bounce, you can control your lure pretty much like you would at a real pond."

"The thing looks good, too, Bubba. Plenty of lakes, plenty of detail on the water, plenty of good spots to look for bass."



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"To tell the truth, Jim Bob, I had some trouble steerin' the boat at first, but once I got that down it was smooth sailin' all the way. I like findin' the right structure or stickup—all those tree stumps, weeds, lily pads. You just *know* there's a lunker among 'em."

"Those guys put some thought into this thing. The screen gives you a good view of the water you're fishin'. A smaller window shows you the depth and speed of your lure during the retrieve."

"That window's where the bass shows up, Jim Bob."

"Or don't show up, the way I've been fishin' lately."

"Don't feel like the Lone Ranger."

"But when those fish do strike, you've got a pretty fair chance of catching 'em, Bubba Lee. The nudge and tug that a real bass gives is simulated pretty good here, with a combination of fast visual feedback and a soft clicking sound. You've got about as much time to set your software hook as you would the real thing. And they're just as hard to land."

"All this fun has a price, though, Jim Bob. You gotta pay for all that fishin'. That takes some patience in the beginning. You have to pick what days you want to work and what days you want to fish. The more you work, the more money you have to put into your fishing equipment. Like that purple worm it looks like I'm going to have to replace."

"Don't tell me you snagged my

worm! Good gosh, man, where'd you learn to fish?"

"Not on *Rich Tauber's Bass Champ*, that's for sure. That thing's as lively as last week's bait."

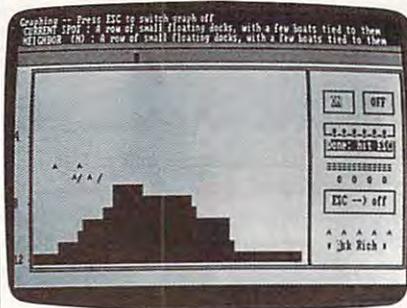
"Hey, now—they had good intentions, Bubba. The folks down at Shadowfax take their fishing just as serious as them fellers down at Interstel. It's the software that lets you down."

"Yeah, you're right, Jim Bob. I guess I'm still mad at losing that lure. But you know, that *Bass Champ* game doesn't really have what I'd call first-class graphics. The first time I booted it up, I couldn't tell my rod from my boat. It's more a text adventure than a simulation."

"Where they do shine is in the number of lakes they offer. 'Course, you got to pay extra for them. But, unlike *Reel Fish'n*, the lakes in *Bass Champ* are real places: Lake Mead, Toledo Bend, Truman Lake."

"I have no doubt about that, Jim Bob, but the lakes look more like the 15th level of *Arkanoid* than they do a natural body of water."

"The game does lack the natural feel that *Reel Fish'n* has, for sure, Bubba Lee. Instead of casting with your mouse, settin' your hook with a pull, reelin' and runnin' with a twist of your wrist, you press the F key to flip your lure, the S key to set your hook, and then you wait and see if you've been lucky enough to pull in a state record."



You can ask Rich for professional advice in *Rich Tauber's Bass Champ*.

"Yeah, it just seems you're bound by software parameters, rather than by your fishing skill."

"What it comes down to is that *Reel Fish'n* is interactive, and *Bass Champ* is passive. And bassin' ain't a passive sport."

"Nah—it just looks that way to folks on shore."

"Right. You know Bubba, I guess the *Bass Champ* folks just got stuck on some DOS hooks."

"Oh, that's bad, Jim Bob. But we oughta give 'em credit for those realistic fish you see on the screen."

"Yeah. First time a fish ever talked to me."

"I for one am darned glad fish don't talk, Jim Bob."

"You're tellin' me. 'Course, you got that rooster in *Reel Fish'n*. He sounds like the crack of dawn for sure. At least on the Amiga version."

"Yeah, but I've been playin' the IBM version. On my game, that rooster sounds awful foul."

"I can't believe you said that, Bubba Lee."

"I owed you one, Jim Bob."

"Speaking of owing, you owe me a buck eighty-five for that worm."

"You'll get it. Just pass me a crankbait and one of them there Slim Jims. We gonna fish or cut bait?"

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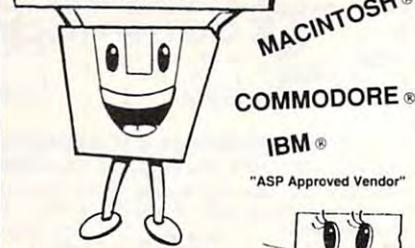
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Gamestar gives you an opportunity to hit the trail on a dirt bike or get down and dirty with professional wrestling.

In *Motocross*, you climb onto a Suzuki RM 250 dirt bike and try to win the U.S. Motocross Circuit Championship. You'll compete against as many as 20 other riders in ten different cities. To start the game, select the skill level and gear ratio appropriate to your driving style. The IBM PC version supports CGA, Tandy 16-color, EGA, MCGA, and VGA graphics. The suggested retail price is \$39.95.

For pro-wrestling fans, Gamestar offers *Take Down*, featuring the Gamestar Wrestling Federation. Begin by selecting a two-man team from GWF's roster of eight unique grapplers. Then you're ready to challenge for the GWF tag-team title. The action in the ring includes pile drivers, body slams, and airplane spins. The IBM PC version retails for \$34.95. The game was previously available for the Commodore 64/128 and has a suggested retail price of \$29.95.

Gamestar, Mediagenic, 3885 Bohannon Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Circle Reader Service Number 200.

From Boob Tube to Big Screen

Inspiration from television sports and from silver-screen adventures has led Data East to its next three releases.

The company's *ABC's Monday Night Football* (first in the Data East MVP Sports Line) is available for IBM PCs and compatibles and retails for \$49.95. A Commodore 64/128 version sells for \$34.95.

Following the summer's blockbuster screen hit *Batman*, Data East is releasing *Batman, The Caped Crusader*. Assume the role of the cowed crime fighter as you travel through the streets of Gotham City, battling foes such as the Penguin and the Joker. Versions for the IBM PC and compatibles and the Atari ST sell for \$39.95. *Batman* for the Commodore 64/128 retails for \$24.95, while the Apple II



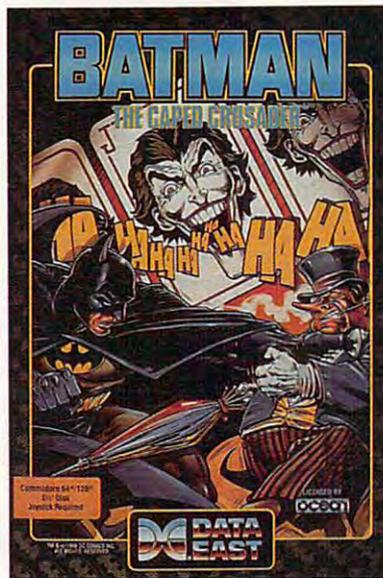
You call the plays in *ABC's Monday Night Football*.

and Amiga releases sell for \$29.95 and \$49.95, respectively.

Also inspired by the silver screen, *Robocop* puts you in the role of the half man/half machine as you fight a corrupt group of thugs that has taken over Old Detroit. It's up to you to save the city. *Robocop* is available for IBM PCs and compatibles and the Atari ST for the suggested retail price of \$39.95. Versions for Commodore 64/128 and Apple II retail for \$34.95. The Amiga release sells for \$44.95.

Data East USA, 470 Needles Dr., San Jose, CA 95112

Circle Reader Service Number 201.



Battle evil villains in *Batman*.

Here's the Pitch, Again

Accolade has taken the basic elements of its popular baseball simulation *HardBall!* and added some major enhancements to create *HardBall II*.

You can choose between behind-the-batter and behind-the-pitcher views, draft players, and create your own teams. League play, defense placement, a game-save option, and instant replay add further depth to the program. With the team editor, you can create new players or input statistics from real teams and real players.

HardBall II is available for the IBM PC and compatibles and has a suggested retail price of \$39.95. A version for the Amiga is planned and will sell for \$44.95.

Accolade, 550 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200, San Jose, CA 95128

Circle Reader Service Number 202.

Reflex Return

Borland has added object-oriented technology to *Reflex 2.0*, the latest update of the database program.

Using Borland's Virtual Real-Time Object-Oriented Memory Manager, only DOS limits the size of *Reflex* files and available RAM is no longer a constraint.

Some of the new features include hot-linking, where a change in one view is automatically made in others. In List View, you edit and browse files in a spreadsheetlike format. *Reflex* graphics are more flexible and can be exported in presentation quality to other applications and publishing programs.

Other new features are the Mail Merge View, Crosstab View, and Quick Report. *Reflex 2.0* works in color on EGA or VGA systems and uses the Borland Graphics Interface.

Reflex 2.0 requires at least 512K memory and a hard disk drive on IBM PS/2s or other IBM-compatible computers and retails for \$249.95. If you own an earlier version of *Reflex*, you can upgrade for \$75.00, or you can get trial versions for \$9.95 by calling (800) 426-7526.

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Hard Disk Direction

Athena Software has introduced *Disc Director*, a utility program that reorganizes your hard disk. It eliminates wasted disk space by finding unused duplicate files, empty and inefficient directories, and orphan files.



The *Disc Director* helps users reorganize and reclaim hard disk space.

The menu-driven program features online help. Besides fine-tuning your hard drive, you can use the program to attach comments (up to 78 characters long) to directories, files, and drives.

Disc Director works with IBM PCs, ATs, PS/2s, and compatibles, including laptops. It requires a minimum of 512K and supports CGA, EGA, VGA, monochrome, and Hercules. The program has a suggested retail price of \$79.

Athena Software, 663 W. Aspen Way, Louisville, CO 80027

Circle Reader Service Number 204.

Indy's Double Crusade

Talk your way out of a Nazi prison, wade through a sea of rats, and hop about Europe and the Middle East in your quest for the Holy Grail just like Indiana Jones.

Right on the heels of this past summer's blockbuster hit from the big screen come two new Lucasfilm Games releases based on *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Both games—one a graphics adventure, the other an arcade-action game—closely follow the script of the movie.

In the graphics adventure, you play Indy as he searches for his father, Henry, who has been kidnapped by Hitler and other Nazis, and continues with the quest for the Grail.

The graphics adventure is intellectually challenging because the game tracks Indy's IQ; the higher your IQ

score, the more successful you are. You also find new and creative ways out of tight and harrowing situations. Packaged with the game is Henry's Grail Diary, replete with clues, sketches, and notes.



Indy punches out a Nazi in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, an arcade-action game.

The arcade-style game takes Indiana Jones through three levels of action where he must fight Nazis, dodge lightning, and leap from ledge to ledge in search of his father and the elusive Holy Grail.

The graphics adventure game is available for IBM PCs and compatibles, the Amiga, and the Atari ST for \$49.95. The arcade-action game has a suggested retail price of \$39.95 and has been released for IBM PCs and compatibles, the Amiga, and the Atari ST. A Commodore 64 version retails for \$29.95.

Lucasfilm Games, P.O. Box 10307, San Rafael, CA 94912

Circle Reader Service Number 205.

The Best Medicine

If you're tired of being the death of the party, look no farther than your computer for the latest in jokes and humor.

The Humor Processor, version 2, by Responsive Software, features more than 500 jokes, funny stories, and anecdotes; and it lets you create some humor of your own.

The humor is cross-referenced in the database by category, occasion, and key words. With the new Brainstorming application, you can choose from 11 joke formulas. You punch in a topic, and the program does the funny part.

The Humor Processor runs on IBM PCs and compatibles and requires 384K of memory. It retails for \$49.95.

Responsive Software, 1901 Tunnel Rd., Berkeley, CA 94705

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Challenge the North American GO Champion!

We're proud to announce publication of **COSMOS** the strongest computer GO-playing program in North America.*

Here's a GO partner who is ready for a game at any time of day or night. If you've had trouble finding someone to teach you GO or just someone to play against, this is what you've been looking for! Play white or black, with or without handicaps, on boards of 7 x 7 up to 19 x 19. 100 selectable levels of play. Your choice of EGA, CGA, or text-mode graphics. Japanese or Chinese rules.

Cosmos will give any kyu-level player a decent game at normal handicaps, but he is a perfect tutor for beginners. Whenever you ask him, Cosmos will give you hints or explain the reasons behind the move he made. You can record your game and play it back, change your moves and explore other variations. Cosmos is both entertaining and instructive.

GO has fascinated scholars, soldiers, and shoguns for thousands of years. If not having a GO master on call has kept you from learning the game, let Cosmos introduce you to it.

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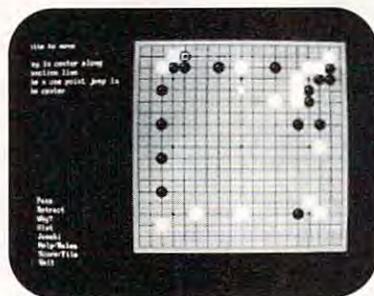
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*Winner of both the 1988 USENIX and International Computer GO (Wei-Chi) Congress, championships.



We're Off to Link the Wizard

Users of Sharp Electronics' hand-held electronic organizer, the Wizard, can follow the yellow brick road to their PC with the Organizer Link. The product allows users to upload and download data between their IBM PC or compatible and the Wizard.

Organizer Link, model OZ-791A, includes all the necessary software and hardware to run on IBM PCs and compatibles and is available in 3 1/2- and 5 1/4-inch formats. The program connects the Wizard directly to the serial port of the PC.

Users can key in data such as price lists and telephone numbers on the Wizard and transfer the information to their PC, or they can type in data on their PC and upload it to the Wizard. Data can also be drawn from or entered into popular database and spreadsheet programs using the link.

Organizer Link has a suggested retail price of \$149.99.

Sharp has also released memory expansion cards for the Wizard. The 32K card sells for \$79.99 while the 64K RAM card retails for \$129.99.

Sharp Electronics, Home Office Electronics Division, Sharp Plaza, Mahwah, NJ 07430

Circle Reader Service Number 207.

The Educational Castle

Envision Software has combined the fun of computer games with the basics of math in *Math Castle*, an arcade-style game where math whizzes are castle winners.

Using the four basic arithmetic operations, you defend your castle with correct answers.

The game has over 6000 math problems in as many as 40 levels. The PC version of the game retails for \$39.95 while the Apple version sells for \$34.95.

Envision Software, 720 S. 333rd St., Suite 203, Federal Way, WA 98003

Circle Reader Service Number 208.

You Asked for It

After many requests, *SpeedScript*, the popular word processor for Commodore, Apple, and Atari users, has been released for the IBM PC and compatibles. The book, *PC SpeedScript*, by Randy Thompson, is published by COMPUTE! Books and includes the program and source code, the documentation, and programming hints and tips.

The program has been tested and is ready to type in using *Turbo Pascal* or BASIC. Also available is an optional 5 1/4-inch disk that contains the *Turbo Pascal* source code files and the

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COMPUTE! Books, Chilton Trade Book Company, Radnor, PA 19089
Circle Reader Service Number 209.

Future Copter

It is the year 1997, and you're in control of an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter in *Apache Strike* from Activision Entertainment.

Your chopper, equipped with a sophisticated radar-tracking device, must fly through 3-D city streets, dodging buildings and overpasses while the enemy fires from tanks and choppers. With the radar, you can track down the enemy and attack with gunfire or missiles. As you progress to the next level, the game increases in difficulty and the enemy becomes

stronger and smarter.

The IBM PC and compatibles version of *Apache Strike* supports CGA, EGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics and RGB monitors. The game is also available for the Commodore 64/128. Each version retails for \$14.95.

Activision Entertainment, Mediagenic, 3885 Bohannon Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Circle Reader Service Number 210.

More Comic Capers

Paragon Software will release *The X-Men*, its second Marvel Comics game, this fall for IBM PCs and compatibles.

The X-Men—named after Dr. Charles Xavier, a mutant with telepathic abilities—are a group of superhuman mutants who are dedicated to the preservation of good. You control the actions of Cyclops, Storm, Wolverine, Colossus, Nightcrawler, and Dazzler. They must rescue Xavier, who has been kidnapped by Magneto and Arcade. You must then find the good doctor in the amusement park of terror, Murderworld. Each mutant has a special power, and you must use these to find hidden objects that will help in the quest.

The X-Men requires 384K and

supports CGA, Tandy 16-color, and EGA graphics as well as the Ad Lib sound board. The game can be installed on a hard disk and uses a key-disk copy-protection routine.

Paragon Software products are marketed and distributed by Medalist International, a division of MicroProse Software.

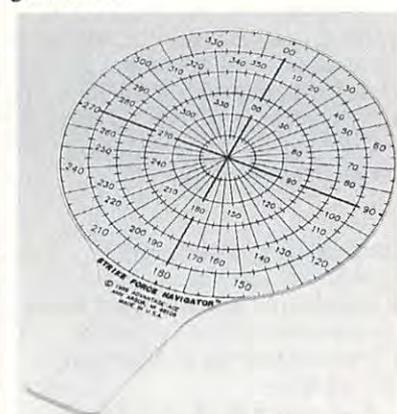
MicroProse, 180 Lakefront Dr., Hunt Valley, MD 21030

Circle Reader Service Number 211.

Navigation Made Easy

Strike Force Navigator, a navigational aid, may improve your play of many games.

Using this clear plastic compass, you can avoid getting lost in most vehicle-simulation games, such as a flight simulator. Strike Force Navigator helps you decide where you want to go, eliminating the usual guesswork.



Strike Force Navigator can help you find the shortest distance between two targets.

Compatible with all computer and game systems, Strike Force Navigator sells for \$8.95.

Advantage Ace, 3542 Pheasant Run Ct. #8, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Circle Reader Service Number 212.

New Tree Planted

The Aldridge Company has released *Tree86* version 3.0 for the IBM PC, PS/2, and compatibles. This version has the ability to pare itself down to less than 5K, freeing conventional memory for running applications. You can log any number of drives of virtually any size.

Tree86 version 3.0 retails for \$89.95. Registered *Tree86* users can receive updates for \$19.95 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling.

The Aldridge Company, 2500 CityWest Blvd., Suite 575, Houston, TX 77042

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OFF LINE

D A N G O O K I N

Up with the music. My first foray as *COMPUTE!*'s resident humorist requires me, I think, to take a stand.

I Believe everyone should own a personal computer. Most people don't bother—not because computers are too expensive or too hard to use, but because they don't know what a computer can do for them. The answer is obvious: Owning a computer will turn you into a geek.

I Believe in the right of new computer buyers to return to the store of original purchase and strangle the clerk who sold them something they didn't need, or lied to them, or basically behaved like a typical computer salesperson. (Actually, this is a privilege—you paid for it!)

I Believe in grass-roots, garage-level computer programming genius. Look what has happened to the major developers since they've become swamped with college computer grads. How come it took 100 programmers and three years to come out with version 3.0 of *1-2-3*? It took Jonathan Sachs ten months to do version 1.0—and it worked!

I Believe computer keyboards should have a hinged top on them to make it easier to sweep out the crud that accumulates there.

I Believe that seeing a young couple in love, walking along the beach with a dog named Bandy wearing a red bandanna, is the most sickening sight known to humankind.

I Believe in computer pranks. How many of you computer-science majors have ever written that nasty COBOL program that sends an infinite number of form feeds and BELL characters to the printer? Neat, eh? The only problem is you make enemies with the dudes running the machines.

I Believe that given the choice between waking up with Aunt Jemima or Mrs. Butterworth, I'll stick to my daily, high-calorie, computer break-

fast of Fritos and Oreos.

I Believe in tabletop fusion. But instead of using heavy water and palladium, we should dip a Commodore 64 into a vat of Jolt Cola. That will produce enough heat to power a small user group writing campaign for weeks.

I Believe that OS/2 will never go anywhere until Microsoft gives all us hackers all the docs on it—free.

I Believe that assembly language programmers are the true lunatics of the programming world, that C language programmers have an attitude problem that stems from their obsession with UNIX, that Pascal programmers are dweebs, and that BASIC programmers just don't know any better. Have I left out anybody?

I Believe UNIX is a four-letter word that's a misspelling of a term referring to a group of harem servants.

I Believe that people still using—and enjoying—*WordStar* should have their Control-key pinky fingers surgically removed. Or better, lock them in a room with a Tandy 1000 and force those stubborn ex-CP/M goons to learn *Microsoft Word* with one hand Super glued to a mouse.

I Believe that one day Brooke Shields and I will spend a quiet evening together and she won't once use the word *icky*.

I Believe in software. There are a lot of interesting computers out there—a lot of powerful hardware; but without the software, a computer is just another toy. And an expensive one at that.

I Believe that newspaper journalists and the news clowns on TV see no practical use for computers unless a 14-year-old starts World War III or some CIS major in Wisconsin brings down the ArpaNet. Then the media paralyzes the masses with fear, frightening little old ladies into smashing their infected VCRs and prompting bomb threats against Egghead stores.

I Believe that PC graphics have been pushed as far as they can go. VGA, with 16 million colors (more than the human eye can see), is all you

can ask for. And all you can afford.

I Believe that IBM has finally decided on a keyboard layout that confuses and befuddles just about everyone. There's no point in changing it now (unless Lotus decides to copyright the alphabet).

I Believe that the battle between IBM's Micro Channel Architecture (MCA) and any other bus design is pointless—90 percent of your computer is now on the motherboard, memory is in a proprietary slot. So who buys expansion cards anymore?

I Believe that the next major improvement in PC technology should be in the area of sound. The PC's speaker is feeble compared to the rest of the electronics in the machine. What about those Mac owners whose computers can gurgle, hiccup, belch,

**BELIEVE
IT OR
NOT I'LL STAND
FOR
NEARLY ANYTHING**

or sing? Give us some sound—anyone! (Or replace the obnoxious beep with a yawn.)

I Believe in having fun, which is what this column is all about. Computers can be annoying, but they can also provide you with hours of enjoyment and productivity. Work with them, have fun with them. But never, ever take them too seriously. And that goes for me, too. □



HOTWARE

SOFTWARE BESTSELLERS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

HOME LEARNING

- 1. Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing**
Learn to touch-type.
Electronic Arts
Apple II, Apple IIgs, Commodore 64/128, IBM, Macintosh
- 2. Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?**
Chase Carmen around the world.
Broderbund
Amiga, Apple II, Apple IIgs, Commodore 64/128, IBM, Macintosh
- 3. Where in the USA Is Carmen Sandiego?**
The chase moves to the USA.
Broderbund
Amiga, Apple II, Commodore 64/128, IBM, Macintosh
- 4. Math Blaster Plus!**
Teaches basic math concepts.
Davidson & Associates
Apple II, Apple IIgs, IBM
- 5. Learning DOS**
Learn the ins and outs of DOS.
Microsoft
IBM
- 6. Children's Writing and Publishing Center**
A desktop publisher for kids.
The Learning Company
Apple II, Apple IIgs, IBM
- 7. Reader Rabbit**
Helps children learn to read.
The Learning Company
Apple II, Commodore 64/128, IBM, Macintosh
- 8. Think Quick**
Children learn problem solving.
The Learning Company
Apple II, Apple IIgs, IBM
- 9. Alge-Blaster!**
Introduces students to algebra.
Davidson & Associates
Apple II, Apple IIgs, Commodore 64/128, IBM
- 10. Mixed-Up Mother Goose**
Kids fix jumbled rhymes.
Sierra
Amiga, Apple II, Apple IIgs, IBM, Macintosh

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

- 1. Flight Simulator**
Head for the wild blue yonder.
Microsoft
IBM, Macintosh
- 2. 688 Attack Sub**
Command a prowling sub.
Electronic Arts
IBM
- 3. The Duel: Test Drive II**
Fast-paced car racing.
Accolade
Amiga, Apple IIgs, Commodore 64/128, IBM, Macintosh
- 4. Space Quest III**
Help Roger Wilco in space.
Sierra
Amiga, Apple IIgs, IBM, Macintosh
- 5. King's Quest IV**
Rosella must save her father.
Sierra
Amiga, Apple II, Apple IIgs, IBM
- 6. Falcon**
Fly your own F-16.
Spectrum HoloByte
Amiga, IBM, Macintosh
- 7. ChessMaster 2100**
Board strategy that isn't boring.
Electronic Arts
Apple II, Apple IIgs, Commodore 64/128, IBM
- 8. TV Game Shows**
Compete in some of your favorites.
Share Data
Apple II, Commodore 64/128, IBM
- 9. Tetris**
Addictive block-building game.
Spectrum HoloByte
Amiga, Apple II, Apple IIgs, Commodore 64/128, IBM, Macintosh
- 10. Leisure Suit Larry II**
Larry Laffer's at it again.
Sierra
Amiga, Apple IIgs, IBM, Macintosh

HOME PRODUCTIVITY

- 1. The Print Shop**
Make banners and more.
Broderbund
Apple II, Apple IIgs IBM; Old version—
Commodore 64/128, Macintosh
- 2. Calendar Creator Plus**
Create many different calendars.
Power Up
IBM, Macintosh
- 3. Managing Your Money**
Manage your checkbook and more.
MECA
Apple II, IBM, Macintosh
- 4. WillMaker**
Get help in writing a will.
Nolo Press
Apple II, IBM, Macintosh
- 5. Print Magic**
Design and print small documents.
Epyx
Apple II, IBM
- 6. Resume Kit**
Help for landing the right job.
Spinnaker
IBM
- 7. PC Globe+**
Explore world demographics.
Comwell Systems
IBM
- 8. DeluxePaint II**
Draw and create a variety of images.
Electronic Arts
Amiga, Apple IIgs, IBM
- 9. Print Master Plus Bundle**
Print posters, stationery, and more.
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- 10. Personal Lawyer**
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NEW

IN THIS ISSUE LOOK FOR COMPUTE!'s DEMO DISK DIRECTORY

NEW

Demo Disk Order List

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- A2 Tongue of the Fatman MS-DOS 3½

BRITANICA SOFTWARE

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- B3 Designasaurus MS-DOS 5¼
- B4 Designasaurus MS-DOS 3½
- B5 Jigsaw! (MCGA/EGA only) MS-DOS 5¼
- B6 Jigsaw! (MCGA/EGA only) MS-DOS 3½

DATA EAST

- D1 Heavy Barrel MS-DOS 5¼
- D2 Heavy Barrel MS-DOS 3½
- D3 Super Hang-On MS-DOS 5¼
- D4 Super Hang-On MS-DOS 3½

ELECTRONIC ARTS

- E1 Abrams Battle Tank MS-DOS 5¼
- E2 Abrams Battle Tank MS-DOS 3½
- E3 Chuck Yeager 2.0 MS-DOS 5¼
- E4 Chuck Yeager 2.0 MS-DOS 3½
- E5 F-16 Combat Pilot MS-DOS 5¼
- E6 F-16 Combat Pilot MS-DOS 3½
- E7 Keef the Thief MS-DOS 5¼
- E8 Keef the Thief MS-DOS 3½

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- L1 Indy—The Graphic Adventure MS-DOS 5¼

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- M3 Airborne Ranger Commodore 64
- M4 Dr. Doom's Revenge MS-DOS 5¼
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- M9 Gunship MS-DOS 3½
- M10 Gunship Commodore 64
- M11 Pirates! MS-DOS 5¼
- M12 Pirates! MS-DOS 3½
- M13 Pirates! Commodore 64
- M14 Red Storm Rising MS-DOS 5¼
- M15 Red Storm Rising MS-DOS 3½
- M16 Red Storm Rising Commodore 64

ORIGIN

- O1 Times of Lore MS-DOS 5¼
- O2 Times of Lore Apple 5¼
- O3 Times of Lore Commodore 64/128

RADIO SHACK

- R1 DeskMate MS-DOS 5¼ CGA
- R2 DeskMate MS-DOS 5¼ VGA
- R3 DeskMate MS-DOS 3½

SIERRA ON-LINE

- S1 Colonel's Bequest MS-DOS 5¼
- S2 Colonel's Bequest MS-DOS 3½

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS

- S3 Curse of the Azure Bonds MS-DOS 5¼
- S4 Curse of the Azure Bonds MS-DOS 3½

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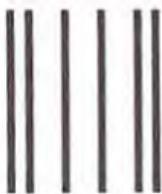
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The Pirates of Pestulon



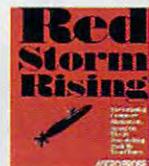
Electronic Arts'
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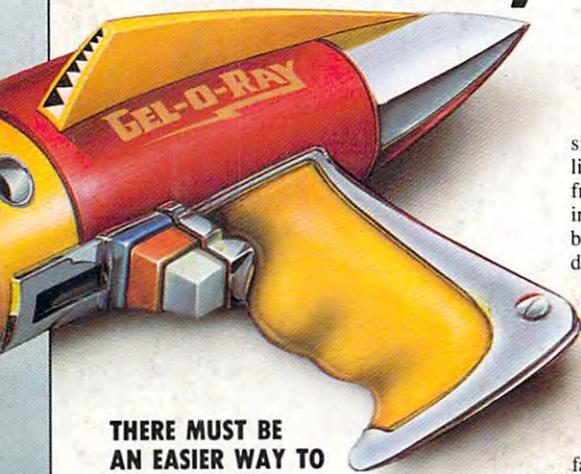


Sierra's
Silpheed

System requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatible with 256K RAM, DOS 2.0 or higher, CGA, EGA, or monochrome graphics adaptor, and headset or external speaker.
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YOU'RE IN DEEP PLASMA THIS TIME, ROGER WILCO!



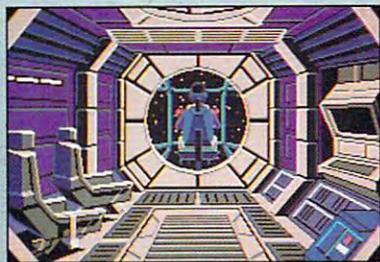
THERE MUST BE AN EASIER WAY TO MAKE A LIVING

There's never a moment's rest for galactic heroes, and when you're Roger Wilco, space-age swashbuckler and all-around nice guy, the thrills just keep on coming. It seems there's always some kind of dangerous mess to clean up.

This time it's those Two Guys from Andromeda, bestselling designers of Space Quest and Space Quest II, who have gone and gotten themselves foully abducted by the pesky pirates of Pestulon, those poaching parasites, those perverse perpetrators of petty mischief and putrid software.

If Roger can't rescue the two guys from the bowels of the Scumsoft Software stronghold, his days as a popular adventure game character are definitely numbered.

So it's simple, right? Just set course for Pestulon and storm the gates of Scumsoft.



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NOT SO FAST, SPACEWIPE!

But the Two Guys don't write games for sissies. If you can't stomach being picked up like so much trash by a wandering garbage freighter, stalked by giant rubbish rats, ground into hamburger in the belly of the Mog, zapped by a scorpazoid in the deserts of Phleebhut, or deep-fried like a chimichanga on the planet Ortega, you'd better play one of those 'nice' games. In Space Quest III, *The Pirates of Pestulon*, you're not likely to be shown any mercy.

LIFE'S NOT EASY FOR HEROES

Real heroes thrive on danger, and space-faring broomjockey and freelance good-guy Roger Wilco is no exception. Is he afraid of being fried by lightning in a megathunderstorm? Is he afraid of landing in the trash shredder in the depths of the intergalactic garbage truck? Is he afraid of finishing the Belcher Combo plate at Monolith Burger? You bet your sweet asteroid!



Check out all the crazy and absurd junk, er, uh, treasures at Fester Blatz's wacky World of Wonders.

TRASH HEAPS OF PRAISE FOR OUR TWO GUYS

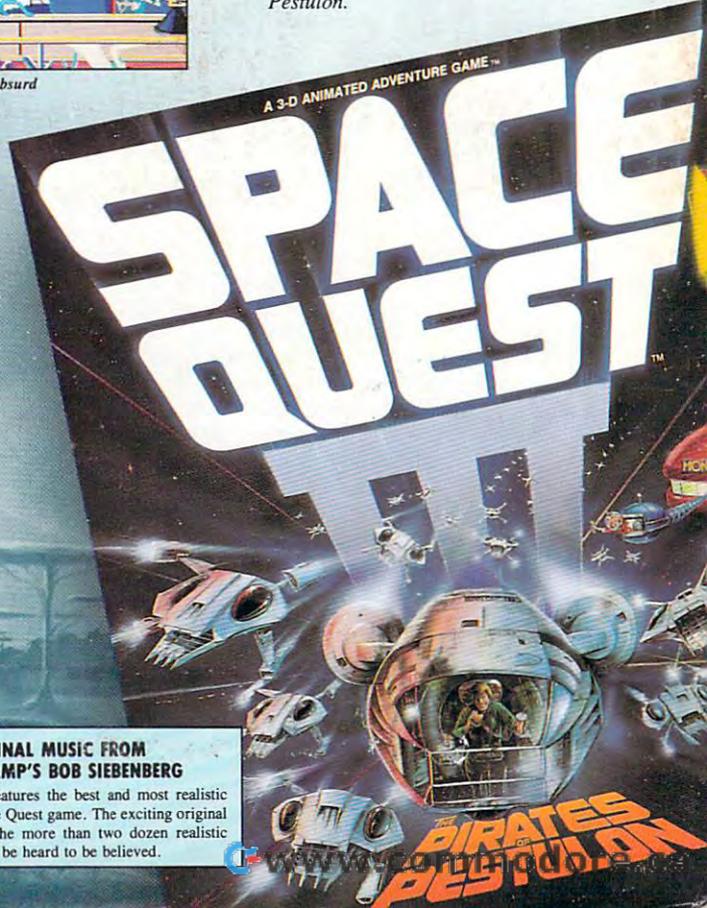
Game reviewers throughout the galaxy love Space Quest games: "...humorous and challenging..."; "laugh-out-loud funny..."; "genuinely entertaining..."; "...A three dimensional graphic wonder..."



Battle for your life in the arena with the Nuke 'em- Duke 'em robots. He's down! He's up! This crowd is out for blood, and it might as well be yours.

HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES? NOW'S YOUR CHANCE TO FIND OUT

But don't take *their* word for it -- blast off for adventure, challenge, and laughs with Roger Wilco and the Two Guys from Andromeda in Space Quest III, *The Pirates of Pestulon*.



ORIGINAL MUSIC FROM SUPERTRAMP'S BOB SIEBENBERG

Space Quest III features the best and most realistic sound of any Space Quest game. The exciting original music score and the more than two dozen realistic sound effects *must* be heard to be believed.

