

Winter Consumer Electronics Show Report Continues

Last issue, we devoted much of the space within this newsletter to coverage of products from the Winter Consumer Electronics Show that occurred in Las Vegas. We continue this coverage as the *important* products proved far more in number than *Inside Games Update* could handle in one issue. As a matter of fact, a large number of calls and written communications have been received at our editorial offices mentioning product we didn't even have the time to see! As the second largest show in Las Vegas (COMDEX is number one), we foresee for gamers—no matter your choice of platform—that 1994 is going to be one super year for you. You're going to have so many new products from which to select, it will require the guidance of such publications as *IGU* to assist you in your final purchase decisions.

Coverage of the remaining CES products will be found in both **Mudgeon's Distillations** and **Under the Cellophane** new product department. Some of the products are truly unique, such as **Aura System's Interactor** video game vest. Many of the video game publishers are releasing so many new products we simply can't afford the space we'd like to dedicate to such offerings, so look for lists of these titles. The best part is that the Summer Consumer Electronics Show is already set for this June in Chicago and it appears to be another super venue for game debuts. Stay tuned as *IGU* keeps you in touch with the world of electronic entertainment and edutainment.

The Search Continues . . .

The plethora of new products and technologies requires far more folk than currently "work" with *IGU*. This means we continue the search for game reviewers and writers. We especially need PC/MS-DOS and MPC reviewers as well as reviewers with Sega GENESIS or SNES systems. We seem to have a high response from those who'd enjoy Macintosh and Macintosh CD-ROM gaming, so the call for writers in that platform area is not as critical as the other mentioned platforms.

The one area where the demand seems to be *decreasing* is for **Windows** reviewers. This last winter's holiday buying season noted a substantial decrease in the number of Windows entertainment titles sold to consumers. Also, we haven't really seen much in the way of new titles for either **3D0** or **Jaguar**. If, and when, 3D0 and Atari produce more product than verbiage, we'll be delighted to cover these platforms.

We're also looking for a writer who could join our senior staff in coverage of on-line and modem gaming. Specifically, we're hoping to find someone who could manage a monthly column discussing the ins and outs of on-line gaming and, even more specifically, discussion of those games that are network aware, games that can be played modem-to-modem, or via cable.

If any of these areas are of interest to you, please write to "P.J.," Editor-in-Chief and Publisher, *Inside Games Update*, The Word Warriors, 521 Czerny Street, Tracy, CA 95376. No phone calls, please!

Thanks for joining us this issue. We look forward to your return in two weeks. Until next issue, GAME ON!
—"P.J."

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—Mudgeon's Distillations—

*The rumblings of the earth even
disturbed the ether of the super digital
highway—the last we heard,
Mudgeon was enroute north via stock
tickers that indicate high tech stocks
are rebounding—well, somewhat!*

The Jaguar leap . . .

All certainly isn't doom and gloom for **Atari**. Seems as though their two-city rollout of their 64-bit **Jaguar** game system resulted in a sales figure of 20,000 units, more or less.

Most of the units are heading into the homes of 18 to 24 year olds. Atari spokespeople indicate full confidence in the projection of over 500,000 sold units by year's end. A total of 35 titles are planned for 1994 from Atari themselves, with about 17 other titles from outside developers. In order for their system to better compete with other platforms, Atari is also planning a CD-ROM peripheral release at around a \$200 price range later this year.

Bummer!

One of our favorite FRPGs last year for our DOS computer was *Betrayal at Krondor* from **Dynamix**. The company was, allegedly, hard at work on a sequel to this superior adventure game. Word has now been heard that they've canceled their sequel project! Not only that, the company has decided to cease, entirely, their work on adventure games. This is really tragic, as they did such a great job on Krondor!

Say it ain't so . . .

If you are attracted by the recent **Compaq** adds that show their new "talking" system software, hold on! As you, I was likewise impressed that this computer seemed to have as much going for it as **Apple's AV Macs**. Well, guess what? Unlike the Mac AVs, this Compaq and its **Windows Sound System** don't synthesize speech at all. In fact, the machine only comes with a database of approximately 200 words. Know what happens if you happens when the software hears a word that isn't in its database? Wow, the user gets to select either *unknown* or nothing . . . yep, and what fine choices they

are!

Granted, developers can configure their applications to recognize such things as menu commands or to recognize additional command

structures. But backwards compatibility? Ain't no way—now the AV Macs can recognize menu commands for products that were released *before* the AVs were ever produced. Gee, wonder which system is the actual winner here, even though the Mac AVs speech and recognition capabilities still need to become smoother in application.

Speaking of Apple . . .

The Internet is populated by gamers, all kinds of gamers, from all walks of life. Gaming is hot on the Internet. Apple has enhanced its AppleSearch text search and retrieval client/servers to aid in the location of the coolest games (or any other subject matter).

Featured in this new software are Reporters—call them search agents. They'll cruise through all of the digital data on a file server and deliver that information to the user. And it doesn't matter what format that information may be in, the Reporter will simply let you know where it is.

The search engine is none other the Callable Personal Librarian that was developed by Personal Library Software. This new AppleSearch can also dig up stuff from server-mounted CD-ROMs and any wire or online service that feed into the AppleSearch server. So, if you're wondering where those NetTreks are located, mebbe this can help you find active games!

Licensed play . . .

The recognized governing body for chess in the good ol' USA is the US Chess Federation. This organization has over 72,000 members and more than 1,800 affiliated clubs! Hmmm, that could be the start of a new political party. Imagine the power they'd wield . . .

You can imagine the endorsement or cooperation of such an organization would be most helpful to any company involved in the development of a chess simulation, right?

Yep, well, **Interplay** (714/553-6655) has managed just that, joining forces with the US Chess Federation to create what they hope will be the most realistic and challenging chess program ever produced. What's cool about this license is that a chess player engaged in *USCF CheckMate Pro* will be able to obtain an officially sanctioned USCF rating from his or her home computer program.

The player will be rated using the standards set by the federation which measures overall performance, that may then be compared to other players rated by USCF for placement in the organization's national rankings! If you're a chess aficionado, you gotta love this opportunity (Checkmate)!

A deal rich with talent . . .

You should always expect companies like **Electronic Arts** to be figuring out new ways to increase their business. In their case, it means adding more and more value to their titles.

To ensure the quality of their work, the company has just signed a deal with AFTRA (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists). The deal institutes a formal relationship for the use of "sanctioned" talent both on and off camera (voice-overs, for example). For AFTRA, this is the first such agreement for them into the world of interactive media production. The agreement also establishes a new minimum daily salary for talent of \$485.00. Sounds like pretty good work to me!

Going beyond rental . . .

Everyone has heard about **Blockbuster** and its new policy of renting games at their storefronts. Now the company has gone beyond just the rental arena . . . the company has decided to plunge into the software biz and has acquired almost a 20 percent stake in **Virgin Interactive Entertainment**. The price tag for this percentage is thought to be around \$30 million.

Faltering lowers the price . . .

When product doesn't sell as well as

expected, one tactic to employ is lowering the SRP to levels of competing products. (Just ask Apple about that!)

With a less enthusiastic sales record than would be liked, **Philips'** CD-I interactive multimedia players currently range from \$399.00 and up. Throw in an MPEG compression cartridge, and you're looking at prices quite similar to the **3D0** player from **Panasonic**. So, rumor has it that Philips is going to release two new CD-I players later in 1994. Look for this price to be hovering at an altitude about \$100 higher than the *Jaguar* from Atari—\$299.00. This pricing should be far more appealing to gamers!

Moving on . . .

When acquisitions occur, personnel changes usually follow. And, such is the case with **MicroProse** after their acquisition by **Spectrum HoloByte**. *Barry Folsom*, who was the president at the acquired company, has resigned. He was originally brought into the company by Kleiner Perkins, Caufield and Byers, a heavy-weight California VC company. He indicated he's now going to pursue other interests. The presidential duties now fall upon the shoulders of Patrick Freely, CEO of MicroProse. We wish both well!

Multimillion \$\$\$ meeting of the minds

Development pacts are exciting, especially when the results hold promise. Such is the case with the recent multimillion dollar deal signed between **Future Vision Ltd.** and **Merit Software**.

Future will develop a total of four new titles, two of which are *Harvester* and *Fortress*. The company anticipates revenues for 1994 to be hovering around the \$10.2 million mark, about a 300 percent improvement over last year's \$2.5 million!

A Summer CES surprise . . .

Rumor has it that Sega of America has told the Electronics Industry Association (the trade organization that sponsors CES) they have no plans to exhibit at the Summer CES in Chicago, scheduled for June 23rd to 25th of this year. The reason given is that the date of the show is too late for the business cycle of its largest customers. Nintendo of America does plan on attending.

New veep of marketing

With 22 years of consumer products marketing experience, *Ralph Giuffre* has decided to join **Interplay** as that company's Vice President of Marketing. Ralph has been with such companies as Walt Disney Computer Software, Electronic Arts (where we first met him), Accolade and Atari. Prior to joining Interplay, he was with Jack Nicklaus Productions, Inc. We look forward to dealing with him in his new role at Interplay.

Sega and Microsoft—partners?

One of the hottest rumors circulating through the industry of late is the one that involves **Sega** and **Microsoft** in a spectacular partnership. Word has it that Microsoft is going to provide the operating system for Sega's Saturn 32-bit video game system. The OS will be for interactive TV applications that'll run on that system!

Industry experts indicate the Microsoft OS would be perfect for a set-top box because the code requires a lot of ROM. The rumor could be the further indication needed that Microsoft fully intends to be a major player in setting the platforms for interactive entertainment. (Look at their on-line service announcement and the number of folk they've hired into their consumer division of late!) The expected launch of Saturn remains late 1994 for the U.S.A. and early 1995 for Europe.

New president and focus. . .

Originally joining **Maxis** from **Walt Disney Software** in 1992, *Sam Poole* has just been named president of the computer game company. *Jeff Braun*, who was both the president and chairman of the company, will retain the latter position as well as that of CEO.

The company is also diving headfirst into the home productivity and CD-ROM market. Maxis has acquired *Instant Artist* from **Pixellite Software**. Maxis will also distribute *Kid Art: Typefaces* from **Imager, Inc.** Two new affiliate partners include **Luminaria, Inc.** and **Maris Multimedia** (who have brought the fantastic astronomy program, *Red Shift*, to Macs).

Plus, all of the business sims Maxis has been developing (*SimHealth*, *SimRefinery*, to name just two) will now be developed by **Maxis Business Simulations**, which became an independent company under a new name as of January 1st. The new company will be headed by *John Hiles*.

Talking bucks . . .

A lot of press is devoted to the financial wherewithal's for various game publishers. There's a great deal of chatter regarding projections, why things turned out the way

they did, and what moves a company will take over the ensuing quarters. To cut down on the verbiage, I'll clue you in to what I read as far as the financials are concerned . . . what you do with this info is up to you!

- Acclaim Entertainment established record revenues of \$127.4 million for its 1Q, which ended 11/30/93. That's a 62 percent increase over the same quarter in the previous fiscal year. Net income was a record at \$12.3 million, or \$0.27 per share. This compares to \$6.3 million, or \$0.15 per share during the same period last year.

—WITHIN THE CELLOPHANE—

NEW PRODUCTS OF NOTE FROM C.E.S. & MACWORLD

AMTEX

Known for their top-notch pinball simulations, **Amtex Software** (613/967-7900) is launching *Royal Flush* in April of this year.

This is the second offering in the Amtex "Pinball Classics Collection." This title is based on the arcade release from premier arcade game manufacturer D. Gottlieb & Company. *Royal Flush* has no bells or whistles, just good, old fashioned, pinball. Shoot the Joker, King and Queen drop targets to get the perfect poker hand. Be careful to line up your shot, or you'll miss your hand. With five balls per player and as many as four players possible, this title is certainly a test of your pinball skill. For Macintosh computers with 4MB of RAM, the SRP is \$49.95.



Although we were unable to keep our appointment with **Aura Systems, Inc.** (310/643-5300) at CES, we have great interest as they address a new frontier — Virtual Reality (VR).

Interactor is the first virtual reality peripheral designed for the video game industry. The unit consists of a vest-like control that is worn across your chest.

Sensory effects are possible with hard driving sound or a thump from a blow to the face. It's also possible to achieve these effects while watching television or listening to CDs.



The patented electromagnetic actuator listens to any game systems' audio output and triggers the vest's core. This, then, creates body-pulsing vibrations keyed to on-screen action. Controls further make it possible to have the vest sense a range of responses, from a feather touch to one of intense pounding. The SRP is less than \$90.



PC/MS-DOS titles continue to forge ahead at **Capstone** (305/591-5900). Now they've combined several of their titles (as many software companies seem to do these days) into single title offerings.

The Kids Collection offers Fievel and his friends in *An American Tail*. Then there's the wild and wacky arcade action of *Trolls*. Also included is *The Rock-A-Doodle Computerized Coloring Book*.

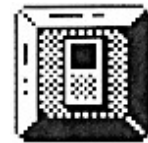
Casino Collection leads off with *Trump Castle II*, which enables gamers to try their hand at baccarat, blackjack, craps, video poker, roulette, and slots. Also included are *Poker* and *Lots-O-Slots* add-on games for four additional types of poker and 9 more slot machines. The SRP is \$19.95.

COLORADO SPECTRUM

Windows products have been somewhat lackluster. Save for a few innovative firms, there hasn't been much in the way of exciting entertainments.

Although far from a stand-alone game, a new and interesting title is *Feature Presentations: Flight* from **Colorado Spectrum** (303/225-6929). Designed for aircraft enthusiasts and those who can't get flight sims out of their blood, this title enables you to personalize your Windows environment with photographic images and authentic digitized sounds of your favorite aircraft.

The package includes 40 "Wallpaper" images of such aircraft as the B-17 Flying Fortress, Lancaster IV, and many more. Sounds from the P-51 Mustang to the B-25 can be configured for different Windows events. For the screen saver set, there are a variety of screens from a crop duster to a B-25 Bomber. There's also a visual aircraft references and an annual calendar of air events in the U.S. and Canada. New calendars may be expected each year from the company. The SRP is \$39.95.



Best Brain Game of the Year award for 1993 was awarded to *Oxyd* from **Dongleware Publishing** (617/497-1130). Now released is *Oxyd Magnum* for Macintosh and PC/MS-DOS gamers. With super new levels of arcade nightmare, you can also download demos of this new offering through GEnie, Delphi, America Online, CompuServe, and AppleLink. Well worth the time for the download, these demos'll prove this company's latest release also has the makings of an award winner!





Eidolon Inc.

Very unusual—a yet-to-be released CD-ROM video game already winning awards! That's just what has happened to *Millennium Auction* from **Eidolon** (718/884-7095). Described as a multimedia game for grownups who enjoy such classics as Monopoly, Clue, and Trivial Pursuit, this offering apparently offers socially aware humor, zany wit, and entertaining subtext and is *not* your typical shoot-'em-up title.

It's the future, and rare art has been proclaimed viewable by all citizens of the world order. Except for those extremely rich and influential traders who can vie for classic items, even Bill Clinton's saxophone! With online trading, artwork database, and a variety of strategies to employ, this title could well become a hit for MPC Windows gamers.

Getting back to the awards the title has already won: two first prize CADDIE awards from *CADalyst* magazine and second prize in *Computer Pictures* magazine's First Annual Art & Design Contest. Not a bad start for a new game!



Take successful titles and bundle them into a single entity sku, and you probably are gonna make some money.

Such is the case with **Inline Software** (203/435-4995) and their *Three Great*

Plays offering. This trio of games includes Cliff Johnson's *3 In Three*, *Tesserae*, and *Cogito*.

3 In Three is an animated color puzzle that's loaded with humorous sounds, over 60 minutes of animation—the game is based around the adventures of a number 3 who is lost inside a Mac CPU! You've got to solve a number of brain teasers to rescue the numeral and get it back into the spreadsheet where it belongs. The game won the winner of The Best Game of the Year award from *MacUser* magazine.

Tesserae is a puzzle game that is an addictive mix of brain-teasing perplexity and riveting graphics in the form of a mosaic. *Macworld* elected this title to their Magazine's Game Hall of Fame as Best Brain Game.

Cogito finds the computer randomly mixing a square of marbles. Your job is to restore the square to its original shape. With over 120 increasingly difficult levels, this brain puzzler packs hours of play. *Cogito* has also won numerous awards.

The package ships next month and will have an SRP of \$49.95 and will run on all Macintosh computers from a Plus or later model.



There's no hesitation here—**Psygnosis** (617/497-5457) is debuting three new titles for the 3D0 game platform.

The first is *Microcosm*, an action adventure game that takes you on a voyage inside the human body. The second is *Advanced Battle Systems*, a title in the shoot-em-up genre that allegedly has super fast paced action. The third new title is to be the company's exceedingly popular *Lemmings*.

Global warming threatens mankind in the year 2022. With the sun permanently eclipsed, mankind has established a new world order. The power is held by Viking Union, the only transportation available across the frozen wastes, because they own—coal!

This new game from **ReadySoft**
(905/731-4175) entitled *Arctic Baron*

offers you a vital mission to free the planet from perpetual winter and the domination by Viking Union. You command a steam powered train, but your requirement for fresh supplies, food, and spare parts becomes essential. The Viking Union certainly isn't going to give you any help—in fact, your death is more of what they have on their mind. You've got to deal with traitors, spies, and attacks. For PC/MS-DOS, PC CD-ROM, and the Amiga, the SRP is \$49.95.



Many of us grew up building **Revell** model car, plane, and warship kits. These plastic, diminutive clones of the real item clogged our bookshelves in our bedrooms or down near where Mom stored her china.

For Sega CD owners, the ability to build the coolest models around is now enhanced.

Revell-Monogram (708/966-3500) has announced *European Racers* for Sega CD for release next month. What you'll receive in this package is a Porsche 911 Slant Nose model kit with the Sega CD software that shows you how to build plastic models of not only the Porsche, but three other hot racers as well: the Bugatti EB110, Italdesign Nazca M12, and the Lamborghini Countach. You can then race these vehicles in a realistic road and track race.

This bundle combines video gaming and model building, and pretty unique venue. The software not only shows how to put the model together, but also offers tips on painting and detailing. The driving simulation even leads to a face-off against five on-screen competitors for a five-lap race. You can also select how to have your racer equipped.

PC/MS-DOS gamers already have versions of Power Modeler software available for their purchase: *European Racers* and *Backroad Racers*. The SRP is \$69.95. A German version is also available in Europe.



You betcha that CD-ROM is big game business for game developers. **Sierra** (209/683-4468) has released *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Father* which features an all-Hollywood cast for the interactive game.

Set in New Orleans, the game stars *Tim Curry* as Gabriel Knight, who must fight the dark forces of the supernatural. Nightmares torment him and Gabriel must seek the answers to a century-old curse. In order to break free, Gabriel must atone for a wrong that was committed before he was born. The CD-ROM includes hand-painted, high resolution art, a full-stereo music score, and a 20-minute video showing the making of Gabriel Knight. (The latter feature does require Windows 3.1, however.) The game requires a DOS machine with CD-ROM drive. The SRP is \$69.95. There is a floppy disk version also available, but this version does not include any voice talent.



One of the finest players to ever play the intense action oriented sport of hockey is Brett Hull, probably the most-popular All-Star player in the NHL. **Sport Accolade** (408/985-1700) has announced *Brett Hull Hockey*, a brand new video game for SNES (taking full advantage of Mode 7 for scaling and rotation) and Sega Genesis systems. A PC/MS-DOS version will debut during the second quarter of this year.

The game incorporates not only high-scoring action, but also Brett's game philosophy of "it has to be fun, or it's not worth play." Several modes of play may be selected: exhibition game, 11 game short season, 42 game half season, or an 84 game full season. Also included is the best of three, five, and seven game playoff series.

Designed by Radical Entertainment, hockey players were videotaped during play and then digitized. There's an instant replay feature and penalties may be turned on or off, whatever your desire. There's also a special coach mode that allows you to adjust the players' strengths and weaknesses in six categories.

One of the outstanding value-added is the complete play-by-play commentary of Al Michaels, who earned his first "Sportscaster of the Year" award in 1980 after calling the memorable U.S. Hockey team's dramatic games that led them to gold medal victory. The SRP is \$69.95.



Enroute for Mac gamers from one of the leading military strategy developers is **Victory At Sea**. From **Three-Sixty** (800/653-1360), this title was developed by military expert James F. Dunnigan.

The game offers a map of the entire Pacific Theater. You can also zoom in to operational level for exact strategy considerations. Auto navigating only requires you to point-and-click, and the game is enhanced with full motion W.W.II QuickTime video display.

You can control either the Japanese or Allied Forces. Additionally, the generals and admirals are employed at your discretion—fire 'em if they're not performing to your standards! You can also see "what might have been" instead of "what was." The SRP is \$49.95. (And, friends, that's a right decent price, considering the ups of software pricing of late!)



Ever since our days of writing for *Dragon* magazine, we've been a fan of their product line, from their fantasy role-playing modules, to their board games, and their books and magazines. They are definitely a mega-company in fantasy gaming and reading!

TSR (414/248-3625) has released a multimedia game experience called *Dragon Strike*. There's a 30-minute video, and you'll find monster-slaying heroes, magic-wielding sorcerers, plus an army of skeletons. The video itself features four heroes on a treacherous quest to capture Teraptus, the evil wizard.

When the video ends, the game begins. With 16 different adventures, there's high dollar value. You must work with your fellow gamers to escape traps and defeat the creatures from the video. If you succeed in time, you'll find treasures and return as heroes.

The game is packed with four game boards, plastic figures, playing cards, adventure books, dice, plus the video. The SRP is \$34.95. You'll also be able to locate four *Dragon Strike* novels and the *Dragon Strike* comic book from Marvel.

Voyager Company

Fifteen new titles debuted from **The Voyager Company** (800/446-2001) during the recent Macworld exhibition in San

||Francisco.

The Complete Maus is a CD-ROM adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize winning graphic novel. This offering takes you on an exploration of the two volume *Maus* work, and the sketches, video and supplementary documents that are the foundation of these groundbreaking comics which constitute Art Spiegelman's memoir of his father's experiences during the Holocaust. The themes shattered the conventional concept of a comic book. Not only does this CD-ROM present the story, but also the process involved.

Other new titles include *First Person: Marvin Minsky—The Society of Mind*. This is the debut title in a new series of conversations with great thinkers, their work, discoveries, and their ideas. *The First Emperor of China* is a bilingual CD-ROM that includes video footage of the original excavation, bringing the treasures of Qin Shi Huang Di to Mac owners. *Comic Book Confidential* is a critically acclaimed documentary by Ronn Mann of comics and their creators.

Macbeth is the first in the company's Shakespeare series and contains over 1,500 annotations and a 24,000 word commentary. The entire Royal Shakespeare Company's performance in QuickTime is also included. *A World Alive* is a nature documentary that includes the 30-minute documentary produced by the St. Louis Zoo and narrated by James Earl Jones. Data on the over 100 animals featured in the film is included as well.

All of these titles require a Macintosh computer with a CD-ROM drive.

Vicarious Entertainment

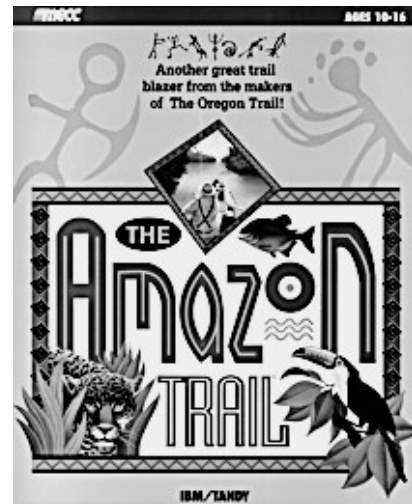
A super new title from **Vicarious Entertainment** (415/261-1900). *CNN Time Capsule 1993: 100 Defining Moments of the Year* is the first CD-ROM product that will be sold directly through TV advertising.

As CNN cameras capture action around the globe 24-hours a day, the content of this CD is rich. Users access major news events and

developments from around the world through videotape, stills, and text of the top stories of 1993. This title is designed to be the first volume in a series which will catalog the defining moments that shape human history, year-by-year.

Using the company's SuperDisc technology, the one CD-ROM disk supports both Macintosh and Windows platforms.

• Product Perusals •



Featured Edutainment —Macintosh—

Amazon Trail from MECC
Recommendation: Buy it!

You're chopping away through dense Amazon foliage in search of a secret medicinal plant. Upon discovering the secret plant you encounter the LARGEST tarantula you've ever seen with fangs dripping of deadly venom! You quickly grab the plant, turn and dash towards your canoe. Concealed by the heavy foliage, suddenly a jaguar leaps in front of you blocking your only escape route! To your surprise, the jaguar speaks, "You have done well!"

A bad dream? No, you have just experienced *The Amazon Trail* - a new learning adventure game from the makers of *The Oregon Trail*. This game is designed for ages 10-16 (although, as an adult, I found it extremely entertaining and

interesting). It teaches the history, ecosystems, wildlife, and plant life of South America. It also improves the player's reading comprehension and map-reading skills. A fifth (5th) grade or above reading level is recommended.

Kids will love learning about the Amazon Jungle through exploration with this game's VGA graphics and excellent sound effects. A point-n-click interface lets you play and learn without keyboard distractions; therefore, a mouse is a must for this game.

The object of the game is to save the people in a hidden Inca village who are suffering from a mysterious disease. You must explore the Amazon in search of a secret medicinal plant. During your quest, you will encounter a mysterious blue mist that takes you back in time. You will encounter actual explorers and scientists of that period in the villages along the river banks. You are permitted to ask them questions, trade supplies, and learn more about what role they played in South American history. While you are canoeing up the Amazon River you can try your hand at spear fishing. This allows you to gather food for your quest and, at the same time, learn about the different species of fish native to this area. Between villages you can stop at any river bank and gaze upon various wildlife and plant life and possibly discover that secret plant!

Cool Stuff

- Installation is pretty easy and straight-forward.
- The manual is easy to understand and follow and also gives you some background pertinent to South America.
- The play interface is easy to understand and use.
- Digital sounds provide a more realistic experience.
- Your guide will pronounce the names of any plant life or wildlife you inquire about - (a nice extra touch).
- A great educational learning tool!

Negative Bits

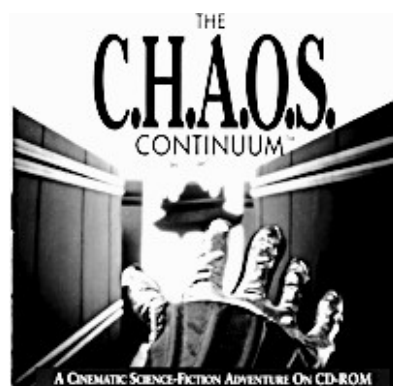
- This game uses different video modes. If you have a multi-sync monitor, the constant clicking between 320x200 and 640x480 is a real annoyance.
- The game incorrectly detected the IRQ for the sound card. As a result, I had to run the setup again to change from IRQ5 to IRQ7.

If you're tired of exploring dungeons and you're looking for a change, then get The "Amazon Trail." This title will provide hours of fun and you'll learn facts about the continent of South America that you never knew.—*Chris Cortel*

System Requirements

386 or higher required; DOS 5.0 or later; 1MB memory; VGA color graphics; Mouse required;

Supports AdLib, Sound Blaster, and compatible sound boards.



C.H.A.O.S. Continuum
from Creative Multimedia Corp.

—Macintosh—

Recommendation:
Do not purchase!

C.H.A.O.S., an orbiting sentient computer, takes over the Titan Colony. You are the Titan Colony's only chance to be saved, but not even an orbiting, sentient, super-computer could save this game's fate.

C.H.A.O.S. Continuum is very similar to the game *Iron Helix* from Drew Pictures and distributed by Spectrum HoloByte. You have a remotely controlled probe that you use to save the lives of lots of people. I have played *Iron Helix* and I must say that *C.H.A.O.S. Continuum* falls dreadfully short of *Iron Helix*'s mark. The only advantage that *C.H.A.O.S. Continuum* seems to possess over *Iron Helix* is the viewing screen size—it's almost twice as big.

The game occurs in the year 2577, and the present. After C.H.A.O.S. takes over the Titan Colony, the last deep space outpost, the scientists that maintain this super computer and the space station itself become trapped in an alternate continuum. You must come from the present time to the year 2577. You must pilot a probe through the Titan colony and finally onto C.H.A.O.S. itself to bring the scientists back.

Cool Stuff

- C.H.A.O.S. Continuum's graphics are breathtaking. The opening sequence, in which your probe automatically flies into the Titan

Colony, was stupendous.

- The user interface for the game is nice—you can control the probes movement by clicking the mouse the movement buttons, or by using the arrow keys.

- You can save your game at any part of the mission.

Negative Bits

- C.H.A.O.S. Continuum is *SLOW*. In fact, so slow that sometimes you have to wait 30 seconds or more for your probe to move.
- Game play is much too simple. There are hardly *any* puzzles to solve, and if you really put your mind to it, you could probably finish this game in less than two hours.
- C.H.A.O.S. Continuum was poorly designed. There are typos throughout the game. The voice synthesis produces nothing extraordinary.

Overall, C.H.A.O.S. Continuum isn't worth your purchase price. Sure, there are some good graphics, but would you pay \$80.00 just to watch some great rendered objects? If you want an interactive science-fiction CD game, go for Iron Helix or Lunicus—I think you'll be much happier with either of those mentioned titles.—*Nick (Nman) Manousos*

Editor's addendum to the review:

What we found additionally disappointing with C.H.A.O.S. Continuum was the plot—it is an almost identical plot to that of *Iron Helix*. If we didn't know better, we would've assumed the author and developer of both programs was the same individual! Granted, there is the possibility that two individuals within the United States might have thought of the same plot simultaneously, and then created their titles separately, but this is an amazing occurrence! Imagination breeds new adventures—in this case, the adventures are just too identical, leaving the consumer with a choice of which program to purchase for its execution, not its plot differential. We agree with Nick that *Iron Helix* is the better of the programs.



Featured Arcade Game —Macintosh—

Firefall Arcade from Inline Software

**Recommendation:
Buy it if you have a fast Mac!**

A great soundtrack, bright graphics, and fast action are super features of *Firefall* from Inline and Pangea Software. This game is a major supercharged version of the famous arcade game *Centepede*, which pales in comparison. Firefall offers more on almost every front—better graphics, music, and sound effects.

The game takes place deep within the ground where Fireworms live. The Fireworms eat the minerals that are vital to the survival of the human race—you MUST stop them. You have to destroy six Fireworms on each of the lines. However, it's not just Fireworms you're out to destroy. There are plenty of other nasties throughout to make your quest more difficult. Don't despair, though, there are lots of power-ups to help you along the way.

Cool Stuff

- Amazing soundtrack
- Bright, colorful graphics
- Two modes of play; Basic and Enhanced, the former for IIc's to IIx's and the latter for faster Macs.
- Great Interface.
- The coolest cursor ever made.

Negative Bits

- The game ends. Although the game is hard, and not easy to beat, it would be nice if the game

| went on forever.

- It gets REALLY slow on older Macs. The game says it plays on a LC — I tried it on a LC and the game was not playable, the graphics were just too choppy. In order for the game to be really fun you have to have a fast Mac.
- A bit hefty on the disk space, mainly because of the soundtrack, but if you have a pretty fast computer, it shouldn't be too much of a problem. In addition, the soundtrack is GREAT.

This game is fun, but only for gamers who have a fast Mac at their fingertips. However, there are going to be some gamers who buy Firefall simply because of its great soundtrack and the amazing cursor!—*Jp Flaherty*



Featured Adventure Game
—PC/MS-DOS—
Stronghold
from Strategic Simulations, Inc.
Recommendation: Buy It!

What we have here is a cleverly disguised fantasy adventure game that is, in all actuality, a city sim. Take your SimCity 2000 or your Masters of Orion, throw the whole concept into an Advanced Dungeons and Dragons scenario, and you have Stronghold. Mebbe the game isn't as strong a title as the two mentioned, but the game certainly is a great deal of fun to play and requires you to consider numerous elements to succeed.

The object, like so many other games of this ilk, is simply to increase your holdings (read conquer new territory) while ensuring your population survives, not only from hostile opposition, but also

in regards for their health and wealth. This is accomplished through various actions you take, from building houses and farms, to investing in high-income generation stores and inns. All the while, you must pay attention to the training of your forces, for without both a defensive and offensive posture, you'll surely succumb to the wants and desires of your numerous enemies.

You may select various "hostility" settings, enabling you to set your game at progressively more difficult levels. You may also determine where you'll play your simulation, either on one of several pre-designed worlds, or one that is randomly created. The interface is quite simple to learn and use, allowing you to zoom in on areas you're building to receiving an overview of the entire "dominion" and the various forces aligned against you. Not all of your opponents are humanoid—in fact, few are—they range from the rather stupid bats that only attack you if you attack them, to Mindark, the evil nemesis out to totally destroy you.

You initiate the game by deterring your leader. This may be a fighter, cleric, mage, elf, dwarf, thief, or halfling. Each race has a specific set of characteristics that are then incorporated into the citizenry beholding to that leader. You "roll" attributes for your leader, keeping in mind the key attribute(s) required for that particular race. For example, if an elf is your desire as a leader, you need to pay particular attention to the STRENGTH and DEXTERITY attributes, re-rolling should they be less than satisfactory.

Once your leader's stats have been accepted, you must then "place" him or her at a specific location on the world map. Selection of this area is critical to your overall success—more on that in The Clue Corner later in this issue. After your leader has been placed, you may select an additional four characters who will work with you in broadening your kingdom. The four additional characters, although not the leaders of the kingdom, build their own strongholds and armies and support your chosen leader in furthering world domination. As the total selection of characters equals five, and there are eight races from which to select, you must determine the best mix for your game.

The land consists of different terrain, each terrain offering various features that can increase your revenue and provide homes for your people. Farms require water, which appears as blue areas on your map, and they should be placed on plains or valleys, which are green on the map. For mines, look for the brown areas which designate mountains. Tan areas are hills and are the middle ground, providing terrain for farms and mines that produce average income.

You determine how an area is to be constructed. A pyramid appears when you select an area. You can adjust the percentage of building, training, or recruiting by dragging the cursor in the pyramid and adjusting the color group for the activity you wish. You can designate any percentage amount for any of the activities, enabling you to have some measure of all features simultaneously occurring within that area. Naturally, if you've just decided to build a granary, two farms, and housing in this area, it would be best to designate the building activity at 100 percent so you can complete the area as quickly as possible and earn revenues from it. However, once built, you must "home" one of your force members there, otherwise whatever you've constructed will start to deteriorate and eventually it will crumble away. Not a wish occurrence after you've spent so much time and money in building that area to start with!

You can attract your forces to various areas of the map quite easily. You simply locate your cursor on the territory you wish to acquire or change and then you click on a bar beneath the pyramid. The bar is a magnet, and attracts whatever number of "ready" folk you designate to that area. As each of your characters is listed on the right hand of the screen, you designate which type of force is to move into the area by clicking on the character that leads that group. Perhaps you would like a couple of clerics, five fighters, a mage, and a thief, to occupy this territory as it might be close to enemy territory. As clerics can heal as well as fight, and the other folk have their own special talents, you would singularly click on the pyramids for the type of force you wish employed. The magnet bar fills with color according to the number of units enroute to that territory—the message would read that you're attracting 3 of 8 available clerics, and so on.

Combat occurs when an opposing force enters one of your occupied territories. If you have substantial force in that area that can overcome the opposition, you win—if not, the territory, the

buildings, and your force of arms that may have been there are lost. You do not control combat, but you may watch the proceedings on-screen. You may also try to attract additional support to that area through the pyramid and magnet bar selection procedure when the area in conflict is selected on your map.

Various reports are available to you throughout the game, including how your income and general funds are doing, and what buildings have been completed or are under construction. If you're doing well and have provided your citizens with enough sustenance to last them through the various seasons, they'll cheer when you access the View Leader screen. You can also obtain identical reports for each of your Stronghold leaders, as well.

Cool Stuff

- Well-written manual—read it!
- Great area screens—you can watch as your citizens build your projects. The fact that you can alter the percentages of activities in each area allows you to customize each area's game play according to your needs at that time, not on a single game turn.
- Regular and zoom-out views allow you to be aware of all activity on your world at any time.
- Complete management reports allow you to adjust your any element of maintenance or new structures to suit changing conditions.
- Ability to select entire regions of citizens loyal to various characters provide you with the ability to change activity percentages instantly. If you need more troops, you can recruit more troops. If training is required (as long as you have training institutions built), go for it!

Negative Bits

- World map only delineates your entire character assemblage as white dots and the enemy as red dots. Each character's forces should be designated as a separate color. This would then enable you to know what specific types of forces were located in which areas of the globe, important for preparing for confrontation.

- No control in combat—bummer. Rarely would a true FRPG gamer allow a thief to confront a Fire Giant alone! Unfortunately, this can happen even if you don't mean it to happen, especially if you decide to sweep your combined forces toward an enemy stronghold and elements of your army pass through enemy occupied lands enroute to their target locale. It would be nice to be able to tell your thief to disengage, or else assign one or two fights from a near area to support the poor thief who will otherwise end up as toast.

Stronghold doesn't break any new ground as an entertainment title. This title is definitely fun to play and, because of its ability to customize its environment, allows you to meet almost any circumstance encountered during the game. With a random world generator, there is a high dollar value due to its replayability time after time without fear of encountering the same game again. Yep, Stronghold is definitely a recommended title for PC/MS-DOS gamers.—*Mudgeon*

System requirements

386/25 or better, 2MB RAM, VGA graphics, hard drive, mouse, and 1.44MB floppy drive.



Featured Edutainments —Macintosh—

The Backyard and The Treehouse from Brøderbund Software

**Recommendation:
Buy them for your children!**

There is now even more of a reason to buy a

Macintosh for your children as Brøderbund targets our younger sets with a series of great titles. *The Backyard* takes place in a child's backyard, complete with garden, tree house, pool, fence, and more. *The Treehouse* occurs in that marvelous child's hideaway built up in the tree, within *The Backyard*.

All the child has to do is click on an object in the Backyard or in the Treehouse and something happens, which makes for good, exploratory learning. It may be a mouse running up the ladder, or a bird singing. In addition, children will learn to control the mouse and select objects and menus, all important concepts to learn when using the Macintosh.

The Backyard also sports some of the best combination of graphics, sound and animation on the market. The pictures are clear and accurate, the animation is simple but smooth, and for the most part, the digitized sounds fit the objects.

Some of the objects lead into other levels that include games, make your own puzzles, and a "Mr. Potatohead" experience with a scarecrow. These additional levels are needed to offer the surprise element and to keep a child focused. One of the problems with self-discovery learning is in keeping the learner active. Adding discovery levels keeps a child wanting to explore more and more.

Educational Features

- There is a great deal of interaction. Everything on the screen does something.
- The user is always reinforced when an object is selected.
- The games have no negative reinforcements.
- All of the games reinforce reading and counting skills.
- The graphics, sound and animation are fantastic!
- The program consistently reinforces self-discovery learning by reinforcing every choice.
- There are multiple levels to the games. A child can play an easy level or a more difficult game.
- There are multiple levels to selected objects in the backyard.
- There is a black and white as well as a color version.

Negative Bits

- The program takes up 15 megabytes of disk space. Getting rid of the color version deletes 5 megabytes, but you will still need 10 megabytes for the black and white.
- Not all of the directions for the games are clear. It takes some trial and error for children to know what to do.

- Some of the activities require an adult to read the instructions to know exactly what to do.
- Self-discovery learning can get boring after a while. After children have played with The Backyard several times, they will find most of the title's activities.
- Using The Backyard in a classroom setting will require some curriculum planning by the teacher. The teacher will have to build additional curriculum around the program.
- There needs to be more reinforcement of pre-reading activities. More letter, and small word recognition is not uncommon for the age group designated for The Backyard.

Broderbund has created a series of programs directly aimed at young children. The Backyard combines excellent graphics, animation and sound to create an entertaining and somewhat education experience. *Mark and Eli Veljkov*

THE CLUE CORNER

&

H.E.L.P



Amazon Trail

- 1) Pick Isabel as your guide, she has more supplies at the start of the game.
- 2) In the village of Xingu, trade with Schultes often, it'll pay off in more ways than one.
- 3) Stay clear of the whirlpools and logs while canoeing, if you tip you'll lose a good portion of your supplies.
- 4) Don't eat too much fish, you'll get a bad case of dysentery.
- 5) While harpooning for fish watch out for floating logs or you'll break your harpoon.
- 6) If you have a sound card, watch what IRQ the game picks when installing.

Make sure it matches what your jumpers are set to on your card.—
Chris Cortel



Stronghold

- 1) Select your initial keep and stronghold area very carefully. Keep in mind how terrain can play its role—it's really tough for opponents to cross water. Look for an area that occupies a good size of the map, say about 30 percent or so, with the random world generator. Then, see how the water can cradle different lands. Make certain your land has lots of green and tan areas for income generation capabilities. Finally, see if the only entrance to your territory is via a narrow strip of land that can be fortified with walls. Place a gate in that wall and you have entrance into enemy lands, but not vice versa!
- 2) Suggested character generation should be: Fighter (as your leader), Thieves (for their spying capabilities), Clerics (combatants and possess powerful spells), Mages (powerful offensive spells), Thieves (for their spying skills—give them a tower atop a hill and you'll always know when the enemy is approaching!), and Elves (they're fantastic foresters!).
- 3) When you're acquiring territory, if you see a tree or trees in the area, CLAIM THEM! Don't cut them down! (This is especially true for elves!) Trees provide food for your citizenry, even during winter, as well as income. Upgrade your trees to groves whenever you have the finances to do so—your people will rarely starve if you can do this.

- 4) For the first year, concentrate on building houses and markets. Markets can assist in the acquisition of food, and houses can store food. If you do build granaries to store food, upgrade them as soon as possible! When fall arrives, there's gonna be tons of food for your populace—you just want to make certain you have areas that can store foodstuffs available. Residences, as they are upgraded, store more and more food and are a better bargain, overall, than granaries.
- 5) Don't build or expand too quickly—you'll run out of money, especially during the winter season. After the second or third year, depending upon your fund availability, go for buildings that can generate lots of income, such as inns; scribery, glassworks, or the like. The buildings available depend upon the character type, so various buildings will be available to you, especially if you've taken the time to create five strong characters of various races.—

Mudgeon

Inside Games Update

521 Czerny Street
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ISSUE #6

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Inside Games Update is published by IMG Publications, Glenview, Illinois, at least 24 times per year.

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