

Guest Commentary

Ban the Software??

December 25th—for many, a holy day. For others, a more secular day of gathering with family and friends. For white males between the ages of 12 and 28, 'tis a day ripe with the sound of cartridges being slammed home into base units, and mornings and afternoons filled with the staccato of gunfire and ravaged screams. For 'tis the day video games are blessed upon households.

The ritual of gaming has long been with us. Before the days of electronic entertainments, the holidays brought forth all manner of games based upon die rolls and cardboard trails meandering from a clever start to a heroic finish line. They carried far less criticism than the electronic entertainments of today. Games based on television game shows, how one strived for success in Life, and the acquisition of properties, filled the coffers of the game publishers each end year. Never was heard the utterance that *Monopoly*™ was to blame for Sally's capitalistic viewpoints developed during her formative years. Nor was Johnny told he was too militaristic because he played *Risk*™. Absurd thoughts—yet, thinking back, the reason the games never became more than entertainment was because parent(s), or another adult authority figure, said *ENOUGH* when the game had been overplayed. Guidance be the key, eh?

Roam through any of the warehouse-like game stores these days and watch *who* is actually buying the games. Yep, kids—where once parent(s) had the time and the desire to purchase what they thought would be most fun and constructive for their children, now it's the children themselves who are deciding what they should engage in their video game system, whether or not it's within their age group. No child should be given so much responsibility for his or her maturation. Knowing the effect television, radio, and film have upon our youngsters, it shouldn't require a great deal of common sense for gaurdians to realize the importance they *must* play in the selection of appropriate video games. If *Mortal Combat*™ is so blood-thirstily graphic in its depiction of death and dismemberment, and it's currently the vogue action your children undertake each afternoon in your home, **why blame the publisher for your inattention to your ward(s)?** Did you take the time to preview the game before it entered your home and decide that such violence was something your children should actively seek and enjoy, and thereby lessen the value placed on life in the first place?

Who Said Life Was Bloody Easy?

Aaagggghhhhhh, it's enough to make you wanna spit! Our nation gives more of a platform to those citizens who enjoy whining, whimpering, and blaming others for their own faults. There was a time when folk owned up to the fact that they were **responsible** for themselves and their children, until the latter gained the age of maturity. Blaming a game publisher for releasing a video game that can negatively affect a child's life through its portrayal of less-than-appealing environments is akin to a child blaming the dog for eating his or her homework the day it's supposed to be turned in—it's not a responsible way to act. Worse of all, it's an outright **lie!** (Hmmmm, lying used to be something abhorrent—now there are grades of dishonesty, from little **white lies**, to **falsehoods**, to **perjury**, and outright **blasphemy**.)

Yeah, I know—responsible way to act—hard to do, huh, 'cause we look at “heroes,” like politicians or attorneys, and these role models leave much to be desired. Why should you affect rationality and ownership for your actions when others who make more money than you, or have more clout than you, so easily toss such character aside? Why bother when you can rely on the government to provide for your every need? That's easy to answer—the government *doesn't* provide anything at all, save dependency upon its own power structures built to ensure its own immortality. And we, as intelligent, thinking, folk must realize we affect our own destinies far

more than some outside influence that you *could* ignore, should you wish to do so. Government was instituted initially to provide a safe environment within which its citizens could *responsibly* grow and enjoy the fruits of their labors. Now, we're whittled down to the point where we have to blame eager game publishers for creating little monsters within our children.

Game publishers are capitalists, a fine and credible entity. By running focus groups with target audiences, they learn that ripping skulls from some downed adversary in a video game is what the purchasing public will lay cash on the table top in order to acquire. Granted, in some cases, the social responsibility and morés of the game publisher is questionable, but that doesn't alter *their* right to produce titles to earn a profit.

If you note that your target group of purchasers enjoys the violence, and they are the ones actually pulling the money out of their jeans' pockets, there has to be an expectation that the guardians' of those children have given their taciturn approval to that purchase. The point is this: if you believe some of the video or computer games are too violent for your children, ***don't let them buy the damned cartridge!*** Yep, it really is that simple. And, guess what—when game publishers feel the affect of a sales slowdown for a specific genre of software, betcha they don't produce such crap anymore! Something like cause and effect—something like they gotta remain profitable by producing material the purchasers will buy—something like you taking responsibility for what your children actually do. Don't blame others, blame yourself. But the neat thing is, it's never too late to change!—*Mudgeon*

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Thanks for reading us this issue and we look forward to your return in a couple of weeks. And we wish you the greatest New Year you've ever experienced!—*P.J.*

—Mudgeon's Distillations—

*More intelligence absorbed while fixing a deflated
Pentium chip near the intersection of Motorola,
IBM, and Apple.*

Tying into the techie line . . .

Communication, electronically speaking, with users is of prime importance to software publishers. This is especially true of entertainment title producers. Gamers want everything they can get their hands on, from free goodies to techie support. And they want it as cheaply and as easily as possible.

Therefore, **LucasArts Games** (in San Rafael, CA) has published a list of lines for voice or modem wherein gamers can get this critically needed info. First of all, there's their new bulletin board which runs at 14.4 baud. The number is 415/257-3070. The BBS is availabled 24 hours a day and you should use

the default settings of 8N1 to access.

Other numbers you'd care about include their voice techie support at 415/721-3333, which is good from 8:30 am to about 6:00 pm, Pacific Standard Time. Their fax number is 415/721-3482.

Prefer to find them through some of the major online services? On CIS, send your e-mail to 75300,454; on AOL or GENie, it's LUCASARTS.

For the truly desperate who can afford the \$0.75 per minute charge, there's a voice hint line at 900/741-JEDI. If you're not 18 years of age yet, you'd best be checkin' with your folks before you dial that number!

Save the Universe again . . .

There really is no rest for gamers these days. If you're not off and rescuing folk from this or that, you're actually saving an entire race of

folk, usually human!

Got another such CD-ROM adventure I've just heard about, supposedly headin' our way and being demo'd at the January MacWorld in San Francisco. The title is *The Better Dead Ratification*. It's from a company named **Art Sector 1, Inc.** (203/338-0192). Seems as though in the year 2323 AD, a way has been found to destroy Mi-Natas Phoule, a beast of the Binwa Evangelical Society.

No, no, seems these nasty aliens are far from god-fearing. Instead, they have a Satanic-like cult that believes the genocide of mankind is its true cause. Now it's up to you to learn all you can about *The Better Dead Ratification* to destroy this threat. You're gonna be pummelled and hunted, so you'd better learn how to use your weapons. You're also gonna have to Psychofuse with Paine, a cyborg unit, giving up your human body. Geez, this sounds tough!

The game will require *at least* a 68020 CPU and a CD-ROM drive. The SRP is being bantered around at \$70.95.

Demands for payment

As you probably have heard, **Compton's New Media** received a significant patent that can spell millions of dollars in royalty payments from multimedia title developers and publishers. However, the **Multimedia Developers Group** (MDG) has absolutely no intention of paying the one percent royalty on any of their work to Compton's. Expect more fireworks, but there's the possibility Compton's may decide simply to leverage their new-found power to "entice" others into using them as their distribution vehicle.

Sorry to hear . . .

A product observed at the Summer CES in Chicago was entitled *Forgotten Castle: The Awakening*. The game was an adventure role-playing game that occurred in the dungeons beneath a medieval castle. In order to find your father through the mysterious city of Hedburg and its castle, you must not only escape from jail but then battle the Ruzakian Lord to fulfill your quest.

The game employed some awesome 3D modeling and stereo sound. Unfortunately, the developer and publisher of this title, **Blue Dolphin Games, Inc.**, has closed its

doors and is no longer in business.

Forgotten Castle certainly appeared to have the potential of becoming a hit, but now we'll never know . . .

Affiliation becomes acquisition

Back in 1992, **Sierra** worked up a deal to publish and distribute titles from a French game developer named **Coktel Vision S.A.** The company developed both entertainment and educational titles such as *Goblins* and *Inca*. Now \$5 million has passed from Sierra to Coktel Vision as the former acquires the latter. Another \$5 million will become Coktel's if they reach specific revenue targets over the next four years. Good luck to both!

Good news for Mac gamers!

Electronic Arts (415/571-7171) is preparing to release two new Macintosh titles. The first is well-known on 22 other platforms—the other is brand new, just for the Mac.

With 2.2 million units pumped out for numerous platforms, the first conversion is *Populous*. A truly hall of fame strategy game, you become a divine being whose responsibility is to build followers from which you garner great powers. With over 500 worlds in the Mac version, you can create land that is beneficial to your followers, which in turn builds a strong civilization. Two can even participate in this strat via modem. The rumored SRP is \$49.95.

The second title for the Mac is *Power Poker*, described as the ultimate poker simulation. The working demo I watched was fantastic, as the game fully supports multimedia technology with QuickTime and PlainTalk inclusions. With network play, a Dealers's Choice mode, plus an in-depth tutorial, this title really has the glimmering of becoming an EA smash hit on the Macintosh. The SRP is going to be around \$49.95 when it's released early next year. Watch for its announcement at Macworld San Francisco. And, there are 77 poker variations in this puppy!

Egg hunt could net winner \$5,000

Through February 28th. of next year, **Ocean**

of America (408/954-0201) is running a contest in conjunction with their *Jurassic Park* video game for Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES) gamers. There's no age limit.

You gotta find the eight clues within the landscape area, both inside and outside the park itself. Each location of each clue must be exactly noted, then the secret message must be unscrambled and solved. All entries must be on an 8.5- by 11-inch piece of paper that contains the contestant's name, age, address, and telephone number along with the specific clues, each clue's location, and the unscrambled message. The entries should be mailed to **The Great Dino Egg Hunt**, PO Box 459, Redwood City, CA 94064-0459.

Exclusive Rights Obtained

Philips Media Electronic Publishing and **Interplay Productions** (714/553-6655) have come to an agreement wherein Interplay will have exclusive right to three CD-ROM titles for Mac and DOS platforms.

The first is *Voyeur*, which stars Robert Clup and Grace Zabriskie. This is a political thriller wherein the CEO of the Hawke Technologies empire—one Reed Hawke—has decided to run for the highest office in the land, that of President of the United States. Unfortunately for Reed, a family member doesn't want him to be president and is out to destroy him. And Reed will do whatever it takes to silence his family!

The second title is *Caesars World of Gambling*. As many as 12 players can play craps, blackjack, video poker, roulette and slots, all with casino odds.

The third offering will be *Zombie Dinos from the Planet Zeltoid*. Watch out, 'cause a bunch of aliens have travelled to Earth's past to capture some dinosaurs. These poor creatures will then be turned into zombies and brought to the present day where they'll be used to wreak havoc and help the aliens take over the world. You, naturally, have to stop this gargantuan plot from becoming reality!

Expect these titles to be released from early to late 1994.

No yen for a loss

We can all recall when PC pricing tumbled due to offshore clones saturating the market with lower-priced units. Now, it appears, **NEC** itself is being hurt by foreign technology. The company has lost approximately \$88 million in the first half of their fiscal year.

NeXT far from deceased

Acquiring a 1.5 percent stake in NeXT's code for building modular applications, **Sun Microsystems** has about \$10 million. So Jobs is now expected to publish the specification for the software, called *OpenStep*.

Is the video orgy over?

For the first time in nearly a decade, **Nintendo** is reporting first-half profits are down 24 percent below the same period last year. Profit was \$576 million as opposed to \$778 million—still, that's not such a tough pill to swallow, but it could mean other video game platforms are either gaining more market strength, or saturation point for the machines is reaching a plateau.

OK, perhaps not as significant, if viewed by itself. However, **3DO** ain't none too happy with their second quarter \$7 million loss—at this same time last year, the loss was but a little over \$2 million. And this time, they've shipped a system—er, granted, it shipped with only *one* title! Perhaps consumers aren't as dumb as some MARCOM folk think they are? Well, we'll see, as 3DO now plans to raise some additional cash by offering an additional one million shares of common stock. Yeah, great bait for the game playing masses. I say, show us more concrete stuff before I give *you* more green!

Software is focus of flagship store

InterActive Electronics Corp. (IEC), a new sister company created by **Blockbuster**, plans to open a store named *Game Power* in Newtown, Pennsylvania. The store will not only sell hardware and software—they'll rent it to consumers, as well. Pricing will run about \$3.99 for three-day software rentals and \$9.99 for three-day hardware rentals. IEC hopes to open about 100 such stores during 1994.

WITHIN THE CELLOPHANE

NEW PRODUCTS OF NOTE



Desktop space can sometimes be quite limiting when it comes to using your I/O device, be that a mouse, joystick, trackball, or . . . whatever! Especially when your keyboard is in your lap because your work surface is so small.

Armchair General (208/733-0700) has produced something they call the *MousLounge Keyboard Caddy*. You slip this unit on either end of your keyboard and you have a stable area upon which you can roll that mouse or support your other I/O peripherals. This nifty little device brings the desk to you, wherever your keyboard happens to be. The price is \$19.95.



Star Wars will *always* be BIG time. Everything that's been seasoned with the Star Wars name seems destined for success, from the movies to the sound tracks to the games. And this trend will only continue as the months draw closer and closer to the next Star Wars movie!

From **LucasArts Games** (415/721-3300) next year is coming *TIE Fighter*. This time, you're viewing the action from the side of the Empire, not the Rebel Alliance. You're a recruit with the Empire with the explicit goal of destroying your enemy to restore the galaxy to Imperial domination.

As with *X-Wing*, there are three sections. These are training (wherein you must become proficient with the TIE fighter, bomber, interceptor, assault gunboat, advanced TIE, and a new TIE vessel that hasn't even been designed yet); historical battle, and campaign battle sets.

Yep, your commander is none other than that good ol', loveable, Darth Vader and his Admiral sidekick, Thrawn. You'll also find new craft, from Space Platform targets to space stations with innovative designs. More to follow as the game becomes reality!

Also keep your wallet cleared for action as

The Dig comes closer to release. This deep space adventure is being codeveloped by LucasArts, Steven Spielberg, and designer Hal Barwood of *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* fame.

Set in 1998, an asteroid is hurtling thorough space toward Earth. If an impact occurs, civilization will be totally wiped out. As Boston Low, you and your team of astronauts must plant and detonate nuclear explosives on the asteroid to shove it out of Earth's way.

Once on the asteroid, things suddenly aren't as they should be—there are weird machines, obviously built by an alien race. A great adventure unfolds before you, including the fact that you're also gonna have to find your way home. Watch for this title's release later next year.



Five titles for the 3D0 platform are enroute from **Dynamix** (503/343-0772). The first is an arcade delight based upon the company's classic *Stellar 7* for PC/MS-DOS gamers. Entitled *Draxon's Revenge*, the entire fate of the galaxy is now in the 3D0 player's hands!

You must demolish the evil and deadly Gir Draxon who is the supreme leader of the evil Arcturan Empire. You must penetrate the Arcturan star system before Draxon can assemble his forces and destroy the entire Terran confederation. There are seven levels of action. The SRP is \$59.95.

Mallard

The first adventure game for a flight simulator is nearly off the coding platforms at **Mallard Software** (214/539-2575). Entitled *Flight Adventure 825*, it'll take the computer pilot from JFK International to Boston, Martha's Vineyard, or Providence, along a randomly

|selected flight path.

The plan is to challenge the computer pilot's skills. With actual controllers and pilots' voices telling you what's going on, you have to use VORs and head for vectors to get to the selected destination. All clearances to the destinations are randomly chosen by the computer to add that interesting element of surprise to your flight sim.

With an SRP of \$29.95, the only program you need to run this adventure is Microsoft's *Flight Simulator v. 5.0*.

Mallard is also releasing three new scenery upgrades. These are *Washington DC*, *Las Vegas/Lake Meade*, and *Portland, Oregon*. These data disks are SRP'd at \$49.95 each.

Working with both *Flight Simulator 4.0* and *5.0*, Mallard's *Real Weather Pilot* is also debuting. A non-scenery add-on, this program enables computer pilots to experience current weather conditions at almost any U.S. airport, or they can fly through specified or computer-generated weather conditions. You can retrieve the latest weather reports quickly and easily during your flights. Track storms and other frontal systems as well. You can even create your *OWN* weather! The SRP is \$39.95.

Yet another release is *Flight Simulator Flight Shop*. Here you possess a variety of aircraft options and you can build planes from scratch or customize your aircraft. There are also enhanced cockpits. Additionally, you can create your own flight adventures, such as a scavenger hunt that'll test both your flying skills and navigational acumen. The SRP is \$49.95.



The latest title from **Software Sorcery** (619/457-4888) happens to be *Jutland*. On CD-ROM for PC/MS-DOS gamers, this game encompasses World War I naval combat. With digitized sound effects, actual W.W.I. newsreel footage and photos, this game should impress simulation fans and history buffs.

You're transported to a showdown between Germany's Imperial Fleet and the British Royal Navy. You select a command and rank and fight one battle or an entire campaign. Each battle has been fully researched and recreated based on published accounts of W.W.I. But, you can actually change the course of history, or build more ships through the sale of war bonds.

This is the first of a series of simulation and role-playing games on CD-ROM to be developed by the company. The SRP on *Jutland* is \$89.95, which is also available in English, French, German, and Spanish language versions.



Game play—specifically, arcade game play—is highly dependent upon the viability of the I/O device you use to control your on-screen activity. Many gamers within the PC/MS-DOS gaming environment have longed for similar game controls that already populate the SEGA and SNES worlds.

Enter **Triax Technologies** (518/489-7300) with their new *Turbo Touch 360* computer game controller for PC/MS-DOS machines. This device detects subtle motion using a touch sensitive technology called capacitance technology. You simply guide your thumb or index finger across the unit's responsive control sensor plate. You don't have to push down on the control anymore to

control your characters or objects on the computer screen.

The unit offers faster response to your movement demands, far better circle and diagonal control, two action buttons for firing when in turbo mode, and avoidance

of that “Numb Thumb” problem when you play for hours and hours. The SRP is around \$30.00.



Unions 'tween companies may be fruitful, or they may be the biggest headache anyone ever encountered. Hopefully, the latest joint venture between **Paramount Interactive** and **CyberFlix** will be of the former genre.

This is a three year deal, wherein Bill Atkinson's *Jump Raven* and *Lunicus* will be marketed and distributed by Paramount. Additionally, CyberFlix will create a new software title entitled *Viper* that will be based on a new television show being produced by Paramount. We wish 'em well!

• First Impressions •

Stuff that's just arrived! We've ripped open the cellophane and briefly tested the program—here's what we found!



The Patrician
from ReadySoft, Inc.
for PC/MS-DOS

Sure looked interesting, *The Patrician*. Sort of like an extended version of *Pirates* or *Seven*

Cities of Gold. Only this time, the scene of the adventure is Europe, with a couple of centuries to play around with, trading, fighting, and politics.

Unfortunately, the game is sooooo buggy, it's unplayable! I have no idea who managed the beta testing for this title, but they should be severely reprimanded and told to play computer Monopoly for several weeks. What you get is sprites galore, all over your screen. Here a sprite, there a sprite, everywhere a sprite-sprite. Rambling, intrusive, totally destructive of whatever draw routines are supposed to be meandering across your screen.

Forget this puppy!—*Mudgeon*



Shadow Caster
from Origin
for PC/MS-DOS

After Electronic Arts acquired Origin, there were some who questioned the feasibility of such a union. Had not Origin, the publisher of the *Ultima* series, proven themselves to be a premiere publisher of numerous fantasy role-playing games (FRPGs) over the past decade? Now with Electronic Arts looming over them, would the creative juices continue to flow? Would Lord British simply become lost in the crowd of Electronic Arts' in-house and affiliated labels?

Shadow Caster answers that question with a highly positive note. Granted, the game itself is nothing more'n a highly interesting hack-'n-slash fantasy role-playing adventure. But it's the manner in which the game has been constructed that garners it rave reviews from me. Even though the game play is reminiscent of several other FRPGs, *Shadow Caster* brings to light innovation in the way in which your character can *morph* into various metaforms to tackle a variety of adversity. Additionally, there are some powers not seen before in other FRPGs, and some of the hostiles themselves are the most interesting of all the game's features.

Origin's penchant for bringing superb, on-the-fly, texture-mapping to their games, plus a complex plot behind the code, ensures a delightful adventure for anyone who would enjoy a refreshingly different FRPG. Designed by **Raven Software**, *Shadow Caster*'s few drawbacks include only four save game slots, the requirement that you learn how to maneuver your character **quickly** (I found a combination of keyboard and joystick the most efficient method), and a somewhat frustrating time learning how to "open" and "select" items for use in the game. Otherwise, *Shadow Caster* is a purchase I believe most PC/MS-DOS FRPG'ers will thoroughly enjoy!—*Mudgeon*

System requirements

Origin recommends either a 386DX, Intel 486, or 100 percent compatible PC/MS-DOS system with a Microsoft or Logitech mouse driver, plus 16MB of available hard drive space. The game requires MCGA or VGA video card and a minimum of 256K of VRAM. Your computer should have 4MB of RAM, with 550K free base RAM and 3.1MB of total RAM required to start the game.

• Product Perusals •



Featured Adventure Game —PC/MS-DOS—

Cyber Race from Cyberdreams

Recommendation: Errr, maybe!

On the recent success of *Darkseed*, a wonderful game combining the chilling artwork of H.R. Giger (the artistic talent behind the *Alien* film designs), and a gripping story, **Cyberdreams** (818/348-3711) tries to duplicate their winning ways with *CyberRace*. Incorporating Syd Myer's talent, whose credits include the designs and artwork for the films *Tron* and *Blade Runner*, Cyberdreams has attempted to create a futuristic game wherein wars have been replaced by races. You must not only battle for planets, but also for the Terran race. In order to make sure that you do not "leave" the race, politicians have

kidnapped your girlfriend to "encourage" you to do your best.

With an interesting plot, however, the game falls flat on its face. The introduction is full of digitized characters and speech, but the latter is not professionally recorded. One voice was simply echoed several times to create an alien voice that sounds terribly faked.

The acting and the plot are absolutely dreadful. The on-screenactors stay frozen in close-ups, only moving their mouths and eyes, which removes the feeling of realism.

The "plot" is driving your vehicle through races and, between heats, you're given the opportunity to talk to people about sabotaging other vehicles, getting the inside word if anyone has it "in" for you, and buying black market items.

Armed with weapons, shields, and other necessities, you are deposited into your race ship. You gain credits for staying on course, destroying other ships, but you ultimately want to win the race so you can go on to more difficult races.

The cockpit shows your outside view, while other screens display your shield energy, weapons, various camera angles and other miscellaneous information. The display of the planets and various other craft are extremely disappointing. The polygons used are quite bland and not artistic, while the explosions are not done well at all.

Even with my 486/66 MHz machine, the controls were VERY sluggish. I often found the vehicle extremely unresponsive with my Flightstick, and the keyboard commands response wasn't much better. I expected a racing game with fast machines, not a title where it takes forever for it to respond to my commands.

Cool Stuff

- Cool box and cover designs
- Syd Mead's designs incorporated into the game and packaging.

Negative Bits

- Controls highly unresponsive and the simulation runs very slowly.
- Introduction animations and character acting roles were stiff and unprofessional in presentation.
- Graphics not exciting, especially for a game that makes a big deal of the incorporation of Syd Mead's designs.
- The game's install procedure can be hard to follow for beginning users.

Cyberace is a pretty game with a pretty box. Genius created futuristic designs, but beyond that, you're looking at a bland game. Nothing really reaches out and grabs you. Save your money and buy *Darkseed*, Cyberdreams best achievement.
—Blud.

System requirements

A PC/MS-DOS computer with a minimum 20

MHz 386 CPU, 4MB RAM, VGA video board, 20MB of free space on a hard disk drive, and DOS 5.x or above.



Featured Arcade/Action Game —Macintosh— Deliverance from Inline Software Recommendation: Consider before buying!

Finally, the enchanted forest is behind you. It was tough—sentient wood bridges flailed at you, nasty branch-men shot at you trying to live up to their name. However, you prevailed, thanks to your trusty battleaxe!

You decide to take a breather—but don't take too long, because now you have to deal with a huge mechanical spider that's guarding your flying dragon. And that dragon is your only means of getting out of here!

This is just a taste of what *Deliverance* "delivers" to your computer screen, a much anticipated game from **Inline Software** (203/435-4995). The graphics are superb and never before has the Macintosh seen such smooth-scrolling animation, at least in the game's small view window view. Sadly, despite such excellent attention to graphic detail, the game suffers one HUGE limitation—simply put, it's **too** short. You could probably complete the game in a period of five to six hours.

In Deliverance, an evil being named Tnarom attempted to destroy the kingdom of Llyn Cerrig by imprisoning the guardian fairies of that land in his palace. You, as the Storm King, have been chosen to rescue and return the imprisoned fairies to their rightful home. During your journey, you battle Tnarom's evil minions and confront a Guardian at the end of each section of the game. Each guardian has a vulnerable area, but it's up to you to determine where that area is! (Check the Clue Corner for some help).

Cool Stuff

- Flawless animation, even when the screen is occupied with numerous elements, such as enemies and objects.
- Superb graphics—extremely detailed, establishing a daunting game atmosphere.
- Excellent sound effects that enhance the game and adds that special touch of realism. Nice soundtrack in the prologue.
- The game gives access codes after each section of your adventure, so you can resume without having to go through previous locations.
- Ability to save the game, should the need arise.
- You are given a set of 7 opal markers to prevent yourself from becoming lost.
- Controls are simple and can be customized (with 2 exceptions).
- The game has 3 options for graphic detail so you can select the correct one for your machine speed. Even with the most demanding detail, the animation speed is still acceptable.

Negative Bits

- The game is just too short and isn't particularly hard to complete. The opal markers are of little actual use because it's really difficult to get lost.
- The ending scene is somewhat disappointing.
- Low replayability value—once you've completed the game, what else is there to do, other than aim for a new, high score?

Deliverance is fun to play and the animation and graphics are a treat, but the fun is over far too quickly in the span of just a few hours.—Gary "Neo" Le

System requirements

A Macintosh computer running Macintosh System Software v. 6.07 or later, with 4MB or RAM, a hard disk drive, and a color monitor.

Featured Simulation Game **—PC/MS-DOS—** **Silverball from** **MicroLeague International Software** **Recommendation:** **Maybe Yes; Maybe No**

As a long-time pinball aficionado (and trophy holder, I might add), I'm always eager to check out any new pinball game that comes down the pike—particularly one that runs on my PC. (Gotta save those quarters any way you can, right?)

Silverball offers players a choice of four different pinball machines: Fantasy (a Dungeons & Dragons-style game), Blood (vampire theme), Odyssey (Greek mythology), and Snooker Champ (an old-fashioned game with a pool theme).

Customization options enable you to set the number of players (up to four), balls per game (3 or 5), the angle of the machine (high, normal, or low), and to turn the music and sound effects on or off. The music is top-notch. While also good, the sound effects are so muted that you may have difficulty hearing them—particularly if the music is on.

The level of detail in all machines is superb. In order to show a reasonably sized machine, the table scrolls continuously up and down. (You never see the entire machine at one viewing.)

After trying out the four machines, most players will eventually settle on one or two favorites. In my case, that meant playing the Fantasy game almost exclusively. Blood, the vampire game, is filled with ramps, but most balls quickly disappear down the side lanes. Odyssey is interesting, but there are only a few live spots in an otherwise wide open table. Snooker is a fun "blast from the past," but plays like it's 20 years old, too. The bumpers don't have much kick, and the special areas and bonuses are ridiculously difficult to hit.

Fantasy, on the other hand, has plenty of action, as well as attainable specials. And practice pays off. If you play long enough, you can expect regular improvements in your scores. After the first week, my three high games were all above 125 million points.

My biggest complaint concerns the accuracy of the simulations. For several of the machines, they're just too good. That is, you can now be just as badly embarrassed in your own home (playing Silverball) as you can in the arcades. That's what drove me away from the arcades in the first place. The machines added lots of gimmicks, reduced the number of balls, and reset the play criteria so that almost no one ever won. And you know how occasionally a ball will get moving so fast that it just hops over a flipper? In Silverball, when the ball really gets moving, it occasionally jumps right *through* normally solid objects, such as flippers and bumpers. Nice trick...

Cool Stuff

- Not copy protected.
- Excellent music and graphics.
- Four different machines from which to choose.
- Supports both fast and slow PCs.

Negative Bits

- No installation instructions; manual is just a fold-over brochure.
- Sound effects are muted (at least they are with *my* sound card).
- Although you can adjust the angle of any machine, finer adjustments than just "high" or "low" would make the feature more useful.
- When the ball really gets moving, it sometimes passes right through solid objects.

Silverball is not the be-all, end-all of pinball games, but it's definitely worth consideration. It's a good-looking game that will give players a real run for their money.—**Steve Schwartz**

System requirements

PC/MS-DOS computer with 640K RAM with a minimum of 570K free; 2.2MB of hard disk space; supports Sound Blaster, Sound Blaster Pro, and Gravis UltraSound sound cards; VGA; DOS 3.3 or higher.

THE CLUE CORNER & H.E.L.P



Deliverance

- 1) When spiders or any other creature come too close, hack your way through instead of throwing your axes.
- 2) To jump to high ledges, move all the way to the edge (until you're almost about to fall off) and press the jump and direction you want to jump at the same time.
- 3) To defeat the dragon, just keep throwing your axes at it; it will force you to the right, to avoid harm, go to the extreme right and jump when it breathes at you.
- 4) To get pass the machine, jump and hit the ball hanging from the ceiling. To avoid harm, pick up the pattern of explosions on the ground, and time your jumps accordingly.
- 5) To conquer the spider, force it to the right towards the two sparking spheres. It will move right if you hit a certain area a number of times, this area is also the means by which the spider attacks.
- 6) For the last battle, pick up all Cherubs, and practice--the enemies attack in the same sequence each time you play the level, with time you'll quickly be able to anticipate where the enemy will appear.



Shadow Caster

- 1) The player's guide offers you a brief walkthrough with their tutorial. Definitely undertake this training! At the close of the tutorial you should've located a health potion, a fire wand, slain a charging Boleth, and have obtained the power to morph into a Maorin.
- 2) Those mobile Floro's appear to be everywhere in the Garden Ruins. As a Maorin, you'll be most effective in slaying these impediments. However, don't just leave their "remains" on the ground—pick 'em up as they're quite useful in helping to float you across quicksand.
- 3) The nasty Super Boleth can be your downfall as it attacks with electricity! You can avoid the attacks by hiding around a corner and blasting the creep with your weapon (hopefully, a fire wand). Otherwise, don't forget you've got the speed and agility of the Maorin—rush the beastie and slice it to ribbons!
- 4) In the northeast section of the Garden Ruins you *might* find a Shuriken. If you do locate this handy little weapon, it'll inflict 3 to 6 points of damage on your opponents!
- 5) The floating chest isn't very friendly—it'll blast you for serious damage! Try jumping from side to side to avoid its lethal energy bolts. ("1" or "3" if you're into keyboard commands.)
- 6) In the Spider Den (Level 15), standing on the blue Power Pool will restore your powers. However, to get there, you'll need to *somehow* float across the acid.
- 7) If you want the Kahpa metaform, you must get the obelisk tip from the area in the northeast corner of the spider den and then place the tip on the obelisk itself.

8) Yeah, them little spiders are everywhere! If you're wearing your protective armor, you should be OK. Also, remember those Slave Mines and the bombs you found there?

They're *highly* effective against the spiders.
—Mudgeon

Ultima VII: The Black Gate

In the town of Trinsic, go to the Blacksmith's shop that Christopher owned (southwest of the town). Around the wrecked house, gather as many crates as possible and bring them outside. Use them, and others you can find around the town, to build a stairway to the roof. Once on the roof, climb into the chimney. Inside, you'll find the most powerful weapons and armor in the game. There's enough of this good stuff for about seven people. Also, there's a complete spell book with a lot of other goodies.

In the top left corner, there's a small spot with a bright light on it—it's an invisible chest! Make sure you get the password for the town before you enter the chimney, or you'll never get back into the town. The teleporter leads you to various other teleporters. The only one you should use for now is the one with the small, blue carpet.—Paul Chauvet, Rosedale, New York.

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