

## MG: Mudgeon's Distillations

by Mudgeon

Editor's Warning: The following information contains not only information about Macintosh industry news and information, but also information about MS-DOS, 3D0, Genesis, etc. Readers who get squeamish when reading about other non-Mac platforms should skip this section.

### Game Rights Licensed For Coin-op...

Normally, computer and video game publishing companies license titles of successful coin-ops from the arcade manufacturer of said game. Time for the tables to be turned . . . Acclaim has licensed to Williams Electronics the rights to produce a coin-op based on TitanSports' World Wrestling Federation. To be introduced this fall, Acclaim will then release the home video game version after the coin-op hits the arcades. Acclaim owns the rights to the title under an agreement with TitanSports through the year 2000. This isn't the first time Acclaim has licensed properties to coin-op manufacturers. The first was Terminator2: Judgment Day.

### Titan Forges Ahead With Acclaim...

Ahhh, two stories on Acclaim to head up this issue! 'ppears Sega has selected Acclaim to be the first U.S. interactive entertainment software publisher to use the former company's proprietary Titan architecture technology to create games for Sega's platforms and coin-ops; the recently announced Genesis Super 32X and the not-yet-debut-but-enroute-shortly SATURN. This agreement has Acclaim developing coin-op titles using the Titan hardware system technology and their own motion capture technology called Duel.

For those who haven't heard, Titan is an arcade video game system that incorporates three of Hitachi's most advanced 32-bit RISC chips. This results in advanced 3D computer graphics and realistic audio. Sega's technology also enables game programmers to transfer their titles to other Sega platforms as well.

### NBA Stars To Save Your Screens...

Accolade (408/985-1700) is releasing their first collection of wallpaper Screen Savers. These new titles feature Charles Barkley and Jack Nicklaus. Each one helps to extend the life of your monitor. Also, five percent of each sale of these two products will go to The Nature Conservancy to help protect endangered plants, animals, and their habitats.

The Barkley screen savers are as intimidating as Sir Charles himself. Twenty-two shots

feature the most dominating basketball player alive. You'll catch him slamming down a thunder dunk or getting in an opponent's face.

Jack Nicklaus is both a legendary golfer and a legendary golf course designer. These incredible screens take you on a dazzling tour of championship courses designed by the pro, plus caddie-close shots of the master in action.

You need Microsoft Windows 3.1, a 256-color VGA monitor and approximately 1.6 MB of disk space for the first collection and about 900K for each subsequent set. All are After Dark™ compatible.

### [Right On Target!](#)

Alliance Interactive Software, Inc. (305/423-4289) has inked a publishing agreement with Bullseye Software, a developer of Macintosh entertainment titles. The latter company's most recent development effort was Valkyrie, a helicopter sim published by GameTek.

The Bullseye titles will now be published by Alliance as part of that company's Digital Illusions Classic Series. Offerings include P51 Mustang, a classic W.W.II dogfight game that takes place over Europe; Ferrari Grand Prix, a racing sim that enables you to race 7 cars on 16 courses as well as design your own racing course; Fokker Triplane, a W.W.II combat sim where you dogfight in 9 missions; and Splat'ers, a 3-D paintball world where you can compete against as many as 15 other computer players to retrieve flags hidden in 10 floors of an underground "battlefield." Pricing for these titles range from \$24.99 to \$34.99.

### [More Super Pinball Coming To Mac...](#)

AMTEX (613/967-7900) has added Royal Flush™ to the company's titles within their Pinball Classics Collection of pinball sims. Set to debut this summer, Royal Flush is based on the arcade release from premier arcade game manufacturer D. Gottlieb & Company. There are no whistles and bells with this title, just good old fashioned pinball. Shoot the Joker, King and Queen drop targets to acquire the perfect poker hand. Be careful to line up your shot correctly, or you'll miss your hand. With five balls per player, and as many as four players possible, this game requires true pinball skill. The SRP is \$49.95 and the title requires a Mac with 256 colors or gray shades, 4 MB of RAM and Macintosh System Software v. 6.0.7 or higher.

### [Pathways Turned Into Fat App...](#)

Bungie Software (312/563-0545) has announced they will be shipping a version of Pathways Into Darkness written specifically for PowerPC Macintosh. There will be new features that take advantage of the computer's RISC-based speed. In addition to texture-mapped walls, the title will texture map the floors and ceilings and frame rates have jumped to over 30 frames per second (fps). These enhancements increased the size of the title by only 180K.

Pathways Into Darkness will be shipping as a "fat app" with both 68K-based Macintosh and PowerPC processor-based Mac compatibility in the same application. The packaging will sport a Power Macintosh computer compatibility sticker for identification. An update application will be available to registered users via electronic bulletin boards or through the mail for a nominal shipping charge.

### [Compton Strikes Out!](#)

The US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), during its re-examination process, has rejected all of Compton's 41 claims in the controversial NewMedia multimedia patent hearing. The USPTO rejected most of the claims in the patent based upon the submission of The Hypercard Handbook and several previous examples of prior art that precluded the validity of claims in the Compton's patent. Naturally, the Interactive Multimedia Association

(IMA) is delighted with the decision.

The IMA would like to see new procedures including better trained examiners in the section of the USPTO reviewing software patent applications, an improved software prior art database available to patent examiners and the public, and pre-grant publication of patent applications, which would open the patent process to public view. For more info regarding the IMA, contact Ken Christie at 410/626-1380.

### [Gurps Now Licensed...](#)

Ahhh, there are many among us familiar with GURPS, the Generic Universal Role-Playing System from Steve Jackson Games. First developed in 1968 by Steve as a paper and pencil system that made true role-playing possible, it has garnered a huge following, making it one of the most popular RPG systems in the entire world.

The neat aspect about GURPS were the generic rules that enabled anyone to create a role-playing experience in a universe you designed yourself. Rules established through the GURPS system then enabled interaction with other players and non-player characters (NPCs) in the universe. Steve's company, publishing games since 1980, has won 12 Origin awards, which are the Oscars of the gaming industry.

Now Interplay (714/553-6655) has licensed this system and will use GURPS to create a development engine that can be modified into any role-playing universe they need, from horror to a wild west theme. Can't wait to see their first title.

### [Photo Surrealistic Adventure Moves To Windows...](#)

Luminaria (415/821-0536) has debuted the Windows version of Wrath of the Gods, a CD-ROM adventure game that brings Greek myth to life. First released on the Macintosh, the unique look of the game was created using production techniques that combine motion video, special effects, graphics and high resolution still photos.

In the course of 40 hours of game time, players embark on a journey through dozens of interactive adventures based on the exploits of Greek heroes . . .as well as facing challenges such as the many-headed Hydra, navigating the Labyrinth of the Minotaur, and stealing the Golden Fleece from a fire-breathing dragon. There is digital video of 60 actors in full costume, with more than 300 backgrounds collaged from original photos of Greece.

The visual style of the game is enhanced by an audio track that features original music. Game play is non-linear. As players acquire appropriate inventory, they can roam the extensive terrain at will, encountering numerous live-action characters, nightmarish monsters, and entertaining puzzles and dilemmas. An animated Oracle offers clues in exchange for points from the player's score. The SRP is \$69.95 and the game will be distributed by Maxis.

### [Strong Sales Garner Success...](#)

Maxis (510/254-9700) is reporting that SimCity 2000 has been hugely successful for the company. Since the title's release four months ago, in both PC/MS-DOS and Macintosh formats, sales have reached MORE THAN 300,000 units! What phenomenal figures!

Additionally, the company is now developing a version of SimCity 2000 that is optimized to take advantage of the increased speed and performance of Apple Computer's Power Macintosh. The native version of SimCity 2000 is scheduled to be released in the second quarter of this year and is expected to run two to three times faster in native RISC mode than on the 68K machines. No pricing or upgrade path pricing has yet been announced.



### [Killer Stuff?](#)

The R4000 RISC is gonna be the heart of Nintendo's new 64-bit game system, the one they're developing with Silicon Graphics. Now, Nintendo has lined up the first developer for their new platform. It's WMS Industries, and they're going to create a title called Killer Instincts. They describe this as a futuristic 3D fighting game. It should appear in video arcades later this year and on the Project Reality home entertainment system in 1995. Other titles may be developed under additional contracts.

You might recall that the deal Nintendo recently cut with WMS Industries involving Mortal Kombat and NBA Jam hacked and hewed Acclaim's stock, which lost 25 percent of its value when this deal was announced at the end of March. The reason? Acclaim's revenues for those two titles total more than 50 percent of the company's projected revenues of around 450 million for this fiscal year. Acclaim does, however, retain the right to market and distribute any version of RELEASED WMS games until March of next year.

Now that we've got you focused on WMS, it sort of figures that they have news of their own. After all, when the chairman of Viacom Inc. invests enough for a 25 percent stake in the company, that's a sign of significant life ahead for the firm. WMS is also expected to purchase Tradewest for around \$15 million or so, with that company's design staff becoming the core of the company's new subsidiary named Williams Entertainment, Inc.

### [New Ultima Series Now Shipping...](#)

Origin (512/335-5200) is now shipping Ultima VIII: Pagan, the long-awaited release that continues the longest-running and one of the most successful series of role-playing games in the entertainment software industry. As with each successively numbered ULTIMA, Pagan offers all-new technology and a new look. A 45-degree angle view on the world gives it 3-D depth. The main character of the Avatar is larger than before. With an almost 100-fold increase in animation, his movements have been expanded from simple walking to fighting to leaping, climbing, and even throwing.

Pagan also features a far deeper level of player interaction with the world, with twice the amount of artwork for objects that the Avatar can see, pick up, and use. Four-channel digitized sound allows multiple sound effects to play simultaneously. An optional Speech Accessory Pack (sold separately) adds digitized speech for certain characters and animated sequences.

For the first time, Ultima players are thrust into a world other than the familiar Britannia. The Avatar has been banished to the strange land of Pagan by his nemesis, the Guardian. Here, elemental titans representing Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water hold dominion over the world and its inhabitants. The Avatar must forge relationships, solve a series of quests, and vanquish a bizarre host of creatures if he ever hopes to escape and save Britannia as well as the Guardian's next target—Earth itself.

The SRP is \$79.95, and the Speech Pack is \$24.95. Required is at least a 386/33 with 4MB RAM and 29MB of hard drive space.

### [Acquisitions Abound...](#)

The feeding frenzy continues as the big financial megacorps swallow successful companies involved in multimedia entertainment (read GAMES and EDUTAINMENT). The latest company to achieve the pinnacle of acquisition is none other than The Software Toolworks (TST) in Marin County, California. A more than \$460 million deal now puts Pearson PLC of the United Kingdom as the acquirer of TST--and their stock reflected the acquisition, jumping to 14-5/8 from 10, with 16 million shares changing hands. Nice move by Pearson, nice bucks for TLS. The only condition is that over 50 percent of the shares must be tendered. The offer is for all of the 29-1/2 million shares of stock.

Pearson, with market capitalization of around 3-1/2 billion, is an international media group. Holdings include over 100 regional newspapers in the United Kingdom, The Financial Times, as well as 50 percent ownership of The Economist and newspaper interests in Canada and Spain. More well known are the company's ownership of Addison-Wesley and the ownership of Thames Television, the largest UK independent producer of TV programs. At first light, this appears to be a sweet deal for both Pearson and The Software Toolworks

A well-known game company has decided to go after some specialized painting processes and digital inking technologies by acquiring METROCEL ANIMATION STUDIO. The new owner is 7TH LEVEL INC., known for their edutainment and entertainment titles.

### [Splash Makes A Splash...](#)

For five years, Patrick Ford and Jack Turk worked at Microsoft and established the Multimedia PC (MPC) standard as well as the Multimedia Extension for Windows. They've now left that company and have started their own company, SPLASH (206/836-2769). They plan to develop and publish interactive multimedia titles for entertainment and education markets, with family entertainment their focus. The new company is based in Redmond, Washington.

### Unbonding...

Much of Strategic Simulation Inc.'s (SSI) sales volume has been produced through their licensed line of AD&D™ games with TSR, Inc.. Pools of Radiance, Dark Sun, Eye of the Beholder--these are all series that have garnered a loyal following of computer gamers. But all was not happy within the SSI camp--the TSR-license was far too restrictive and hampered title creativity and design. Sooooo, off goes SSI in one direction, and TSR in the other. There are a couple of titles SSI will continue to produce within the TSR framework. Rumor has it that TSR, the mega-publishing company responsible for AD&D 1st and 2nd editions, D&D, and a broad range of game modules and other gaming systems, will produce their own software titles. A major announcement is expected from TSR to be delivered at the June Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago.

### [Little Bits of IMPORTANT Stuff...](#)

◦ Acclaim's Q2 is looking pretty good! The company is reporting quarterly revenues of \$116 million and a net income of \$11 million. That's better'n the \$72 million and \$5 million, respectively, reported for the same quarter last year. Guess the Mortal Kombat news hasn't hurt as much as folk might have thought!

◦ More Acclaim news involves their acquisition of Voyager Communications, who publish Valiant Comics. The deal is for around \$65 million plus some common stock. Don't expect Acclaim to sit on their newly acquired titles.

◦ Paramount Interactive has signed their first international partnership—they're now have a licensing agreement with NEC in Japan. NEC'll be able to localize and distribute Lenny's MusicToons, a musical cartoon adventure for PCs.

◦ Sega's TITAN technology continues to be the focus of much industry speculation. 64-bit technology . . .wow! Now word has leaked that Acclaim is gonna be the very first U.S. company to use this proprietary technology. Quite an accomplishment.

◦ As packing silicon becomes more and more feasible, cost-effective, and possible, now Creative Technologies has managed to jam the circuitry required for their Sound Blaster Pro 16 and Sound Blaster Pro PC sound boards onto a single chip. Expect delivery later this year.

◦ Interplay is cracking knuckles as code flies for Star Trek: Starfleet Academy. Based on the

original Star Trek series, you get the opportunity to become a Star Fleet officer and train the way Kirk and Spock trained. See if you can better their record!

◦ Nintendo is none too pleased with their European sales! It appears as though there'll be about a 40 percent decline in current profit because earnings will be over 20 billion yen less than the company had previously forecast

◦ Now that MicroProse has become part of the Spectrum HoloByte fold, all role-playing game development has allegedly ended. Additionally, sims like Sid Mier's Civilization and Railroad Tycoon may no longer be forthcoming from the MicroProse team. The adventure game tool kit MicroProse used to create original graphic adventures has now been purchased by Sanctuary Woods which makes sense, considering Matt Gruson and Ted Markley (who designed the tool kit) have also moved to Sanctuary Woods. Rumor has it that the tool kit will be used to create a new 1930's adventure game based upon Robert Ripley and his Believe It Or Not.

◦ No matter your opinion regarding the government's overbearing attempts to censor video games (guess you can figure out where I'm standing on the issue), appears as though 12 companies have decided fighting a stupid law isn't worth it . . .they've formed the Interactive Digital Software Association and one of their charters is to form a ratings system for such entertainments. Another bending of individual rights to agencies that themselves are rich with stupidity and ignorance.

◦ Broderbund Software has negated the coming merger with Electronic Arts. The recent fall in price of Electronic Arts common stock is given as the "public" root cause for the dissolution of this marriage. Perhaps, as with Rosanne and Tom, other factors may be at play--perhaps a ploy to bump up interest elsewhere--perhaps a method to increase perception of company and titles--perhaps even a way by which face is saved by both companies. Private rumor has it that Broderbund was non-too pleased with the manner in which they felt Electronic Arts might handle their titles. Many in the industry feel this was a smart move by Broderbund--their stock certainly indicated a positive perception to this announcement as it jumped up nearly seven points!

◦ As we indicated in Inside Games Update about six weeks ago, problems seemed rampant within Commodore International Limited. With fewer than 200 folk occupying their Pennsylvania location, and sales dipping, the end appeared to be in sight for this personal computer manufacturer. Their Amiga 2000, Amiga 4000, and Amiga CD-32 offered high hopes for those involved in graphically-rich environments, such as games and multimedia. In fact, an entire product based on the Amiga platform made its founders millionaires in studio special effects--Toaster. Now the company has officially called it quits, out of business. No word as who might continue to offer technical support for this platform.

◦ A favorable ruling from the Federal District Court in San Francisco is certainly pleasing to Cardinal Technologies. They had been the recipient of a suit filed against them by Creative Technology and that company's subsidiary, Creative Labs. The court has ruled that Cardinal may continue to use the terminology "Sound Blaster compatible" on the Digital SoundPro series of sound cards. Cardinal sells these units to OEMs as well as to the retail channel.

◦ An exclusive bundling deal has been signed between Accolade and Interplay. The agreement gives Interplay the right to OEM all Accolade CD-ROM and PC games in North America. The first title to fall within this agreement will be Accolade's All-Star Sports Collection, a CD-ROM featuring products from company's Sport Accolade line.

◦ Big bucks should be pouring into video game and software entertainment publisher Electro



Brain International Corp. Seems as though TelAssist Enterprises has signed a Letter of Agreement with the company to invest as much as \$17 million over the next year or so, through the purchase of common stock. The initial investment is \$4 million.

◦ Kesmai, producer of online, interactive games, appears to be headed for acquisition by News Corporation. This means subscribers to Delphi Internet Services would eventually be able to play Kesmai games on that service.

◦ Media Vision had reported a profit for the last quarter of 1993. Now, however, after two executives have resigned and an over 10-percent staff reduction announced, the company has reported an actual loss for that period.

◦ Many questions still remain regarding Nintendo's "Virtual Reality" 32-bit game that supposed to enter the Japanese market in the spring of 1995. With a SRP of less than \$200, the entrance of such a product could be quite significant . . . yet try to learn about the specs of the unit and you run into a wall of fog. Rumor has it that the VR machine could be either a hand-held device, or a table-top unit. With it's own LCD viewing screen, it is definitely cart-based. Surprising for an alleged VR device is the fact that, apparently, no goggles or HMDs are included in the unit. There you have it--what we know, you now know!

◦ PowerFest(TM) '94 is on its way. Nintendo is launching the largest video competition ever held in the United States. The goal? Within six months, to locate the best video game player! The competitions are scheduled to be held through November of this year. Competition will take place in three-day events, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm on Sundays, scheduled in a number of cities. More than half-a-million players are expected to participate, with more than \$1 million in prizes offered. A specially designed, five-minute SNES 16-bit cartridge featuring some of Nintendo's most popular games will comprise the hardware used for the competition. The top ten scorers from each three-day event will be invited back at 2:45 in the afternoon for a playoff to determine who will go to the finals. For more information on PowerFest dates and locations, call Nintendo customer service at 800/255-3700.

◦ Sega is also active in the joint agreement arena, as well. Now Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) has announced a deal with Sega to create new interactive media titles, TV programs, and titles for movies. Seems as though Hollywood is really starting to become enamored with the way video game and software entertainment publishers produce their wares, and now they want their piece of the action as well. Called a non-exclusive pact, brands and games adorned with the brands from both companies might see release in the 1995 to 1996 timeframe. The titles are planned for the Sega CD, Super 32X and Saturn hardware platforms.

◦ May 2, 1994 is a big day for Spectrum HoloByte. The Pacific Stock Exchange has announced that options trading on this company will start at the opening of business on that date.

◦ Having successfully survived the Paramount takeover wars, Viacom is producing its first video game. Called Rocko, this game is based on the cartoon character and is designed for SNES and is being coded through Viacom's New Media division.

◦ Warner Brothers Consumer Products and Acclaim Entertainment have entered into a pact wherein Batman Forever, the third Batman film starring Michael Keaton, will lead Acclaim's entry into the coin-op arcade market next year. Also, this film will headline several Acclaim interactive entertainment titles for leading home video game cart and CD-ROM systems next year. Under this agreement, Acclaim will develop the coin-op arcade game as well as the software for the home video systems. The coin-op title will be developed using Sega's

proprietary Titan hardware system technology and Acclaim's motion capture technology. Under a separate agreement, Sega is slated to publish software based on this film for their Genesis Super 32x and Saturn hardware platforms.

◦ A lawsuit has been filed in Federal District Court in Los Angeles by Yamaha Corporation of Japan against many sound board manufacturers and distributors. Yamaha alleges patent infringement by these companies in the use of silicon for sound generation.

◦ For those who want to know everything, be advised that the ministry of Electronics Industry in China has "officially" endorsed PowerPC as a critical technology.