

# resident's Letter

by Andrew Welch

Andrew Welch and his

trusty steed

Andrew has been pretty busy lately fine tuning Apeiron for its late summer release, so instead of a President's Letter we are going to substitute an interview. This should serve as a good foundation for future interaction with Ambrosia's fearless leader. We welcome any comments or questions about Ambrosia or Andrew Welch and will address them in future issues of The Ambrosia Times.

Ambrosia Times: Andrew, you are at a pretty advanced stage of developing, both in your actual programming as well as the business side of things. How long has it taken you to get here, and how did you get started on this particular path?

Andrew Welch: Thanks for the praise John. No, you still can't have a raise.

I actually stumbled into programming quite accidentally. Years ago I used to write fiction quite often, but I didn't have a word processor on my old Apple II+ machine. So being a good American, I wrote myself one.

Ambrosia Times: How did you go about the transition from Andrew Welch single developer to Andrew Welch company director? Was this a smooth transition and what were/are the pluses & minuses involved?

Andrew Welch: I decided that I wanted to marry quality support systems to quality software products, so it was necessary to approach the whole business side professionally.

It certainly has been a learning experience, but I've been kind of schizophrenic of late, juggling both the programming and business decisions.

All in all, I'm very pleased with the progress we've made, and have only high hopes for the future.

Ambrosia Times: Why did you choose to concentrate on shareware instead of putting your talents to work in more traditional aspects of the programming industry?

Andrew Welch: I've done commercial software before, but I found that I was interested in having more control over my projects than that offered. In addition, I firmly believe that electronic distribution of software is an idea whose time will come soon, if it hasn't already.

Ambrosia Times: How is the introduction of eWorld going to affect Ambrosia as a company and you as a developer?

Andrew Welch: We're excited that Ambrosia is going to have a support forum on eWorld, similar to the forum we currently maintain on America Online. The more accessible we are to the folks who use our software the better!

eWorld?

Ambrosia Times: Where are you from, and what brought you here ( Geographically).

Andrew Welch: Born and raised in New England (Connecticut actually), and looking forward to moving to warmer climates! (Cajun, how's that beach-side office in Hawaii looking?)

I went to college in Ithaca, NY for two years, then transferred up to the Rochester Institute of Technology—I don't know what I was thinking. All my life I've kept moving more and more northerly!

Ambrosia Times: Are you responsible for the artwork and sounds that went into Chiral & Maelstrom?

Andrew Welch: I'm responsible for a number of the sounds in Chiral & Maelstrom, and we also licensed a number of the sound effects from sound collections like Killer Tracks and various other sound CD's. A few talented friends helped out with the sound effects as well, such as the "Ren & Stimpy" imitations in Maelstrom.

The artwork in Maelstrom was done by Ian Gilman, and Mark W. Lewis, and I think they did one heck of a job. The artwork in Chiral was again done by

Mark W. Lewis, with a few pieces done by myself as well.

Ambrosia Times: What is Apeiron, and when can we expect to see it?

Andrew Welch: Apeiron is a new game I'm currently working on... I hope it'll please folks who are interested in fast action shooters. You can expect to see it today John; but it won't be released publicly until there is a bunch more work done on it. I'd say a late July release would be nice, but no promises.

Ambrosia Times: Well, we are all looking forward to it. Have you, or do you plan to, translate any of your programs over to a DOS environment?

Andrew Welch: Nope.

Ambrosia Times: At RIT you studied photography. Has your background in photography helped with your programming?

Andrew Welch: They are both very creative processes where you create a finished "work" that is publicly distributed and critiqued. Some of the crits I've had in my photog classes toughened my skin a bit, which is helpful.

In addition, the visual training I recieved has helped me immensely in designing what I consider to be attractive software and user interfaces.

Ambrosia Times: When did your Harley Davidson come into your life?

Andrew Welch: A little over a year ago. I love my 1990 Low Rider Sport like there is no tomorrow. Rains a bit too much in Rochester for our taste though.

Ambrosia Times: What is your favorite video game?

Andrew Welch: Definitely Civilization from Microprose. It has just the right mix of approachability and depth: it'll suck you right in and keep your attention for hours on end. In fact I blame Civilization for the length of time it has taken to get a new game out there...

Ambrosia Times: What are your views on the new PowerPC technology? Are you "going Native."

Andrew Welch: We will be going PowerPC native in products where it makes sense (as soon as we get a PowerPC that is). When designing a fast-action video game, you have to be very sensitive to the speed it runs at.

People will be playing games like Maelstrom on LC's, and if the game

performs like a dog, it severely detracts from the gameplay. I highly optimize the software I write, doing the time intensive code in assembler, which means that a direct “port” to the PowerPC is impossible.

The good news is that since we try to make sure our games will run well on the low end 680x0 Macs, it’ll run great under emulation (in fact I heard that Maelstrom was used to test the speed of the PowerPC emulator, since it uses very few Toolbox routines).

For other software, such as our screen saver Eclipse, going native is a definite, and I consider it to be very important. I’ll likely rewrite it in the translation.

Ambrosia Times: What would be the three key things for other shareware authors to keep in mind?

Andrew Welch:

1. Write quality software.
2. Make it easy for people to register.
3. Provide good support.

Ambrosia Times: Who is Hector D. Byrd?

Andrew Welch: Hector is our beloved African Grey Parrot—the resident heckler of the office, and as one of the Ambrosia crew (who shall remain nameless) puts it, he’s a “glorified pigeon.”

Cheers,

Andrew Welch