

January

COLLABORATORS

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Chapter 1

January

1.1 main

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"One Step Above Excellence"

Dark Unicorn Dispatch Newsletter - January Edition
 "An Entertaining and Informative Look Into The Amiga and CD32."
 In The New HyperMedia Format!

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1.3 intro

Welcome to the new *monthly* hypermedia edition of the Dark Unicorn Productions Newsletter; your monthly source for the -ultimate- Amiga rush for those of you who just gotta have it! <wink> This issue is a first for us using the hot AmigaGuide format complete with graphic images! Future editions may even have sound and music! For those of you who have been keeping tabs on us, thanks for your interest! We are doing everything we can to keep the excitement of the Amiga alive for you by publishing this newsletter as well as consistently bringing you high quality software at an affordable price. Blah blah blah ... Enough of the product plugging; on with the editorial.

As strange as it may seem, the Amiga is more alive today than it EVER was when Commodore was at the helm. Although parts and systems are getting harder and harder to get and more and more Amiga-doom-and-gloomers sing death songs, THE AMIGA IS SURVIVING! Lots of people thought that developers would just yank out and run for PC compatibles (like NEWTEK; BOO!) but it seems to be just the opposite. Hardware, software, and support are still abound and more is coming for our beloved machine. Dealers are still making money (no thanks to Commodore, right?) and selling product (like my good friends at Intelligent Machines in Orlando, Florida! hi guys). Publishing houses are releasing their best productivity titles like Final Writer II and FinalData. Game houses are developing goodies like Super Stardust, Mega Race, and Tower Assault. Projects once thought abandoned or never to be such as Mortal Kombat II, Aladdin, The Lion King, and the new hit arcade game Primal Rage are all being converted for the Amiga platform. This 'recession' is actually bringing the Amiga community more good than bad. Mostly, I think, because Amiga users are starting to better support the developers. If you show the company a willingness to buy, they will show a willingness to create. 'Where there is a market there is a way' as some businessmen say. More users are buying from their local dealers, keeping them in business. This is the way it should be. Keep up the good work.

Regardless of who wins the bid for the Amiga technologies, we will still have hope. All parties interested are going to relaunch the Amiga and CD32

market immediately. Development for the next generation machines are already in the works by both parties.

At this time of writing, Commodore U.K. plans to move the Amiga to a 64-Bit RISC chipset technology. According to David Pleasance, the AAA chip set is a no-go simply because, although it is completed, there is no operating system for it thus at least another year to get it out, even with a large group of Amiga techies working on it. Pleasance also promises a CD64, the new generation incarnation of the CD32, U.K.s most popular game machine.

The CD64 (might want to change the name to avoid confusion with C64) will "run circles" around the new yet unreleased Sega Saturn and Nintendo's Project Reality. We hope so, David!

Last issue I expressed a concern that Microsoft may be looking to pry the Amiga from Commodore's cold dead fingers. Well, I still cannot substantiate the idea, but I still believe in it. As I mentioned last issue, the other runner for the Amiga technologies is Creative Equipment International (CEI) the Amiga's largest third party seller of Amiga products in the U.S. They have a mysterious silent partner that is rumored to be worth 'billions'. Coupled with the rumor of Microsoft writing a version of WORD for the Amiga and Microsoft giving CBM's liquidation some serious press in their 'in-house' magazine and you create some interesting speculation. See last issue for more. Just in before this text 'went to press' ... I recent had the pleasure of attending a real time conference with Alex Amor, leader of CEI, on the GENie network (the full capture is available on Tombstone) and I heard a lot of things I certainly didn't care to hear. Alex said that CEI had partners that were eager to apply the Amiga technology in other applications and that CEI had agreed to this. The mention of an Amiga in a PC was also mentioned. Being frightened at the thoughts I expressed above, I blatantly ask Alex if Microsoft was backing CEI. His initial response was "Excuse me, that was Bill on the phone :)" Then he replied "Due to the nature of the beast, we cannot disclose our partners ...". Any of you people worried yet? :(

Don't you all find it interesting that games are going back to their roots? Look at the hot games today: Super Stardust, Guardian, Banshee, etc. Now look at their elderly counterparts: Asteroids, Defender, and 1942. Even the PC is going back to basics like Lode Runner and Archon. I guess people are just tired of glitz and want to get back to the REAL reason you buy games; to PLAY them, not watch them. Although DRAGON'S LAIR was a miracle arcade game in its day, its staying power and popularity was very small. Even now, IT is being brought back to the home. The consoles are no exception either. Donkey Kong, Space Invaders, and endless other games are being brought back for the new generation. I saw Space Invaders for the Game Boy being SHAMELESSLY advertised on television like it was some kind of brand new idea! Then again I shouldn't be surprised. Most people will believe anything you tell them (probably why there are so many PC users in the world). For example, Atari actually has people believing that the Jaguar is a 64-bit game console (it isn't) and look at its most popular game- TEMPEST.

Well, there you have at least part of the philosophy that DUP believes; playability beyond glitz. And if you can get the glitz too, so much the better! Long live the games and long live the Amiga.

- Shane R. Monroe

Dark Unicorn Productions

1.4 coming

Coming Attractions

As usual, we will start this page with the standard update on the Dark Unicorn Productions projects, then take a look at the latest and greatest games and programs coming to an Amiga near you!

Dark Unicorn Productions - Update

Good news, loyal DUP customers! DUP now has its own support areas on the on-line service GENie! Yup, we now have our own file areas, message areas, and we even host real time conferences now. Now we can be closer to our valued customers and you can be closer to us. Please feel free to drop in a spell.

DUP has now taken up Better Concepts, Inc. as our official distributors of the registered versions of our games. Soon, you will be able to buy all our products (with the exception of Scorched Tanks, available from Northwest PD) from them. Look for advertisements in Amiga World SOON!

Here is a progress update on the DUP projects currently in development. Included are the names of the coders as well. You may download a DUP PROMO demo from Tombstone or GENie that shows screen snapshots and information from all our new games! The last issue of the Dispatch contains more detailed descriptions of each program.

TOMCAT (John Graham) - The final version of TOMCAT is complete! You may purchase it from us for \$15. This is the Amiga's first full motion video game without a CD-ROM! Fly your Tomcat against air, land, and sea targets. All *real* video action. Two megabyte playable preview available from Tombstone BBS or any other good BBS. Look for a full review of this game in the January edition of AMIGA WORLD as well as some more information about DUP!

IT'S THE PITS! (Kit Felice) - Progress slow but sure. The first couple of stages are completed and things are really shaping up. Quite a playable game. I think you will all like it. Basically a multi-stage arcade adventure game with a 3D tunnel flight/combat and more.

SCORCHED TANKS V1.85/90 (Michael Welch) - Ah, yes! The long awaited upgrade to the 1.77 version, this tank artillery game has 10 new weapons, much improved 64 color terrain, better graphics, some little enhancements, some new music, and more. (A seriously cool DUP intro too!) It should be available on Tombstone and GENie by the time you read this. Come get the Shareware version on Tombstone or GENie or purchase the full version for only \$12 from Northwest Public Domain.

FLYING TIGERS (Seumas McNally) - The helicopter arcade simulation game is coming along quickly!!! Who knows? It may even be out by the time you read this. Seumas has added tons of goodies, artificially intelligent wingmen, cool explosions, etc, etc. It is in alpha testing now. He keeps adding more and more stuff. Amazing. This will be a classic. First of

our games to support the CD32 controller! Whee! More news on Tombstone as it is available.

FLEET COMMANDER (Shane R. Monroe) - This game got put on hold for a couple weeks while I was waiting for the Turbo Extension for AMOS to come in. Since it is not readily available, I have resumed coding. It is about 65% complete (coding) and about two-fifths of the video shooting is done. Working on a very good combat system to please everyone. I think you will approve. It will not be making the December release date (running DUP is getting VERY time consuming :), but look for a playable preview mid-January.

A hearty welcome to Eric Gieseke (a.k.a. SIDEWINDER) our newest member here at Dark Unicorn Productions. Eric, as you probably all know, is one of the premier musicians on the Amiga. You have heard his stuff in numerous music mods, some games (Scorched Tanks being one of them), and around. Hopefully he will add to the musical quality of our programs! :) We're glad to have you aboard!

Commercial Software - Update

Oh yes! It is going to be a great year for the Amiga in terms of software from commercial companies. Let's take a look at some of the big titles coming soon.

MORTAL KOMBAT II - Yup, just when the whole world thought that Acclaim had dropped development for the Amiga (beginning with this hot arcade conversion) out comes Probe Software with the announcement that not only is Mortal Kombat II going to be crossed to the Amiga, but that the conversion is done! Those die hard game fans of this brutal and bloody sequel to the original MK will be happy to know that all the fatalities, friendships, babalities, etc. will be in the Amiga version. The best part is, is that it is not AGA, but uses EHB for 64 wicked colors! The game is filled with all the goodies of the original including pit/spike fatalities, hidden characters, etc. As usual, all the speech was left in the game, however the music in this version suffers compared to the original MK for the Amiga. Other obvious deficiencies: the shapeshifting SHANG TSUNG character cannot morph into ANY player in the game, only the opposing character; the backgrounds (as cool as they) are NOT animated. In defense of the game, however, the attention to graphic detail is amazing. The characters are all very clean and the action is BLAZING fast, regardless of processor. A first class job. One word to Probe and Virgin; CD32 would be an OPTIMUM platform for this game, since the six button controller would make it FAR easier to play than a single button one. Plus, the CD would make for awesome sound and storage of lots of good animation. C'mon, hook us up!

THE LION KING - Disney seems to be supporting the Amiga as well through Virgin Interactive, the software company that has brought us such goodies as Aladdin and Cool Spot. The latest offering is the stunning platform adventure game The Lion King. This is like playing a cartoon. The animation is rich, sound, and VERY smooth. Although the game play is more or less of the standard platform genre, the game truly shines in aesthetics. The music is almost CD quality and the attention to detail is remarkable. From the way the little lion can just barely grab the ledge and try to scramble up it (a la Prince of Persia) to the butterflies he plays with if you remain still for too long, the thought and time put into

this game is awesome. Now, again, I am patiently awaiting the CD32 version. This game is available as an AGA title only.

PRIMAL RAGE - Those of you who read my texts know that I am somewhat of a bloodthirsty kind of guy (only games and movies, folks, not for real) so you can imagine my delight when I discovered that this new incredibly gory arcade game from ATARI (figure that) will be available for the Amiga in the early part of 1995. I would imagine that the JAGUAR console will get it first, but who knows? We all know that the Jag has crappy frame rates even though the graphics are pretty clean. Anyway, for those of you who haven't made it to your local arcade lately, Primal Rage is like Mortal Kombat with dinosaurs. The graphics are just down right unbelievable and are at an incredible frame rate which makes playing the game like being in JURRASIC PARK. Attention to detail and gore are amazing right down to the caveman worshippers that tend to get underfoot (and subsequently eaten or crushed) while fighting. It is bloody good fun and as the other games of this type you have to have a dictionary sized manual full of all the special moves to play it properly. This release is intended for the CD32 also.

Naturally, there are tons of other commercial releases coming as well. Here is a quick peek at the programs recently released or are coming soon.

AMIGA ECS/AGA

Theme Park (AGA/ECS)	Bubbles and Squeak
Ishar III (AGA)	On The Ball
World Cup USA '94	Dream Web (AGA/ECS)
Sensible Golf (AGA/ECS)	Sensible World Soccer (AGA)
Dawn Patrol (AGA/ECS)	Pinball Illusions (AGA/ECS)
Gulp!	Mr. Blobby
Lords of the Realm	High Sea Trader
Big Sea	Kingdoms of Germany
KTM Motocross	Lemmings III
Troll Islands	All Terrain Racing
Battle Isle II (AGA)	NHL Hockey
PGA Euro Tour	Shaq Fu
Putty Squad	Out To Lunch
Jungle Book (AGA)	Super Stardust (AGA)
Breach 3	Castle Conquest
Dark Stone	Dragon Stone
Field of Glory	Hannibal
Police Quest III	Robinson Requiem
Realms	Ruff & Tumble
Mighty Max (AGA)	Skeleton Krew (AGA)
Top Gear 2 (ECS/AGA)	Magic Carpet (AGA)
Aladdin (AGA)	Banshee (AGA)
D-Day	Detroit (AGA)
King's Quest VI (AGA/ECS)	Raiden
Sim City 2000 (AGA)	TFX (AGA)
U.F.O. (AGA)	Alien Breed-Tower Assault
Cannon Fodder 2	King Pin Bowling (AGA)
Kid Chaos	

CD32

Marvin's Marvellous Adventure	Scavenger 4 (Nova Storm)
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World Class Cricket	Jungle Strike
MegaRace	Communicator
Alien Breed II	Arcade Pool
Banshee	Captain Dynamo
Brian The Lion	Brutal Soccer
Caesar & Chort	Cannon Fodder
Combat Cars	Dark Seed
Dragon Stone	Fire and Ice
Guardian	Heimdall 2
Litil Divil	Liverpool
Ryder Cup	Universe
TFX	Simon the Sorcerer
Skidmarks	Aladdin
Kin's Quest VI	Sim City 2000
Theme Park	U.F.O.*
RoadKill	

1.5 shareware

Shareware tends to fall off during the summer months as the hobby coders tend to go hang out at the beach and soak up rays. Now that winter is back, we can hopefully get more stuff. In the meantime, here are a couple of Shareware releases to whet your appetite.

Deluxe Galaga V2.4 - Yet another new version of this killer action space shoot'em up. This one has some very noticeable differences including some improved graphics, support for the CD32 controller (Thanks a million!!), some new hurry up enemies, and much much more. On the down side, it seems that the elusive NTSC/PAL bug is back. Maybe it is just me...

Suicide Mission - I know, I know...More death and carnage...This is another of the Operation Wolf style shoot'em ups that just happen to contain a lot of gore. You have to mow down cute little forest creatures like bunny rabbits, squirrels, and even turtles. Of course, they all have heavy weaponry and will surely kill you if you don't wax them first. Written in AMOS, this is an entertaining game, if not a bit simple. Graphics are decent, but not really animated. Overall though, a decent game. Available on Tombstone.

1.6 software

Death Mask - Apache Software

Well, there you have it. Finally, we have at least a PSEUDO version of DOOM for the Amiga computers. While this is not a totally free-scrolling game like DOOM, the game play and graphics are very similar.

The game is for ECS machines and comes on two disks (no HD). The game loads at a decent speed, so it isn't too bad. The interface for your options are well done. The options are simple; number of players (1 or 2 with an option for a two player 'battle' mode which is basically a DOOM death match), graphic detail, speed, maze (2 player battle mode), and

password entry for the actual game play.

The graphics are satisfyingly dark and gloomy with very good detail. The advantage of it NOT being free scrolling is that the graphics always look clean - even close up. The scroll nice and smooth; even on a standard A1200 with no Fast RAM. Sound effects are gruesome and equally satisfying. There is a little music here and there, but nothing really to gasp at.

The game is actually set up in a scenario where each level has something to do from just finding the exit to destroying little nuclear reactors. Lots of ammos, medical kits, different guns, a variety of enemies, sliding doors, etc. fill the levels up. In two player mode, only one player has to fulfill the mission objective.

Naturally, the real shine to this game is the two player battle mode. Slay your buddy. Neat! The maze continuously fills with more ammo and better guns to keep life interesting. It is so fun to chase your dude around the screen mowing down your buddy with a mini-gun. WHEE!

The two player modes are done on a vertical split screen (like the old game XYBOTS) and it is VERY smooth. There is no modem play, but this two player method is just fine by this guy.

For any of you who are interested in this type of game, then it is finally here (CD32 version is coming VERY soon). I give it a high recommendation. Clean graphics, fast action, and death. COOL!

Roadkill AGA - Vision Software

Where has this game been all my life? I have always been a big fan of the traditional overhead racing games from Sprint to Nitro. Of course, my bloodlust is always needing to be quenched. Now, I get the best of all of them with ROADKILL!

Alright, here we go. For those of you who may have missed the classics I mentioned about, I will tell you about the gender.

The actual racing area is a full loop (not point A to point B like Nitro) and it takes several laps to finish each of the numerous tracks. The tracks are all many times larger than the screen, so they scroll while you drive them. Each course is begun with a practice lap (no enemies and no interaction with items or damage) to let you study the course and learn where the important items are.

During the course of the race, you are not only trying to beat the numerous enemy cars but also trying to make a little cash by causing them massive damage. This can either be done by using weapons you pick up like rockets and missiles or by ramming the cars into KILL ZONES where they get tons more damage than just running them into the walls.

The courses get steadily harder as you play and the action gets faster and faster. You may pick up extra armor, etc. from the course too, as well as weapons. Enemies also get much smarter and start dodging your shots, and slipping away from you. Courses also get goodies like ramps to jump. Quite a jolly good time. The more damage you do to a car, the more bucks you get. There are 'jackpots' to get by actually destroying the other cars or by causing lots of hits on multiple cars.

The game's atmosphere is just fantastic. Sounds and music are right on the money as is the great speech clips thrown into the game. With deep, Mortal Kombat voices saying stuff like "TAKE HIS LIFE" and "DESTROY HIM" chiming in at the most appropriate times, you can't help but get into the bloodbath.

Graphics are nothing stupendous but are plenty sharp for this type of game. The cars animate nice and smooth and the background graphics are very clean. The intro type graphics, car selection screens, etc. are very nice and often raytraced. The whole game has that kind of clean look and feel to it.

Finally, the controls. In all fairness, the car controls very real. If you take the corners too fast you slide. The more damage you take, the harder it is to control (that sucks, too). The support of the CD32 control pad was QUITE nice and very much appreciated. The game really has to be played with a two button controller at least; a separate button for the missiles and weapons. While the controls are sensitive, they are very properly done. Bravo.

Final analysis. If this game even sounds REMOTELY like you cup of tea, go buy it right now. You will not be dissapointed. Oh, CD32 version is out NOW. Both versions are PAL. Rumor has it that an ECS version is also in the works.

1.7 hardware

VIDEOMASTER - From Oregon Research

This review covers the non-AGA version with V1.0 software. There IS an AGA version (A1200 ONLY) and newer software for this digitizer, but I did not have access to it for the purpose of this review...

Things have come a long way from the old Digi-View from NewTek. With the multimedia revolution in full swing, the ability to grab video in real time and with good framerates is getting to be more and more desired. The VideoMaster hardware is an entry level, low budget ticket into this exciting new world.

The hardware is a plug in box for A500s via the expansion slot, or the A600/A1200 (PCMCIA slot). There is NO version for Zorro-II/III slots, a thing that they should be brutally spanked for; they are missing the real market that needs this stuff. The software is a single disk (single file, actually) that controls the hardware sampling. There is a calibration screw and a brightness knob on the hardware as well as a standard RCA jack for video and one for the audio input.

The software is the greatest liability in this package. The interface is decent, with all the nice intuition items you have come to expect from a good Amiga program. But the list of problems goes very deep. Here is my own personal complaint list at a glance:

- 1 - No AREXX control. C'mon. No serious application is missing this.
 - 2 - Proprietary file format. More on this later on.
-

3 - Non-Standard file requestor.

Audio sampling rates go up to 16Khz which is just fine for this type of application. Video sampling is up to 30 frames per second in 16 colors greyscale. The size of the video capture is 1/4 screen but the frames are actually saved as full 320x200 screens with the image stretched to fit the screen (so it looks like a chunky pixel screen). Therefore, they must be scaled with another program to the proper 160x100 size.

The software saves the data in one of two formats: the proprietary .FLC format (anim in 1/4 screen and audio together), or each frame saved out as IFFs individually and the audio saved out in 8SVX format separately. Supposedly the newer version of the software contains a standard ANIM format saver. Basically you get a copy of Anim Workshop or Adpro to join all the frames, rescale them, and combine the anim and sound. Just a pain.

Now that I have shot it down hard, I guess I will tell you the plus sides to this little toy.

You can trim and sequence frames very easily, as well as trim up the audio to match. It is very friendly and easy to use for this stuff. You can also configure the memory to give yourself more video/audio space, as well as how much to actually give to the digitizer. Even on a single meg machine you can do a LOT of good stuff. It comes with a PD player program to distribute with your clips. Video can be 'colored' as it comes in with a filter with red, blue or green (what for, I dunno).

Outside of the couple of really bad things (AREXX and lack of ANIM support), this is actually the best unit of its type in anywhere CLOSE to its price range. In fact, our hot game TOMCAT was all done with this box. It doesn't require a Time Based Corrector or any of the other hidden costs that other units of this type do. Considering it is well under \$100 you really can't go wrong with this box if you need to do video clips with audio. You could use Sepia Toning to make the images look more real. There are plenty of PD utils that will help you overcome the shortcomings of it (at least until the new version of the software gets out and around). The only thing that REALLY upsets me is the lack of a Zorro slot compatible version. I would own two then!

1.8 cd32

The CD32 Corner

Now that summer and fall have come and gone, the traditional game slump is over and software houses are back to work creating more killer games for us. The CD32 support is huge. Whoever rumored that the CD32 was going away obviously didn't bother to tell the developers!!! There are lots of new offerings either available now or will be in the very near future.

Let's take a look at some of the hottest titles around for this awesome game machine. Those I have personally seen, played, or previewed have an asterisk after the title.

GUARDIAN (*) - Acid Software

Billed as the best action game for the CD32, the author admitted it is a

shameless take off of the SNES version of STARFOX that takes polygon action games to the next level.

Often called a 3D version of Defender, this game allows for full freedom of motion around the planet surface you play on. The graphics are the standard polygon type with some surface detail. From the articles I have read, the frame rate and the action is furious enough to make you forget about the polygons, only slowing down on rare occasion when there is FAR too much on the screen to keep track of. This looks like it could be a real winner and when one of us gets it, we'll give you a full review.

PINBALL ILLUSIONS (*) - Digital Illusions

Stunning. That is all you can say about this third installment of pinball from the coders once known as The Silents. The graphic detail is awesome, since it was written exclusively for the AGA platform (no ECS version will be available from what we've heard). Since I previewed the AGA version vice the CD32 version, I can only assume that the music will be enhanced for the CD version. That isn't saying that the music is bad now; far from it! It is actually a great improvement from the music in PINBALL FANTASIES and has the reminiscence of the rich music from the first installment PINBALL DREAMS. Although I only played the first board, LAW 'N JUSTICE, the complete version will have three boards (the four was dropped for poor quality) including the above mentioned as well as EXTREME SPORTS and BABE WATCH. The latter two look remarkable from their screen snapshots.

So, what is new? Well, everything looks a lot more polished from the board itself to the shiny look of the pinball. The most impressive graphic upgrade is the animated board at the TOP of the pinball machine where the score is kept. Like modern pinballs, many excellent clips of animation are displayed in this small 'pixelized' window. The LAW 'N JUSTICE animations are excellent showing things like speeding cars, terrorists being shot through a window, riots, and much much more. Very impressive. Although rumors flew around that this release would have a 'pinball construction set' it sadly does not. On the other hand, the most request feature of all IS included; multi-ball play. Up to three balls can be played at once varying on what type of multiball you score. So how are the balls tracked? Well, this is the most exciting part. You can either have it in standard play mode where the screen pans with the LOWEST ball on the screen, or you press a key and >POOF!< you are now in HIRES MODE!!! You can see almost the entire board and play your balls. Intense!

The game play itself is much smoother and easier with the CD32 controller. You may use the FORWARD and REWIND buttons for flippers or the left direction and blue button. You can turn off the music with the yellow button (YES!). Of course, the keyboard also works. There is now a DON'T MOVE feature on the boards which will send your ball back into play if you lose your ball immediately after you shoot it. Kind of a 'second chance' deal.

All in all, this will be a game to pick up. The CD32 specific version should be a proud addition to your library.

GUNSHIP 2000 (*)

The game opens with a several minute Silicon Graphics rendered intro which shows helicopters flying around a valley blowing each other away. One of those that require that you turn the volume UP and the lights DOWN. A masterpiece to be sure. The game, however, is very much the same as the standard Amiga version. As you can imagine, the framerate is pretty slow on the CD32's 68020/14 processor. It doesn't seem that the Akiko chip was used much in this translation. But, if you stop and consider that you are flying a HELICOPTER and not an F-16, the slowness of the game is not as bad as you first think. The controls are all very strange but responsive. External views run much faster than the cockpit view, so that helps.

You'll find yourself playing in 'chase' view mode a lot. The graphic detail is not very high (certainly not high enough for the slowness of the screen update) but most people who truly play this kind of game usually don't mind. All in all, the intro makes it worth having around to show off the CD32 (if you can get it for a cheap price) but you better play it yourself before you go down and plot \$50 on it.

BANSHEE (*) - CORE DESIGN

Back in the 80's, a great game came about called 1942. It was a simple game yet highly addictive. Sure, the graphics and sound were pretty cheesy, but hey, addictive game play is hard to come by. The idea was simple. Fly your plane (overhead view) over the Japanese harbors and destroy other planes, ships, subs, and other military objects. It actually was banned in Japan due to the nature of it. Your only special defense was a cool little 'roll' where you could more or less make yourself invincible for a few seconds. There were a few treasures to pick up like three way shots and more powerful shots, but that about ended it. There were the obligatory 'waves' of planes and the 'big bosses' at the end and that was it.

Now, 1942 has been reborn into BANSHEE. Same game concept but now it is upgraded for the 90's. The game's incredible music and sound effects with awesome moody AGA graphics and super smooth action make this game a shoot'em up gamers dream come true.

BANSHEE is broken up into mission, much like its predecessors. There are still precious few powerups and the 'rolls' are still there. However the detail of the backgrounds and elaborate enemies make this one a far cry for 1942.

Enemies are varied and interesting with all sorts of different weapons. You can shoot a lot more of the 'background' like lighthouses, tanks, even enemy soldiers (watch their heads catch fire and they scream off the screen; neat!).

BANSHEE allows you to add a friend to the carnage as well, increasing the enemies too. Although 1942 could also be played with two players simultaneously, the ability to 'split' the power ups was not present. In BANSHEE, you may elect to have the power ups be split in two, each with a different color that designate which plane can actually pick it up. Quite a new and welcome feature.

If you are a mindless shoot'em up fan or a big fan of 1942, then this game is definitely for you. The basic cleanness of the game earns it a spot in your library.

SUPER STARDUST (*) - Bloodhouse

By now, everyone has probably seen the original STARDUST. Billed as 'asteroids with attitudes', the raytraced asteroid clone has stirred up a lot of, uh, DUST! :) The 3D tunnel sequences were gasped over and 'ooo'ed and 'ah'ed (as well they should have been; they were sensational). The graphics were fabulous for ECS; almost up to AGA standards.

Now, for the AGA machine owners and CD32 users alike comes this SUPER version with even better graphics and sound plus some new surprises. Although the game play is more or less identical to the original (your basic Asteroids game with some extra enemy ships and some power ups plus big bosses) there are some great new goodies like cloaked enemies (a totally stunning effect) and better power ups.

I looked at the AGA version, so I suspect that the CD32 will have the obligatory pumping soundtrack spooled off disc. The tunnel sequences are astounding as are the backgrounds for the actual game. The CD32 version is also said to have a killer raytraced movie-style intro that will knock your socks off (the stills look remarkable).

This is pure eye/ear candy with some clever game play thrown in. If you are an Asteroids fan or just want to truly show off the CD32, this is a must. The game play gets repetitive and the longetivity may wear off. Get the preview from somewhere and try it first before shelling out the \$40.

NEXT ISSUE: Lital Divil, Tower Assault, Roadkill, UFO, and MUCH more!

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