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Video Games & Computer Entertainment[®]

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June 1991

Sega Unleashes a Sonic Boom— Can Sonic the Hedgehog Be the New Video Game Hero?

Part II Of
VG&CE's
Super
Famicom
Preview

Meet the Father of Video Games

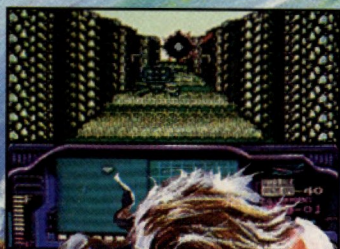
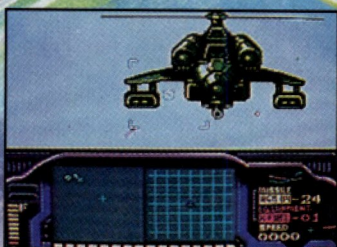
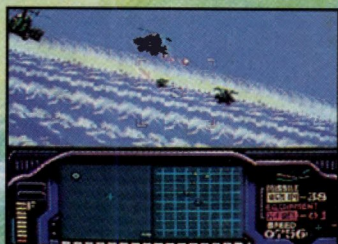
**MAPS
AND TIPS:**
Sega's
Castle of Illusion Starring
Mickey Mouse, Part II



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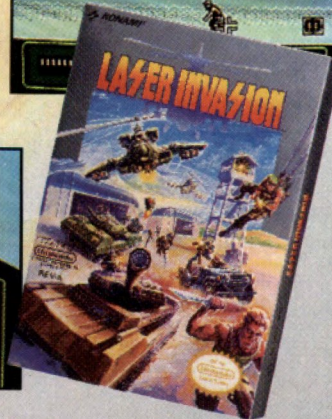
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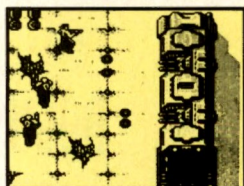
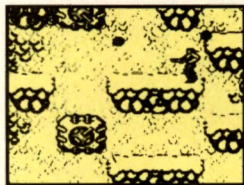
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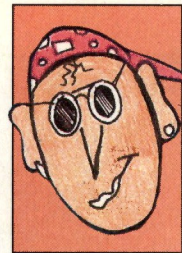
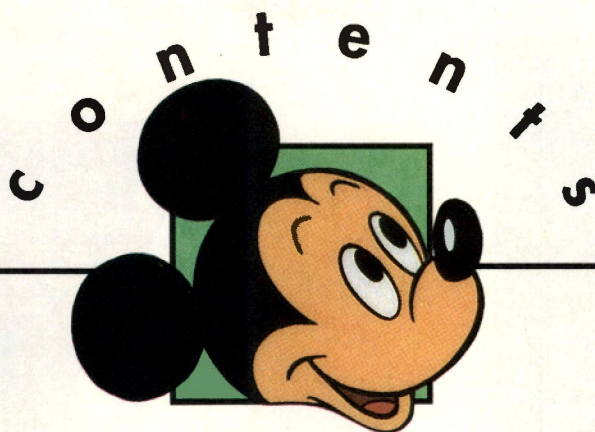
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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: Meet *Sonic the Hedgehog*. This month we'll take a look at the sizzling new game for the Sega Genesis. Turn to page 34 for a thorough review of our spiny hero.

Cover Art: Jim McDermott



JUNE 1991



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Attention tank commanders! Put on your best battle fatigues, and show us all that you can be!

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by Revo Emag

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by Donn Nauert

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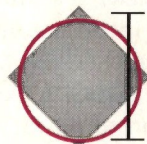
by Arnie Katz, with Joyce Worley
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by Bill Kunkel

Take a ride on the wings of war circa World War I, and make your mark as a digital Red Baron.



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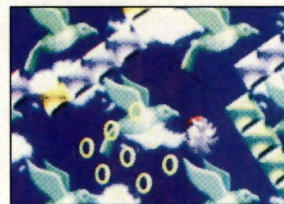


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by Frank Tetro, Jr., and Roger White

Let our computer-game strategists take you on an interstellar tour of Star Control and Wing Commander.

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Art Director
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Associate Editors
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Research
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National Advertising Manager
JAY EISENBERG
JE PUBLISHER'S REPRESENTATIVES

Address all inquiries:
11150 West Olympic Blvd., Suite 600
Los Angeles, CA 90064
(213) 479-6844

Fax: (213) 479-3290
For advertising inquiries only:
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Advertising Production Director
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Vice-President, Sales and Marketing
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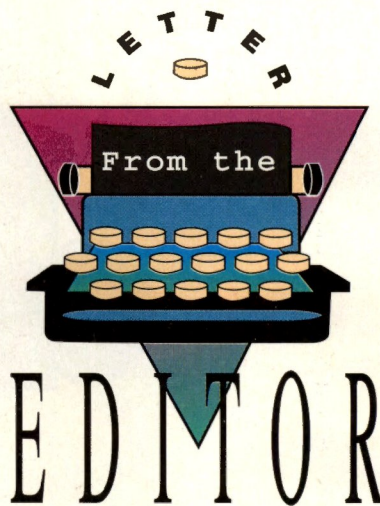
Subscriptions Director
IRENE GRADSTEIN

For subscription information call
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Editorial Offices
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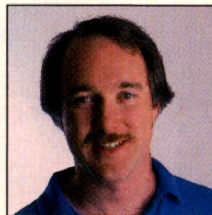


t

here's a lot
of excitement

over the impending release of the Super NES (SNES). To help assuage your beating hearts, we've started giving tidbits of information about the SNES's big brother, Japan's Super Famicom. Following up on his look at the Super Famicom in the April issue, Revo Emag will continue to lead readers through what can be expected when the SNES comes here this fall.

The question that has dogged us for quite a while, though, is whether VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT should cover the international market more intensely. My



strategy as VG&CE's Executive Editor has been to fill the pages with game data pertinent to the player *today*, rather than teasing with news of titles that can only be acquired by import from overseas. We've heard both sides of the argument: Some gamers want to know about everything, including games that may never reach our shores; others want VG&CE to cover cartridges and disks that are about to come out or are already in the stores, so that they will be better informed when their hard-earned cash is plunked down.

The main problem is that we are limited to a certain number of pages each month, a figure that has varied from issue to issue. As I have said here before, the publishing world is somewhat captive to the quantity of advertising bought in each issue, and VG&CE is no different. We've

received lots of letters regarding the

gigantic November and December 1990 issues, hoping that we'd continue that size, but, unfortunately, those are bigger months for advertising in VG&CE, due to the holidays. That makes for a large magazine.

Due to this constant dilemma, we only have a certain amount of pages devoted to editorial uses; therefore, we have to carefully decide what we

will write about and what we will pass over. It's impossible to cover *everything*.

What I'm after here is a simple answer to a troubling question: Do you want to see more rumors and potential *vaporware*

(products that are announced but never show up in stores), or do you want solid info on products that are coming to a retailer near you?

If you could take a moment to write us a note, we'll tabulate the voting and read through the comments, then make a decision as to whether VG&CE needs an overhaul in its editorial mission. From my perspective, there's always room for improvement, and as I've stated before, this is *your* magazine. If we don't do our jobs to your satisfaction, you will respond in kind—you just won't buy the magazine.

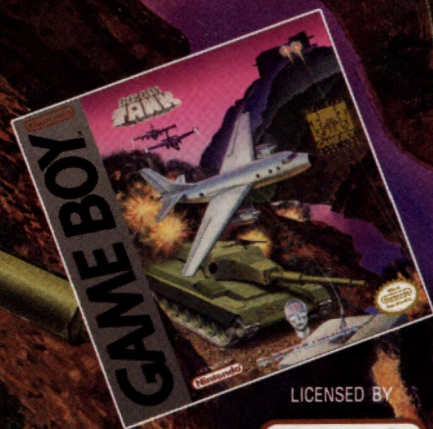
Please send your letters to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Andy Eddy. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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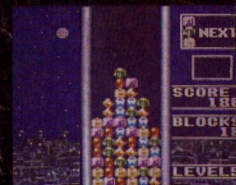


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SPIRITED EASTER EGGS

Dear VG&CE:

I just got through calling the TurboGrafx-16 hotline. I asked the lady if she could tell me about any codes or secrets for the game *Ninja Spirit*, but she said there weren't any. I told her that before I bought the game, I had seen a few codes in VG&CE, but had misplaced the issues. She said I could use codes from the magazines, but they usually don't work. Since I can't get any help from the people at NEC, I was wondering if you could reprint any codes or secrets you know about the game *Ninja Spirit*. If not, can you tell me how to order back issues?

Also, I sent for my free game the day after Christmas, and I still haven't received it yet.

Thank you.

—Matt Reardon
Sparks, Nevada

VG&CE ran the following codes for *Ninja Spirit* in our January 1991 Easter Egg Hunt:

• For a stage select, during the title screen, press II, I, II, II, I, II, **SELECT**, then **RUN**. To select Stages 4-6, you have to hold down **SELECT** as you flip through the stages.

• To see a special message, press either I, II, II, I, **SELECT**, **RUN** or I, II, II, I, **SELECT**, II, I, I, II.

As far as the TurboGrafx spokeswoman's claim that the codes from magazines don't often work, she is misinformed. We can't speak for other magazines, but we try very hard to check and double-check each code that we print. Sometimes there are typos that cause a code not to work, but we make every effort to print a correction in a future issue. Other times, a code will work on a prototype game, but not on the final version. We try to avoid printing codes that we don't check on a final version. Mistakes will happen, but the vast majority of our codes will work as documented.

Back issues can be ordered from our subscription office. Simply send a request for the particular issue(s) you are interested in along with \$4.00 for each issue to VG&CE Back Issues, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

Finally, NEC's free TG-16 game offer in late 1990 was so popular

that they were bogged down and had trouble filling the orders quickly. If, by the time you read this, you haven't received your free game, call NEC at (708) 860-9500, extension 7857 or 7858, and ask for assistance. VG&CE had nothing to do with this offer, but we're happy to play middleman if you (or any other readers) have trouble getting satisfaction from an advertiser. We hope this helped you, Matt.

MORE GAME BOY!

Dear VG&CE:

There are many, many Game Boy games out, and I understand that you don't have the time nor the room to review all of them, but I recently purchased a Game Boy title called *Final Fantasy Legend*. Wow, what a game! This is almost better than the *Final Fantasy* for the NES.

So far, no magazine has had a review of this game. I write to you

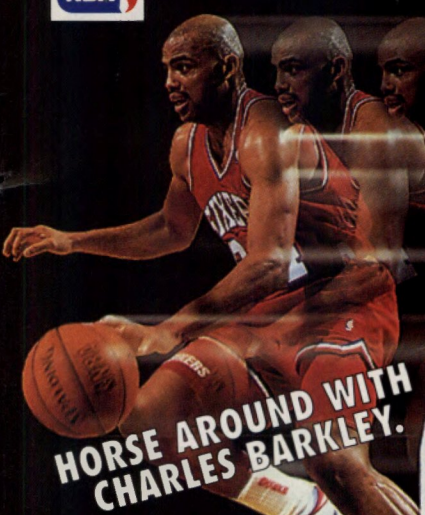
Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

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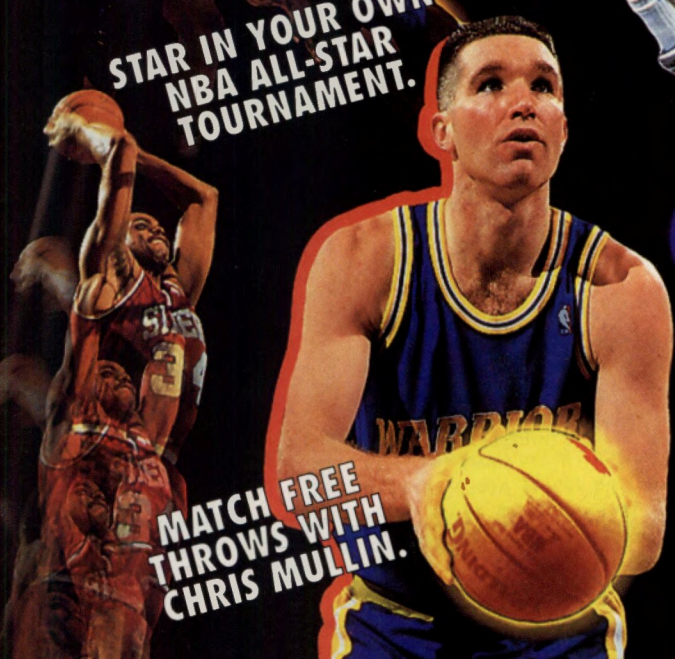
HORSE AROUND WITH CHARLES BARKLEY.



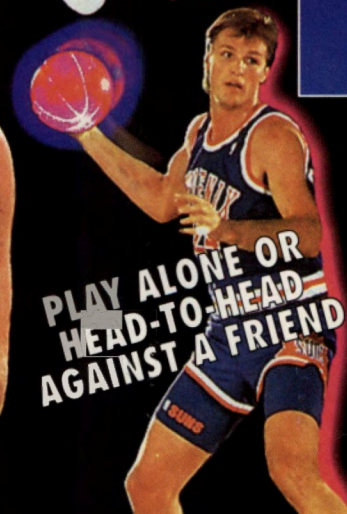
GO ONE-ON-ONE WITH ISIAH THOMAS!



SHOOT OUT WITH PATRICK EWING.

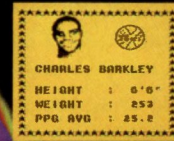


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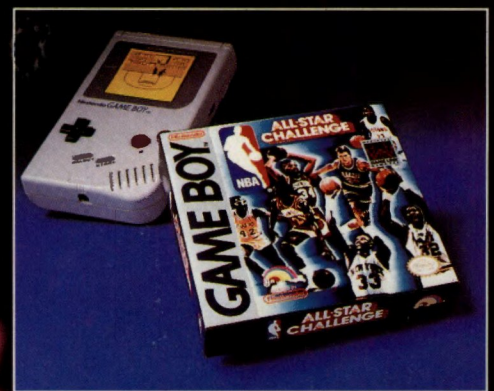
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CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD

because I know you listen to your readers. Your magazine is the best—even better than the Big N's and Sega's *Sega Visions*.

Thanks for all the pages.

—Mike Ybarra
Plumsville, Oklahoma

Thanks for your kind compliments, Mike. We really appreciate them.

As far as not reviewing Final Fantasy Legend, this is one case that space wasn't an issue. Nintendo is one company that doesn't usually send preliminary review copies of games to magazines. This is likely because of the magazine that the "Big N" does, which ensures that it gets all the software announcements first. It's not likely that you'll get as objective a view of a game when you're reading a company's own magazine, so your best bet is to buy both the company mouthpiece for news and product announcements, as well as an unbiased mag like VG&CE.



market SFs in Europe, I wasn't impressed. With Nintendo's dubious dealings in the 8-bit arena, I consider them an arriving serpent in the 16-bit paradise. How will the pressure tactics and intimidation of "Mario's Mafia" affect the surging popularity and production of the current 16-bit systems on the market? Will the additional funds gained from SF sales give Nintendo the power to crush companies like Tengen, who insist on producing its carts in America?

I don't know how Nintendo's suspect, possibly illegal, dealings are viewed in Japan, but retailers and manufacturers in America should be entitled to certain freedoms. While millions of eight-year-olds will be screaming for the latest release of *Dr. Mario 2: Let's Play With Syringes*, some of us will refuse to dump more money into Nintendo.

Just say No!

—CW2 Bryan Walker
With Operation Desert Shield/Storm

First of all, let me say how proud all of us are for the great job you and your fellow soldiers did overseas. We hope you are reading this in the comfort of your home.

Thanks for your perspective on the future, Bryan. It's our view that the first games we've seen for the Super Famicom aren't all that hot, but it may be too early for all the machine's capabilities to be shown. In fact, using the Genesis as an example, it looks like the programmers are just finding out what the Genesis can do, judging by the leap

that Sonic the Hedgehog has shown. It may take some time before a real blockbuster—though we're taken by Pilotwings for the SF—comes out and shows what the SF can do.

As far as Nintendo being successful in the American marketplace with the SF (when it comes here as the Super NES) that remains to be seen. We feel that Nintendo has the advantages of a sizable bankroll and brand-name value (thanks to the success of the NES), but it has to get past the Genesis and TG-16, which have a head start. It's likely that the SNES won't be nearly as popular as the NES, which has sold about 30 million units in the U.S., and there are a number of questions that need to be answered:

- Will many Americans buy another game system after having spent a good amount of money to establish a library for their 8-bit systems? Keep in mind that no company has had two successful video-game systems.

- What price will Nintendo set for the SNES unit? This will obviously affect Nintendo's ability to get the SNES in many homes.

- Will Nintendo be able to get companies to bring out games other than the wealth of "scroll/boss" software, games that American players seem to be getting tired of?

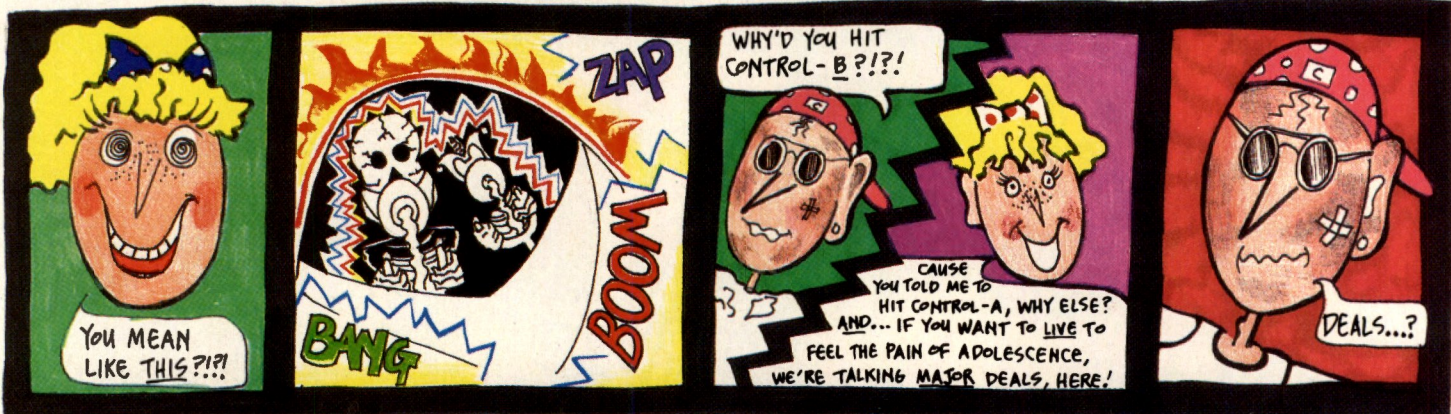
The bottom line is that only time will tell. We're all watching anxiously for more news on Nintendo's plans for the SNES in the U.S., and VG&CE will have more information as soon as it's available. ♫

HOPE OR HYPE?

Dear VG&CE:

As the owner of a Genesis, a Lynx, a Neo-Geo and an Apple Iigs, I'm a big fan of 16-bit gaming. As an older video gamer (27), I can really appreciate the advances in game quality the new machines make possible. I remember when *Pong* was hot stuff!

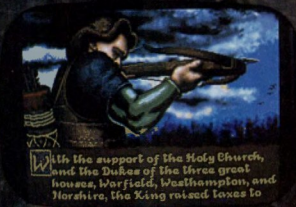
The new entry into the 16-bit arena, Nintendo's Super Famicom, is being greeted with an inordinate amount of hype. Having seen gray-



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CASTLES™

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed *Tip Sheet* to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

VG&CE,
9171 Wilshire Blvd.,
Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA
90210
Attn: *Tip Sheet*



by **Donn Nauert**

In the game *Shadow Dancer* for the Genesis, I was wondering if you could tell me how to defeat the last stage boss. Also, is there a level select for the game?

—Eric Sellers
Frankfort, Indiana

To defeat the last boss, it helps if you have some ninjitsu left when you enter this screen. Once the black ninja starts to appear, position yourself with the column (as shown in the picture), and press the attack button as fast as you can. If you hit the ninja as he falls from his perch,



he'll be knocked off the screen. Then if you can reach the edge of the screen in time, you can hit him again (while he's still off-screen) and make him disappear. Normally, it would take three hits to defeat the ninjas. Now move to the other side and repeat the process.

Keep battling the ninjas until the head of the Sauros comes off and the fireballs fall from above. Once they do, stand below the ledge that the ninjas appear on and you'll be safe. As you can see in the photo, the fireball that lands on the ledge disappears before the rest. This will give you enough time to get two hits on Sauros.

The tricky part is getting in the last two shots to defeat him. Try to battle off the fourth pair of ninjas (when Sauros throws both hands in the air and makes two ninjas appear at the same time) until the lightning bolts appear for the fifth pair. Now hit your ninjitsu. All four ninjas will be destroyed, even the ones that haven't appeared yet, and you'll be able to take your shots at Sauros unhindered.

As far as level selects and codes, there are none that we are aware of. A practice mode will appear if you press and hold the A, B and C buttons and then press **START** during the title screen. Here you can select from any of the stages except the level bosses in each round.



Make sure that you battle the ninjas until the head of the Sauros comes off in *Shadow Dancer*.

TIMEQUEST™

The unthinkable has happened — a renegade from the Temporal Corps has stolen a time travel machine and gone into the past to alter critical events in human history. Only you can prevent this madman from rewriting history and destroying current civilization.

A high speed chase through time, TIMEQUEST is a classic adventure game that features pageantry, danger, and puzzle-oriented adventure. The game is epic in scope, spanning four continents and three thousand years — from Stonehenge to Hitler.

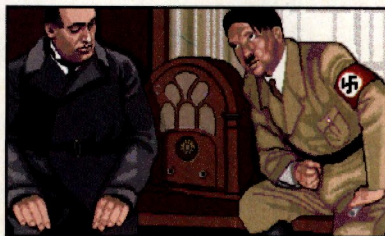
Criss-crossing time and space, you will travel to England, Rome, Peking, Cairo, Babylon/Baghdad, and Mexico from 1361 BC to 1940 AD, meeting Caesar, Hitler, Napoleon, Genghis Khan, Attila the Hun, Cleopatra, Michaelangelo, and many others.

Written by Bob Bates, author of *Sherlock: The Riddle of the Crown Jewels* and *Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur*, TIMEQUEST is the latest from Legend Entertainment, the company that brought you the hit game *Spellcasting 101: Sorcerers Get All the Girls*. A treat for science-fiction fans and adventure enthusiasts alike, the game features:

- high resolution EGA graphics
- superb musical score featuring RealSound as well as Roland and AdLib support
- unique Legend screen design with pushbutton options
- menu driven parser

For IBM-PC compatibles.

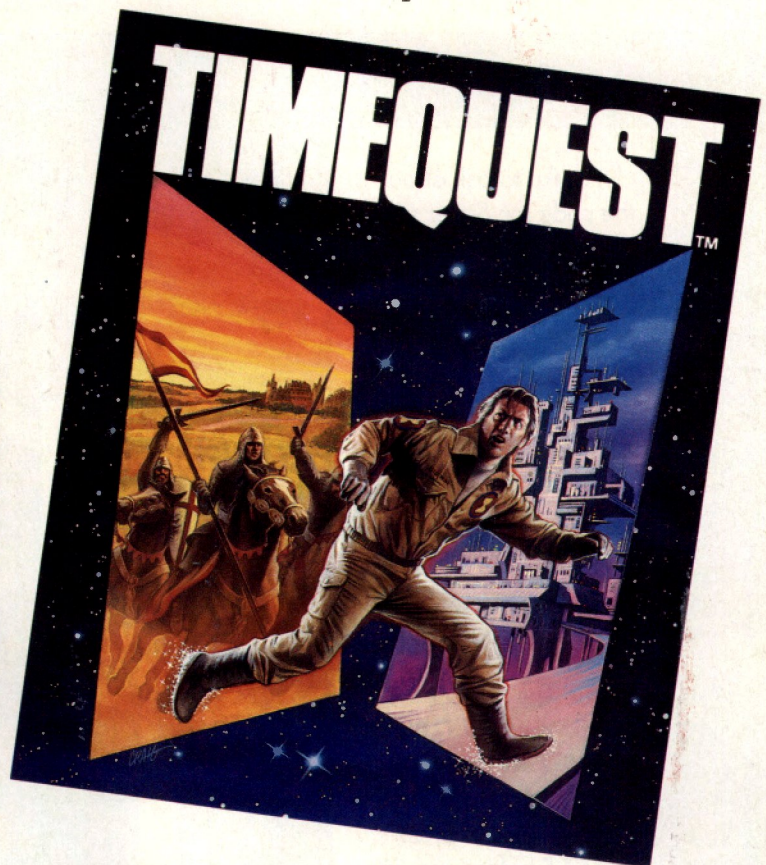
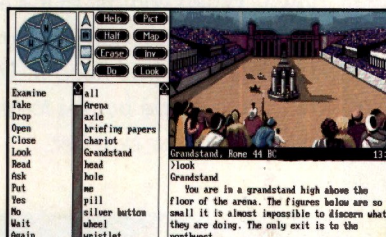
Rome 1940. Fool Hitler and Mussolini into thinking that Churchill has surrendered.



England 452 A.D. Escape a death-blow from Riothamus, the real-life King Arthur.



"Legend is the company that finally got the adventure game interface right." — *Computer Gaming World*



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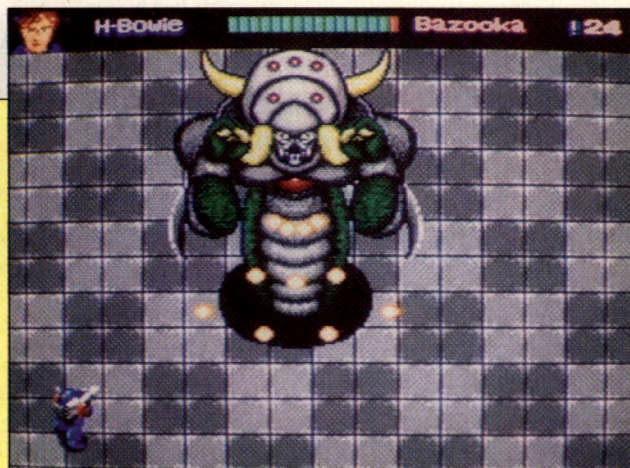
©1991 Legend Entertainment Company. TIMEQUEST is a registered trademark of Legend Entertainment Company. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. EGA graphics shown above. Actual screens may vary.

I just purchased the TG-16 CD-ROM game *Final Zone II*, and I can't beat the giant Biomonster at the end of Stage 7. I was wondering if you have a strategy for him or if there are any Easter eggs for this game.

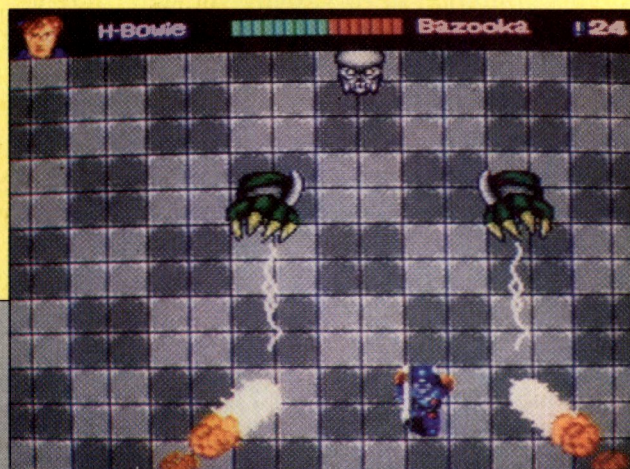
—Noah Reinhertz
Meadow Vista, California

Once the final boss appears on the screen, get it to shoot at you. As soon as it stops to fire, move to the left or right side of the boss, and fire at the bottom section. The boss' shots can't reach you from the sides. After enough shots, the body portion of the boss will disappear, and the hands and skull will fly around the screen.

The main thing you'll need to do here is to hit the skull when the mouth is open. You can destroy the hands to make it a little easier to move around, but you don't have to.



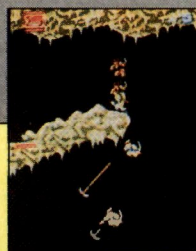
In *Final Zone II*, move to the left or right side of the giant Biomonster in Stage 7. His shots will not be able to reach you in those locations.



I'd like to ask about the code for Super C by Konami. The code that I'm trying is R,L,D,A,B then **START**, which is supposed to get me ten men, but it doesn't work. Is there something wrong with the code, or is it my game?

—Steve Prater
Thebes, Illinois

No, Steve, there's nothing wrong with your game. The correct code should read R,L,D,U,A,B then **START**. For a two-player game, use the same code, but press **SELECT** before you hit **START**. The code was printed incorrectly in a previous issue, and we apologize for the mistake.



In the game *Ninja Spirit* for the TG-16, I can't seem to get past the drop-off in Level 7. How do I get by this part? Also, do you have any tips for the final boss?

—James Fountain
Barstow, California

Yep, we sure do. Once you get to the ledge, fall off and hold to the left until you reach the wall. Then move Moonlight one character space away from the wall and shoot straight down. When you get to the end of the section, move to the right and get the orange ninja for a power-up, if you need it. Using the sickle and chain or the bombs to hit the head of the last boss is your best bet.



SUNSOFT
for the Nintendo Entertainment System™



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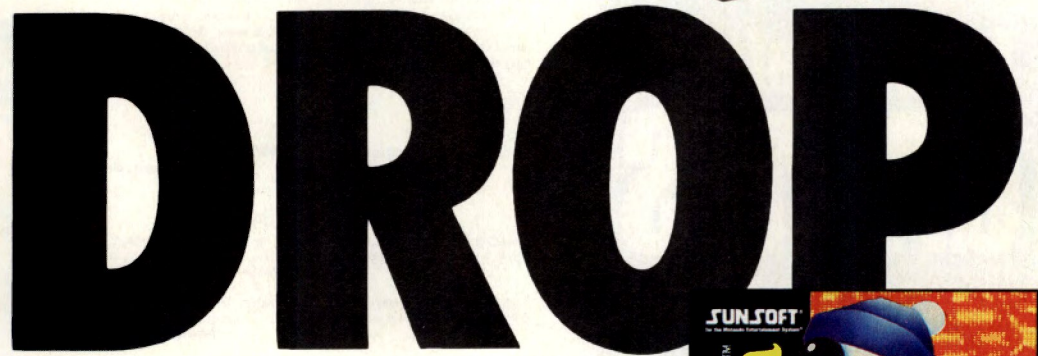
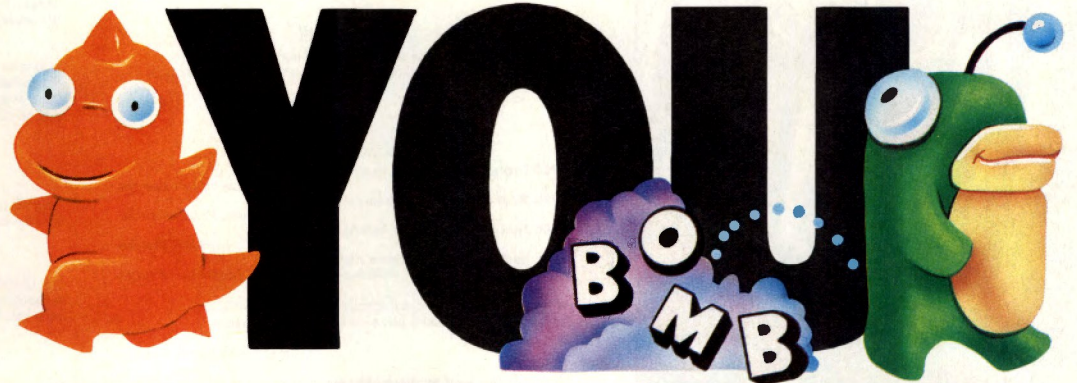
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TurboGrafx-16
GAMES



Aeroblasters™
"...one of the best shooters... It's all here - great detailed graphics, huge difficult bosses and great game play with a learning curve that leans to the hard side which is a welcome addition to a home game. The weapon power-ups are awesome!... Very challenging and very impressive!..."
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

Allen Crush™
1989 Best Simulation Game
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

"... Allen Crush features finely detailed creatures reminiscent of the film, *Alien*, lots of bonus situations and some of the finest music ever heard in a video game. ...it's downright eerie."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Battle Royale™
"This wrestler has lots of different characters and plenty of rip-roaring action 'mano to mano' as well as great 'free for all's'. Great music, statistics and even the managers fight for the rights to each fighter. It has it all."
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

"A rock 'em, sock 'em free-for-all...the graphics are nicely detailed and sharp-looking...add it to your collection. This is a great party game."
—*GamePro*

Blazing Lazars™
"The ultimate space shooter! Nine levels of pulsating aliens, advanced weaponry, and enormous Bosses! A total blast from start to finish!"
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

"One of the fastest-paced games for the TurboGrafx-16, Blazing Lazars will keep you going for hours..."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Bloody Wolf™
1990 Best Arcade Action Game Award
—*Game Player's Magazine*

"Bloody Wolf is a cool Commando-style shooter that combines a frantic shoot-em-up pace with dual goals.... One of the best Turbo games I've played, combining Contra with 16-bit graphics, but contains a much more expansive environment to explore. Tons of power-ups and challenging Bosses help make Bloody Wolf a delight to behold!"
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

Bomberman™
"...if you like crowds, this is one of the most fun multi-player games around. For beginning gamers or anyone looking for an addicting, relatively simple to play puzzle game, Bomberman is a blast."
—*GamePro*

Bonk's Adventure™
1990 TurboGrafx Game of the Year Award
—*Game Player's Magazine*

1990 Most Exciting New Theme Award
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly Magazine*

1990 Special Achievement Award
—*OMNI Magazine*

1990 Best Action Video Game Award
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment Magazine*

"NEC scored a hit with this card, and rightfully so. Bonk's Adventure has... technique as well as good looks...unique...an all new type of video game adventure!"
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly Magazine*

"Bonk's Adventure has all the ingredients to become not only a successful game, but also the first installment of a successful series of games. The main character is cute, the head-butting is superb, and the creatures and situations are inventive. The fact that you can reverse direction and go backward in this game is another strong point. The graphics are sharp and, well, charming."
—*Game Player's*

Bravoman™
"A unique approach to an action game. Super graphics."
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

China Warrior™
"Not just another chop-'em-up game, this one shows the characters in amazing detail. Fight your way to the end, attacking enemies and other moving objects."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

"Kung-fu kick-'em-up that uses extremely large characters. The detail is extraordinary - you can even see your hero bleed from his mouth as he gets beat up!"
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

Chew-Man-Fu™
"...the whole look of this vast (550 screens!) game is decidedly off-the-wall, with screen after screen of bizarre, weird, and silly stuff rendered in colors of eye-popping brilliance. This game could be a real sleeper."
—*Game Player's*

Cratermaze™
"Cratermaze is a game that will appeal to the whole family, thanks to its good graphics, interesting animation and splendid sound effects."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Cybercore™
"...Cybercore is a fast-action shoot-'em-up that's challenging enough to tax even veteran gun hands. Its combination of detailed graphics and interesting sound effects make it a game that you'll return to often."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Deep Blue™
"Patrol the ocean depths in your mechanized sub-fish, blasting all types of marine life. Capturing power capsules lets you modify your weapons list. The music is well done and

provides detailed and colorful. There aren't many underwater games so this one is nearly in a class by itself."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Devil's Crush™
1990 Best Simulation Game Award
—*Video Game & Computer Entertainment Magazine*
1990 Excellence Award
—*Game Player's Magazine*

"Devil's Crush is a perfect example of why video pinball has such exciting potential... the movement of the ball and the action of the flippers are so realistic that it plays just like any arcade pinball machine... You'll definitely want to see Devil's Crush for yourself."
—*Game Player's*

"A combination of realistic pinball action and bizarre insectoid graphics made Alien Crush the last word in video pinball... and finally, that sequel's been hatched: Devil's Crush for the TG-16... Devil's Crush is a must-have for those who enjoyed Alien Crush. It's loaded with more clever animation, impressive graphics and fast frenetic action than the original."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Double Dungeons™
"...the 3-D maze effect is done very well... A good 2-player game... A split-screen window also allows two people to explore independently."
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

Dragon Spirit™
"Become a winged serpent and destroy the evil that has invaded your land! Hard-hitting action with power-ups, bosses, and more!"
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

"Instead of fighting a dragon, you are one in this game. Zip through the sky, shooting down enemies and bombing various types of monsters, while you pick up crystals for extra power. Your dragon can grow up to three heads and acquire all kinds of weapons, even shooting flames!"
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Dragon's Curse™
"Dragon's Curse is a good-looking, action-packed game that's perfect for hard-core TurboGrafx-16 swordsmen. Heavy-duty hackin' and hewin' is the order of the day...Dragon's Curse won't drag on."
—*GamePro*

Dungeon Explorer™
"Dungeon Explorer is the perfect hybrid of action and adventure... outstanding graphics help compliment this card that guarantees a long quest and plenty of thrills!"
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

"...up to five people can play, helping one another out by taking on the various enemies that cross each other's path. One, for instance, can play the part of a wizard casting magic to save your little band of souls. If your magic fails, you can always resort to good, old-fashioned shooting!"
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Fighting Street™
"Originally called Street Fighter in the arcades, this CD-ROM game features real voice and orchestrated music that's just like the quarter-muncher!"
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

"This CD-ROM game pits you against four large opponents. Duke it out using kicks, jobs and outright punches. The detailed, colorful graphics are supplemented by real music and voices from the CD player."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Final Lap Twin™
"...so whether you want straight up no frills racing, or an unusual four-wheeled adventure let Final Lap Twin take you for a ride"
—*GamePro*

"Select your track and head out in your open-cockpit formula race car. Steer, shift and brake your way across the finish line. The screen is divided into two halves that allow player against computer or two-player mode."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

Final Zone™ II
"Final Zone II is another great CD game for the TurboGrafx. The graphics are great, the voices are excellent... The game play is fast and there is a lot of action."
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

"...a CD-based shooter, gives you five characters, seven levels of action, an elaborate story, map screens, and high-fidelity sound effects that take full advantage of the CD's awesome audio capabilities."
—*Game Player's*

Galaga™ '90
"Originally...in the arcades, this superb space conflict loses nothing in the translation."
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*
"Galaga '90 is an excellent shoot 'em up."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

J.B. Harold: Murder Club™
"Combining digitized video, CD quality stereo music plus true human voice...you have to go out and pound the pavement, search for clues, interrogate suspects and gather enough evidence to make an arrest."
—*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

J.J. & Jeff™
"...the overall game play and hidden goodies are what make this game a winner."
—*Video Games & Computer Entertainment*

"JJ & Jeff has a lot going for it...it's challenging without being ridiculously difficult. And it's definitely addictive."
—*Game Player's*

King of Casino™

"...I have to admit that NEC's King of Casino is the most complete gambling simulation I've seen...from checking into a fancy hotel to flaunting cash in a casino, it's all here."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

Last Alert™

"...features cinema-type intermissions and real voices. Last Alert is a very good CD game with cool animation. The potential for CD technology scores another one with this good shooter."
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

Legendary Axe™

1989 Video Game of the Year
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment Magazine

"Legendary Axe has a little of everything: loads of axe-swinging action, layer upon layer of high-quality music and smooth, colorful animation. The combination of these elements brought this action adventure to the top of the video-game heap like rising cream."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

Legendary Axe II

"Legendary Axe II is quick, action-packed, and enjoyable."
—Game Player's

Military Madness™

1990 Best Military Strategy Game Award
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment Magazine

1990 Best War Game Award
—Game Player's Magazine

"Military Madness is an excellent introductory war game. It's extremely playable and always tense, and it does its job better than several computer war games currently available. If you're looking for a different kind of gaming experience on your TurboGrafx — one that takes good advantage of the system's capabilities."
—Game Player's

"Military Madness is a game that puts you in exciting and unpredictable strategic combat situations. Terrific stereo sound, realistic battle simulations, and awesome graphics are only a few of the reasons why Military Madness is an interesting addition to any TurboGrafx collection."
—GamePro

Monster Lair™

1990 Best Shooter Game
—OMNI Magazine

"Monster Lair is a fast and colorful game that's even more fun when played by two people... And because the game is on CD, the stereo soundtrack is superb. Monster Lair has enough charm to last through many playings."
—Game Player's

Moto Racer™

"Up to five human players can race for the finish line in this high-speed challenge. The options are many with several different race tracks, six different futuristic vehicles and several different music scores."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

Neutopia™

"If the TurboGrafx-16 is your first game machine, don't miss Neutopia."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

"...Neutopia will offer hours of excitement."
—Game Player's

Ninja Spirit™

1990 Best Game of the Year (TurboGrafx-16) Award
—Electronic Gaming Monthly Magazine

1990 Excellence Award
—Game Player's Magazine

"...the level of intensity is unmatched, with multiple weapons, options and shadows all coming into play. The Bosses animate and fill the screen and truly provide a testament to what this system can do... Ninja Spirit stands out...and earns our Turbo Game of the Year award."
—Electronic Gaming Monthly, 1991 Video Game Buyer's Guide

"Forget 'Budokan', this is true martial arts action. Awesome weapons and power-ups and intense ninja action. Excellent graphics and authentic Japanese BGM. Great gameplay and cool bosses. Best Turbo card yet."
—Electronic Gaming Monthly, 1991 Video Game Buyer's Guide

"Ninja Spirit is so good that it might even appeal to gamers who don't think they like ninja games. Its fast and varied, and the challenges get more difficult as the game goes on. Ninja Spirit is probably the best martial arts game to appear so far on the TurboGrafx-16 — and one of the best on any video game system."
—Game Player's

Power Golf™

"...the best one (golf game) is Power Golf for the TurboGrafx-16 system. Power Golf has outstanding graphics — on some lofted shots you can see the dimples on looking at some holes. Most of the game is played from an overhead perspective; when you're ready to hit, a small screen insert opens up showing your stance and the power bar. The game is quick-paced and fairly realistic. One nice feature is that after you hit a shot, the overhead view tracks the flight of the ball... Power Golf should keep you glued to your couch."
—Sports Illustrated

Psychosis™

1990 Best Sci. Fi. Game (Honorable Mention)
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

"From a purely visual standpoint this cart is worth its weight in gold. The graphics are gorgeous."
—GamePro

R-Type™

"The legend has never looked better than on the Turbo! All eight levels of monstrous play grace this four-meg masterpiece!"
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

"One of the best arcade-to-home translations we have ever seen comes in the form of R-Type."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective™

"...for the first time in video game history, thanks to the huge memory in a CD, we will be able to play a game that will contain real video footage! Throw in perfect speech with synchronized lip movement and it will be difficult to believe that this is a video game!"
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

Space Harrier™

"...stay tuned to NEC's channel for arcade quality Space Harrier action, and you can solve this diff hanger for yourself."
—GamePro

Splatterhouse™

1990 Best Coin-op Game Award
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment Magazine

"Splatterhouse...is another fantastic example of how good Turbo games can be. The game is challenging and graphically outstanding... I love it."
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

"Talk about tension and suspense, wow! Splatterhouse has plenty to go around. Excellent graphics and challenging game play make this seven-level nightmare come true... Very entertaining..."
—GamePro

Super Star Soldier™

"Massive amounts of firepower...tons of power-ups, huge bosses and great graphics."
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

"...features eight vertically scrolling stages of gorgeous graphics, non-stop interstellar space fighting, four different weapons, two defense systems, and numerous power-up possibilities."
—GamePro

At times there is so much action on the screen you can get lost in...the rockets, bullets, attackers and shrapnel streaking across the screen. If you're looking for a hot-action shooter...it will keep you sweating."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

Super Volleyball™

"...Incredible, gorgeous graphics... The best sports game I've played for the TG. 'Nuff said."
—Digital Games Review Digest

"Sports fans can enjoy solo play or two-person competition in Super Volleyball. The big-screen views, crisp detail, and startling depth of this game's graphics almost convinced us that we were watching a live game on TV."
—Game Player's

"NEC's Super Volleyball brings the popular sport to the TurboGrafx-16 with lots of options, a comfortable user interface and, most of all, loads of athletic action on-screen. All in all, Super Volleyball is a good, challenging simulation. If you've a hankering to take your place among the world's volleyball heroes, Super Volleyball may be right in your league."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

Takin' it to the Hoop™

1990 Best Sports Game Award
—Game Player's Magazine

"...a well-balanced and entertaining sports game..."
—Game Player's

"Hardcore gym rats know there's no substitute for an honest-to-goodness game of hoops. Takin' It to the Hoop has all the thrills, none of the spills, and some top notch video round ball. Call time out and give it a try."
—GamePro

Tiger Road™

"A multitude of vertical and horizontal scrolling adventures...clean graphics and sound...bonus rooms and secret warps...beef up both strategy and options."
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

Timeball™

1990 Best Strategy Game Award
—Video Game & Computer Entertainment Magazine

"...if you like puzzle games, Timeball has it all. It's highly recommended."
—GamePlayer's

TV Sports Football™

1990 Parents' Choice Seal of Approval
—Parents' Choice Council

1990 Best Sports Video Game Award
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment Magazine

1990 Excellence Award
—Game Player's Magazine

"TV Sports Football has been built around a unique Turbo feature - 5 player simultaneous action! As such it's a lot of fun with everybody getting into the action. ...think of it as a party football game..."
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

"TV Sports Football is simply one of the finest football simulations available for any game system. It skillfully combines realistic sound effects, crisp graphics, and awesome action."
—Game Player's

Veigues Tactical Gladiator™

"Veigues is a fighting vehicle like none you've seen before...it can glide swiftly, pivot, leap and fly through air...it's a category unto itself...there's plenty of good old-fashioned shoot-em up, but the key...is how well you strategize."
—GamePro

"The game play makes Veigues a solid fun game...that will keep you bouncing on your robotic toes."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

Victory Run™

"Probably one of the best driving games to come along for any system. Victory Run has true 3-D effects, including hills and curves, and enough variety in the courses to keep you occupied for some time. The car handles like a race car should and the power drifts are better than any racing game to date... Very addicting!"
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

"This high-speed game is a version of the Paris-to-Dakar road race. You start out by stocking up on parts like brakes, suspension and engine, then zip through the countryside outside of Paris. Colorful screens will take you from mid-day to night and back to morning. Controls let you accelerate, brake and shift gears while displays give you constant updates on your speed and engine RPM."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

World Class Baseball™

"This game allows two players to compete against one another, or one against the computer. You get the best seats in the stadium, behind the catcher, or an overhead view. Digitized voices add to the realism, along with realistic scorecard images and player movement."
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

"...World Class Baseball is very close to perfect."
—Game Player's

World Court Tennis™

"A visually stunning tennis game that plays well and offers head-to-head competition!"
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

"World Court Tennis combines the action of top notch Singles and Doubles tennis with the shimmy of an unusual tennis adventure. It's game, set, and match for NEC!"
—GamePro

Ys™ - Book I & II

1990 Best Role Playing Video Game Award
—Electronic Gaming Monthly Magazine

1990 Best Background Music and Sound in a Video Game Award
—Electronic Gaming Monthly Magazine

1990 Best Role Playing Game Award
—OMNI Magazine

1990 Best Adventure Game Award
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment Magazine

1990 Best Sound Award
—Video Games & Computer Entertainment Magazine

1990 Best Fantasy Role-Playing Game Award
—Game Player's Magazine

"This graphic adventure is one of the most detailed, involved games I have ever played... Ys has the best musical soundtrack I have ever heard! The dozens of scores are all on the CD. If I have to give Ys a 10 for the sound/music rating, then the next best game I ever play with good music will probably get a 1. The intro to the game itself is so good, I find myself watching it over and over again. This is...the best reason to buy the TurboGrafx-CD player if you don't have one. No one can ever claim that CD-ROM games are just a gimmick ever again!"
—Lee Pappas, Video Game and Computer Entertainment

"Over 42 minutes of true stereophonic, high fidelity background music...two full length quests containing 1700 different screens...in addition to over 20 minutes of cinema type intermissions."
—Electronic Gaming Monthly

"If you're a role-play adventurer who's been waiting for a reason to invest in a TurboGrafx-16 CD-ROM unit, here it is...Ys has got it all - great graphics, engaging RPG game play and a brain draining quest."
—GamePro

HARDWARE

TurboExpress™

1990 Best New System of the Year Award
—Electronic Gaming Monthly Magazine

1990 Best Game System of the Year
—Chicago Tribune

1990 Best Top 100 Products of the Year Award
—Popular Science Magazine

"...NEC's TurboExpress, which is much more sophisticated than anything else on the market and features more entertaining games than any other portable."
—Los Angeles Times

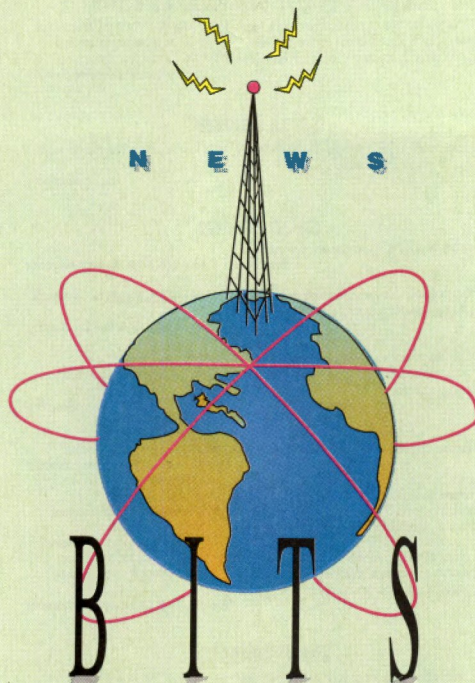
"...a hand-held game machine that boasts high-quality color graphics and super sound. Even better, it uses the same cartridges as the NEC TurboGrafx-16. An optional attachment turns the unit into a TV that fits in the palm of your hand. Unfortunately, the system has proved to be so popular that you might have to be patient to get your hands on one; stores sell out their stocks quickly."
—Chicago Tribune

"This powerful pocket system is the most remarkable hand-held to yet appear, with several amazing features that elevate it above the rest of the pack. First and foremost is the quality of the screen display...the second, and more important, feature is the Express' ability to play all existing TurboGrafx-16 game software. This instantly gives the Express the largest library on the portable scene. The price is steep, but for the upscale gamer who wants the best, the TurboExpress is the ticket to take. BEST NEW SYSTEM OF THE YEAR."
—Electronic Gaming Monthly, 1991 Video Game Buyer's Guide

TurboGrafx™ - 16 System

Macaulay Culkin plays Kevin McCallister, who has to defend his house against a pair of bumbling burglars in the movie Home Alone. ...Macaulay says his primary goal in life is to get his own TurboGrafx-16 video game system."
—New York Times News Wire Service

"...The TurboGrafx-16 has the most impressive graphics, color and sound of all the new systems."
—San Francisco Examiner



Sierra's Hardware Postponed Indefinitely

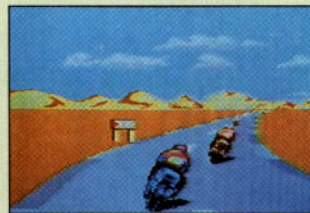
Sierra President Ken Williams announced that Sierra has indefinitely suspended plans to introduce a multimedia hardware package. A previous report had delayed its introduction to mid-year.

Williams explained, "We had initially expected our multimedia bundle to be ready by the middle of this year. However, it has become evident after ongoing discussions with leading hardware suppliers that the industry lacks clear standards necessary to make home-based multimedia hardware a reality. The technology is still in its infancy stages and changing all too rapidly. I cannot justify selling to my customers a product that would become obsolete in a very short period of time."

New Games for Atari 7800

Atari added eight new titles to the library of games available for the 7800 video game system, bringing the total number of games to almost 40. Each retails for about \$29.99, and the 7800 currently lists for \$60.

Five of the new titles were created by Atari. *Planet Smashers* is a space adventure. *MotorPsycho* gives one player a chance to cycle through four tracks. *Basket-*



Brawl can be played either as a six-player basketball tournament or a two-player competition. *Ninja Golf* is a nine-hole golf game against such unlikely opponents as ninjas and flying dragons. And *Alien Brigade* is a rescue operation to save hostages from aliens.

The last three games introduced were created by outside developers. *Ikari Warriors* (by SNK) is a two-player combat mission that takes place behind enemy lines. *Mean 18 Ultimate Golf* (Accolade) is a one- or two-player golf game. *Mat Mania Challenge* (American Technos) brings wrestling action to the 7800.

According to Atari Entertainment President Lawrence

Siegel, the popularity of the 7800 video-game system remains strong. "While our country's economy is slow, the quest for entertainment is at an all-time high. The success that the Atari 7800 is having tells me that families feel the system gives them outstanding value for their money."

F.M. Towns Gets Mixed-Up

Sierra has announced the release of its first interactive multimedia game for play on the Fujitsu F.M. Towns computer. Company spokespeople said that this is the start of a series of titles the company will develop to support the Japanese hardware.

Sierra's first for the new system is a CD-ROM version of *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*, the award-winning children's classic. It features painted background graphics, full voice in Japanese and English and



graphic animations not previously possible.

Sierra's President Ken Williams described the program: "*Mixed-Up Mother Goose* is the first true multimedia product on the market today. In addition to the high-resolution 256-color graphics, it has digitized voices speaking and singing. We have only just begun to develop our efforts in this field." He went on to express pride in the new product. "This is a ground-breaking project for Sierra and for the entire industry."

To date, Fujitsu has announced no plans to bring the F.M. Towns to America. However, the company has unveiled prototypes at American CD-ROM conferences, and it is possible that a decision about marketing the equipment stateside will be forthcoming later in the year.

Cinemaware Quits Publishing

In the wake of an abortive attempt to sell the company, Cinemaware pared its staff down to 14 people, shelved all publishing projects and set about licensing both its name and its games to other companies. Company founder Bob Jacob told VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT that Cinemaware would henceforth operate as a development house.

The company had been in negotiations with Columbia



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CIRCLE #110 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Pictures and, more recently, Electronic Arts. In anticipation of the rapid expansion such a sale would make possible, the company had geared up its research and development effort. When EA's board of directors turned down the acquisition in February, Cinemaware found itself unable to support the expense of its 50+ workers.

Among the projects Cinemaware will tackle in the coming year is a pair of sports games for Data East. Scheduled are *Bo Jackson Baseball* and *ABC's Monday Night Football II*.

Acclaim Is Acclaimed

Toys "R" Us named Acclaim Entertainment as Vendor of the Year for 1990, citing its noteworthy contribution to the company's overall sales, exceptional vendor communication and continuous efforts to enhance its alliance with Toys "R" Us. A spokesman for the giant toy chain pointed out that video games comprised approximately 20% of all toy industry sales in 1990.

Robert Holmes, president of Acclaim, expressed pride that his company received the prestigious award and pledged that Acclaim would continue to provide top-quality product and service to video gamers and to the retailers who market their wares.

This is the second time Acclaim was honored as a top vendor. Last year the company was nominated for a similar award by Wal-Mart Stores when it received the "Vendor/Partner of the Quarter" award. Wal-Mart will soon announce its choice for Vendor of the Year.

Game Boy Title Features Cooperative Play

The latest FCI Game Boy cart calls for cooperation between players in order to finish

the game. FCI's *Ultima: Runes of Virtue*, created by the designers of the *Ultima* computer-game series, lets players meet Lord British, talk to characters,

defeat monsters and explore dungeons using graphics that are said to push the Game Boy system to its limits.

Ultima: Runes of Virtue has over 150 levels of play in one-player mode. Two-player mode has 80+ levels, with two types of dungeons. One type lets the players compete against each other, but the second requires them to work together and is said to be impossible to complete without cooperation.

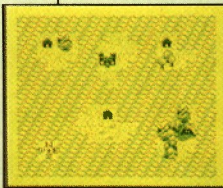
Users Get New On-Line Services

Members of DELPHI (the telecommunication service) can look forward to expanded services, including news, games and even a chance to see what their fellow onliners look like.

DELPHI recently added *USA Today's Decisionline* and the *PR Newswire*. The first service carries daily reports that summarize facts about news, trends, developments and issues of national importance. The *PR Newswire* offers releases from over 15,000 news sources and is useful for tracking earnings reports, new product announcements and special events.

DELPHI also created a new section for reporting fast-breaking war news, with most stories coming directly off the UPI newswire. On the less serious side, DELPHI reported a record attendance at a recent trivia contest when 68 players competed in a single game.

The service is currently planning a yearbook that will contain profiles and pictures of its members. This is thought to be the first such picture book of telecommunication users.



SPA to Visit Cannes

The Software Publishers Association will hold the 2nd Annual European Conference in Cannes, France, June 9-12, 1991. Software executives from Europe, North America and Japan are expected to rendezvous on the Riviera to attend sessions on topics of interest to the industry. Plans now call for meetings on marketing, distribution, technology, public relations and advertising and trends in education, leisure and business software.

Keynote speakers include Steve Jobs of NeXT, Jim Manzi from Lotus, Bernard Vergnes of Microsoft Europe and Guerrino DeLuca of Apple Europe. The conference will attract software distributors, marketing managers, hardware executives, vendors and software developers.

Fuji Introduces Upper-Byte Disks

The newest addition to the Fuji Film Floppy Disk family has an "over-byte," a 3.5" four-megabyte floppy disk. Dubbed the MF2ED (extra density), the disk will work with the new 2.88-megabyte disk drives currently under development at some hardware manufacturers to provide extra storage capacity for large files.

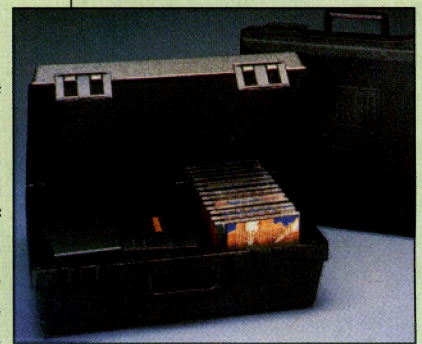
The new disks store roughly 1,400 double-spaced typed pages, approximately twice as much as the current 3.5" double-sided high-density disks and retail for \$138 per ten-pack. The increased capacity comes from a barium ferrite coating formula that is said to raise signal accuracy and extend the life of the disk.

Currently, no game manufacturer has announced any plans to market games on the new disks.

TurboGrafx, Genesis Get New Accessories

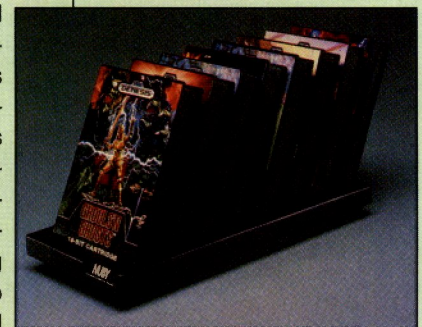
Nuby Manufacturing (a division of Curtis Manufacturing of Jaffrey, New Hampshire) introduced new accessories for NEC's TurboGrafx-16 and the Sega Genesis. Each product is licensed by the company for use with the video-game system it supports.

The TurboGrafx-16-Bit Carry Case stores the TurboGrafx system, TurboBooster, two TurboPads, TurboTap, AC



Adapter and up to 13 games. The Sega Genesis System Carry Case holds the game system, Power Base Converter, two controllers and up to six games. Both cases are styled to resemble briefcases, featuring injection-molded construction and double-latch snaps, and both retail for around \$50.

The TurboGrafx-16 Game Card Caddy (\$7.95) stores up to 20 TurboChip Game Cards, and the Sega Genesis Cartridge Caddy (\$14.95) holds up to eight Genesis cartridges. The lightweight open boxes have slots for the games and



are intended for at-home storage and transport.

Nuby's Game Card Soft Pak holds 12 TurboChip Game Cards, and the Sega Genesis

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clude top-selling video games. The professional group released two lists for January, tracking sales for IBM PC computer games and for video games based on analysis of sales by leading retailers Babbage's, Softwarehouse, Waldensoft and Electronics Boutique.

Sierra was the big winner on the computer list, boasting the top-selling game of the month (*King's Quest V*) and six titles in the top 25. On the video-game list, Sega's *Joe Montana Football* for play on the Genesis was January's best seller.

Top 10 IBM PC Games for January 1991

| THIS LAST | | |
|-----------|-----|---|
| MO. | MO. | TITLE PUBLISHER |
| 1 | 1 | <i>King's Quest V</i> Sierra On-Line |
| 2 | * | <i>Red Baron</i> Sierra On-Line |
| 3 | 7 | <i>Montana Football</i> Sega |
| 4 | 3 | <i>Flight Simulator 4.0</i> Microsoft |
| 5 | 9 | <i>Wing Commander</i> Origin |
| 6 | 5 | <i>Nicklaus Golf</i> Accolade |
| 7 | 10 | <i>SimCity</i> Maxis |
| 8 | 11 | <i>Entertainment Pack for Windows 3.0</i> Microsoft |
| 9 | * | <i>SimEarth</i> Maxis |
| 10 | 19 | <i>F-19 Stealth Fighter</i> MicroProse |

* First month in the Top 10.

Top 10 Video Games for January 1991

| THIS | | |
|------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| MO. | TITLE | PUBL./SYSTEM |
| 1 | <i>Joe Montana Football</i> | Sega/Genesis |
| 2 | <i>Super Mario Brothers</i> | Nintendo/NES |
| 3 | <i>T.M.N.T.</i> | Konami/NES |
| 4 | <i>Football Play Action</i> | Nintendo/NES |
| 5 | <i>Shadow Dancer</i> | Sega/Genesis |
| 6 | <i>Mega Man 3</i> | Capcom/NES |
| 7 | <i>Dr. Mario</i> | Nintendo/NES |
| 8 | <i>T.M.N.T.</i> | Konami/GB |
| 9 | <i>Super Mario Land</i> | Nintendo/GB |
| 10 | <i>John Madden Football</i> | EAG/Genesis |

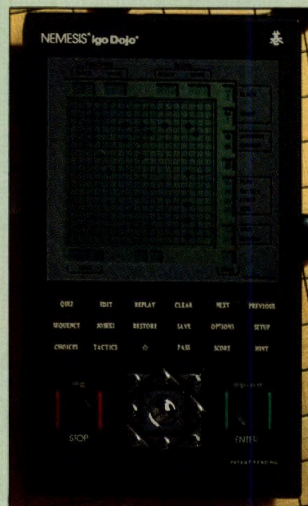
GB = Game Boy

Oriental Classic Now Handheld

Go, the board game that originated in China over 4,000 years ago, is set to conquer the USA in its latest manifestation, a portable electronic handheld developed by Bruce

Wilcox and distributed by Fidelity Electronics. The classic strategy game is currently played in 25,000 commercial establishments in Japan and is said to have over 25 million players worldwide.

Go (which inspired the name of a certain well-known American video-game company) is played on a 19 x 19 grid board. Two players take turns placing stones on vacant intersections, as they both try to occupy or surround as many vacant intersections as possible.

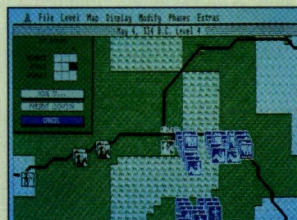


The new handheld game, *Nemesis Igo Dojo*, has three skill levels and is based on *Nemesis*, the software program developed by Wilcox in 1984 that received endorsement by the Japanese GO Association. It offers hints and suggests moves and strategy tactics. The company also plans game-recording cartridges, as well as carts containing prerecorded professional games and further Go problems and promises future upgrade cartridges to perpetually update the program.

The portable player, *Nemesis Igo Dojo*, retails for \$999.99.

Sequels, Follow-Ups and Add-Ons

Designer Ezra Zidran's *Universal Military Simulator II* has been readied by MicroProse for marketing under their MicroPlay label and is reported



to offer the gamer even more flexibility than the first "wargame construction kit." Using *UMS II*, gamers re-create historical battles, modify them in "what if" scenarios, create fictional battles (between armies from different eras, for example) or even fight fantasy battles. Global in time and space, the campaign can involve as many as 127 nations, 525 provinces and 32,000 military units.

Battles are displayed on a 3-D grid that lets the player view the field from any angle. A new feature, the planet editor, even lets the player design new worlds. There are also add-on scenario disks that contain a planetary database, original music and other handy features. *UMS II* is available for play on Amiga, IBM PC and Macintosh computers.

Velocity Software announced that *Jetfighter II* is almost ready to market. Moses Ma, CEO of Velocity, says the company delayed release of the product long enough to add new features, such as SCUD missiles, to make it more topical. The program is not meant as an upgrade to *Jetfighter I*, but rather as a sequel. The first game took the flyer through flight training and missions 1-32. This one continues where the previous title left off. The new program features 256-color VGA and Ad Lib support, built-in virus immunity and missions 33-158.

Artworx completed their *jigsaw Pinups*, a computer puzzle for adult computerists. The puzzler chooses from VGA graphics of 12 pinup models, selects the piece size (jigsaw shapes are recomputed with each program use) and then assembles the puzzle. When

appropriate pieces are placed, the on-screen lovely laughs, sighs and even kisses, and the finished puzzle "talks" to the gamer with software-based digitized speech that requires no add-ons. Currently available for play on IBM PC, *jigsaw Pinups* will have additional pinup disks out later this year.

NEC Launches Newsletter

NEC, makers of the TurboGrafx-16, has a new treat in store for video gamers. Best of all, it's free to anyone who has sent in a TurboGrafx-16 warranty card.

The video-game manufacturer has inaugurated publication of *TurboEdge*, a four-page quarterly newsletter. The first issue should reach Turbo fans this month. *TurboEdge* will include NEC news, previews of forthcoming hardware and software and information about forthcoming events of interest to gamers.

New Licensees, More Titles for Genesis

After the addition of five new licensees early in 1991, Sega announced that there are currently 21 third-party software manufacturers working on Genesis games. Further, the company expects a total of 100 new Genesis titles to be introduced this year.

The five new licensees added last winter will beef up the line with classic and new games. Taito debuted *Space Invaders*, *Rastan Saga II* and *Sagaia*. Virgin Mastertronic unveiled a science fiction role-player, *Corporation*, and Mirrosoft introduced the movie-inspired *Predator II* and a futuresports game, *Speedball II*. From the Orient comes Mentrix, a Japanese software company that previewed *Wardner*, a game of forest intrigue. America's own IDG, best known for action computer games, will unveil its first Genesis title soon. 🎮

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Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!



Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button

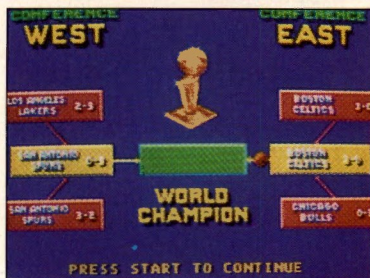


WORLD COURT TENNIS

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)



On the other side of the gamers' age spectrum, 62-year-old Homer Sparkman of Las Vegas, Nevada, has sent in a code that will give you \$655,350, all the pearls, the magic ball and the inner tube. Type in JKKXNPPPP△△△P△br. Homer says the first thing you should do is find Toronto, and buy a racket, shirt and shoes. Then go to the bad king, who is on an island just north of Toronto. Thanks, Homer, for the great Easter egg.



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

(ULTRA FOR THE NES)



Using Delphi, Eric Smith sent in these great Easter eggs for this game.

To get a stage select, press D, D, D, D, D, R, R, R, R, R, R, R, R, B, A, **START**.

5 Joystick

To get ten lives per player, press U, R, R, D, D, D, L, L, L, L, B, A, **START**.

5 Joysticks

To combine the two previous eggs, press B, A, B, A, U, D, B, A, L, R, B, A, **START**.

The codes must be used during the title screen, so you must be fast. Also, for a two-player game, press **SELECT**, **START** instead of just **START**.

LAKERS VS. CELTICS AND THE NBA PLAYOFFS

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)



If you'd like to start the playoffs with a three-game lead over your opponent, enter LGQ HJK for the fourth game between the Celtics and the Spurs. This code was sent in by Aaron Kamin of Studio City, California. Thanks Aaron.

On the other hand, if you'd like to start off with Game 1 of the playoffs, enter T#6 CGK for a game between the Pistons and the Lakers. Thanks to Bobby Bergman of Phoenix, Arizona, for this code.



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We'll soar through 8 horrific levels (you're gonna love the Afterlife Waiting Room) taking on

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creatures. One wrong step... and you're food for the Sand Worm.

Here's a tip: Buy scares from the Recently Deceased Information Booth, they're your best weapons. So, join me in the Neither-world... and make



my millennium!



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CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

MEGA MAN III

(CAPCOM FOR THE NES)



Eric Smith of South Portland, Maine, was the first person to send in the code to start play at Dr. Wily's castle. Place six blue dots in these locations: A3, B5, D3, F4, A1, B2. Also, place two red dots in these locations: E1, A6. Thanks for sending these in, Eric.

To change the number of energy capsules you have in any existing code of yours, place a red dot in one of these locations. Every code will have at least one red dot in one of these locations, so simply remove the corresponding dot in your code, and move it to the location of your choice.

- 0—C5
- 1—E6
- 2—E4
- 3—B4
- 4—A5
- 5—C1
- 6—D2
- 7—C3
- 8—F2
- 9—A6



| | SPARKSHOCK | SEARCHSNAKE | NEEDLE CANNON | HARD KNUCKLES | TAPSPIN | MAGNET MISSILE | GEMINI LASER | SHADOWBLADE |
|----------------|------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| SPARKSHOCK | / | 28 | X | X | 28 | 4 | 28 | 28 |
| SEARCHSNAKE | X | / | 28 | X | 28 | 28 | 6 | 28 |
| NEEDLE CANNON | 14 | 7 | / | X | 14 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| HARD KNUCKLES | 14 | 14 | X | / | 4 | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| TAPSPIN | 28 | 14 | 28 | X | / | 28 | 14 | 4 |
| MAGNET MISSILE | X | X | 28 | 7 | 28 | / | 14 | 28 |
| GEMINI LASER | 28 | 28 | 4 | 28 | X | 14 | / | 28 |
| SHADOWBLADE | 7 | 14 | 14 | X | 28 | 4 | 14 | / |

To give Mega Man super-jumping abilities, just press and hold R on Controller 2, jump normally on Controller 1 and watch Mega Man soar.

On the right is a chart that shows you what weapons work best on the various end bosses and how many shots it'll take to defeat them.

BATTLE ROYALE

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)



To get a sound test, during the game-select screen (with the blonde on the screen), press L, D, R, U, L, D, R, U, L, D, R, U, L, D, R, U. The sound test will appear under the the league selection.



To get back into the ring once you've been thrown out, press I, L, D, R, U, II. Repeat the code until your man gets back into the ring.

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CIRCLE #113 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Shadow Dancer

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)



We've had a lot of people write in with these eggs, but Jack Chen of Whitestone, New York, and Geoff Dobran of Ballwin, Missouri, were the first to get them here. Jack's Easter egg is a way to get a 1-Up in the bonus stage. Simply move to the far left, and don't shoot any of the ninjas.

Geoff's Easter eggs reveal the locations of some hidden extra men. In Stage 2-2, where the fence starts for the second time, you can jump and shoot a 1-Up. You can also find a 2-Up in Stage 3-1. On the third floor, walk to the far right. There's a man on the two boxes. Shoot him with a power shuriken, go to the next level and you'll be able to jump down and retrieve a 2-Up. Thanks to both Jack and Geoff for these great Easter eggs.

Solar Jetman

(TRADEWEST FOR THE NES)



Kent Kurima of Geneseo, Illinois, discovered some passwords that will give you various amounts of money in the game:

| Code | Money |
|--------------|--------|
| BBBBBBBBBBBB | 000000 |
| DDDDDDDDDDDD | 111111 |
| GGGGGGGGGGGG | 222222 |
| HHHHHHHHHHHH | 333333 |
| KKKKKKKKKKKK | 444444 |
| LLLLLLLLLLLL | 555555 |
| MMMMMMMMMMMM | 666666 |
| NNNNNNNNNNNN | 777777 |
| PPPPPPPPPPPP | 888888 |
| QQQQQQQQQQQQ | 999999 |



GREMLINS 2

(SUNSOFT FOR THE NES)



Gary Barragan of Sylmar, California, has come up with the codes for this game. Thanks for passing them on, Gary.

| | |
|-----|------|
| 1-1 | GBQK |
| 1-2 | BVKF |
| 2-1 | DXNH |
| 2-2 | CGMW |
| 3-1 | NJTD |
| 3-2 | ZFPJ |
| 4-1 | SHMC |
| 4-2 | VLBB |
| 5-1 | NXRD |



Phelios

(NAMCO FOR THE GENESIS)



Here's a way to get nine continues instead of three for this game. First, get to the Chapter 1 screen, then press C, A, B, A, C, A, B, A.



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CLSAW

VIDEO GAMES REVIEWS

Sonic the Hedgehog

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$54.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
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| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

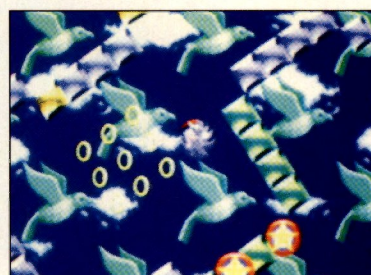
Want to see something really special? Run out and pick up a copy of *Sonic the Hedgehog*, and plug it into your Genesis. Now turn it on, and that thing you used to call a TV set becomes a window to a different world—a land of color and sound, of action and adventure, of terrible danger and glorious reward.

At last, Sega has their own "Mario"; a combination of the common man, the champion and the corporate mascot, all rolled into a neat little bug-eyed cartoon character. *Sonic* is Sega's "guy game" extraordinaire, a run-and-jump masterpiece that compares favorably to the best examples of its genre—including Nintendo's own 16-bit *Super Mario World*.

Visually, Sonic is about as appealing as a video game character can be. Give him a running start, and he'll bear down and pick up speed like an NFL running back. Point the controller in the opposite direction and watch him slam on the brakes Fred Flintstone-style, digging his heels into the ground with a rubber-burning squeal. If you lead him too close to a precipice, he'll teeter on the edge and flail his arms, trying to regain his balance as he looks down with apprehension.

Sonic can also roll up into a whirling ball of pure hedgehog—that's how he takes care of bad guys like Motobug, Ballhog and Crabmeat. An evil scientist has captured Sonic's friends and trapped them inside these evil creatures, and only Sonic can set them free this way.

As expected, the graphics and sounds are great. Sonic travels through six different zones of three "areas" apiece, and each zone has distinctly different graphic elements and musical themes. Exploration has always been an important part of this type of game,



and *Sonic* has more than its share of hidden power-ups and surprises. There are some places you can see but can't quite reach, and it's up to you to figure out how to get to them. Did I mention that Sonic can burrow through solid rock, or that he can run faster and jump higher when he finds a pair of running shoes?

Unfortunately, if you're tired of *Super Mario* clones, there's nothing I can say to hide the fact that *Sonic* is one of them. Another minor complaint came from a less-experienced player who previewed *Sonic* for me: the game's incredibly quick scrolling and layered backgrounds can be somewhat disorienting if you're not accustomed to 16-bit graphics. For instance, there's a surreal bonus round where Sonic rolls around and bounces off the walls of a huge rotating maze with hypnotic patterns of birds and fish floating by. This stage can actually make you dizzy—heck, the music alone is mesmerizing enough to put you in a trance!

All things considered, it's easy to see why *Sonic the Hedgehog* took the industry by storm at the Consumer Electronics Show in January. Software development for the Genesis has primarily focused on serious-themed action titles, encyclopedic RPGs and realistic sports simulations. The Genesis catalog really needed a dynamite *Mario*-style adventure, and *Sonic* fills that void better than many folks believe is possible.

They've been telling me "Genesis does" for months, and now I'm convinced: Genesis does it all! All Sega has to do is shelve all those copies of *Altered Beast* and include *Sonic* with the system instead—it'd make a big difference.

Sega is calling *Sonic the Hedgehog* the fastest game ever. That may be so, but don't be surprised if it's the fastest-selling too.

—Chris Bieniek

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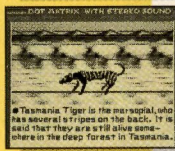
Blow it!

Don't blow it!



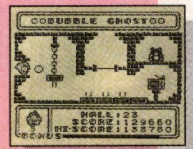
If you blow it you could end up as dinner!

Dare to visit Tasmania, an Australian island inhabited by weird wild animals and bizarre carnivorous creatures! A boy struggles to survive in these strange and dangerous jungles "down under." Guide him on his perilous quest to find the elusive Tasmanian tiger, while ferocious Tasmanian devils try to eat him. Don't blow it! Get *Tasmania Story* and get ready for *Tasmania Mania!*



You have to blow it to win the game!

Enter a wacky world where your ghost's breath moves a fragile bubble around candle flames, fans and spikes. Wind your way through the maze-like halls. But pop the bubble and you blow it! Challenge *Bubble Ghost*, an a-mazing puzzle that will blow your mind and leave you breathless!



FCI 
Not Just Kid Stuff

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Abrams Battle Tank

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$59.95)

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|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

These days, simulations are the big thing on home-computer systems. "Games" like *SimCity*, *Railroad Tycoon* and the brand-new *SimEarth* have changed computer gaming into something more sophisticated and rewarding. Your Sega Genesis is a computer too, and even though it's dedicated to games, there's no reason why it shouldn't be capable of good simulations. As a matter of fact, I've got a good one for you right now: *Abrams Battle Tank*.

In *Abrams Battle Tank*, you get to climb aboard one of those mighty metal monsters of the battlefield and try to seek out and destroy enemy forces. You play several roles simultaneously, including commander, gunner



and driver, and you'd better know all positions well if you want to survive.

When you begin the game, you can choose to play a single scenario or take on an entire campaign, one scenario at a time. After making a selection, you get your orders, load up on ammo (you can choose from three types, each specially suited for a particular type of enemy)

and head off to battle.

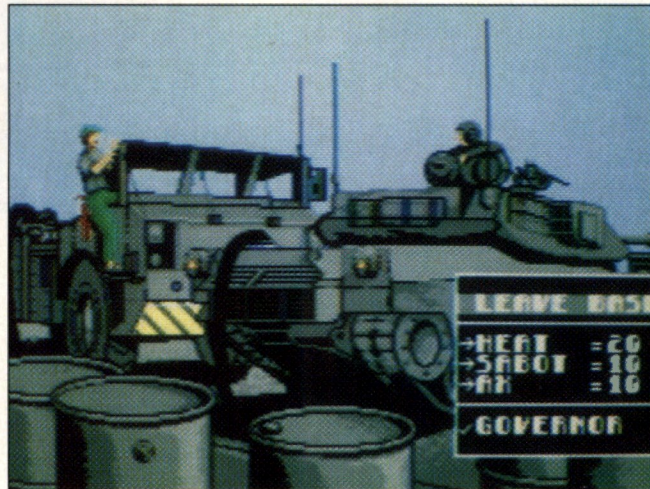
In each scenario, you are given a particular goal, such as guiding a convoy to its destination. You then attempt to complete the mission, all the while taking out enemies as they appear. Enemies come in all types, including ground vehicles and even helicopters. As soon as they get into range, they start firing, and unless you blast them quickly, they'll turn

your tank into hot scrap.

Quick, turn the page!

During your mission you can choose from four different main displays: commander, driver, gunner and cupola. Each display has its own command menu from which you can control your tank's many functions. The tank's movement and fire functions are accessed from the control pad, but other functions, such as choosing the type of ammunition, changing to turret control, checking for damage, setting off a smoke screen and many others, are controlled by activating menu items.

The displays themselves show not only such helpful items as overhead-view maps and damage summaries, but also a full frontal view of the terrain from the viewpoint of the soldier at that station. When in the driver's display, for example, you look through the slot in the front of the tank (whatever they call that thing), with the turret above you, which you can see firing and turning. The commander's



view, on the other hand, is taken up mostly by the overhead map, although there is still a "through the slot" view of the terrain.

Although the graphics are not as well rendered as one might expect for a Genesis game, they are detailed enough to sustain the simulation. What's really stunning is the movement of the display as you drive the tank. The simulated 3-D is almost as good as many of the flight-simulator programs on "full-scale" computers. The sound effects are also especially well-done. From the sound of your tank's engine cranking over to the detonations of shells, the aural qualities of this game add much to the realism.

Abrams Battle Tank is an engrossing simulation, a game every serious Genesis owner must own. It seems to this reviewer that, with the addition of games like *Populous* and *Abrams Battle Tank*, the Genesis is slowly acquiring a software library that



may someday rival the "big boys" such as PC compatibles. Let's hope this trend continues.

—Clayton Walnum

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The Lone Ranger

KONAMI

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

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|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

If you're like me, you'd rather nail your eyelids to a tree than rescue another princess. I mean, look, I'm crazy about role-playing games, I really am. But can't the game designers create a scenario or two that isn't inhabited by dragons, princesses, lost



kings and a dungeonful of other fantasy cliches?

Hope has arrived in the form of *The Lone Ranger*. Although technically it isn't a role-playing game, it's close enough for me. But you won't find a sword, princess, dragon or castle anywhere. This is the wild and woolly West, folks. Good guys and bad guys. Cowboys and Indians. Sheriffs and bandits.

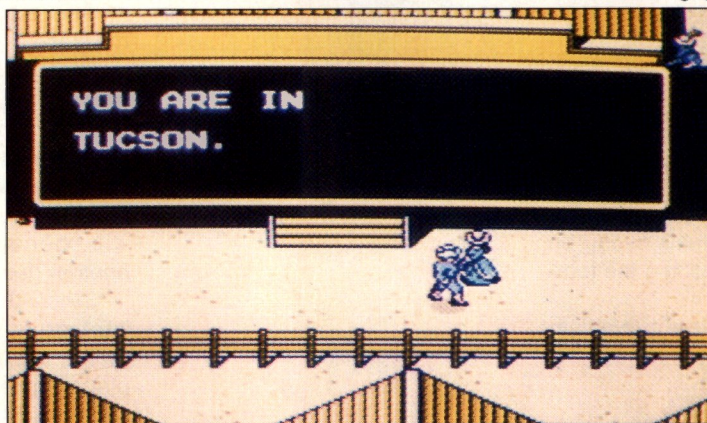
The story: It seems that the Lone Ranger's arch enemy, Butch Cavendish, has kidnapped the President of the United States. Considering that Cavendish was the guy who killed the Lone Ranger's father back in the

days of the Texas Rangers, our masked hero needs no coaxing to take on the hunt. Now he can kill two birds with one bullet: rescue the President and gun down the man he hates most in the world.

You just missed him!

The Lone Ranger begins much like a role-playing game, with you, as the Lone Ranger, traveling from town to town, quizzing townspeople, buying equipment in stores and shooting down occasional gunslingers for cash rewards. After talking with the townspeople, you'll soon discover your first task. However, in the best role-playing tradition, each task leads to other smaller tasks, each of which must be completed in the right order. For example, at the start of the game, you need to find your horse, Silver, but in order to do that, you must get a note from the sheriff. The sheriff agrees to write the note—as long as you first do something for him.

When it's fightin' time, you can choose from three weapons: fists, pistol or TNT. Your pistol handles both regular and silver bullets; the latter chews through your target and keeps on going to the next. For tougher opponents, better pistols can be



bought in weapons shops, provided you can pay the asking price.

Naturally, the bad guys don't care for your meddling in their business. At every opportunity, they attack with fists, knives and guns. Luckily, most towns have doctors who are glad to restore your strength—for a fee, of course. Other services you may find in a town include shooting galleries, where your pistol prowess can earn extra cash, and train stations, which provide ticket holders with transportation between some towns.

As you try to track down Cavendish, you'll shoot it out in several types of scenes, including top-down, horizontally scrolling and simulated 3-D. From one scene to the next, you'll have plenty of opportunities to exercise your arcade-action and role-playing problem-solving

skills. *The Lone Ranger's* graphics vary in



quality from scene to scene, but are generally well done. There isn't a great variety of villains, but a bandit is a bandit, you know? The sound effects and music are adequate, though not especially arresting.

If you'd like to pace the dust-ridden streets of an old West town and feel your hand wrapped around the blue heat of a blazing six-gun, *The Lone Ranger* is your ticket to outlaw-ousting fun. Although it hasn't the depth of a full role-playing game, its scenario is engaging enough to keep you at the controls for many hours. Anyway, it sure beats sitting on the porch chewing hay and watching the tumbleweeds roll by.

—Clayton Walnum

Konami, Inc.
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510
(708) 215-5111



TV Sports: Basketball

NEC

For the NEC TurboGrafx-16 (\$49.95)

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| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

After their great success in licensing Cinemaware's *TV Sports: Football*, NEC announced an entire line of future *TV Sports* titles for the TurboGrafx-16. Basketball is the subject of the second game in the series, but with the future of Cinemaware in doubt, there's no telling if any of the other planned titles will ever be released. I hope that they will, because *TV Sports: Basketball* is another gem.

Since the game is not licensed by the NBA or its players, you'll have to settle for teams like the Ninjas or the Zombies. The players are similarly generic, including the cleverly disguised monikers of well-known NBA stars and the names of several Cine-

You have to be faster than that!

maware staffers involved with the game's development. No Manute- or Muggsy-lookalikes are present, but some players do have distinguishing physical characteristics. There's also a benchful of subs who can be sent in when your starters get tired.

Interestingly, the vertical orientation of the court has confined the action to either side of it. Dribbling the ball across the half-court line brings up a brief, noninteractive horizontal transition screen, with a menu at the top that lets you pick a play to execute when you reach the other end of the court.

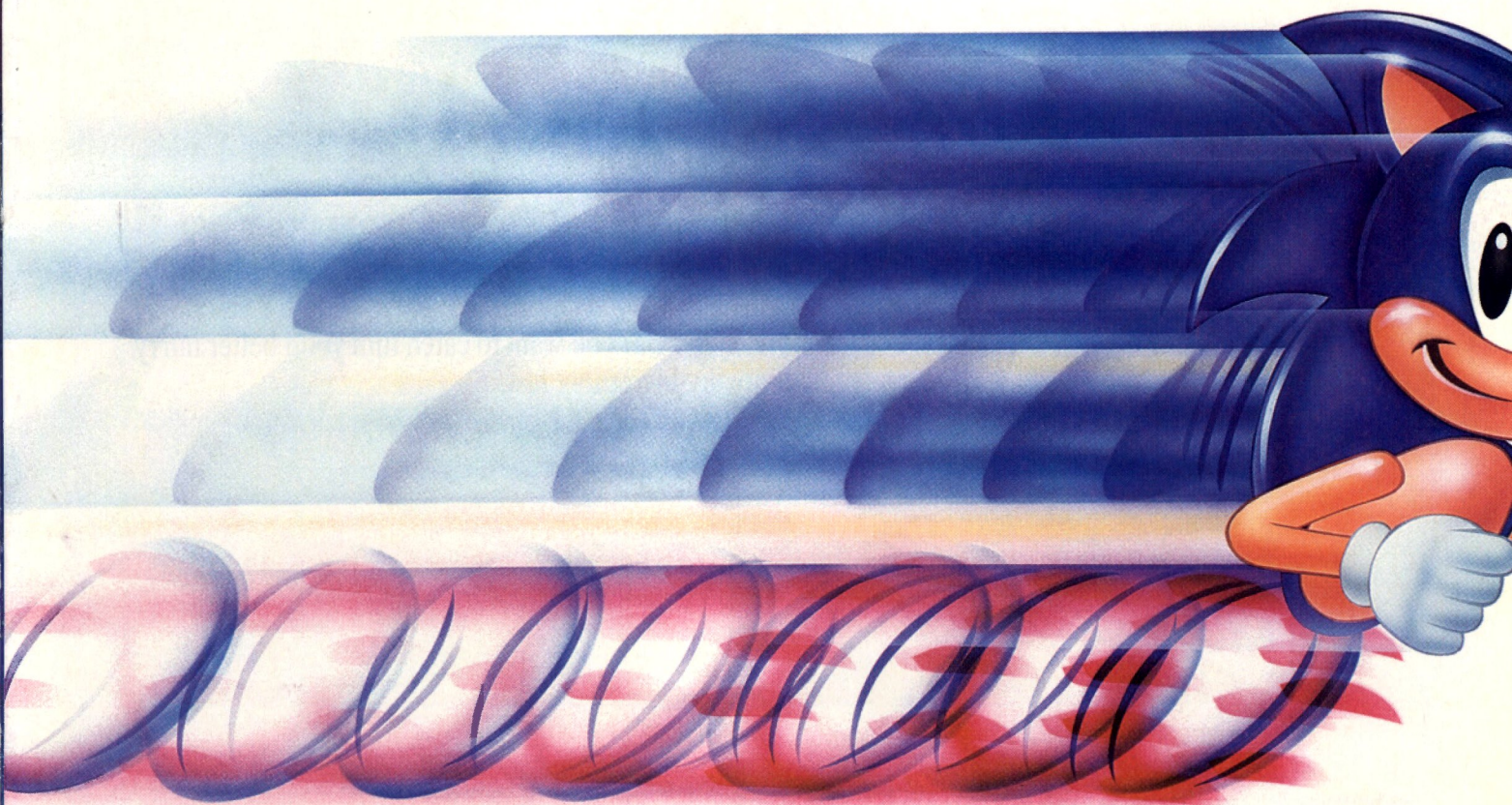
A fuzzy but understandable voice punctuates the action with comments like "Rejected!" or "A steal!" Fouls are also called out loud, and the announcer tells you the player's number and how many violations he has. The sounds of the ball dribbling and swishing through the net are perfect, but there's not much else happening in the audio department. There's no music other than a lightweight tune that plays behind the title screen, and



it's spoiled by weak percussion; namely, a snare drum that should be crisp and powerful, but instead sounds like a 7th-grader tapping on his algebra book with a No. 2 pencil.

To really put *TV Sports: Basketball* through its paces, I assembled an elite team of game TurboTesters and asked them to check out the game's five-player mode. That's right—up to five players can participate, and there's a simple menu screen that lets you specify which team each player is on. You can play three against two, four against one or any other configuration; on-screen players not assigned to a controller will be handled by the computer.

We decided to go all the way and set it up so that all five of us were on the same team, playing against a computer-controlled squad. Most of us had never seen a five-player game before, and the results were predictably riotous. It wasn't long before the room was filled with shouts and high-fives; you simply can't enjoy an

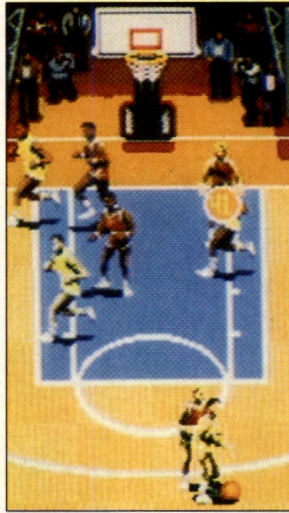


experience like this with only one or two players. One common complaint: Though the game assigns a color to each controller and flashes that color on your player's uniform, most of us found it difficult to quickly identify which player was ours.

In the final assessment, *TV Sports: Basketball* suffers because so many features have been left out. I'm not referring to esoteric, nonessential stuff like the flash of the photographers' strobes or a half-time show. I mean basic, fundamental things like jump balls, crowd noise and situations where a team will inbound the ball from someplace other than beneath their own basket.

Aside from these glaring omissions—in addition to the frustratingly high level of difficulty—*TV Sports* is a pretty decent game. If nothing else, the sharp graphics make it an improvement over the cartoonish looks of the other TurboGrafx roundball contest, *Takin' It to the Hoop*.

On the other hand, if you have a Turbo-Tap, five controllers and five people, you can't afford to miss this one; the five-player



mode is a blast. Even when you lose, it's great fun.

—Chris Bieniek

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Gain Ground

RENOVATION PRODUCTS
For the Sega Genesis (\$49.99)

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|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
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| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Gain Ground is an unusual strategy-arcade hybrid that features progressively difficult rounds of combat in which the player is gravely outnumbered by hordes of computer-controlled foes. The abilities of the enemies and the construction of the terrain change

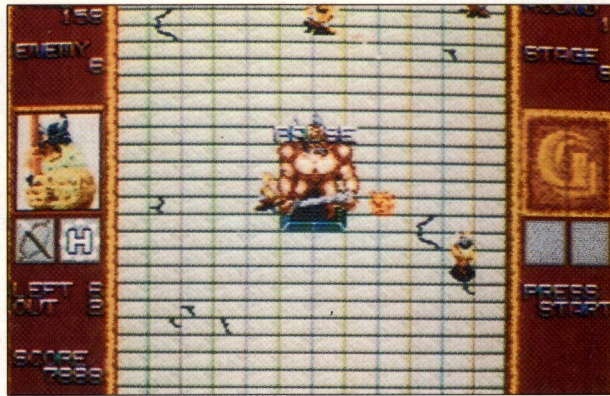
Okay, who's the wiseguy that hit pause!

Sonic The Hedgehog™ is coming soon. He's the fastest video character you've ever laid eyes on. And he's only available on the 16-bit Sega™ Genesis™ system. If you want to catch him you'd better hurry. He's going to be moving incredibly fast.



from round to round. In these ways, the game resembles the humdrum *Crack Down*. But *Gain Ground* offers a few more twists, making it a more complex and interesting game.

When the game begins, you're given a certain number of lives...but each life is actually a different character, each of which has unique abilities and weapons. Every time a new stage begins, you select which one of the characters will fight in that stage (except for any characters who got killed off in previous stages). The difficulty lies in learning which character has the most strategic advantage in any given stage. For instance, if you're holding a pistol, there's no way you'll be able to defeat an archer standing on the other side of a castle wall. But if you can lob a grenade or a javelin well enough, you've got a crucial advantage. High-tech weaponry is generally best, but it also tends to be heaviest, so the character may walk slower. Many

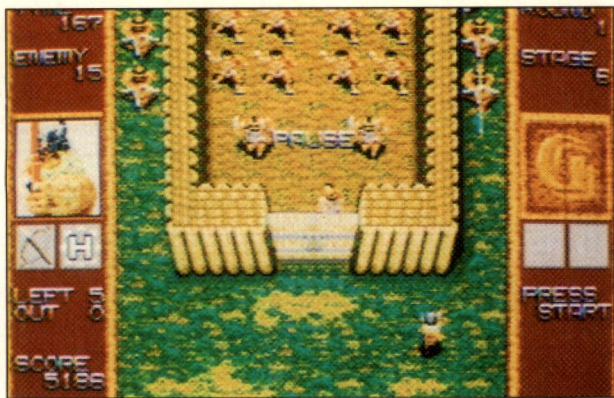


characters have two weapons, usually a specialty weapon and a simple hand pistol.

Playing in easy or normal mode gives you three "lives" and a preset number of continues. Playing in hard mode disables the continues but gives you 20—count 'em, 20—lives, each of which is a different character. The weapon selection is far more extensive this way. Learn to play on hard and forget the other levels.

Each stage is filled with mindless villains and contains an exit. Once you begin a stage, you have two ways out: either through the exit, or by polishing off every enemy onscreen. Wipe out the whole enemy contingent, and the stage will end. Take the exit, and *each* character or life you have left will *also* have to take the exit...meaning a lot of extra work and time. (If any of the subsequent characters clears the screen, the stage ends.) There's also a timer in operations: take too long plowing through a stage, and





you lose your present life.

Each level ends with one or more bosses. They have strong defenses, but their attack patterns are easy to learn. Some stages in some rounds (there are ten stages per round) seem almost impossible to clear, but this game has a two-player cooperative mode that changes the strategy entirely. For single-player games, there's always the option to have each character cut and run for the exit rather than risk lives trying to clear the level.

Due to the constraints of having to show a whole battlefield on-screen at once (using only about 65% of the screen's width), the characters are small and poorly defined. The background graphics are adequate but certainly nothing impressive. The music, like the rest of the game, is often too repetitious; many stages have identical music.

Gain Ground didn't appeal to me. I found the endless combat sequences tedious after a while (particularly in easy and normal modes). But those who enjoy war games mixed with action, or combat scenes from RPG/action games (such as *Sword of Vermillion*) will probably find a lot of entertainment value in *Gain Ground*.

—Josh Mandel

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987 University Ave., Suite 10
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Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$61.99)

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| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

There was a chill in the air as the rain poured down outside my window, a perfect night for a good mystery. And what better location for an evening of sleuthing than the streets of London? Tagging along with Sherlock Holmes no less! With notebook paper,

pen and cookies at hand, I was ready for action.

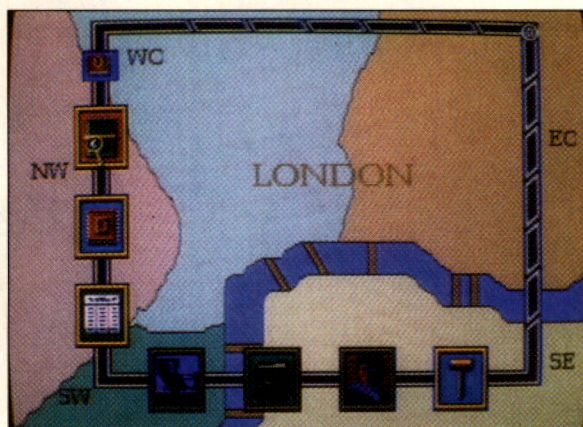
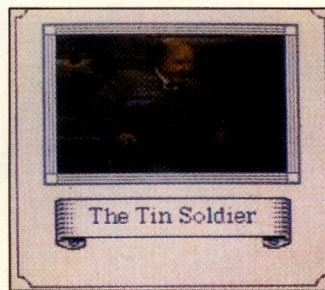
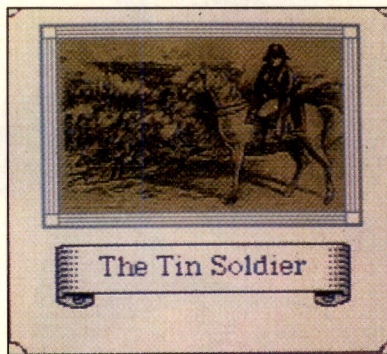
Those of you looking for the kind of action that only an itchy trigger finger can provide, read no further. *Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective* is a game for thinkers, patient ones at that. If you're a mystery lover who sometimes likes to skip to the end to find your culprit, you might find this game irritating at times. To solve the mysteries you must play through to the very end—no giving up!

You'll start the game out with a pep talk from Sherlock Holmes. In a digitized scene of footage of a live actor, Holmes comes to life on the screen, imparting his advice to you before you set off on your first case. There are three mysteries to solve: the mummy's curse, the mystified murderess and the tin soldier. Each mystery begins with a digitized scene featuring Holmes and Watson discussing the case. After you've been briefed, you're on your own.

Your resources are a notebook containing the names of the Baker Street Regulars (a varied group of observant informants), a directory of London, a newspaper, Holmes' own files, the Baker Street Irregulars (youths who will seek out clues for you) and a carriage to take you from clue to clue. Everything is explained in the documentation. There is no annoying sound track to distract you as you solve your case; thankfully, the only sounds you'll hear after the opening sequence music are voices of characters as clues are uncovered.

The game interface is simple to use and straightforward, but sometimes frustrating. Going back and forth from place to place can be tiring, especially since the little buttons on

the directory are not so easy to hit without a mouse. There are a lot of red herrings to be found (too many I thought), but



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nestled amongst them are clues that you must investigate.

Should any of you cocky investigators think you have enough information to solve the case at too early a stage in the game, the judge will tell you so and send you back to gather more clues. Sigh. Here's where the patience comes in. Unthinking detective that I was, I never saved my game after the first four hours of playing, and the next day I had to go back and re-gather all my clues before the judge would let me solve the mystery. Holmes would never have neglected such a detail.

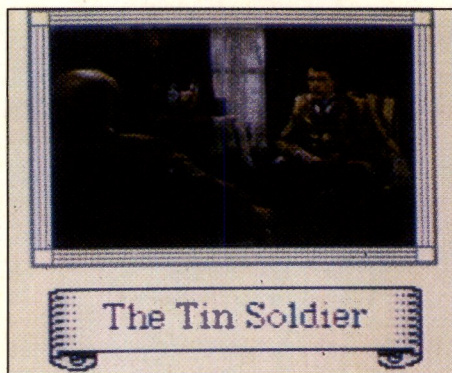
In fact, detail is one of the main features that recommends this game. When you uncover a clue, a digitized scene with costumed actors in sumptuous, period settings appears. Not so appealing is being told that some brilliant deduction you've made is "a complete waste of time" as you stare at an etching of a closed door. Still, even though some of your investigations may not yield digitized scenes or important information, you might learn a little about London.

At times I found myself investigating almost everyone in the directory. By doing this I racked up my points. The goal in *Sherlock Holmes* is to solve the game in as few points as possible. Reading the newspaper and interviewing the Regulars in your notebook will not give you points, but traveling from place to place in the directory, opening Holmes' files and getting the help of the Irregulars will.

Unlike most video games, you will not have a constant reminder of your score, but will find out how you did in the end. It seems that the journey is more important than the destination. In this aspect, the game definitely resembles a computer game more than your typical video game fare, and it will probably appeal more to the adult gamer than the average youngster (although mystery-loving teens can handle it).

After playing my first game, my score was ludicrously high, but I suppose the idea is that the player will want to go back and try and re-solve the mystery using less points. If that doesn't appeal to you, then you should perhaps pass on the game when you're done. Then again, you might want to call a friend over to help you solve the mysteries.

Despite its flaws, I found *Sherlock Holmes* to be an enjoyable game, although you



might have to wait for Holmes' final explanation of the case to understand what happened, even after you've solved it! (And frankly, without giving anything away, I thought some of the characters' motives for murder were a little silly.) If you love cracking cases and you've got time and patience, check this one out.

—Norma Edwards

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Laser Invasion

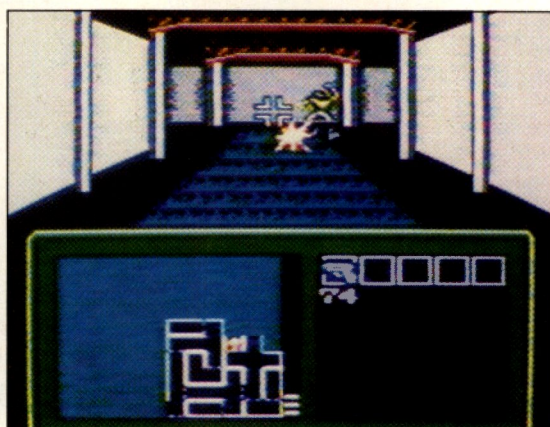
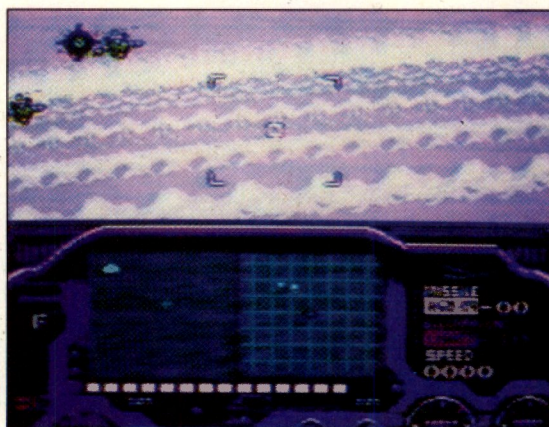
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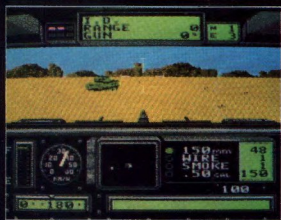
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|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

With the recent upheaval and turmoil in the Middle East, I suppose it was only a matter of time before games similar to the situation over there would start appearing. While it's probably only coincidence, there are some similarities within the wording of the manual for *Laser Invasion* that made me think twice.

Okay, all you potential saviors of the world, this is what you are up against: the infamous "Sheik Toxic Moron" has been pre-



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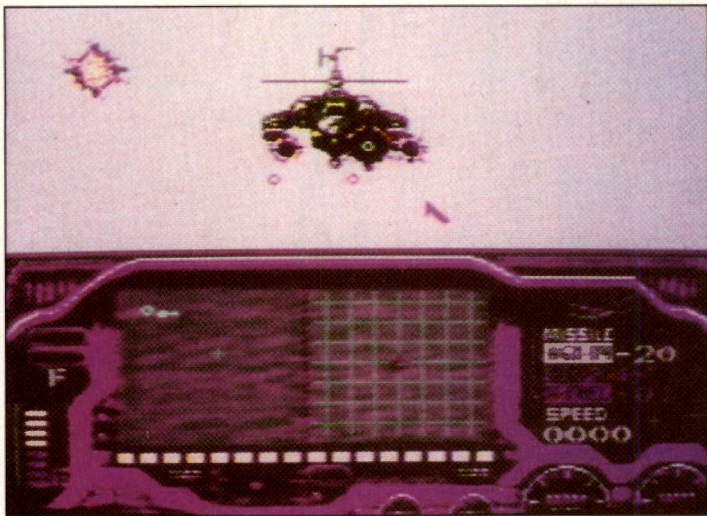


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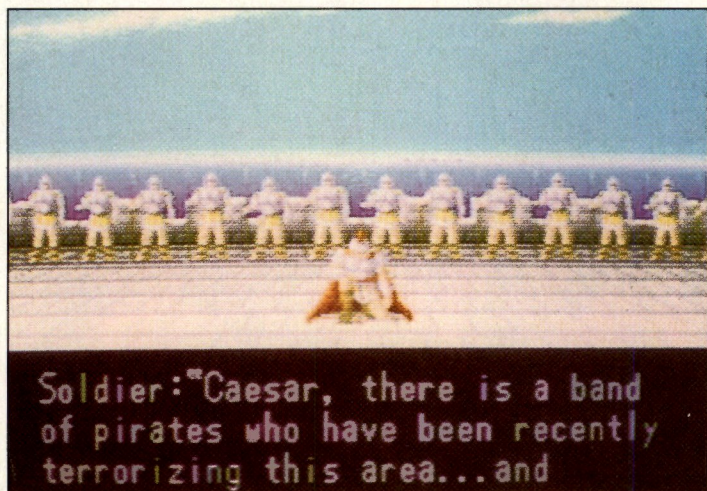
siding over his empire of oil fields, harems and expensive autos and has decided that now is the time to expand his domain over the entire world.

Our friendly sheik has developed the deadly "TechnoScorch Missile," which takes under 15 minutes to reach any major city around the world (okay, it's a bit more impressive than a SCUD). The world community's response has been to draw together to select one man or woman with the ability to take this guy out.

If you accept the mission, you will take command of the military's newest attack helicopter, the "Laser Invasion Helijet," over land and sea-fighting enemy aircraft, land at secret bases and blast your way through enemy camps and underground mazes drilling anything that moves.

If this doesn't draw a clear picture of what you are up against, imagine a cross between *Top Gun*, *Operation Wolf* and a 3-D maze game. Yes, *Laser Invasion* has all that, and, what's more, there's plenty of action to keep the gamer busy.

This game is designed around the new Laserscope headset that acts as a light gun when worn. The regular Zapper guns and joypads may be used as well for control, so



nobody should feel left out. I personally used a regular joystick and had no problems with the different areas of the game. (For those unfamiliar with this headset, see the October '90 issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT for details.)

There are at least four missions with different stages within each. (The preliminary version I played had a level select, but nothing was mentioned within the manual, so don't hold your breath.) Five continues are provided, which place you back at the beginning of the mission.

The action starts when you get your mission briefing and proceeds to loading your copter with extras: different missile types, ground bombs, chaff and extra fuel-capacity options are adjustable, depending upon the mission requirements.

Once you are in the air, there are two radar screens available to guide you. One shows enemy aircraft in your immediate area, and the other is the long-range radar that is used to guide your craft to its target(s). On-screen damage, fuel, airspeed and ammo gauges all keep you abreast of your fighting status.

After skipping your way through a barrage of jets, helicopters, missiles, submarines, ships, etc., you will either face a boss aircraft or have to land at an enemy base. Landing isn't automatic however; you must guide your copter down, fighting crosswinds that try to blow you off-course. Don't worry, you can keep trying if you miss, at least until you run out of fuel.

Once you set that puppy down, it's time for some serious sniping of the sinister sheik's soldiers, gun emplacements and aircraft. Ammo and health power-ups appear occasionally to keep your chances healthy for making it into the 3-D bunker mazes, which contain hidden enemies. Secret agents may appear with advice or materials to help you on your missions, so keep exploring.

Laser Invasion plays very well and has the equivalent of three games' worth of variety and complexity. I have been skeptical about any game that has used the light-gun system, but this one is a definite must-have for light-gun fans. The game takes advantage of the feature without sacrificing playability or complexity.

Definitely take the time to check this one out. I must take a moment to compliment the author of the manual as well. It is entertaining and was written with a sense of humor. With enemy names like Capt. Yassir Heesmybaby, Yabba Dabba Ali Babba and Kurt Sliatgut, I almost busted a gut!

—Brent Walker

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BLOBERT IS BACK!

DAVID CRANE'S THE

RESCUE OF PRINCESS BLOBETTE™

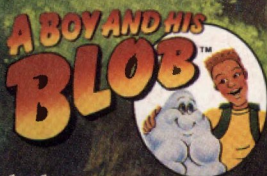
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Warrior of Rome

MICRONET

For the Sega Genesis (\$69.99)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

The complaint rings out often these days: "This game didn't last long enough! I finished all 178 levels of *Li'l Muffin's Death Rattle* in two hours!" If you're among those who find themselves in similar situations, heed this: *Warrior of Rome* is a pure strategy war game that offers gamers countless hours of compelling play.

Many gamers are immediately turned off by war games. True, there's something intimidating

about seeing an enormous map divided into hundreds of tiny hexagons (or in this case, squares), but there's little real difference between a war game and a computer role-playing game like any of the *Ultima* series. The terminology may be different, but the game play is nearly identical.

In *Warrior of Rome*, you step into the sandals of Julius Caesar himself. You start by fending off pirates on the isle of Crete. The second scenario is fought on the Mediterranean, ship-to-ship—and when two opposing ships meet, hand-to-hand. Land in Egypt and defeat the armies of Alexandria. The palace is the final and most difficult scenario. Your reward (?) for all your efforts will be Cleopatra, who may have a surprise or two of her own for you.

Each scenario takes place on a grid divided into hundreds of squares and featuring different types of terrain. Most of your time is spent on a close-up section, which scrolls in all directions. Some terrain is impassable, some simply makes for very slow movement. Both sides can create pit traps, which can seriously debilitate even the strongest units. Each unit has particular abilities: some are better fighters, some are better at digging traps, and so on. Crucial to success is knowing when to retreat or rest your units: movement, battle and trap digging all drain a unit's vitality. You can alter the "retreat strength" of each unit; for instance, set retreat strength to 20%, and a unit in battle will automatically retreat when it's lost 20% of its men.

Once you've entered into battle, you're moved into a full-screen representation of the



fight, with gauges on the side of the screen showing each unit's dwindling strength. Your only option at this point is to retreat; otherwise, combat is a spectator sport only. Battle screens can be resized and moved, so you can continue to command your other units.

There are plenty of options allowing you to tailor the game play. There are three difficulty settings and all manner of informational windows can be set to appear automatically. Heavy use of the **PAUSE** button is a great convenience: you can pause the game, examine all your units, give them orders, then take off the pause button and see your commands executed. This way, there's never a

need to make a snap decision.

At the end of a successfully completed scenario, you're given a password allowing you to jump right to the next scenario next time you play. However, there's no way to save a scenario in progress, which is a shame, since it'll take you many continuous

hours of play to complete a single scenario.

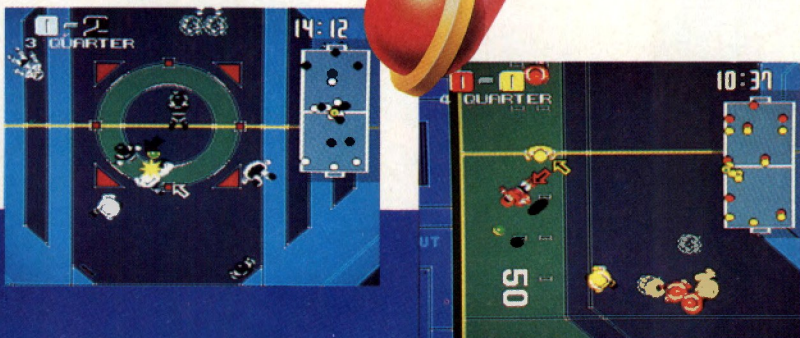
The graphics, even during the close-ups, are not exciting. Due to the great amount of information present on each screen, characters and icons are extremely small. There are several interesting graphic touches, though, particularly in the introduction. The music was nicely orchestrated but extremely repetitive—however, this is forgivable considering the length of time that each scenario takes to conquer.

War games may not appeal to everybody, but *Warrior of Rome* is solid, lengthy and easy-to-play, and serves as a great introduction to the genre. It'll also entertain those who already have a fondness for war games, though it's a bit on the elementary side compared to many computer war games.

—Josh Mandel

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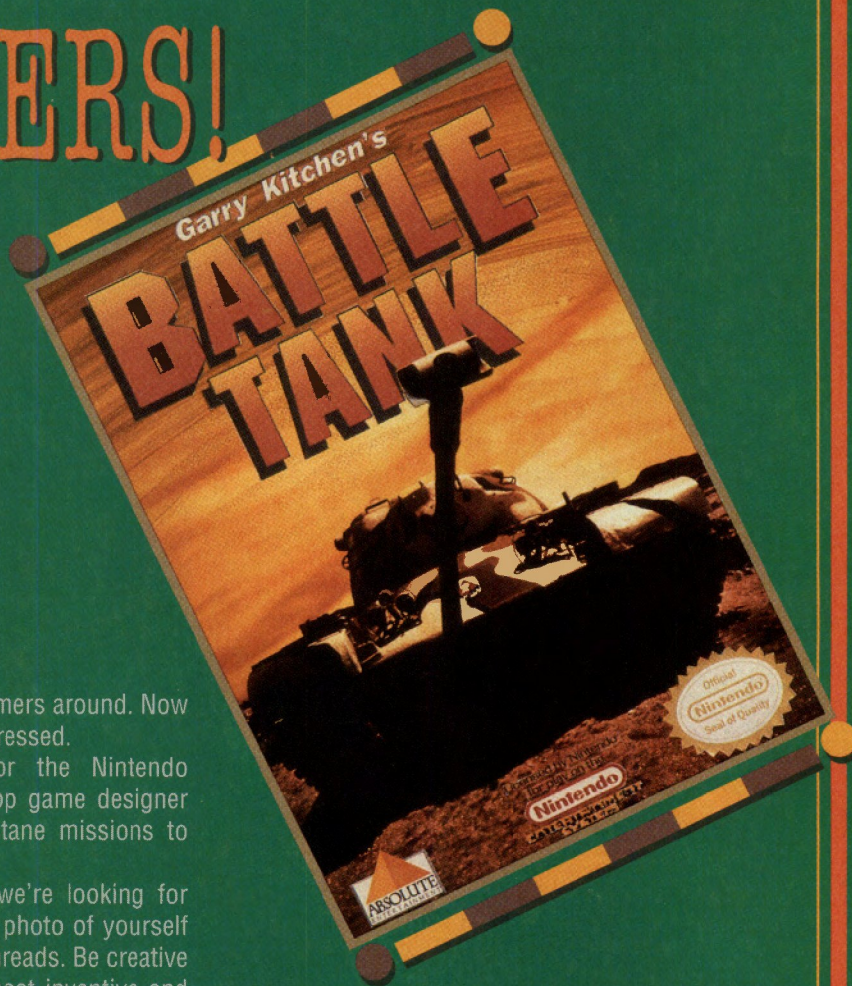
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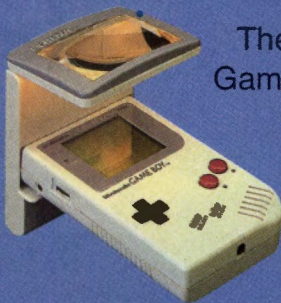
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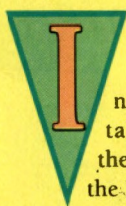


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In the last segment we talked about some of the technical features of the Nintendo Super Famicom (SF), which was released in Japan last November. In this issue we'll talk about what is important to a video game system, what sells the hardware—the software. That's right, 50 bucks worth of pure crystallized silicon (sand to you and me) encoded with months' or even years' worth of programming. Without the software the SF is just five pounds of plastic and sand.

In the past few months there have been a few releases that include some wonderful new concepts and some old favorites brought back to life. The chart on page 56 shows some of the releases in Japan for the next year or so along with the memory size of the ROM. This list is by no means complete nor is it necessarily what will appear for the American version, called the Super NES (SNES), which will make its debut later this year.

Actraiser

When you first plug in *Actraiser*, you see a side-view jump-and-slash game very similar to NEC's *Legendary Axe 2* for the TurboGrafx-16. The graphics are just wonderful, with rich colors and detailed backgrounds. Even more impressive are the three or four levels of parallax scrolling. Quite simply, parallax scrolling is when different planes of the background scroll at different rates, giving the illusion of depth.

As I am beginning to expect from the Super Famicom, the music and sounds in *Actraiser* were incredible—I could listen to the music from *Actraiser* all day if I had to—and the sound effects were top-notch. It is obvious to me that there was quite a bit of time spent working on the audio portion of this game.

The theme of the game is very simple: You progress from left to right, jumping and slashing enemies as you go. There are various power-ups along the way, including life, points and weapon power-ups. As best we can



P A 2 R T

BY
REVO EMAG

tell from the Japanese version we've tested, the only weapon seems to be your sword, but there are power-ups to make energy shoot out as well. I was extremely impressed by the power-ups that are hidden on ledges above and below the action, which added an

Reminiscent of *Legendary Axe 2*, *Actraiser* yields an impressive display of parallax scrolling.



element of discovery to an otherwise straightforward game. At the end of each level there are some formidable—and large—bosses. These bosses were quite difficult to beat, but if you watched the movement patterns you could eventually conquer them.

After each fighting level there is an unexpected surprise that can be considered a second game built in. The screen opens to a top view of the countryside, and at the center of the screen is the town hall for a new village. Using menus and guiding a small angel, you must kill demons that are trying to prevent the village from forming. At the four corners of the screen there are demon generators to destroy. Only when all the demon generators are destroyed can the next fighting stage be

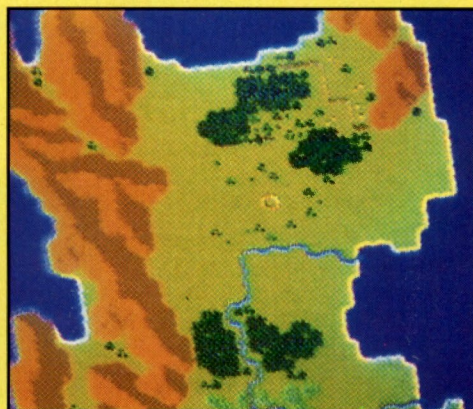
entered. Your people must be kept happy at all times and that means fighting the demons using various natural disasters to mold the landscape.

There is no doubt that this is one of those games that people will be talking about for a long time.

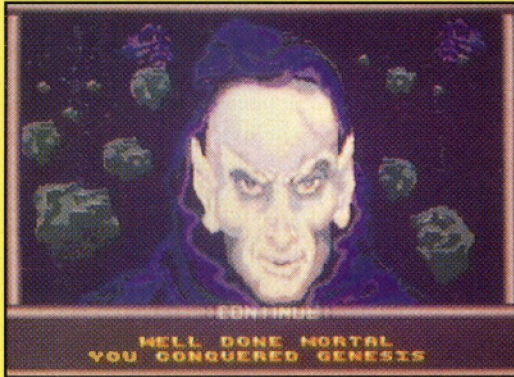
Populous

Electronic game players are all familiar with *Populous*. This game started on the Amiga and ST, moved to other computer formats, then to the Sega Genesis and now the SF.

Simply put, you are a god, and you must build your "good" people and their kingdom for an inevitable confrontation with the "evil" side. The basics are just that: You must raise or lower your land to provide a place for your people to settle. The more flat land you make for



Available in several formats, the Super Famicom version of *Populous* is by far the best.



them, the bigger the houses they are able to create.

Eventually you will knight your leader, who will travel to the land of evil and burn down evil's houses. If you have the energy, you can use earthquakes, volcanos, swamps and floods on evil to level its houses and lower its deity's energy.

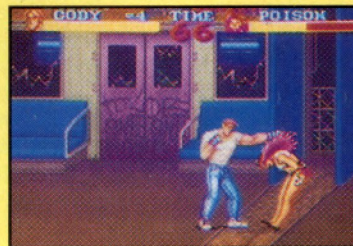
This is by far the best version of *Populous* yet. While the Genesis version has four landscapes, the Super NES has nine: grassy plains; snow and ice; desert; rock and lava; cake land; silly land; bit plains; Japanesque; Française; and piggy land. By far my favorite is bit plains, where your houses start as Game Boys, then evolve through various versions of the Japanese Famicom, become NESes, SFs and finally, instead of a castle you get a Cray computer.

The most difficult part of *Populous* involves the controls, which are a tad twitchy and sometimes too sensitive. Other than that, *Populous* is a fantastic and addictive game that can be played for months without tiring.

Final Fight

Street fighting game fans rejoice. Capcom has taken the hit arcade game *Final Fight* and brought it home to the SF. This is the game that will define this genre for the future.

You start each level by picking either Haggar or Cody. Haggar is a rather large guy who



reminds me of Andre the Giant, while Cody is the video game version of Jean-Claude Van Damme. The action here is pure street fighting. Although some of the key combinations are difficult to master, once you do, you can perform some awesome moves. Most of the moves look like they were taken from pro-wrestling, like brain busters and body slams. To add to the variety, Cody and Haggar have different moves. The graphic quality and the animation is top-notch.

It's not all hands and feet either: Kick some boxes and you might find a weapon like a knife or a pipe. Once you are armed with the sword, you can pretty much finish off the bad guys without taking any damage. One neat feature is the addition of damage meters for the enemies. Once you hit an enemy, his damage meter appears and stays on the screen until you hit a

different enemy. This is better than most games that just have damage meters for the bosses.

The sound effects are mostly groans and screams—but they are the best darn groans and screams I've heard on a game system yet. They complement the great graphics and game play.

The only negative is the lack of a two-player option. This would have made a great single-player game into an even better two-player simultaneous game.

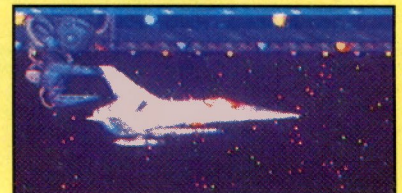
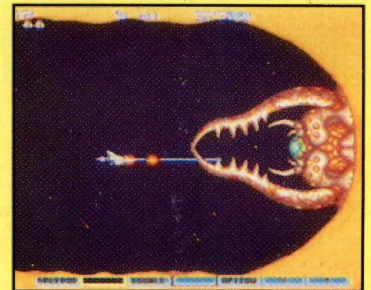
Brought over from the arcade version, Capcom's *Final Fight* will define the fighting-game genre for the SF.



Gradius 3

Finally, the 16-bit version of the game that put Konami on the video map. *Gradius* was the game that defined horizontally scrolling shooting games for the NES. *Gradius 3* adds some different features and boasts some new ones, but is it all enough?

The game opens with a nice animated sequence of the ship departing from a big mothership and flying away. After picking the number of players, there is a unique weapons-selection screen. Here there are four sets of power-ups to choose from and



***Gradius 3* is the 16-bit version of the game that put Konami on the video gaming map.**

two shield types to pick. If you don't like the weapon sets provided, there is an edit mode where you can pick weapons for each of the seven power-up slots. It doesn't make much of a difference which one you pick, since the categories stay the same no matter what (i.e., the second slot is always a two-way shot of some kind). Once the game really starts, you'll see the same old horizontally scrolling game you've seen before. The backgrounds are great, and there is some nice variety. I couldn't tell which I liked more, the Arabic-looking sand dunes or the spacelike techno level.

The enemies come out in the same kind of groups and the power-ups are found the same way as in the other *Gradius* games.

You collect the numerous power-ups that allow you to activate the various weapons and options. The bosses are all large and well animated—this is something we have been seeing with most of the SF games.

Jumbo Ozaki's Hole-in-One Golf should even appeal to non-golf players, with its high level of detail and realism.



shouldn't we? Not so fast. In the words of the immortal Bartman, "I think it sucks." The problem is, the game is much too similar to the NES *Gradius*. The graphics are the same, and the play is the same. While there was so much room for improvement, Konami chose to keep

the game the same. Besides the play and design problems, the game has some serious technical shortcomings: At various times during play, sprites flickered and disappeared, and when the action got too intense, the graphics slowed to a near standstill. This was annoying and should be unacceptable for a \$60 cart on a game system that's as well equipped as the SF.

Hole-in-One Golf

Take a small white ball and whack on it with a club, on TV, and what do you get?

Jumbo Ozaki's Hole-in-One Golf. *Hole-in-One Golf* is an addictive golf game that even a non-golf player will enjoy.

First you choose the game mode: stroke play, match play, tournament mode, practice mode and even versus Jumbo himself. The practice mode is great because you can choose a hole and the wind velocity. Try to keep shooting the same hole until you can get a hole-in-one. It's tough, but it can be done. After you pick your game mode you can even pick which of the clubs you want to pack in your bag.

The graphics of the course are fantastic and well shaded to show the variations of each hole. If that's not enough, use the zoom mode to get a close look at the hole, then use the cut mode to get a cross section, which shows the exact slope of the grass. After hitting the ball, you can use the replay mode to show the exact path of the ball. Once you're on the green, you may be treated to one of the various close-up animations of the ball either going in the hole or bouncing out.

The overall realism is just great, especially the various sounds of the ball bouncing or hitting the cup. I would have liked to hear some cheering or oohs and ahs, but I guess golf just isn't that kind of game.



Now this is the tough part. Everyone loved *Gradius*, everyone loved *Life Force* and those of us that got to play it loved the Japan-only *Gradius 2*. Now comes *Gradius 3*, the 16-bit *Gradius*. We should all love it,

Up and Coming Software 1991

| Schedule '91 | Title | Category | Manufacturer | Megabytes | Backup or Not |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| Feb. 20 | <i>Jumbo's Hole-in-One Golf</i> | Sport | HAL | 8 Meg | No |
| March 29 | <i>Darius Twin</i> | Shooter | Taito | 8 | No |
| April 5 | <i>Big Run</i> | Racing | Jaleco | 8 | No |
| April 8 | <i>Long Way to Agutus</i> | Simulation | T/E Soft | 8 | No |
| April 26 | <i>Ultraman</i> | Action | Bandai | 4 | No |
| In April | <i>Sim City</i> | Simulation | Nintendo | 4 | Yes |
| In March | <i>Drakken</i> | RPG | Kemco | 8 | Yes |
| Spring | <i>Gadulin (Catalin?)</i> | RPG | SETA | 8 | Yes |
| Spring | <i>Kerry Boy</i> | Action | Epic Sony | U/K | No |
| Spring | <i>Area 88</i> | Shooter | Capcom | U/K | No |
| June | <i>Wanderers From Y's</i> | Action RPG | Tonkin | U/K | Yes |
| July | <i>Pro Soccer</i> | Simulation | Imagineer | U/K | U/K |
| July | <i>Morita the Chess Master</i> | Table Game | Seta | U/K | No |
| August | <i>Lagoon</i> | RPG | Kemco | U/K | Yes |
| August | <i>Legend of Raiden</i> | RPG | Toei | U/K | Yes |
| August | <i>Dungeon Master</i> | RPG | Victor Music | U/K | Yes |
| Summer | <i>Zelda III</i> | RPG | Nintendo | U/K | Yes |
| Summer | <i>Final Fantasy</i> | RPG | Square | U/K | No |
| Summer | <i>SD Battle Dodgeball</i> | Sport | Banprest | U/K | No |
| Summer | <i>Dead-Heat Pro Baseball</i> | Sport | Epic Sony | U/K | No |
| December | <i>Fist of the North</i> | RPG | Toei | U/K | No |
| TBA | <i>Boppers</i> | Action | Sun | U/K | No |
| TBA | <i>Super R-Type</i> | Shooter | Irem | 8 | No |
| TBA | <i>Village of Ultra Demon</i> | Action | Capcom | 8 | No |
| TBA | <i>Super Pro Baseball (tent.)</i> | Sport | Jaleco | U/K | No |
| TBA | <i>Flying Dragon</i> | Action | Culture Brain | U/K | No |
| TBA | <i>Scherzhade II</i> | Adventure | Culture Brain | U/K | Yes |
| TBA | <i>Dragon Quest V</i> | RPG | Enix | U/K | Yes |
| TBA | <i>Super Nova</i> | Shooter | Cobia System | U/K | No |
| TBA | <i>Ring Master (tent.)</i> | RPG | Yahoman | 8 | Yes |
| TBA | <i>Wizardry</i> | RPG | ASCII | 8 | Yes |
| TBA | <i>Dragon Slayer</i> | RPG | EPOC | 4 | No |
| TBA | <i>Chibimaruko-Chan (tent.)</i> | RPG | EPOC | 4 | No |
| TBA | <i>Charge! Goemon</i> | Action | Konami | U/K | U/K |
| TBA | <i>Super Ultra Baseball</i> | Sport | Culture Brain | U/K | U/K |

As you can see from the chart on the right, there are seven graphic modes for the SF. Each mode has a set number of background screens, and each background has a set number of colors that can be displayed. For example, Mode 2 has two screens, each of which has 128 colors. If overlaid, a programmer can display 256 different colors. If the programmer takes two or more of these screens and overlays them, then scrolls them at different rates, it will create the wonderful parallax scrolling we've seen so much on the Super Famicom games to date.

The Future

So far we've seen some great games, and I'm sure we'll see some not-so-great games. It looks like the capabilities of the system will help to produce more of the great and less not of the not so great. So when the SF hits the U.S., there is going to be a whole mess of fun.

| Mode | # of Screens | Screens | # of Colors |
|------|--------------|---------|-------------|
| 0 | 4 | 1 | 32 |
| | | 2 | 32 |
| | | 3 | 32 |
| 1 | 3 | 1 | 128 |
| | | 2 | 128 |
| 2 | 2 | 1 | 128 |
| | | 2 | 128 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 256 |
| | | 2 | 128 |
| 4 | 2 | 1 | 256 |
| | | 2 | 32 |
| 5 | 2 | 1 | 128 |
| | | 2 | 32 |
| 6 | 1 | 1 | 128 |
| | | 1 | 256 |

PAC-MAN'S BACK AND GAME BOY'S GOT HIM!



PAC-MAN © 1980, 1990 Namco Ltd. All rights reserved.

The arcade classic Pac-Man makes his Game Boy™ debut in this sensational new release from Namco. Relive the adventure as you munch your way through twisting mazes filled with power pellets, bonus fruit, and those wicked ghosts! Beware of their touch- they've been known to snack on Pac's.

Hook up with a friend to double the excitement in this first 2-player Pac-Man™. Determine the challenge by choosing the number of lives you'll need to defeat your opponent. Add fuel to the rivalry by using the handicap feature which allows two players to begin in different rounds. Gulp down a ghost and shoot'em to your opponent's maze!



There's Ghosts to gobble so get Pac'n.

namco

The Game Creator

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CIRCLE #121 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

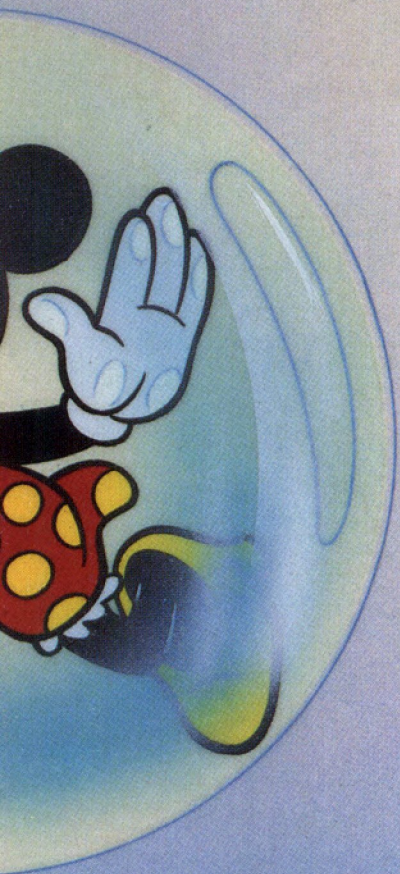


THE CASTLE OF ILLUSION

STRATEGY GUIDE PART 2

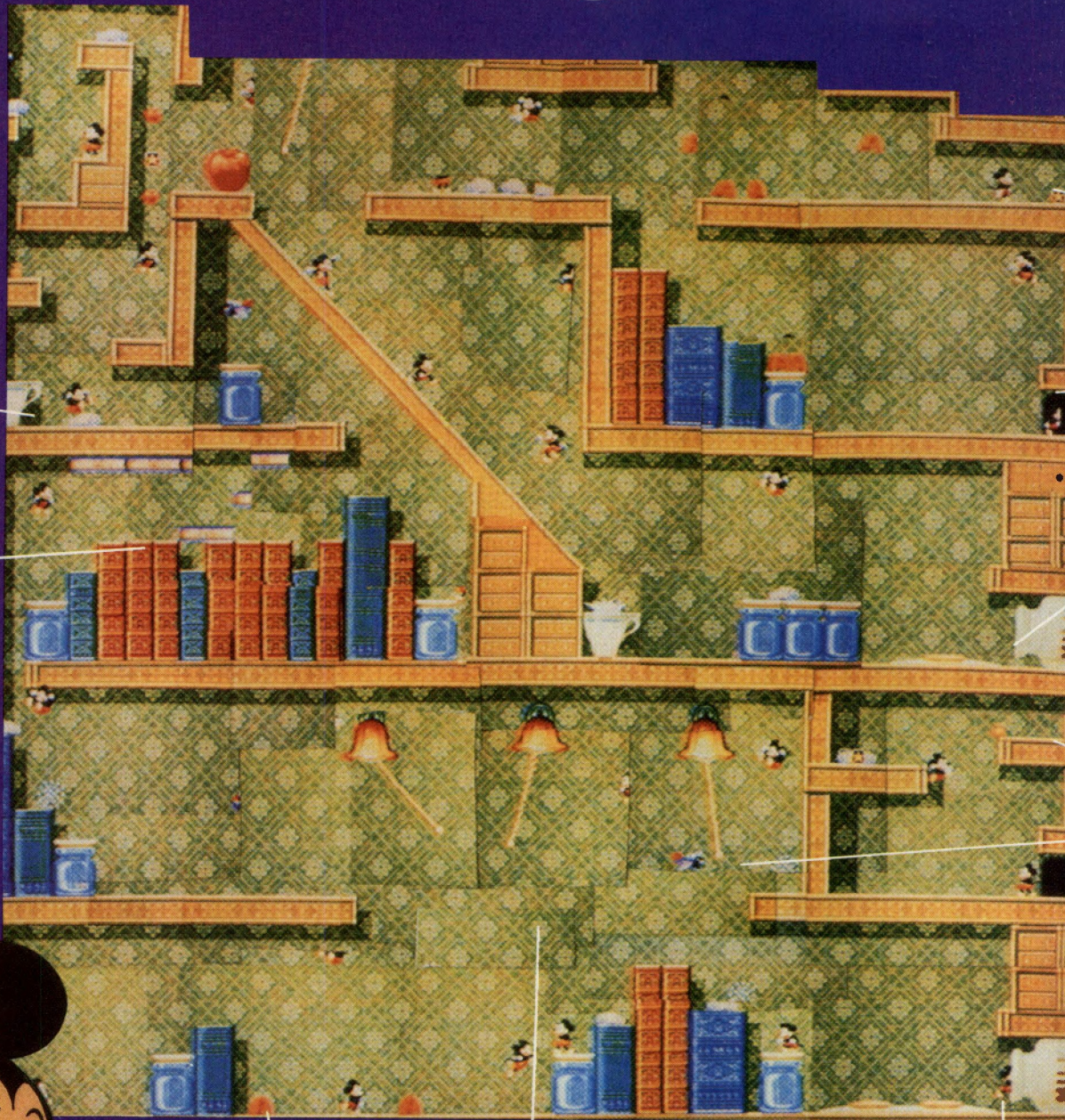
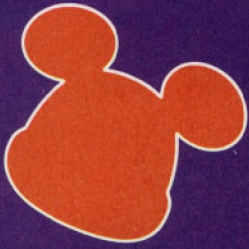
by **Denn Neuert**

One fine day, Mickey and Minnie took a stroll through a meadow. Little did they know they were being watched by the evil witch Mizrabel. Riding her broom, Mizrabel swooped down with lightning speed, snatched Minnie before anyone knew what was going on and took her to a castle far away. On the following pages are maps to the last two levels that Mickey must complete if he ever wants to see Minnie again.



THE LIBRARY

LEVEL 4-1



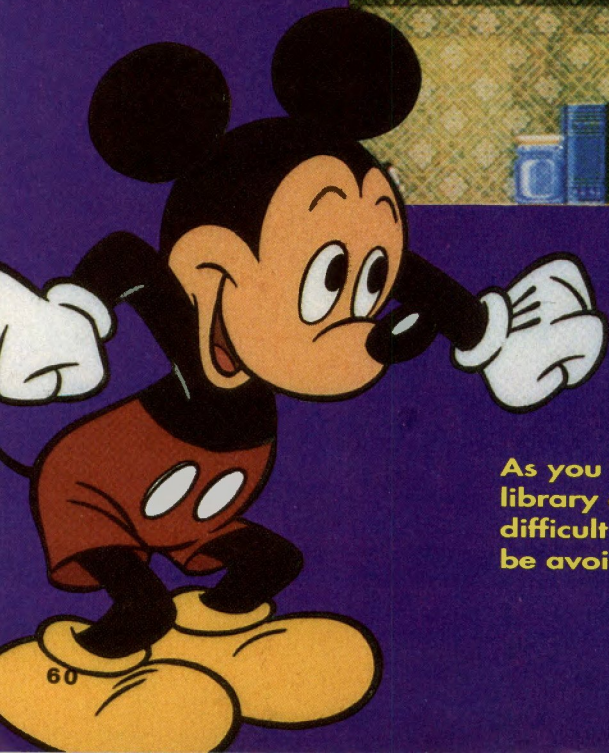
Jump in the tea cups for some extra items and points, but watch out for the sugar cubes.

Be careful. These books were censored, so they have a mean disposition and are just waiting to slam down hard on Mickey.

The roof is blocked until...

...you enter the milk bottle and retrieve the green gem.

As you can tell, this is the library of a giant. The most difficult part of this level will be avoiding the jumping A's.

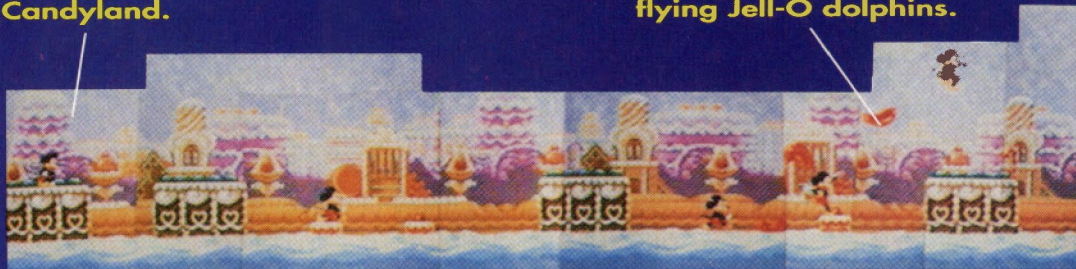


LEVEL 4-1A



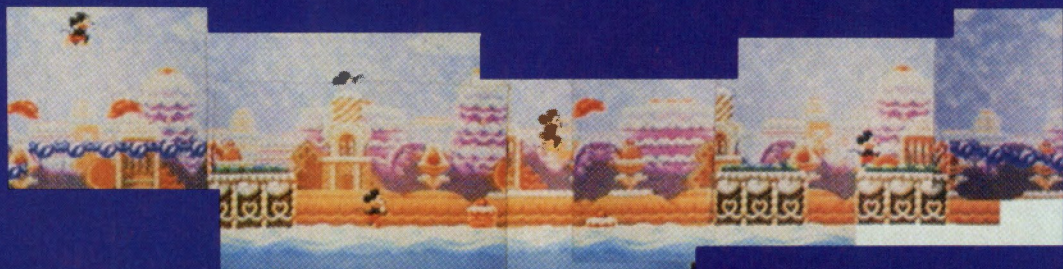
Mickey can have his cake and eat it too in Candyland.

The only hazards in this section are the flying Jell-O dolphins.



You can catch a rising star...if you want to battle the A's, that is.

Enter here and wind up in a room full of goodies (see below).

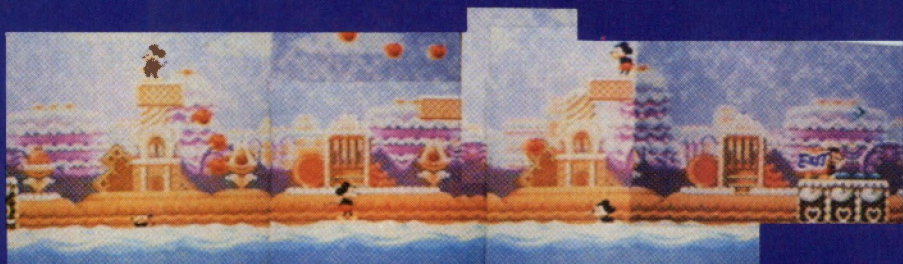


Dodge the apple and other pests while going for the milk bottle—and the end of the level.

Here's the room of goodies.

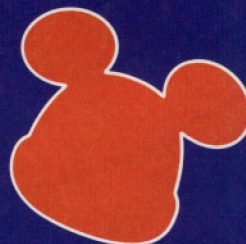
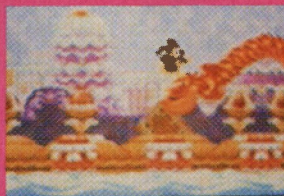


Jump on the chain, and the lights go out. When you jump off, they'll come back on.



End boss

This guy can be tricky so be on your toes. He likes to act like he's going high but will then duck down quickly. Stay on the center island, and time your jumps so that you'll land on its head.



THE CASTLE

LEVEL 5-1

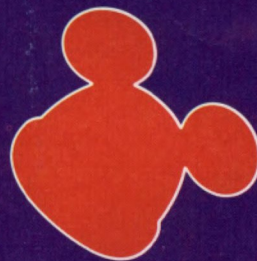
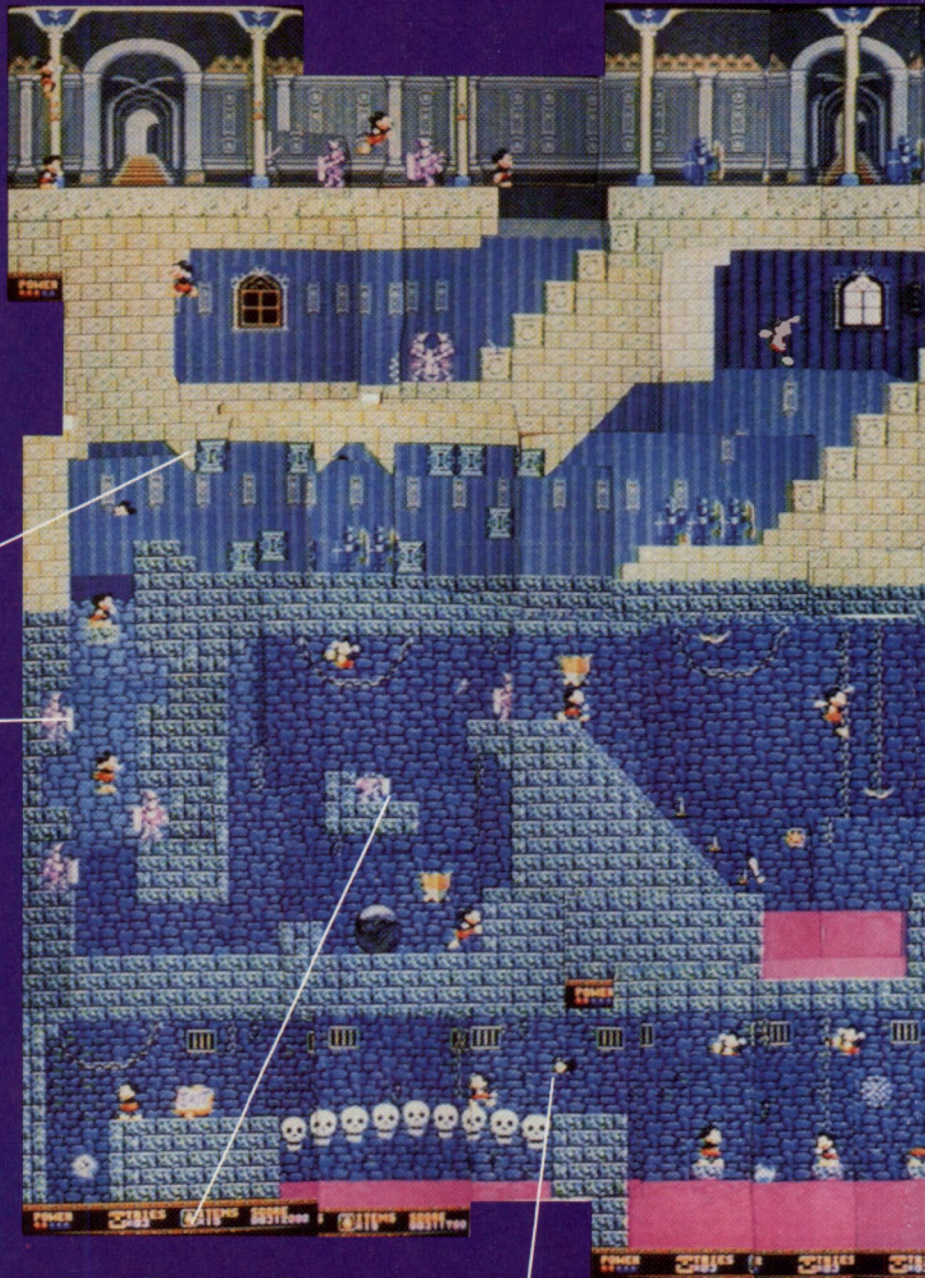
Welcome to the last level of the game and Mizrabel's home.

The second and fourth blocks are the ones to watch out for here.

The first and fourth are the deadly blocks on this group.

This knight's weapon is the only one to watch out for as you fall.

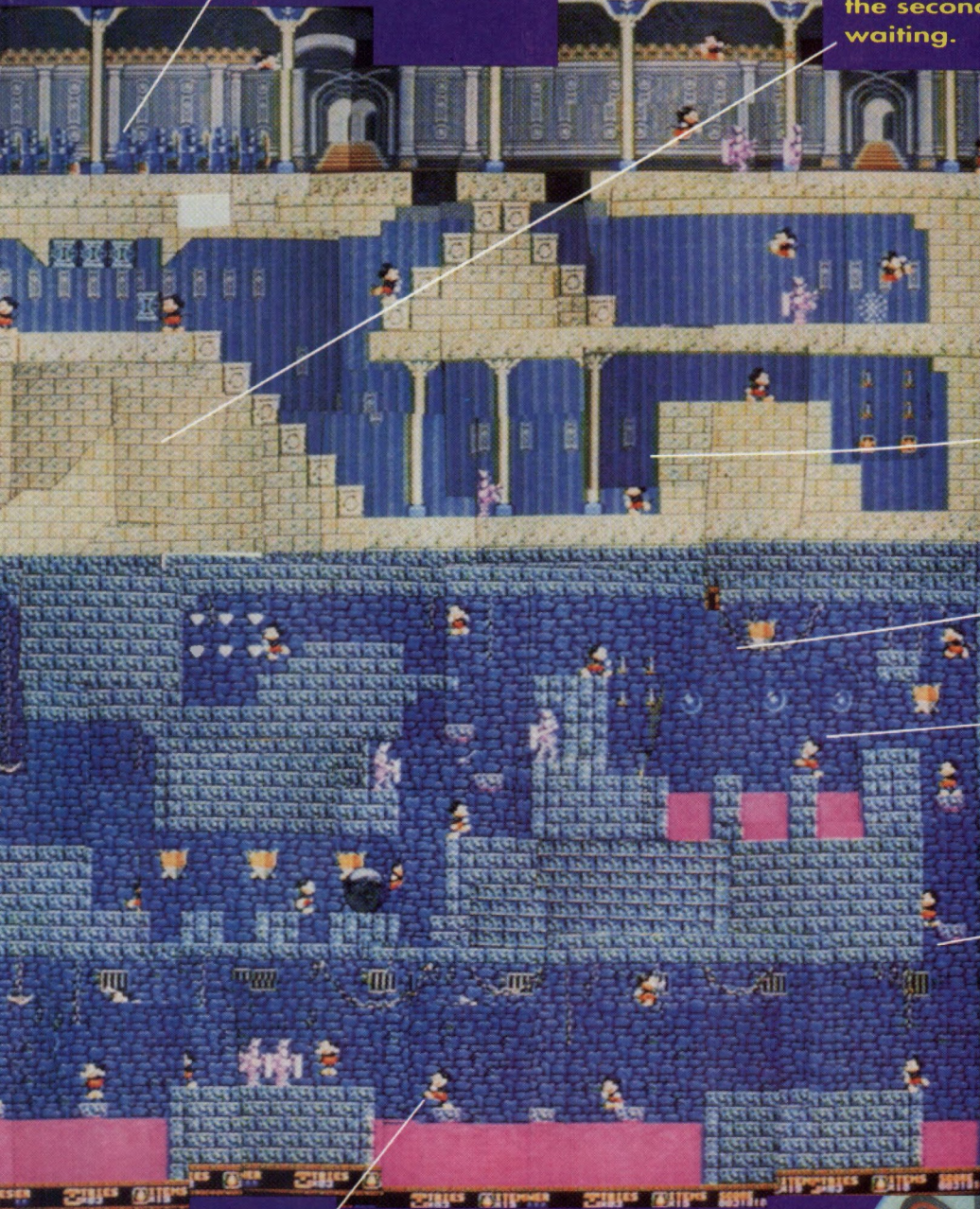
The items in this level are the candles found on the pillars.



A bat will appear as you near the skeleton bridge.

The trick to spotting which one will stick you is to watch their eyes.

Go slow. The first block will come down and so will the third, but you can stand under the second block while you're waiting.



Jump on the knight as he is walking toward the entrance. This is the only way to make it to the hidden room.

Don't forget the diamonds.

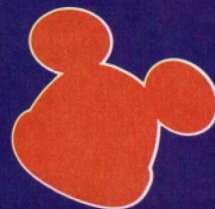
You can jump on top of the bubbles or jump over them.

Hold left to walk off the step before you land in the lava.

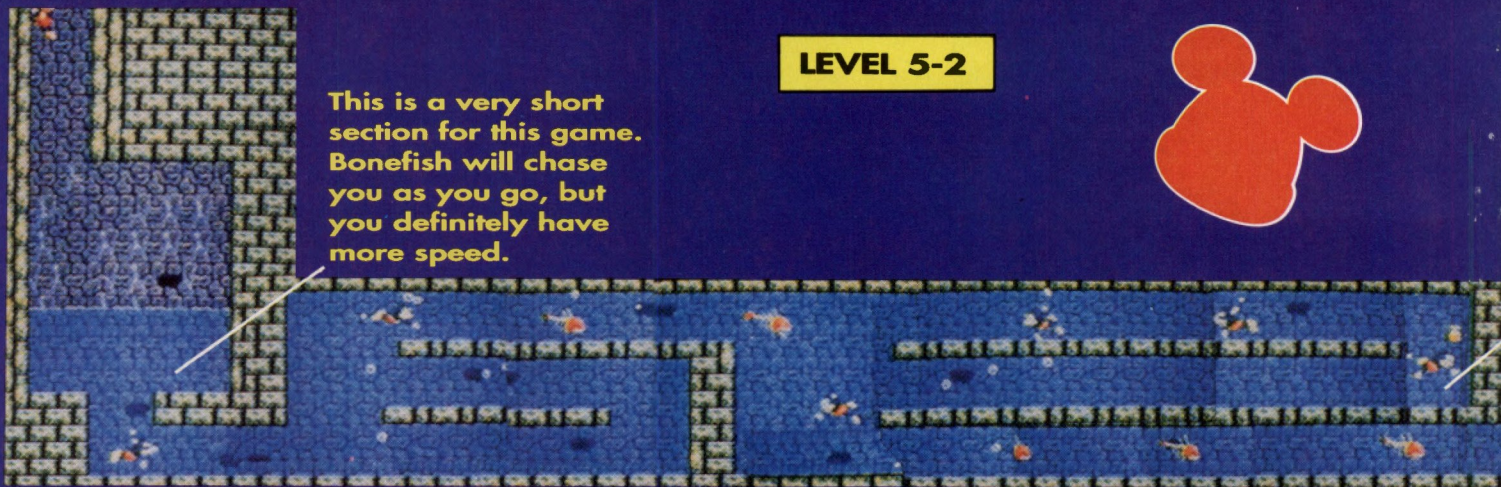
Timing is the key here.



LEVEL 5-2

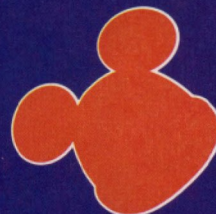


This is a very short section for this game. Bonefish will chase you as you go, but you definitely have more speed.



End Boss

To beat this guy, wait for him to jump, then position yourself just in front of where he's going to land. As he grits his teeth, move away so that he can't hit you, then jump and land on top of his head. Repeat this procedure until he's defeated.



Final End Boss—Mizrabel

The first thing you should do when battling Mizrabel is move to the block in the upper left. You'll be safe there unless she appears in the lower left, at which point you'll want to move to the right ledge. As soon as the lightning ghosts fly from her body, move in and jump on her head. If you are on the left ledge and she appears on the right, you'll have to move quicker to get a shot than if she appears in the other locations.



Take the middle path and then wait for the Bonefish to turn back around to get the bag of items.

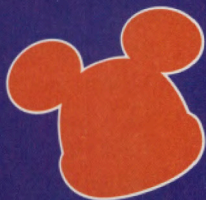


The key to this upper section, other than watching your jumps, is to get the timing down for the bats that fly back and forth.



LEVEL 5-3

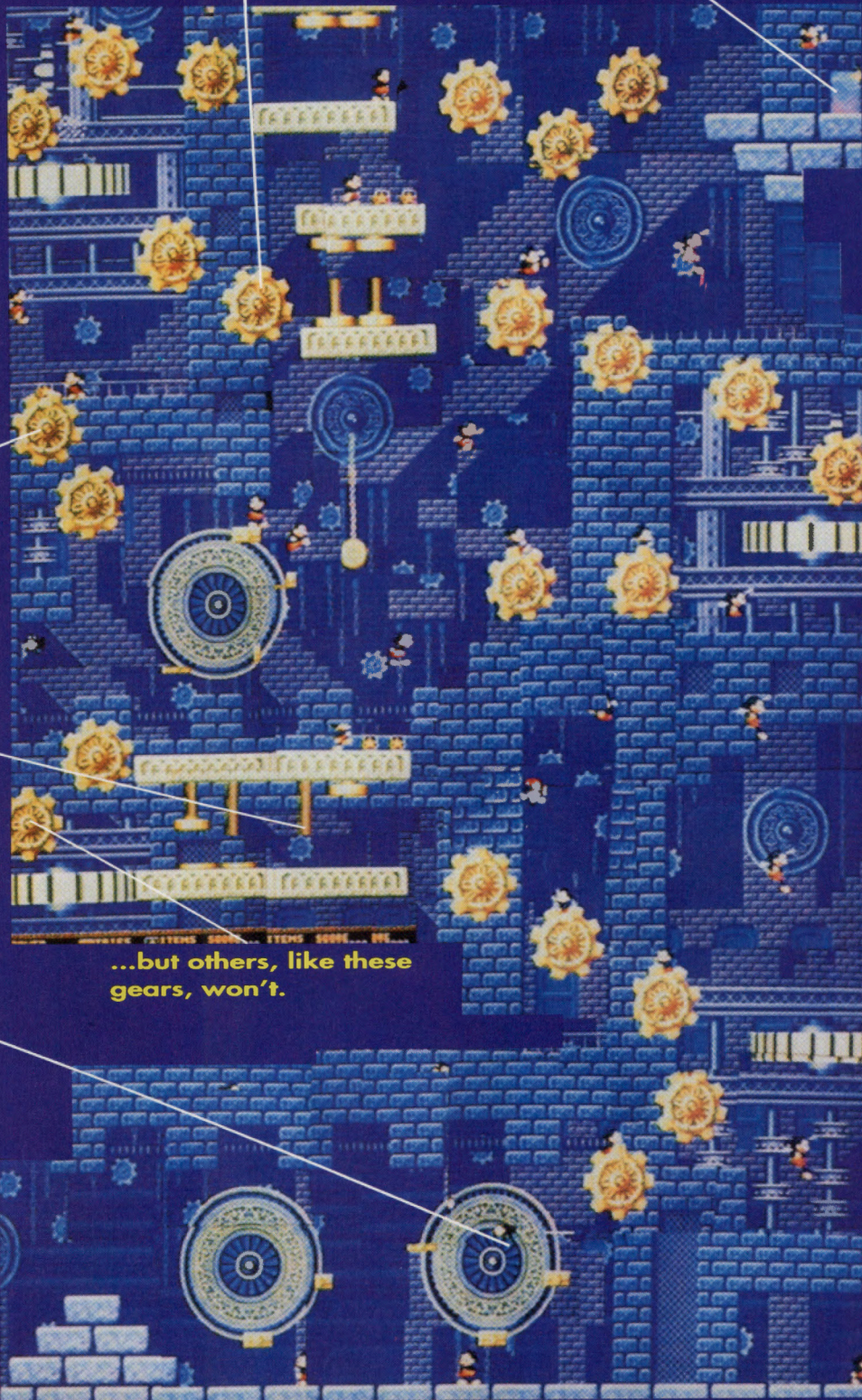
Just as you're about to hit the exit, a bat will appear.



If you can reach this spot, you'll get an extra star.

After the first one comes down, make a mad dash for the other side.

You'll have to catch a ride on the wheel to be able to jump on the gear. Some gears will fall once you step on them...



...but others, like these gears, won't.

Final Lap 2

NAMCO

As you sit in the cockpit of your car waiting for the race to begin, you feel the nervous pounding of your heart. Suddenly the clock counter changes from three to two. You can't resist the temptation of stepping on the gas peddle to rev the engine. The car violently resonates with the sudden surge of power. Glancing at the tachometer reveals the exponential increase in the engine's revolutions. Then without warning, the clock changes from two to one, and the buzzer sounds,



indicating the start of the race. Your inherent response is to floor the peddle, causing the car to lurch forward abruptly, leaving behind a plume of white smoke created by the burning rubber from the tires.

No, it's not another race car movie with Tom Cruise in it. *Final Lap 2*, by Namco, is the sequel to Atari's popular arcade hit



by Mike Davila

familiar to many. The game returns with all the features of the original *Final Lap*, including its first-person perspective view of the



racetrack.

The game is a Grand Prix-style racer where the player can compete against the clock or head-to-head against other opponents (up to eight players can simultaneously

compete against each other).

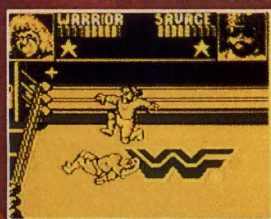
When the gamer first sits down, he or she is given a choice of four racetracks to choose from. Each track has its own scenery: trees, edifices and billboards that scroll past the race car as you drive.

Courses are broken down into two categories: high speed and technical. In the high-speed category, the player can choose either the USA or Italy, the latter being the more difficult of the two race tracks. As the category name implies, these courses are designed for high-speed travel and contain long straightaways with few turns.

In the technical courses, the gamer has a choice of either Japan or Monaco, with



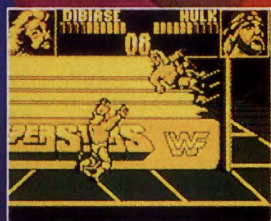
THE ULTIMATE GAME BOY GAME.



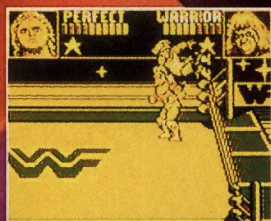
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CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

the Japanese course being the more difficult. These courses contain very few straightaways but many turns. It would be advisable that gamers stay away from the technical courses until gaining experience driving on the easier high-speed courses.

Final Lap 2, like its predecessor, has few controls. Included are a steering wheel, accelerator and brake pedals and a high-low gear shifter. The steering wheel on the console has a very loose feel to it. Gamers might have a tendency to oversteer, which could easily cause the car to spin out.

The play screen is broken up into several viewing zones. On the lower section of the screen—which encompasses more than two-thirds of the viewing area—is the actual racetrack. Above that area you will find left and right rearview mirrors. On top of the left rearview mirror are lap, time and speed indicators. Between both mirrors you will find a two-dimensional map of the current course being played. Markers show your position (and your opponent's if multiplayer mode is selected) on the track and the amount of time you have left to complete it. Above the right rearview mirror is an indicator that shows what position your car is in.

Final Lap 2 follows successfully in its predecessor's tracks. It would have been nice to see a selection of user features that, for example, allow for car type and style selection, as well as manual or automatic transmission. Aficionados of *Pole Position*-style racing games should enjoy this one.

Rad Mobile

SEGA

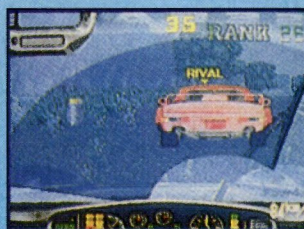
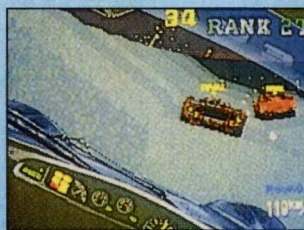
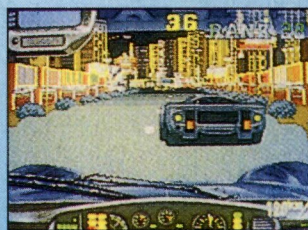
Hold on to the edge of your seat, because you're in for the ride of your life! Huh, you just had lunch? You better sit this one out. If you think I'm kidding, you're going to have to take a closer look at this game. I'm still trying to figure out if I just played a video game, or if I just stepped out of a New York City taxicab.

Rad Mobile, by Sega, is a cross-country

arcade race simulation that begins in Los Angeles and terminates in New York. The object of the game is to make it through 20 timed rounds while avoiding an onslaught of



impediments. In most games of this type, the main opponent is usually the computer or some guy in another car. Here, you do have computer-



controlled opponents, but the main foe is good 'ol Mother Nature.

The game begins in broad daylight on a highway in Los Angeles. There is no gear-shifting involved, but you do have gas and break pedals. To the right of the steering wheel is a control panel with buttons that start the game, toggle the windshield wipers and turn on the headlights.

As you advance through each of the rounds, the environment changes. Gamers will experience a number of road and climactic conditions. For example, the player might be driving in perfectly good weather, when suddenly it will start to downpour, requiring the gamer to turn on the windshield wipers.

Road terrain can vary from a level

highway to a cobblestone country road, banked surface roads, winding mountain highways or congested city streets. Driving along the mountain road requires the player to pass opponents in the oncoming traffic lane. Chances are that you'll wind up in a head-on collision or plummeting to your death off the side of the cliff.

Vehicular traffic is a combination of race participants and innocent bystanders. Race participants are denoted by the word "RIVAL" appearing above the vehicle. Passing an opponent increases one's rank in the game. Both rank and the amount of time left to complete the current round are indicated on the upper right-hand corner of the screen.

Keeping an eye on the rearview mirror is helpful in avoiding the police. If you spot a patrol car, you might be able to outrun them, if there are no or only a few obstacles in your path. Otherwise, about a half-dozen patrol cars will pull you over, the cop will get out of his car, pound on the hood of your car and yell at you.

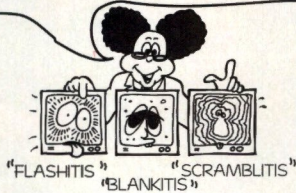
Visually, *Rad Mobile* is extraordinarily good. Scrolling and animation are both smooth and without jerkiness. The manufacturer claims to use a 32-bit microprocessor combined with an 8-bit microprocessor. On the audio side, *Rad Mobile* falls on or around the average level. I guess there are only so many sound effects that one can incorporate into a race game. The game comes in both a sit-down model and an upright.

Overall, *Rad Mobile* proves to be an exciting and fun race game. It's nice to see an old concept such as a race car game presented with a new twist. ♀

VG&CE would like to thank C.A. Robinson and Company and Betson Pacific of Los Angeles, California, for their assistance in providing vital information for this column.

NO MATTER WHAT YOUR PROBLEM...

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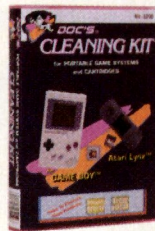


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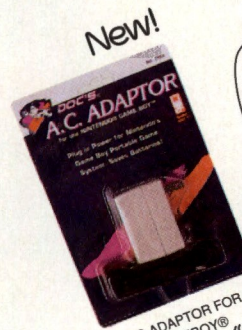
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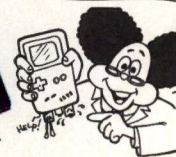


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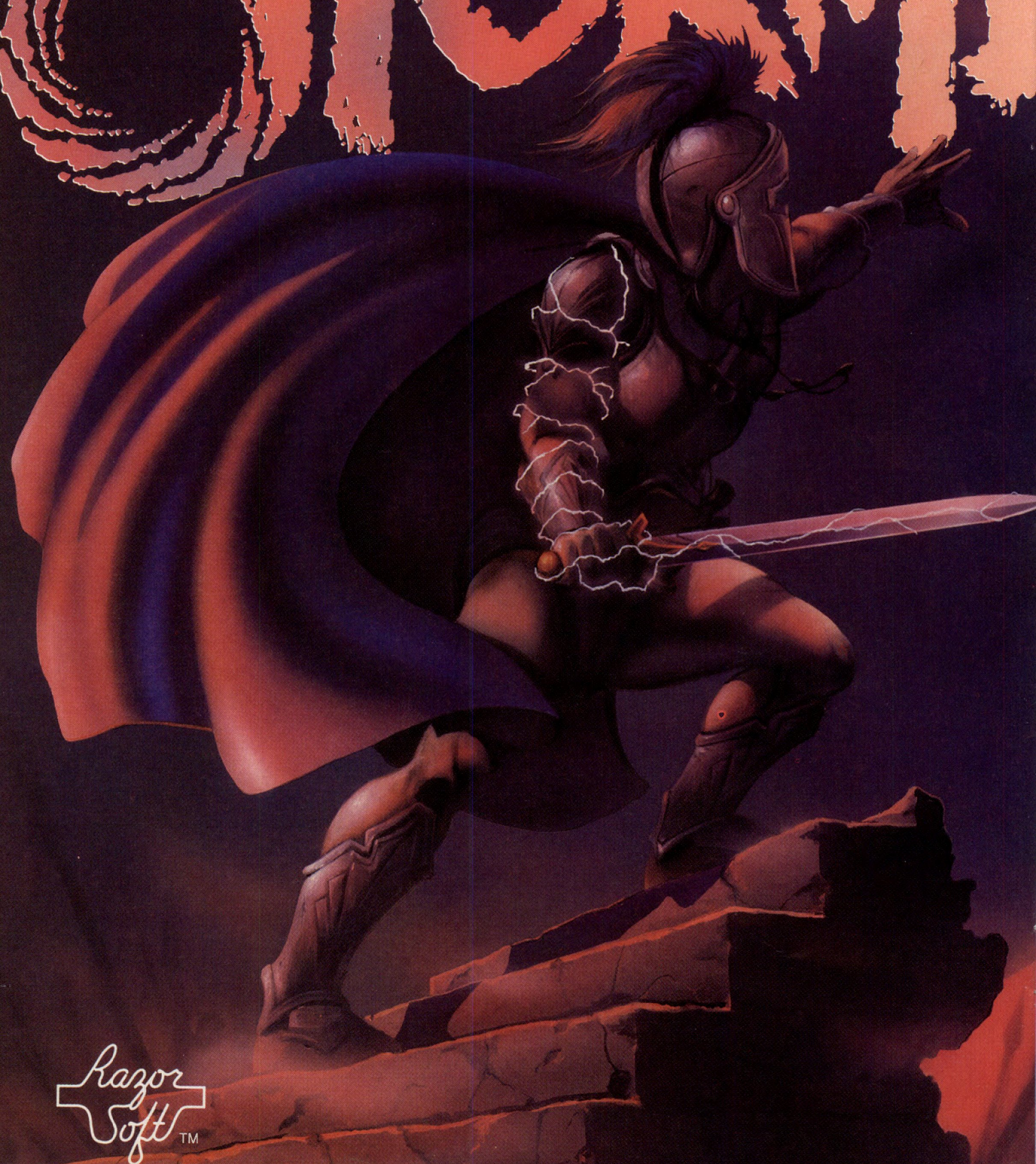
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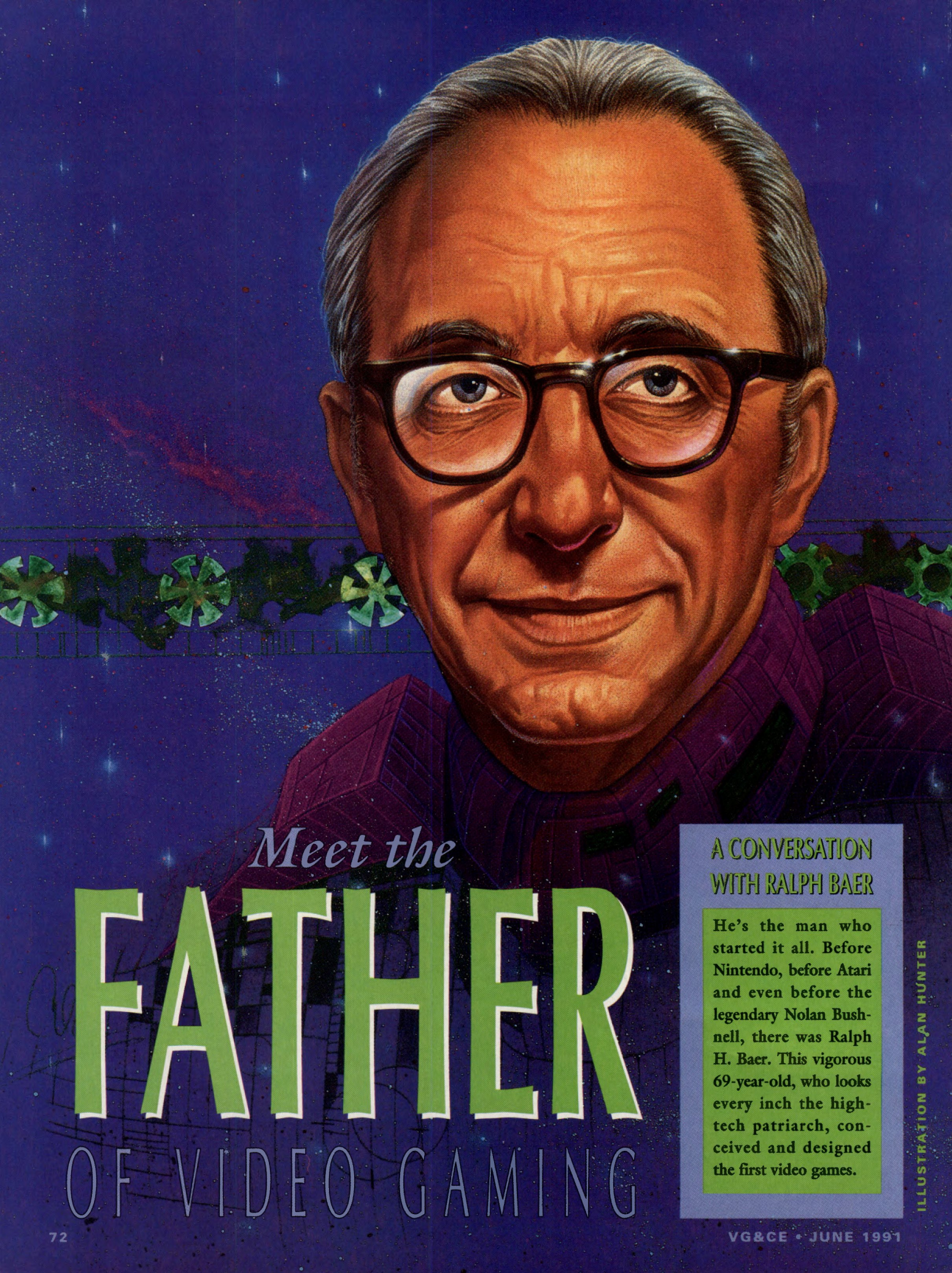
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Meet the

FATHER

OF VIDEO GAMING

A CONVERSATION WITH RALPH BAER

He's the man who started it all. Before Nintendo, before Atari and even before the legendary Nolan Bushnell, there was Ralph H. Baer. This vigorous 69-year-old, who looks every inch the high-tech patriarch, conceived and designed the first video games.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN HUNTER

His story is a classic chapter out of the book of the American Dream. It starts in Germany, where his parents were in the shoe business. It was 1936 and the increasing hostility of the Third Reich forced the 14-year-old Ralph to quit school and join the battle against mounting economic privation.

At first he worked in an office. He did shorthand, typing and correspondence for the company. "I worked for a small wine importer," Baer recalls. "At one point I tried to become a plumber, but couldn't get into it."

In 1938, the 16-year-old and his parents came to the United States, "just in the nick of time" as he ruefully puts it. "My mother had tons of relatives in New York, so they were able to provide affidavits," he says, explaining his good fortune.

With most of his family in Europe engulfed by chaos, the young Baer was left to make his way in his adopted country. Always drawn to electronics, he signed up for a correspondence course in radio repair from the NRI (National Radio Institute). "There was no TV then," he reminds us. Baer is one of the few who have worked with today's computer-scientists and trailblazers like Lee DeForest, inventor of the vacuum tube.

Baer traces his current staunch support for cooperative education to his personal experience. His entire career has been an interplay between practical engineering experience and scientific study.

The correspondence course led to a fling in the radio-repair business. From a shop on Lexington Avenue and 78th Street in New York City, Baer and his partners quickly expanded to three locations. "We used to do pickups and deliveries by way of streetcars," says Baer.

Like many of those who fled Nazi tyranny in Europe, Baer soon found himself heading back to battle Hitler, courtesy of the U.S. armed forces. They swore him in as a citizen, along with a bunch of other guys, on the ship. He first served with the combat engineers, "convenient cannon fodder," he quips. "I'm five feet six inches, and I was in with all those six-foot-two guys."

After his basic training, he landed in the hospital with pneumonia, which he developed when his combat boots became soaked with rain and mud. In the next bed was an old-timer, a veteran combat engineer who had a hand blown off in the Spanish-American War.

"We were supposed to pick up mines and explosives," he explains. But Baer was luckier. "Algebra II saved my hide," he declares. His illness delayed his transfer to the front, and meanwhile, the army decided a correspondence course he'd taken in Algebra merited his immediate transfer to military intelligence.

Baer became a small-arms expert and stayed on in Europe working for the government, collecting munitions. The weapons went into stateside official military exhibits set up by Baer, and some of them are still on display.

After leaving the army, he attended the American Television Institute in Chicago on the G.I. Bill. "I took equivalency tests," he explains, "so they let me skip the first year." He received a B.S. in television engineering, one of the first such degrees granted.

Baer got hands-on experience in the Institute's television studio, where he built some of the test equipment. He

believes in "combining learning with work. You can't get 20 years of experience through studies alone." In addition to his studies, Baer moonlighted at a radio station frequented by many technicians.

After graduating in 1949, Baer contacted some old friends and managed to get a job with a New York City outfit that made electronic medical equipment. Next he went to a company specializing in military electronics. He worked on radar systems and other military equipment.

He next moved to Norman Industries, a small company that made testing equipment for the Navy and Army. The company started out in New York but later moved to New Hampshire. They had plenty of customers, but financial machinations led to the company's demise.

Baer didn't want to leave New Hampshire, so the next logical step was to join Sanders Associates in 1959. "They were the state's biggest employer even then," says Baer, "with more than 1,500 people."

Sanders Associates' main business was, and is, sophisticated military electronics. Although Baer would eventually drag the company into consumer-oriented electronics as well, he threw himself into the company's bread-and-butter business. Promotions came quickly, and he became a division manager within a remarkably few years.

The idea for video games came to Baer during a breather from official projects. "I was running a division at Sanders in 1966 when it occurred to me that you should be able to do something else with a television set other than just tune into a channel," says Baer. "A TV is a complex piece of equipment for very little money. There were 66 million of them in U.S. homes and more worldwide. I wanted to find something else to do with the sets except just watching television. The answer was games."

Working in his spare time, Baer wrote a short proposal that outlined his vision of video gaming. He surmises, "By early 1967 it became obvious we should get serious."

By March 1967, Baer had a two-man crew jammed into a tiny, locked room at Sanders. The project was a big secret, possibly because Sanders didn't think home entertainment fit its high caliber image.

The team built four or five prototypes and developed quite a few games to demonstrate its capabilities. One of Baer's people had stumbled upon the ball and paddle. "We had Ping-Pong, rifles to shoot at the screen, board games and sports," Baer recounts. Everything was analog, since there was no such thing as a microprocessor then.

"We had all this stuff," Baer continues, "but we didn't know what to do with it. I'd go to the room two or three times a day to keep track of it, but we really didn't know anything about marketing it."

So Sanders Associates started a search for a company already involved in consumer electronics. Companies in the infant cable television business got first look at this interactive marvel. Baer thought playfield backgrounds could be sent to subscribers over the cable, so all the machine would have to supply was

the game elements.

Teleprompter, for one, liked video games, but at that point, the cable industry was too weak. The struggling outfits didn't have the resources to subsidize this major project.

BY
ARNIE KATZ
WITH
JOYCE WORLEY

Baer recounts, "In 1970 we began parading it past the TV manufacturers. We showed it to everyone who made sets in this country, which at that time was still quite a few companies, including RCA, Sylvania and General Electric. RCA entered negotiations, but nothing came of it. Ironically, one of the stumbling blocks was an initial lack of interest at Sears, which eventually became a key factor in the success of the Atari 2600 VCS toward the end of the decade.

"Finally, we got an invitation to go down to Ft. Wayne to meet the Magnavox people," Baer explains. Besides games that worked with the joystick and the gun, Baer's group also had a golf ball mounted on a joystick. Hitting the ball with the putter initiated corresponding movement on the TV screen. "We also demonstrated *Ping-Pong*. Unlike *Pong*, our paddles could move all over the screen, and you could use English." Among the other numerous games were simple chase-and-target shooters and a primitive version of hockey that employed an overlay to delineate the rink.

Only one Magnavox executive thought Baer had hit the bull's-eye. Fortunately, he was a vice-president of the Entertainment Division, so in 1971, Magnavox constructed a few dozen models of what became the Odyssey. In March 1972, Magnavox introduced the Odyssey (Model 1 TL 200) to dealers at a Tavern-on-the-Green event in New York City.

Among those who saw *Ping-Pong* and other contests on the Odyssey that spring was Nolan Bushnell. This technologically savvy entrepreneur found an investor and supervised the creation of the first video-game coin-op machine, *Pong*.

Despite the fact that Atari, Mattel and many others were paying licensing fees to Sanders Associates, mainstream media incorrectly assumed that Atari had invented *Pong* and the whole idea of video games. They proclaimed Nolan Bushnell "the father of the video game." Unwilling to do anything that might be construed as a slap at a client, Baer held his tongue.

Baer is good-natured about the confusion. Not that he undervalues Bushnell's mammoth contribution to popularizing his invention. "Without Nolan, it would have taken at least five years longer for video games to become popular," he asserts.

However, the marketing for Odyssey still raises the mild-mannered scientist's hackles. Magnavox sold only 75,000-80,000 units in its first year. Price was a big reason. The Sanders team expected the Odyssey to sell for \$19.95, but customers had to pay \$100. "They couldn't have built it more expensively," states Baer.

Another problem was that the best peripherals, like the rifle, had distribution woes. "You couldn't find them," Baer laments, "because they were shoved under a counter along with most of the game cartridges." One more obstacle: Early Magnavox ads implied that the Odyssey only worked with a Magnavox television.

Baer is candid enough to admit that no one, not even he, foresaw the development possibilities of this initial product that evolved into a vast hobby enjoyed by millions. "We had no way of predicting what would happen," he says. "I thought it was interesting and a beginning of something, but I could never have visualized the extent to which this took off. No one had microprocessors at that time; no one knew that people would have high-tech electronics available to them in the home."

Seeing a commercial product rise from his video-game work is a source of pride and satisfaction for Ralph Baer. He recalls looking down from a plane at the Chicago cityscape and thinking, "Some of those houses have an Odyssey in them."

As for disappointments, Baer points out that product development always has both successes and strings of failures. "It's also disappointing when no one knows me at a trade show," he concedes. "But Sanders put my name up big and the royalties help," he says with an especially broad smile.

The father of the video game didn't just walk away from his brainchild. In the early 1980s, he felt that video games would have more variety if programmers weren't restricted by available controllers. Sanders Associates developed a range of innovative command devices, but the manufacturers didn't want to take a chance on anything but the tried-and-true joystick. The Power Pad, designed by his team at Sanders, is an example of the difficulty of introducing a new type of controller. He described a Catch-22 situation: "Why doesn't anyone write games for it? Because no one uses it. Why doesn't anyone use it? Because no one writes games for it."

Lack of variety is still the biggest flaw he sees in today's video games. "Companies will go to the Orient and get a guy who'll write a game that looks like 10,000 others."

Talk of the future reminds Baer of the aborted, ahead-of-its-time project he launched in 1982. The ideal interface, the ColecoVision video-game console with an RCA CED player. (The latter was an electro-magnetic alternative to CD.)

Things advanced to the point that RCA actually made a few CED peripherals. "Then along came the Adam computer and ended it all."

Though best known for his video-game work, Baer has also had a string of hits in the portable electronic-game market. Among games that his group has developed over the past 15 years are Simon, Maniac and Computer Perfection.

When talk turns to the future of electronic gaming, Baer shows that he still has his finger on the pulse. "I think you see the precursor in the handhelds and portables. They're beginning to have the capabilities of the larger machines to perform education and information at affordable prices."

He went on to say, "What I'd like to see is not going to happen." He'd like to see CED revived, instead of the industry going into CD. He worries that CD will fail to deliver the full-motion video that people expect.

But Ralph Baer is too much the optimist to let his predictions end on a negative note. "When we learn how to make blue lasers at a reasonable price, it will give CD a much wider bandwidth. Then we'll transfer data three times faster. That will improve the situation."

Enigmatically, he adds, "And, you can never count out magnetic tapes. Someday we may go back to them." Mysteriously, he added, "There could be other ways to record data," and mentioned, in addition to the tapes, holographics. Don't bet against Baer himself concocting new hardware that finally puts CD gaming over the top.

As Baer reviewed his career for VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, he permitted himself a rare moment of self-satisfaction before advancing to the next big gaming project on his plate. "I can't really complain," the father of the video game sums up. "I've had a pretty fantastic life." ♣

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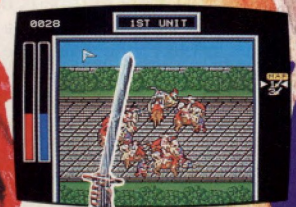
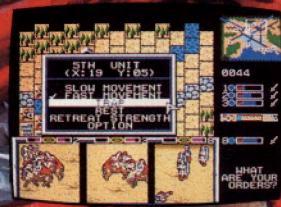
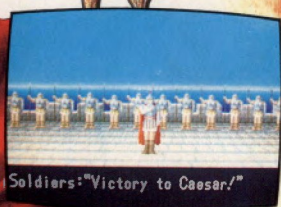
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here's a population explosion underway in electronic-gaming fandom. *Fandango* can cover only a fraction of the fanzines received week after week.

A few of the top faneds (fanzine editors) have suggested that there are too many fanzines. I partially agree. Diversity of opinion is a big part of what makes fandom and fanzines so fascinating. I wouldn't want to see the hobby lose its healthy variety.

On the other hand, it's true that fandom needs more writers and artists. Most current fanzines are written entirely by their editors. Nothing wrong with that, but fanzines with several outside contributors often give more comprehensive coverage.

Written contributions, including letters of comment on previous issues, are a good way to get into fanzines. Artists could become the toast of electronic-gaming fandom overnight. Science fiction fandom has William Rotsler, wrestling fandom has Potshot, but electronic-gaming fandom still awaits its first star cartoonist. If you can draw, contact your nearest fanzine.

The Survivalist, #1
Dennis Chimells, Jr.
 36 Maple Ave.
 Bellport, NY 11713
 \$1—No schedule stated
 Six pages

This excellent fanzine is a rallying point for owners of systems like the Atari 2600 and 7800, Intellivision and Colecovision, which don't get much support from retailers or the professional gaming magazines. Dennis has a thorough understanding of his specialized subject. The 23-year-old college student expresses himself clearly and exhibits a genial editorial presence. Even those who don't play on anything older than an NES will enjoy *The Survivalist* for features like his critical evaluation of the leading professional magazines.

WHAT IS FANDOM?

Electronic-gaming fandom is still fairly new, but hundreds of knowledgeable computer- and video game lovers are now editing, writing and reading the small-circulation hobbyist publications we call fanzines. Electronic-gaming fandom is an informal network of people who share a knowledgeable interest in interactive electronic entertainment. Fanzines are the amateur publications that these fans produce as forums for the exchange views on all aspects of the topic.

Getting involved is as easy as sending for sample copies of some of the titles mentioned each month in *Fandango*. Most fanzines are available for a letter of comment on the previous issue, contribution of artwork or written material, trade for other fanzines or, of course, cash.



THE FANZINES KEEP COMING

by Arnie Katz

Sega Sentinel
Ulrich Kempf
 Patterson Road, R.D. 5, Box 212
 Watertown, NY 13601
 75¢—Irregular
 Four pages

One of fandom's best writers and analytical thinkers produces a slim publication that will enhance any Genesis owner's enjoyment. The two issues of *Sega Sentinel* I have at hand feature Ulrich commenting intelligently on current gaming issues and reviewing recent games like *Strider* and *Hard Drivin'*. All this is presented well, thanks to Ulrich's keen layout sense, which makes *Sega Sentinel* easy to read, as well as highly informative.

ATTENTION FANZINE READERS

If you want to see sample copies of many of the top current fanzines—or if you're a fanzine publisher looking for names for a mailing list—VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT can help you. The Fanzine Readers List is available to any fanzine editor who sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. Anyone can be included on the list by simply writing and asking. In either case, here's the address: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

The second Fanzine Readers List, with over 100 active names, is currently available. A new one, with every name requalified, will be ready in early June, so get those names to me as quickly as possible.

Eden: The Genesis Fanzine, Chapter 1, Verse 1
Evan Miller
 1759 Fireside Drive
 Cincinnati, OH 45255-2569
 \$1.50—No schedule stated
 Five pages

Evan's enthusiasm for the Genesis is obvious in the editorial and largely reflected in his favorable reviews of *Thunderstrike III* and *Ghostbusters*. It also leads him to underrate the power of Nintendo to successfully introduce its Super NES in the U.S. next fall, in an otherwise well-done piece about the system's chances. Despite first-issue glitches, like the double-spaced typing, *Eden* has a likable personality and appealing energy.

TurboNews and IBM Review, #1
Lee Bridges
 9 White Oak Drive
 Troy, MO 63379
 \$1—No schedule stated
 Three pages

Like others, Lee's fanzine contains speculation on the forthcoming Super NES. He also reviews *Chew-Man-Fu* for TurboGrafx-16 and *Victory Road* (Data East/IBM PC). *TN&IBMR* is a creditable first effort, but a few outside contributors would help its youthful editor fill its pages a little fuller.

Game Guide, #1
Tim Arnold
 204 N. Main, #9
 Coupeville, WA 98239
 75¢—Frequent
 14 pages

Tim is shy about putting his name forward, but he should be proud of his premiere issue. News, reviews and strategy for IBM PC entertainment software is the focus in one of the few fanzines that talks about game controllers, demo disks and other too frequently ignored aspects of the hobby. *Game Guide* is a little too formal and too much of a pseudo-prozine, but Tim is bound to loosen up in future issues. That and a switch to a smaller type point size are all that stand between this newcomer and a place in the first rank of current fanzines.

MEGAGAMING

A sample copy of *Megagaming*, the biweekly "Voice of Electronic Gaming," is available for \$1 from Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). Each issue contains news, previews, fanzine critiques, a forum for fan-oriented questions, columns and more.

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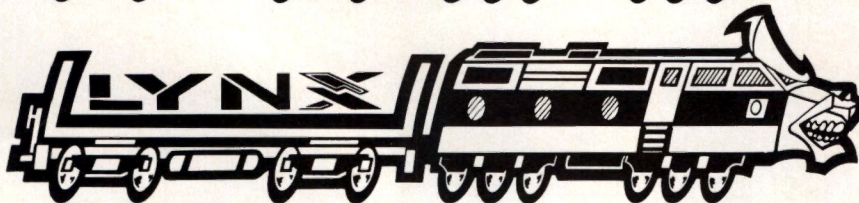
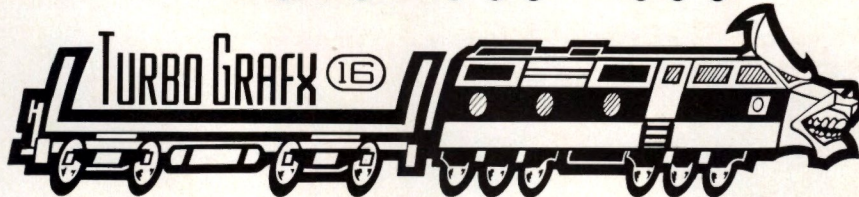
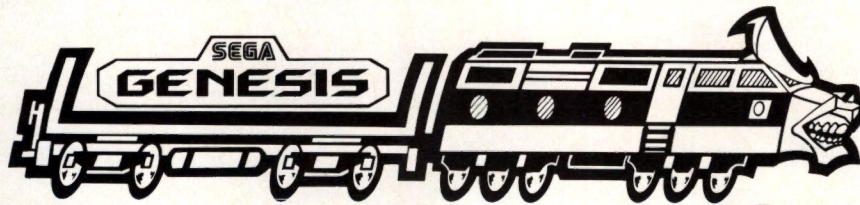
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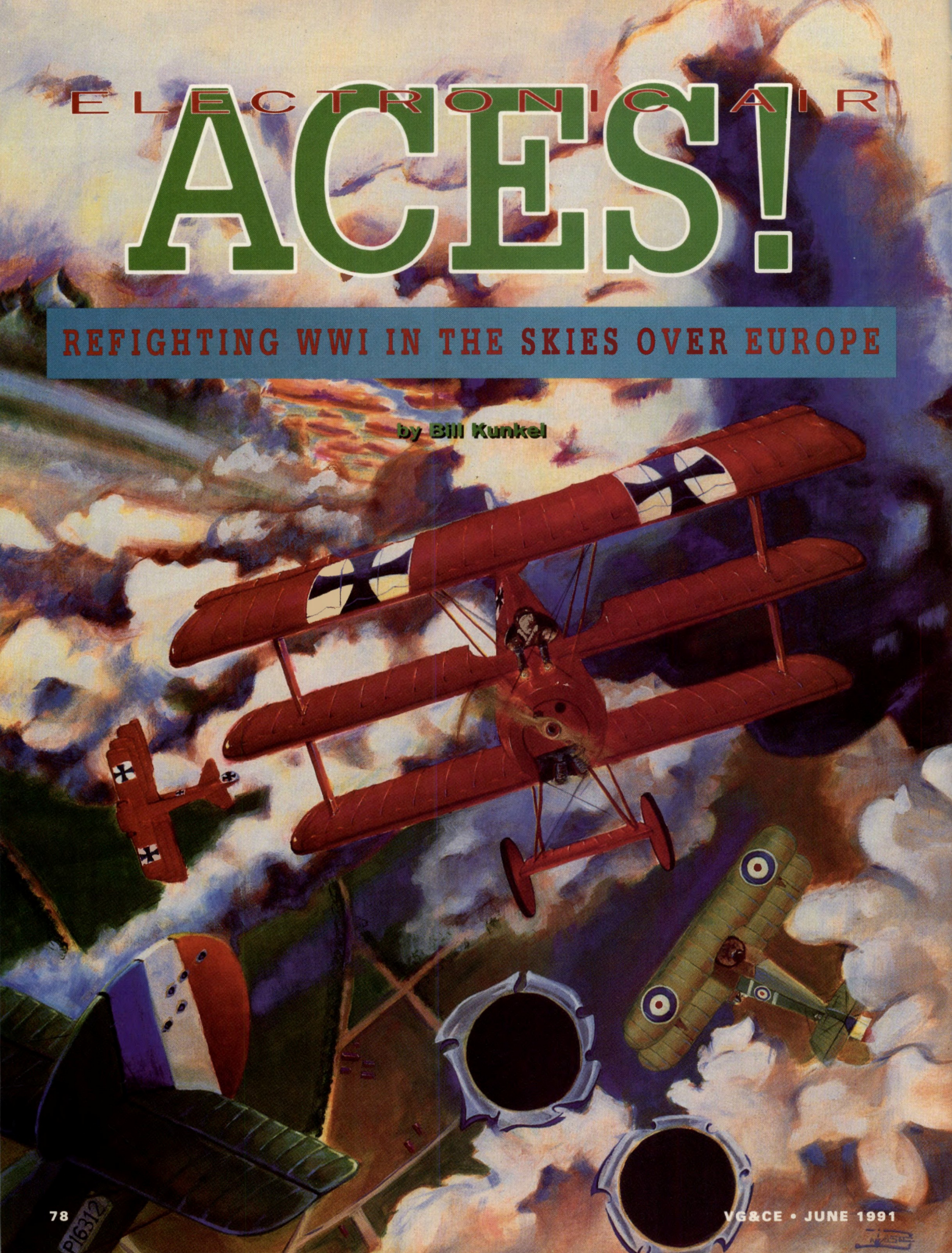
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ELECTRONIC AIR

ACES!

REFIGHTING WWI IN THE SKIES OVER EUROPE

by Bill Kunkel



More and more, armchair aviators are turning to the simpler thrills and romance of circa World War I air combat. After years spent pondering the intricacies of modern air warfare, computerized targeting, autopilots and 15 flavors of ordnance, gamers are finding the simplified skies of 1914 Europe a bracing change of pace.

WWI flight simulators are one of the hot new trends in computer software. Five major releases plus an updated edition of a long-time cult favorite have hit retail shelves within the past six months. Biplane-era flight simulators have been around for a while, dating back to the WWI combat simulator that Bruce Artwick included as part of his enormously popular *Flight Simulator II* (SubLogic) package and, even earlier, an Atari vector-graphics coin-op named *Red Baron*. But only in recent months has this genre become a major new category of combat simulator.

THE WINGS OF WAR

Wings (Cinemaware), designed by John Cutter with programming by Dan Pinal, Tim Hays and Randy Platt, is a multievent WWI air-combat contest that blends an interesting variety of visual perspectives and game genres to fashion a unique role-playing experience. After booting, the user goes immediately to flight school, where he or she can create a surrogate pilot or use the default flyer, Waldo P. Barnstormer. Each pilot is assigned an identity card listing important information that includes: name, rank, missions flown, ditchings/crashes, dogfights and bomb and strafing kills. Pilots are also awarded a variable number of ability points, which the user can allocate among four skill categories—flying ability, shooting ability, mechanical aptitude and stamina—in order to personalize the player-character.



The World War I flying ace stalks manfully to the computer, booting up with the practiced ease of a longtime flyer. Lowering the goggles on his tight-fitting headpiece, the air warrior tosses a quick kiss to the beautiful French girl waiting by the airfield gate, casually wraps a white silk scarf around his neck, acknowledges the copy protection and gives a jaunty thumbs-up sign to the imaginary flight crew before taking off into the blood-red European skies!

Wings takes a strong role-playing approach to its overall game structure. The player-character joins the service as a green rookie and advances (as part of an air squadron) through the period 1916-1918 complete with computer-generated diary entries, medals for meritorious service and reprimands for screwups. The player wins the game the same way the actual WWI pilots did—by surviving to Armistice Day!

The game offers four types of missions: aerial combat, strafing, bombing and combined bombing/strafing missions. The aerial combat, or dogfight, scenarios use a pseudo-first person perspective in which the user views the action from a point several feet behind the pilot's head. Alternate and outside-the-airplane viewpoints can also be generated via keyboard commands similar to most flight simulators.

Bombing scenarios employ a scrolling top-down perspective that allows the gamer to view the scene from a point about 50 yards above their own aircraft, while strafing is portrayed from a two-thirds viewpoint reminiscent of Sega's *Zaxxon* and the original *Blue Max* (Synapse), showing the game scrolling diagonally from southeast to northwest.

Wings is a highly personalized and extremely challenging simulation that points out what was a brutal fact of life for WWI pilots: Very few of them survived the duration of the Great War.

MAXXING OUT ON WWI

A more traditional form of WWI flight simulator is also available to gamers. Artech Digital Entertainments' *Blue Max: Aces of the Great War* (Three-Sixty Software), for example, is a

meat-and-potatoes air-combat program with an impressive array of options. Users set the game mode (practice flight, dogfight, practice strategy or campaigns) and can even fine-tune difficulty by selecting the number of enemies or, in the practice strategy mode, the number of seconds per move.



Cinemaware's Wings blends an interesting variety of visual perspectives and game genres to fashion a unique role-playing experience.

Available aircraft include the Sopwith Camel, the preferred airplane of WWI flying ace beagles; the Nieuport 17; the RAF's S.E.5a; and the Spad 7 for the Allies. Central Powers aircraft, meanwhile, are comprised of the Albatros D.III, the Fokker D.VII, the

Red Baron, by Dynamix, returns the gamer to the dawn of aerial combat, during the opening days of World War I.



famous Fokker Dr.I "Triplane" and the Fokker E.III. Planes can be flown in either "direct flight" or "realistic simulator" mode. The former is much easier and eliminates the eccentricities of the various aircraft. Other user-adjustable features include cloud and wind conditions; three settings are available for each.

The second game to use this venerable title (the first was an arcade game from now-defunct publisher Synapse), *Blue Max* makes excellent use of multiplayer features that include head-to-head and cooperative dogfight and campaign modes. There is also a special two-player strategy game in which the gamers plot their aircraft movement on a hex grid, then sit back and watch as the computer attempts to execute their orders.

Blue Max uses polygon-fill graphics and offers the usual variety of alternate first-person cockpit viewpoints, as well as a "VCR" feature available in the one or two-player campaign modes that allows gamers to replay entire sequences from a variety of camera angles.

ACEING THE WAR!

One of the joys of WWI flight simulators is their ease of play. There are no complicated command lists to memorize, no extended weapon selection and no fear of breaking the sound barrier. The first dogfights often seemed more like medieval jousts than today's high-speed air fights in which weapons must be operated by computer, since no human being could track them unaided.

The dogfight was the romantic essence of WWI air combat, and the aces were the superstars of their day. Though very few of them survived the war, their names remain with us even today: Billy Bishop, Eddie Rickenbacker, Georges Guynemer and, of course, Manfred von Richthofen, a/k/a the Red Baron.

Red Baron (Dynamix), by simulator ace Damon Slye (*Stellar 7*), takes the gamer back to the dawn of aerial



combat, the opening days of World War I. The main menu allows the user to fly a single mission, enlist for the entire campaign or face off against a famous ace in a dogfight.

More than 40 missions are available from the period 1915-1918. German scouts include the Fokker E.III "Ein-decker;" the Albatros D.II, D.III, D.V. and D.Va; the Pfalz D.III; the Fokker Dr.I "Triplane" and the Fokker D.VII—an aircraft that so terrified the Allies that the Treaty of Versailles dictated the destruction of every D.VII. Central Powers reconnaissance and bomber aircraft includes the Aviatik C.I, Rumpler C.IV and the Junkers J.I. Allied aircraft includes the Sopwith Pup, Triplane "Tripehound," Camel and Snipe; the S.E.5a; the Handley Page O/100 and O/400; the Nieuport 17; and Spad 7 and 13.

Flight controls include an altimeter, compass, fuel gauge, air-speed indicator, tachometer, oil pressure gauge and inclinometer. Players can fine-tune the graphic details in order to maximize speed or realism, but even at minimal levels, *Red Baron* is breathtaking, combining bit-mapped and polygon-fill graphics to produce stunningly realistic visual images.

The game even features a realism panel, which allows the gamer to use or ignore a variety of realistic features, including weather, gun jams, carburetor freezes and limited ammo and fuel. Flight groups, comprising one to four aircraft, can fly in any of seven formations—solo, line abreast, line astern, vee, box, echelon and diamond—with the player-character cast either as the flight leader or just one of the boys. Mission types include: historic, dogfight a squadron, patrol the front, escort a bombing raid, hunt a zeppelin and bust balloons. A "mission record" option allows the user to view any saved mission from several camera angles, using a VCR-like interface similar to that seen in Dynamix's *David Wolf: Secret Agent*.

DAYS AND KNIGHTS IN THE SKY

Another WWI air-combat simulation with a heavy emphasis on dogfighting against famous air aces is

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In MicroProse's *Knights of the Sky*, the gamer is a hired gun assigned the task of hunting down 16 of Germany's most celebrated air aces.



Knights of the Sky (MicroProse) by MPS Labs, MicroProse's own development group. The idea here is that the gamer is a hired gun, assigned the task of hunting down 16 of

Germany's most celebrated air aces.

Players choose from among 20 aircraft, navigate using actual WWI era maps and can fly more than a hundred missions, grouped into seven categories including ground support and bombing. The normally superb MicroProse graphics offer "top flight" bit-mapping and polygon-fill graphics with 13 different perspectives available, each in pseudo 3-D.

In addition to its other features, *Knights of the Sky* also offers two-player action via either direct cable or modem. Modem play opens up the gaming possibilities for users. They are no longer limited to opponents in their immediate geographic vicinity.



While the other games discussed in this article are designed to run on IBM PC and/or Amiga computers, Donald A. Hill Jr.'s *Fokker Triplane Flight Simulator* (Bullseye Software) is a classic Macintosh product, recently rereleased in an upgraded edition.

Fokker Triplane is set in northern Europe, just across the English Channel. There are three friendly air bases (Douai, Lille and Cambrai) and three enemy bases (Lillers, Frevent and Albert). Remember, when you're flying a Fokker Triplane, you're on the side of the Central Powers.

The game was designed for ease of use and it shows. Gamers can adjust stick sensitivity, re-designate command keys, set the difficulty level and control weather (wind and clouds).

There are nine missions, ranging from the elementary (takeoff and fly, go cross country and refuel, etc.) to the extremely difficult (destroy enemy fuel depots, seek and destroy and more).

Fokker Triplane may not represent state of the art in terms of World War I-era combat simulators, but it is an extremely serviceable program and still the only game in town for Macintosh owners.

THE ANCIENT PAST AND THE NEAR FUTURE OF FLYING

The most unusual of the current spate of WWI air-combat simulations is unquestionably *The Ancient Art of War in the Skies* (Brøderbund), by the Murry siblings.

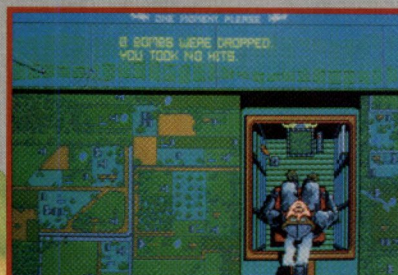
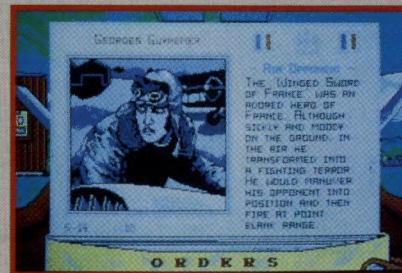
Not scheduled for release until late in the year, this third entry in the *Ancient Art of War* series emphasizes the strategic side of warfare. Gamers deploy air squadrons and then enter the cockpit for arcade-style dogfighting action. Players can face off against a variety of famous aces, including Oswald Bloecke and the ubiquitous Red Baron, while a campaign editor allows gamers to fashion their own battles through the creation of terrain and the allocation of forces.

As flight simulators go to ever-greater lengths to reproduce the faster-than-sound, high-tech universe of modern

air warfare, gamers may find themselves looking more and more to the past for a welcome change of pace. And when it comes to flight simulators, nothing expresses the romantic simplicity of yesteryear as well as those games that feature the elegant flying machines of World War I.

The WWI flying ace exhales as he watches his opponent's plane burst into flames and plummet from the sky in splinters. The comforting rumble of his prop vibrates through the Ad Lib board and out through his speakers. The breeze from his computer's internal cooling fan invigorates him, and he slowly begins to bank his Nieuport 17 to the right for the long ride home. A beautiful French girl is waiting for him there, ready with a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine.

It's a dangerous life, but someone has to live it. 🧑



The Ancient Art of War in the Skies, by Brøderbund, emphasizes the strategic side of air warfare.

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COMPUTER GAME REVIEWS

Jones in the Fast Lane

SIERRA ON-LINE

Versions: Amiga(\$39.95),
Atari ST(\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Jones in the Fast Lane is a computerized board game certain to draw fairly polarized reactions from gamers. Reminiscent of the old nonelectronic classic board game *Life*, players move around a "board" with various squares that represent different phases of life: finding an apartment; going to school; getting a job; and paying the various bills that accumulate as a result of those activities.

Turns are broken down by the week and during a several hour play session that simulates a period of months, players experience amazing changes in their wealth and status. The player who was dishing up hamburgers for the first few weeks at a fast food joint might become a bank president, while that character who was seemingly on the fast track to success may wind up stuck in a rat trap of an apartment with tattered clothes, unable to even go to work!

At the beginning of the game, players set their goals by moving a lever under each of the four categories: happiness, career, money and education. Let's say you want your character to be a happy-go-lucky type of person who makes enough money to get by, but that's all. Just set the happiness lever all the way to the top, set the money lever around the middle and the other two. However, it is a fact that happiness is a lot easier to come by when you've got a nice job, a nice pad and a good education.

The graphics are simple but extremely attractive, with plenty of

Players of Sierra's *Jones in the Fast Lane* are guaranteed to become totally captivated with the lives of their surrogate characters.



pop-up windows for character interactions and lots of cute on-the-board animations.

Here's the rub: there are a lot of people who play electronic games to escape just the sort of pressures that are the essence of *Jones in the Fast Lane*. However the vast majority of people who played this during testing were totally captivated and became deeply involved with the lives of their surrogate characters. This is even more true in multiplayer games; *Jones* gets better as the number of players increase.

The game's only serious flaw is the lack of computer-generated competition. *Jones*, the title character, will play against a single human player only, despite the note on the back of the box that says the game can be played by "any combination of one to three human and computer players." There is only one computer character, and it isn't even possible to have two or three human players with *Jones* in the same contest. *Jones* plays strictly one-on-one, which means that gamers without available human opponents will never get optimal enjoyment from this game.

The documentation is a little thin on details, but the four color-coded direction cards provide most of the required information in easy-to-digest form.

Overall, *Jones in the Fast Lane* is a great success, a game that's terrific for party play but is also satisfying, albeit to a lesser degree, as solitary entertainment. It's great to see Sierra continuing to experiment with different game genres, and despite a few quibbles, *Jones* is a great success.

—Bill Kunkel

Sierra On-Line, Inc.
P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-8989

3 in Three

CINEMAWARE

Version: Macintosh (\$49.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Cliff Johnson had two big hits in the puzzle genre with *Fool's Errand* and *At the Carnival*. His latest game, *3 in Three*, successfully continues the basic framework begun in his earlier hits and is sure to please the most avid puzzle strategist.

The player takes the role of the number three, who was separated from her spread-

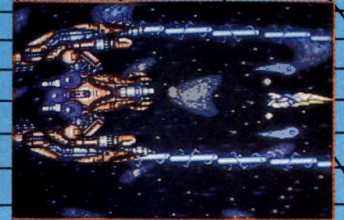
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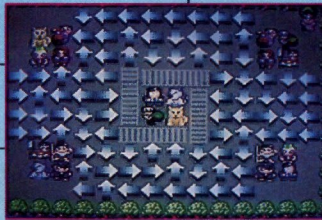


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sheet friends during a power surge. This surge thoroughly messes up two businessmen trying to develop their company's third-quarter report, and the number three is the only one who can restore the computer to order.

Players must work through 60 different scenes to set things right. Two sequences are purely informational: the introduction and the finale. Each of the remaining 58 contain a specific puzzle, or series of puzzles, to be solved.

Eleven puzzles are available when the game starts, and the other scenes are closed off until those are solved. While the player can freely jump between the current active puzzles, many scenes only become available after another puzzle is solved.

The puzzles in *3 in Three* fall into several categories. The word puzzles are about the closest this game comes to paper and pencil games; they use the computer to manage things. Other types include logic puzzles to arrange symbols in a grid according to the predefined relationships between the images. There are also mesh puzzles similar to Rubik's Cube where tiles must be shuffled into their proper alignment. Elevator puzzles present a series of platforms to rearrange, so the player-character can successfully maneuver through the screen.

Finding the solution to *3 in Three* is really a two-step process. First, about 50 of the game's puzzles must be solved. Doing this convenes the letter legislature and leads into the final scenes of the program. One of the scenes in this area requires the player to look back over most of the solved puzzles, then use the clues to fill in the words that match the various prompts. The other scenes feature a cryptogram segment and a sequence with moving letters to maneuver to their proper places in a grid.

The actual screen layouts vary based on the puzzle being solved, but all are up to the standards set by the two previous releases. The puzzles utilize the Macintosh's sound capabilities to the fullest and produce many effects that are very enjoyable to watch.

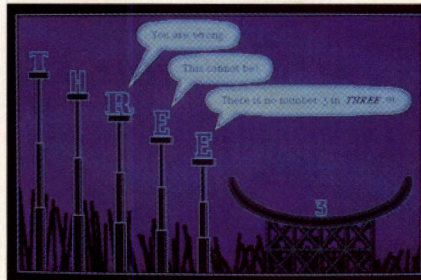
As a whole, the puzzles are integrated very well. Themes carry from puzzle to puzzle and generally fit well together. *3 in Three's* only shortfall is its limited replayability. The puzzles are not quite as challenging once they have been solved, but since the whole game takes several days to work through, this is not as big of a problem as it might seem at first.

Cliff Johnson's games are in a class by themselves and, hopefully, there will be many more to come. Computer puzzle solvers should not miss this one—they are in for quite a treat.

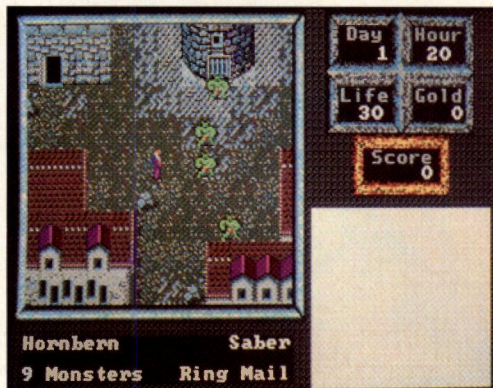
—R. Bradley Andrews

Cinemaware
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Westlake Village, CA 91362
(805) 495-6515

3 in Three, by Cinemaware, is a collection of 60 different integrated puzzles.



Newcomers to RPGs should find Keys to Maramon less overwhelming than the Wizardry or Ultima series.



Keys to Maramon

MINDCRAFT

Versions: Commodore 64 (\$29.95), IBM PC (\$34.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
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| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

The single factor that makes *Keys to Maramon* stand out from other fantasy role-playing games (RPGs) is its ease of play.

Those players who are new to the genre, or are overwhelmed by products like the *Wizardry* or *Ultima* series, should snap this one up. *Keys* is not a straight "hack and slash," but the puzzles it contains do not require the additional expense of a hint book. The game has an introductory level of difficulty and can easily be completed in a weekend.

The fictional premise of the story is adequate, if not imaginative. The village of Maramon is being plagued by monster attacks every night. Naturally, this has a severe affect on everyone's sense of well being, not to mention the tourist trade. The player may assume one of four personae to solve the mystery of the monster's origin and rid the town of the evil once and for all.

The roles are huntsman, blacksmith, scholar and courier. The latter of these is a female character. Each is rated for strength, dexterity, speed and life force. The first and last attributes are handled similarly to other games of the genre, except that encumbrance limitations are not a factor in *Keys*. Dexterity is approached rather uniquely. Instead of the usual modifier for your percentage chance of hitting an opponent, *Keys* applies the attribute as the probability of killing a given monster with a single stroke. This recreates the luck factor in combat, but speed also appears to be critical at several points in the game. *Keys to Maramon* operates in real time, similar to *Gauntlet* and a lot of video-game titles, so on-screen icon speed is vital when confronted with numerous enemies.

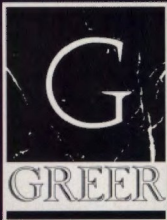
Players soon learn that the source of *Maramon's* woes is the catacombs (translate as dungeons) and whoever is running the show down there (translate as end boss). Players equip themselves with standard melee weapons and armor, upgrading to magical items as they are found. Herbs, mushrooms and potions all provide bonus effects to the player on a temporary basis, but there's no magic system in the traditional sense (hence the lack of intelligence or wisdom attributes).

continued on page 90

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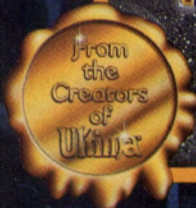
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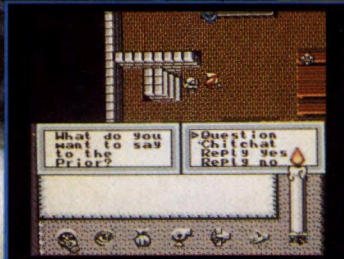


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ondary attacks, initiative rolls and other random factors for the player, limiting involvement to tactical decisions each round. (It would have been nice to have a "hot" key to keep the same options from round to round for long combats).

The combat-resolution routine is a logical model of the weaponry of antiquity, yet it's unobtrusive. All attacks are resolved via text description under the main display and, when a monster is killed, it vaporizes on-screen for the player's gratification. It's a good thing the combat system works so well, because hacking and slashing is close to the heart of this outing. The player must solve some puzzles, but most are straightforward or solved only by finding the right items.

The lack of an auto-map feature is either challenging or irritating, depending on one's point of view, because the locations are not traditional grids. Finally, the game does boast a full-sentence parser, one of the most transparent used in any RPG. There are occasional nonsensical responses but usually the program understands. This makes NPC interaction, what little there is of it, a delight.

There are a myriad of other fine points that could entice players to add this product to their collection. One must simply know that *Bane of the Cosmic Forge* will provide hundreds of hours of top-notch fantasy role-playing entertainment.

—E. D.

Sir-Tech Software
P.O. Box 245
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-6451

Wild Streets

TITUS SOFTWARE

Versions: Amiga(\$44.95),
Atari ST(\$44.95), Commodore 64
(\$39.95), IBM PC (\$44.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
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| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

There are so many fighting games out there already that it is surprising to see a software company release one these days. No longer are gamers content to kick and fight enemy after enemy in a never-ending battle.

Fortunately, *Wild Streets* is nothing like that at all. Instead, *Wild Streets* challenges the player to move quickly to wipe out a large number of criminals on the way to saving the boss of the C.I.A. from drug lords who have taken him hostage. The

Sir-Tech has improved the play mechanics and user interface while maintaining Wizardry's flavor.



Wild Streets gives the player both eye-pleasing scenery and enough action to wear out a joystick.



number of men that attack the player is large, but a black panther tags along to help in tough circumstances. The panther guards the player's rear and attacks enemies randomly.

Usually, in a game of this repetitive nature, the backgrounds are kept simple to speed up the action. Not so here. The most impressive elements of *Wild Streets* are the graphics and animation. There are five or six levels of play before the player reaches the boss, and in each, the backgrounds are varied and drawn with incredible detail for such a fast-paced game. *Wild Streets* gives the player both eye-pleasing scenery and enough action to wear out a joystick.

Wild Streets requires the player to fight screen after screen of oncoming criminals on each level and then defeat the gang leader for that level. The difficulty of each section is nicely scaled so that the player can learn from his mistakes early on without having to start over.

Aside from the panther, the player in desperate situations also has a six-chamber .357 Magnum for protection.

It is best to save the bullets until meeting the gang leader because his punches do more damage than the normal thugs. However, if the player uses up the bullets, he can pick up additional clips along the way to the leader. These clips pop up on the screen after certain criminals are killed.

To reach the boss is one thing. To take him back to the drop-off point is something entirely different. The panther takes damage along the way, just like the player. By the time you make the return trip through

the same scenery, the panther is much weaker and not as useful. This is why the player must stay more alert after saving the boss. Not only do you have to watch your own back, but you must also keep the thugs away from the boss as well. This makes the second half of

the game doubly difficult, but not impossible to finish.

Wild Streets is not for wimps. The action is fast and the goal difficult to obtain. Like other Titus games, it is heavy on action and wonderful graphics. The sounds and music are nothing exceptional, but certainly add to the tension in the game. Most people will walk away from *Wild Streets* with a cramped joystick hand and quicker heartbeat.

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The manual is laid out well and describes all of the characters in the game, even the panther. Because of its repetitive action, *Wild Streets* could have been tedious, but the scenery, the panther and the player's ability to jump over opponents make it fun. Now if only the panther would do all of the work.

—Russ Ceccola

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X-Men II: The Fall of the Mutants

PARAGON SOFTWARE

Version: IBM PC (\$39.95)

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|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
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| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

By now most comic book fans have discovered Paragon Software's Marvel Comics computer games. Paragon has produced the *Amazing Spider-Man* and *Captain America in Dr. Doom's Revenge*, *The Punisher*, *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *X-Men: Madness in Murderworld*. All are good games, but none are the last word for those characters.

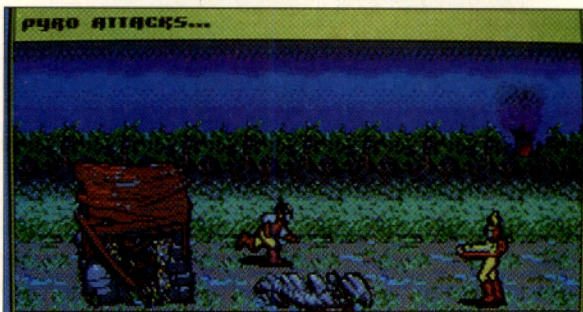
Their latest comic-inspired game, *X-Men II: The Fall of the Mutants*, is largely a combat-oriented game based on issues 225-227 of the *Uncanny X-Men*. The player puts together a team of five mutant X-Men from 15 possible characters, including Wolverine, Psylocke, Colossus and Rogue, just to name some. X-Men must explore three areas using the time portals: a forest, a desert and a primal age. There is a lot of fighting in the game, but it is not so grueling that it becomes a nuisance.

The story of *X-Men II* puts the player's team up against the Adversary, a super-being who has brought forth chaos and time portals in Dallas, Texas, in order to lure the X-Men to their defeat. The Adversary kidnaps Storm and Forge as bait. Helping the Adversary are the Freedom Force, a band of evil mutants under government orders to arrest the X-Men because they did not register their powers. Other villains include Pyro, Blob, Mystique and Avalanche.

X-Men II uses Marvel's "What if?" approach, which lets the player put together a unique adventure. Unlike a lot of team games, the choice of



X-Men II uses Marvel's "What if?" approach, which lets players put together a unique adventure.



characters really does make a considerable difference. If a player has a lot of trouble defeating a particular enemy, it may be because the villain has a special resistance to that mutant's skills. At times it is necessary to switch characters in combat.

The player moves the team in one of four formations, shown in overhead perspective with the leader highlighted. Along the paths are traps to avoid and objects to find that help the X-Men in their journey. The game switches to a side view for combat when the group encounters a villain. The gamer can also perform combat on a grid, almost like combat systems in traditional war/fantasy role-playing games, but the side view is a lot more exciting. In this method, each member of the team must fight an enemy on a separate action screen. The animation is smooth, and the combat is more challenging than similar sequences in *X-Men: Madness in Murderworld*. The choice of mutants is most important because the wrong team member can pound away forever and not accomplish anything.

The graphics in *X-Men II* only use 16-color mode, but they are nonetheless impressive. The sound effects are appropriate and support Ad Lib.

To enhance the game, Paragon has released the *X-Men Construction Set*, a program that offers new characters, a character editor, plot and area editor and new background scenes with graphics. A company-sponsored contest will support the *X-Men Construction Set*.

The game moves along a lot quicker than its predecessor, and for that reason it is a lot more enjoyable.

—R. C.

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Tunnels & Trolls: Crusaders of Khazan

NEW WORLD COMPUTING

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| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Originally a nonelectronic board game published by Chaosium, one of the most famous role-playing games has finally reached the computer. The box reads: "Orcs and trolls hunt the fields of men...as you begin your quest to find the wizard king." This description presents nothing new for fantasy role-playing software. But despite the similarity of title and some overlap of play mechanics, New World Computing's *Tunnels & Trolls: Crusaders of*



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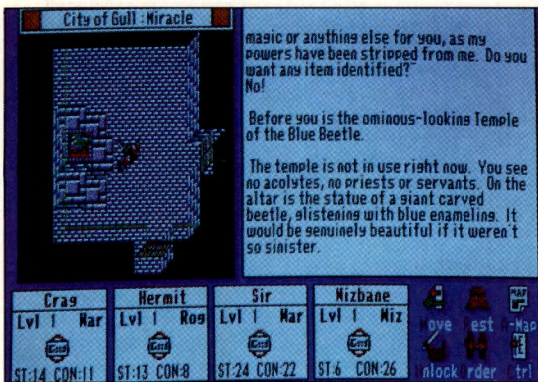
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The main strength of *Tunnels & Trolls: Crusaders of Khazan* lies in its menu-driven play.

Khazan shouldn't be confused with *Dungeons & Dragons*. The game's ease of play and unique atmosphere more than make up for its superficial similarities to any other game.

The main strength of *Tunnels & Trolls: Crusaders of Khazan* lies in its menu-driven play. Like everything else in the game, character generation is quick and uncomplicated. Players may be warriors or wizards or rogues, who have limited skills of both. If the initial characters die or prove inferior, the towns of Phoron and the Dragon Continent are brimming with pregenerated personalities ready to take their place. A pleasant touch is the addition of graphics to the character status, showing what armor and equipment is readied.

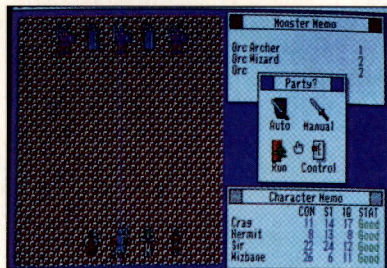
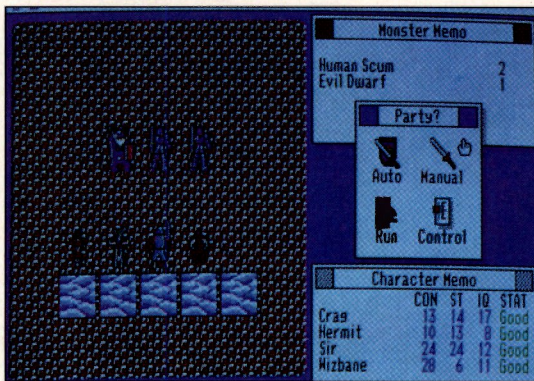
Combat occurs on a special tactical display complete with quicksand, water, trees and other obstacles. Players act in order of their speed ratings and have the unusual martial option of pushing, which often knocks opponents unconscious. The designers made good use of artificial intelligence in the game. All the computer-controlled foes fight more intelligently than in most games and capitalize on player mistakes.

Some of the creators of the original *Tunnels & Trolls* worked on the computer version. They managed to give Lerotra'hh's domain and the free city-states a sense of logic and subtlety not found in many other games. Each location reflects the Death Goddess' influence, not only in the availability of goods and services, but also in the citizens' culture and moods. Some act morosely while others have become militant in their paranoia. Encountered individuals do not make forced, elaborate speeches. They talk—that is, when characters understand their languages. Opponents are more often malicious or spiteful than "evil."

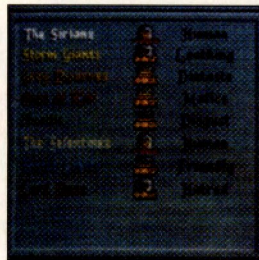
Tunnels & Trolls: Crusaders of Khazan does not have an elaborate musical score or an allegory-laden scenario. But it's an extremely playable game with atmospheric detail long missing from the genre.

—David S. Moskowitz

New World Computing
20301 Ventura Blvd., Suite 200
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Warlords, by SSG, contains a crisp mixture of graphics and sound effects.



Warlords

STRATEGIC STUDIES GROUP
Versions: Amiga (\$49.95),
IBM PC (\$49.95)

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| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Warlords is an eight-player struggle for supreme power in the fabled kingdom of Illuria. The game may be played by one to eight humans with the computer filling in the empty seats.

Illuria is divided into eight zones. The players each start with one castle and a hero to lead their initial army. In the early stages, there's a mad rush as players attempt to claim as many of the remaining castles as possible while avoiding enemy confrontations.

After all the castles are claimed, Stage 2 lets players analyze their situation and begin mobilizing armies to attack nearby enemy installations. Each player's

ultimate goal is total conquest.

Players take their turns in sequence until everyone has had a chance. Early on, players use their turns to produce armies and send them out to claim neutral cities. Each castle a player obtains brings income and new armies to control. However, gamers must be careful not to produce more armies than their income can afford to sustain.

Each player has a hero: the key man early in the game. The hero may search the dungeons and altars for treasure or allies to join the quest. Searching these places is risky; there is always a chance the hero will be slain by an angry dragon or other unfriendly creature. Should this happen, gamers must play without one until another

hero offers to join their side.

Warlords is a very intense strategy game that should not be tried by those who hate long and actionless games.

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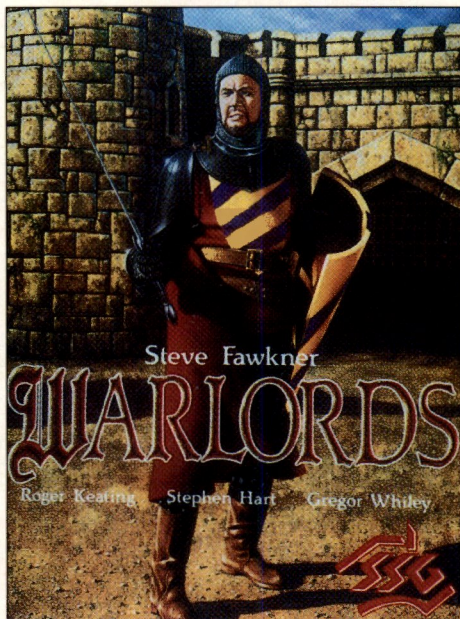
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However, those who lust to be armchair generals will be delighted by all the game offers. The graphics are very colorful and the representations of the different armies are well-thought-out and easy to distinguish. The control system is amazingly simple to use. Players click their way around, moving armies by simply pointing to the desired destination. A full game can take anywhere from two to eight hours so be ready for an epic challenge. Thank goodness SSG included an excellent save-game feature, which remembers up to eight games at once.

The sounds, though scarce, are digitized recreations of swords swinging, trumpets blasting and other assorted battle sounds. It is this mixture of crisp graphics and imaginative sound effects that helps make *Warlords* a game players can play for hours.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

Strategic Studies Group
1747 Orleans Court
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(415) 932-3019



Warlords is a very intense strategy game that should not be tried by anyone who hates long, actionless games.

DarkSpyre

ELECTRONIC ZOO

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95),
Commodore 64 (\$29.95),
IBM PC (\$49.95)

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| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Once upon a time, the Code of War, Magic and Intellect despaired of man and built a great tower called DarkSpyre to test whether mankind was worthy to exist. Many champions challenged its many hallways and levels in search of magical runes of power and portals that lead to the final trio of celestial tests—and none have returned. Time is growing short; there is only a century yet before the wrath of the gods is unleashed.

This real-time adventure, developed by Event Horizon Software, combines some degree of arcade movement with many of the attributes of the standard quest-adventure genre. There is but one hero or heroine, for instance, but the character has a number of variable attributes; strength, agility, endurance, accuracy, talent and spell-casting power. The player may be either right- or left-handed.



DarkSpyre has all the bells and whistles of a good RPG game, but doesn't get bogged down in the detail.

—Ross Chamberlain

There are a variety of weapons and spells that will become available as the game develops. Proficiency in their use will increase skill points, while hit points and spell-casting ratings may be gained, expended and regained.

The action, viewed from a 3-D overhead vantage point, is continual, controlled from keyboard, joystick or mouse, for the most part without stopping to enter keyboarded commands or even to select choices from a menu. The screen scrolls horizontally and vertically to maintain some view of surrounding corridors, including nearby areas not visible to the character.

There are some simple techniques to be learned for picking up and using objects, and there's a menu list of available actions, such as punching, invoking, etc. Skull-heads embedded in the hallway floors conveniently identify locations or comment on nearby items.

The overhead view is but one of two screens. The other, called the character screen, is always partially visible at the bottom, and it is possible to either switch back and forth between them or scroll to make a larger segment of the one and a smaller of the other available at any time. The character screen includes an image of the hero or heroine, complete with accoutrements as they are obtained, plus a couple of rows of items—weapons, scrolls and the like. There are also several status icons and the means to exit and/or save the game.

While moving around the corridors there are frequent vistas of the stars beyond exterior walls, a nice graphic touch. The game supports VGA, EGA, CGA and Tandy graphics and sound ranging from IBM's internal one-voice and Tandy's three-voice to Sound Blaster and Ad Lib music cards.

Included with the game are a manual, including a 16-page story depicting events preceding the creation of the DarkSpyre and descriptions of the various play attributes and options, and a scratchpad with grid-imprinted sheets to help map each level's meandering corridors. There's also a technical reference sheet describing how to use keyboard, joystick or mouse controls.

The game's designers strove to give the game depth, yet make it fun, and even addictive, to play. They seem to have succeeded in avoiding the tendency that multiplayer role-playing games often have—getting so bogged down in moment-to-moment detail that the sense of adventure is lost. The puzzles to solve, traps to avoid and techniques to master require relatively little of the slam-bang energy of the average shoot-'em-up arcade action, and that's okay by me.

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Wayne Gretzky Hockey 2

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS

Version: IBM PC (\$54.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

The main problem with *Wayne Gretzky Hockey 2*, a theoretically enhanced version of Bethesda Softworks' award-winning *Wayne Gretzky Hockey*, is obvious to canny software purchasers. The back of the box displays two playfield shots: a close-up screen of a skater winding up for a slapshot and a view of a fight up on the arena's big screen.

But where is there a photograph of an actual playscreen? *Wayne Gretzky Hockey 2* is definitely a mixed bag. On the plus side, the game is loaded with marvelous, innovative and downright inspired features. Each on-ice player is rated in no fewer than 11 skill areas, including skating, puck-handling and aggression.

Virtually every element of the game offers modular fine-tuning, from game speed and difficulty level settings to period length, in addition to such extras as user-controlled instant replay! The design employs the

Wayne Gretzky Hockey 2 has marvelous strategic innovations and multiple options, but suffers from lack of playability.



classic Gamestar and SportTime mix of action and strategy with a satisfying complement of user options.

The gamer can control on-ice players while Number 99 does the computerized coaching, or he can play and coach or simply coach. Team strategy is stylized through a series of sophisticated menus, and hardcore hockey fans will probably enjoy this game strictly on a coaching level more than any previous hockey simulation.

Now the downside: The basic game setup screen is a confusing mess, and the badly written documentation only makes things worse. There seem to be only two pro teams available, the Bruins and Canadians, and the players on these teams are all-time greats.

The game's fatal flaw is its poor game play graphics. *WGH2* runs in a top-down mode, using tiny figures zipping about at high speed (even on a 12 MHz machine) like roaches dancing the midnight shuffle when the lights come on. Add to that the fact that almost no use is made of color, resulting in team uniforms that are virtually indistinguishable from one another. You then have a game that's simply too confusing to follow.

The strategic innovations and multiple options are marvelous, but they must connect with a playable game for those values to be realized. And that's too bad, because this one could have been a classic.

—B. K.

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In the production phase you have two goals: first, to generate enough Starbucks on developing mineral worlds to sustain the fleet; and second, to establish a fast conduit between the starbases and the battlefield through the colony worlds.

The ideal place for a starbase is at the far end of a long string of fortified colony worlds that lead to the battle. Ships will be able to get to the front quickly while the starbase is protected from an immediate attack.

One way the Alliance player can win the economic phase is by moving the starbase so that the pipeline to the front remains short. Then the Alliance player can flood the skies with Shofixti Scout ships.

Shofixti ships cost only five Starbucks to build, and in the hands of a modestly skilled pilot, they can take out their equiva-

Three basic skills are required in *Star Control* in order to succeed: arcade prowess, successful economic management and ship-matching acumen.



lent in opposition ships. Three or four Shofixti ships can destroy the expensive 30 Starbucks Ur-Quan Dreadnought. Umgahs, the least expensive of the Hierarchy ships, cost only seven Starbucks to build.

Grand tactics require winning ship combinations. Some of *Star Control's* ships, such as the Mycon and the Shofixti, require very little skill to use effectively. Others, such as the Arilou and the Spathi, are useless in the hands of a novice pilot, but in skilled hands they become deadly scalpels. Buying ships that take specific advantage of your piloting strengths is a good way to defeat the enemy.

The Ur-Quan Dreadnought is the ultimate heavy hitter. There are no great choices against this vessel, but there are cost-effective alternatives. The pilot that has little skill can choose the Shofixti Scout. The pilot of this ship merely has to learn

how to close in on the enemy and self-destruct the ship in a kamikazefike fashion. Earthling Cruisers and Chenjesu Broodhome warships are effective for pilots that have intermediate skill levels. Use the Chenjesu's ships only if there's a colony world nearby, so it can be rebuilt after a battle. The Arilou and Spathi are good choices after the pilot develops advanced skills.

No matter how researched the ship selection or how skillful its positioning, the moment of truth comes when the fateful words "Battle ensues" appear at the bottom of the screen. This is when all the strategy and grand tactical skill

are confirmed or nullified by a subtle flick of the wrist or the cleverly timed push of a button.

Much of the tactical skill in *Star Control* is weapon-specific, but there is one tool all ships share—planetary gravity. Each player must learn to use the planet and its gravitational pull as a weapon.

The simplest method is to use the gravity as a speed boost. Fly close to the planet and let off on the accelerator as the ship passes. This will slingshot the ship at an accelerated speed and distract any missile-like projectiles that might have been fired at you. A second method is to make your opponent's ship crash into the planet. This is a good way to get rid of those pesky Ur-Quan fighters.

The final technique of utilizing the gravitational pull is a method only the Arilou can perform. This is a cop-behind-the-billboard scenario. First, wait right next to the planet until the enemy passes by, chase after him with your guns blazing, then veer away to safety so that you may repeat the process until the enemy is destroyed.

Star Control will exercise different skills at many levels. Beginners might have difficulty playing the full-scenario game at first. It would be wise to sharpen one's skills in the practice mode—battling different configurations of ships—before playing the full game.

—Roger White

How to Become the Wing Commander

ORIGIN
Version: IBM PC

Origin's latest action/adventure is a three-dimensional space-combat simulator with some amazing attributes. Players must help forces on Terran overcome the evil Kilrathi forces, in an attempt to restore freedom to the galaxy. This is done by commanding four different spacecraft through different assignments ranging from simple "search-and-destroy" runs to complex escort, rescue and defensive missions.

Start in the bar by questioning the bartender and the people sitting down. The bar should always be checked after each mission: The pilots who hang out there usually have some important news for anyone who'll listen. This is also a good place to practice flight maneuvers on the training



Remember to bank from side to side while engaging the enemy in *Wing Commander*.

simulator. Use it to get accustomed to the controls before actually heading out.

In the hangar, gamers are given an objective and shown where the nav points are for the current mission. If it's a search-and-destroy, it's simply a matter of blasting all Kilrathi ships and heading back. If the objective is an escort mission, remember to stay within 3,000 clicks of the escort ship at all times to avoid getting a negative review. Don't chase enemy ships too far on these missions. Instead, wait for them to come to you.

Once airborne, choose the missiles you like best. Early on, players can use the heat-seekers to take out the enemy and blast the last couple of guys with lasers. Later on, it becomes important to save those power missiles for the second or third nav point, where the enemy wing leaders are. In these rescue missions, always head straight for the rescue ship and try to get the enemy off of it. If it looks like they're in big trouble, fire a few random laser shots to scare your enemies and (hopefully) get them to chase you or the wingman.

When the wingman spies an enemy fleet, remember to give an order such as "stay in formation" or "break off and attack." If many hostile ships are concentrated in one area, make the wingman break off and head the other way to split up the enemy. Once that's done, listen for messages and be ready to help the wingman if things get tough.

When engaging the enemy, never fly straight. Shake things up to make it hard to get a lock on the ship. Remember to press "T" then "L" to get a lock on the enemy if missiles are required. Try to avoid a head-to-head fight. The enemy is usually a better shot with a laser gun. Instead, break left or right hard, and try to come up on him from the side. Don't fire random laser shots. They use energy and wasting them could spell disaster later on if things get really hot!

Finally, if the briefing warns that the upcoming mission may be met by one of the Kilrathi star pilots, watch the comscreen to find out which one he is. This smart mouth always communicates something sarcastic before he attacks. When he does, lock on him and try to get off a missile before switching to guns. Once done, fire a volley of lasers across his front. If done correctly, he'll either blow up or run away scared.

Of course this doesn't always happen. If it doesn't, you'd better be ready to use some fancy flying maneuvers if you're ever gonna nail this guy!

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

If there's one thing about the Game Boy that I complain of incessantly, it's the machine's screen. Small and dependent on room lighting, it's a constant source of eye strain and frustration to me. When I heard that several companies were making lighting and screen-magnifying attachments for the Game Boy, my tired eyes cried out for them.

Some months ago I talked about two such units (The Illuminator and the Light Boy), which were unavailable for my use at the time I wrote the piece. Just yesterday, however, the good people at Nuby Manufacturing more than answered my request for a Game Boy eyestrain alleviator and sent me three peripherals designed to improve viewing and sound.

First up is the Game Light (\$9.95), which is a small unit that clips onto the top of the Game Boy and frames the screen. Two small lights in the frame throw a welcome glow on the display, making it easier to see. Next was the Game Boy Magnifier (\$7.95), which clips to the front of the Game Boy and holds a rectangular magnifying lens between your eyes and the screen, enlarging the image. Finally, plugging into the headphone jack at the bottom of the Game Boy is the Game Boy Amplifier (\$14.95), which gives you two stereo speakers for improved audio.

This all sounded great, until I wanted to get everything up and running. I found that the number of batteries required for on-the-go gaming with the Game Boy went up from the usual four AAs to eight AAs and a 9-volt battery (four AAs for the Game Boy, four more for the Game Light and the 9-volt for the amplifier). The batteries alone set me back eight bucks. Next, I found the Game Light wasn't quite what I'd hoped for. The screen is easier to see, but the illumination isn't entirely even. I can't blame Nuby for that, after all, a backlit screen would have avoided the problem entirely (right, Nintendo?).

On the other hand, the Amplifier worked great, once I was able to get the battery in it. The battery compartment on the unit I received was so



GAME BOY GEAR

by
MAURICE MOLYNEAUX

tight that I almost had to force the battery in, then I had to use a pocket knife to pry it out again. The compartment is about 1/16th of an inch too small! Fortunately, you can plug an AC adapter (not included) in and run the Amplifier from that.

The biggest disappointment was

vast improvement over the Game Boy screen alone. The Amplifier is nice too, but it's rare that most of us will ever want to crank up the sound on a game to the levels it allows. The Magnifier was the only unit I really found lacking, and I don't use it. So, if you're looking for add-ons such as these to make your Game Boy playing more enjoyable, check these out. Just make sure you have lots of batteries, or even better, rechargeable batteries.

And now it's on to our featured Game Boy titles.

Castelian

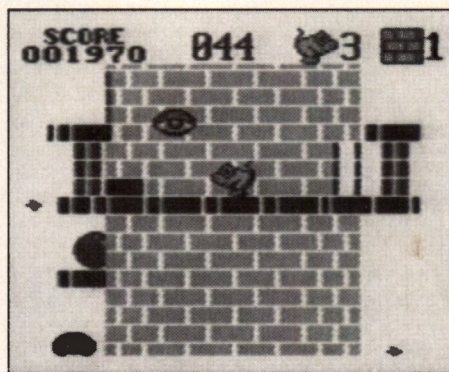
Triffix Entertainment for Game Boy

It was Shakespeare who wrote: "A rose, by any other name, smells just as sweet." That sentiment can be applied to this game, as in (with apologies to the Bard) "Tower Toppler, by any other name, plays just as neat." I had no idea what *Castelian* was when I first plugged this cartridge into my Game Boy, but I was surprised to find myself looking at a familiar face and hearing a familiar tune. Name change aside, this is a Game Boy translation of the computer game *Tower Toppler*. Just why the name has been changed is a mystery (probably related to legal issues of copyright and trademark) and regrettable because *Castelian* is an unwieldy title that really says nothing about the game. The name *Tower Toppler*, on the other hand explains what this game is about: toppling towers.

Then again, even that description is imprecise. In the game you control a little creature—pig-nosed, with bug eyes and a round little body held up by two legs (sorry, no arms)—who must

scale a series of towers, trying to reach the summit of each before a timer runs out. When he reaches the top, the tower is destroyed, and it's on to the next tower, pausing for a bonus stage on the way.

Scaling the towers is done by navigating a series of platforms that circle the structures. Your on-screen alter ego walks, jumps and rides elevators in his quest, evading and (sometimes)



Don't be surprised if you experience déjà vu while playing Triffix Entertainment's Castelian.

the Magnifier, which, in my opinion, actually made the screen harder to look at because it made the Game Boy's screen fuzzier and tended to pick up reflections.

Don't get the impression that I hated all three items. On the contrary, the Game Light, while not perfect, is a

destroying opponents along the way. Any contact with an opponent causes your creature to get bumped off of the current platform and fall until he either lands on another platform or plunges into the sea. Getting knocked to another platform costs precious time; plunging into the surf costs a life.

Opponents can be dealt with in a number of ways. Some types can be blasted to atoms, others can be frozen by your shots and others must simply be avoided altogether. Getting past such indestructible baddies can involve running past them, jumping over them or ducking into a tower tunnel (which brings you out on the other side of the tower).

The music in the game is good. The graphics are pretty good and detailed, but more impressive is *how* they move. As you walk around the (round) towers, the picture rotates, as if the towers were really 3-D. This means that you can be totally unaware of what's just around the bend. It's a nice affect that gives the game a unique look.

More an action-puzzle game than a pure arcade contest, *Castelian* is one title that will definitely get more than an average amount of play on my Game Boy.

R-Type

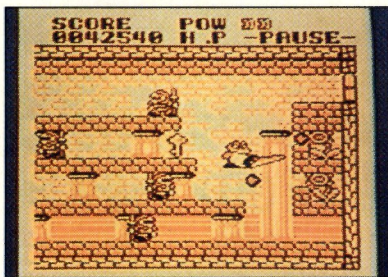
Irem America for Game Boy

A popular arcade game, more so than a computer and video game, *R-Type* arrives on the Game Boy in fine form. Naturally, due to the small screen and lack of color, this version isn't as spectacular-looking as its predecessors. Yet in spite of these limitations it's still a good-looking game.

The goal is simple: Fly your spacecraft in a one-man assault against the evil BYDO Empire, and destroy the five warlords and their leader, El Supremo. In essence, it's the old, familiar "complete the level and kill the boss" game structure. In *R-Type* you see a side view of your ship moving through horizontally scrolling alien caverns and complexes. You dodge obstacles, shoot anything that moves (and a lot that doesn't) to stay alive and pick up power-up capsules to add to your speed and weaponry. The first and most important such power-up is the power pod, which you can use as a shield or a weapon, launching it away from you and then retrieving it as you wish. Other power-up items increase your ship's speed, give you a "plasma" energy ball that destroys

anything it touches, and so forth.

Enemies come in all shapes and sizes, from flying and walking menaces to locked-down gunnery positions. Destroying as many of these as you can as quickly as possible helps a lot because it's difficult to duck shots when they're coming at you from five or more directions at once. Most enemies can be dealt with rather easily, particularly if you let your laser build up to full power before loosing your shots. The "boss" creatures are more



Top: Natsume's Tail 'Gator is a cute reptilian romp that might appeal to younger gamers.

Right: Game Boy Amplifier, by Nuby Manufacturing, adds two stereo speakers for improved Game Boy audio quality. The accessory retails for about \$14.95.

difficult, but each has a vulnerability you can exploit. The "bosses" tend to be rather large and well-drawn and therefore the most impressive graphic items in the game.

There's not a lot more I can say about *R-Type* other than it seems like a faithful conversion of the original and plays well. If you like these kinds of scrolling shoot-'em-ups, you could do worse than give *R-Type* a look.

Tail 'Gator

Natsume for Game Boy

This game has to feature one of the "punniest" titles I've ever seen. It's a cute play on words and incredibly appropriate considering the game is about an alligator that uses its tail to fight off enemies. The manual's story is silly, as usual, and really doesn't have much to do with the game prop-

er, in which you must go from room to room fighting off numerous enemies as you seek the key that will let you go to the next room. The ultimate goal is to get through all of the castle rooms and defeat the evil Dragon Warlord, Basso Gila (yes, as in Gila monster).

In your travels you'll pass through water, caves, over land and on clouds, fighting off killer snakes, fish and whatever. Your only weapon is your tail, which you can swing to the left

and right.

The 'gator can walk, swim and jump and must fight off his enemies trying to break open the

chests in each area while he seeks the key to that room. Each chest contains an item; if not a key then perhaps a bomb (which eliminates all enemies momentarily) or a power-up (which gives your tail-swinging more punch) or maybe a heart (which adds to your life-meter of hearts). There are many rooms to play through, and fortunately, a password system is employed, allowing you to continue from the last area you completed.

I'm sort of at a loss to say much else about this title. The above paragraph sums up your goals. The game is

more or less an arcade-type contest. The sound is average, with one of those silly little tunes that runs throughout the game (I couldn't find a music-off option). The graphics are simple and cartoonish, but effective. One basic image that stands out most in my mind is when your 'gator runs out of hearts (lives), dies and floats away like an angel, hands under his chin and wearing a weary expression as if to say, "Gee, thanks for getting me snuffed, Bub." Sorry about that.

Next month I'll be discussing some new games for the Lynx that don't fall into the tried-and-true category, including the puzzling *3D Blockout*, *Chess*, as presented by *Fidelity Ultimate Chess Challenge*, and even a 3-D flight simulator—*Warbirds*. Gotta go! So many games, so little time! ♀



The old Doc has spent the last few issues attempting to clear out the vast backlog of excellent questions. Now, the decks are clear, the Game Doctor Prize Packets are ready to be mailed and the questions can be answered.

The winner of this month's Game Packet is one of the many enthusiastic gamers who have expressed an interest in producing a fanzine. Fanzines, as readers of *Fandango* are well aware, are amateur magazines produced by electronic-gaming fans for electronic-gaming fans. And just to make sure he's abiding by the rules, the following missive arrived from the editor of *16-Bit Beat*.

question

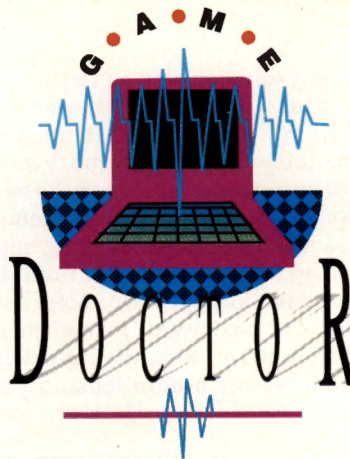
I am a fanzine editor, and I was wondering if you could answer a few questions. Is it illegal to use screen shots of video games on a small publication like mine? If so, do I need permission from the manufacturer? Is it okay to use logos from video games as long as I put a "TM" or "©" alongside it? And one final question: Do I need some sort of license or copyright for my fanzine? Any help you can give me would be greatly appreciated!

—Steven Morrison
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
Canada

answer

Good questions all, Steven, and you're obviously a thoughtful, prudent editor. After all, when a letter comes in the mail with one of those video game company logos on the envelope, you'll want it to be a company subscription, a thank-you for a good review or maybe even a job offer. On the other hand, there is nothing like a half-million dollar lawsuit from a corporate powerhouse to take the edge off one's day, so it's always better to be safe than sorry.

A caveat: The Game Doctor is *not* a lawyer. For that matter, the Game Doctor isn't even a doctor, so I'm not altogether sure why people ask me so many questions in the first place. In other words, if I am going to err in responding to this question, it will be an error on the side of conservatism.



IF YOU'VE GOT THE Q WE'VE GOT THE A!

by
the Game Doctor

So let's look at these questions one at a time.

1) Since screen shots represent visual representation of copyrighted material, it is quite possible that a publisher could create trouble for any editor employing unauthorized use of screen shots. In most cases, fanzine editors get their screen shots from three sources: screen dumps, photos clipped from the game's box and photos cut from magazines like this one.

To my knowledge, no game or magazine publisher has ever taken legal action over the unauthorized use of screen shots, but why take a chance? Contact the video-game companies and request blanket permission to reprint screen shots already in current use (magazine ads, playfield shots on the back of the game box, etc.). Who knows? Although actual transparencies of screen shots are expensive for publishers to produce, they may be willing to send you black-and-white "ad slicks," which are sometimes produced for publication in black-and-white media.

2) The use of logos is much trickier. Now let's say you are running an article entitled "Bonk Vs. Mario," which discusses and compares the virtues and deficiencies of these programs. It is my understanding that it would be acceptable to reproduce those logos, with a clear "TM" designation.

If, on the other hand, you inserted the Sega Genesis logo on your cover, Steven, just above your *16-Bit Beat* logo, for example, you could have trademark notification out the wazoo, and Sega will still send you one of those letters that take the edge off your day. The reason is simple: By using Sega's logo in that way, you would be implying that your fanzine was an authorized Sega publication. In the law, intent is very important.

By the way, trademarks protect the visual design of a logo. Titles themselves are notoriously hard to protect, but a trademark refers to the way that title is designed.

3) Finally, no, you don't need any sort of license to publish a fanzine. Anyone can publish a fanzine. As for copyrighting the material, I would suggest that for fanzine editors with small circulations, it is not worth the trouble of formally copyrighting your material. Simply print the standard "All Material Copyright ©" by the editor, authors or whoever and include the year, and your fanzine will be protected upon publication.

Your Game Doctor Prize Packet should have arrived by the time you read this, Steven. Hope you get a kick out of it and best of luck with your fanzine. Speaking of fanzines, I want to thank the many editors who've sent me copies of their publications. Even if I don't have the time to respond to each one personally, rest assured they are read and enjoyed!

question

I am the proud owner of a Neo-Geo and was wondering why the software for the system is so expensive. The games are a far cry from everything else out on the market, but does that justify the \$200 price tag? Also, when and where will the rental program start? One other thing, is it true that a football game is coming out this year for the Neo-Geo? Thanks for your time and expertise!

—Bob Young
Lindenwold, New Jersey

question

I am an avid video-game fan and have owned several different systems

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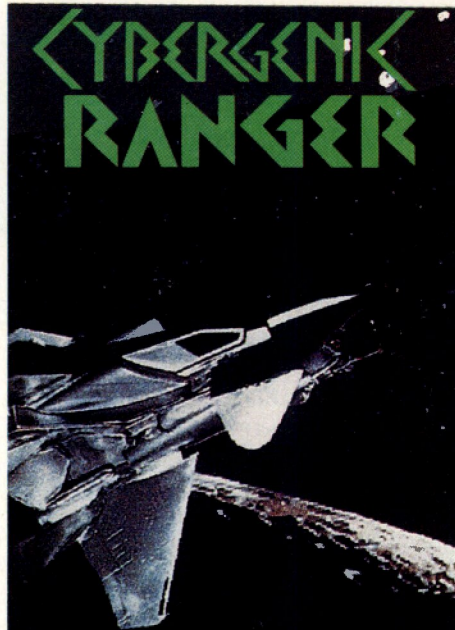
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CIRCLE #142 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

over the years. My most recent purchase was the state-of-the-art Neo-Geo. The system's abilities are impressive to say the least. The Neo-Geo can display 4,096 colors on screen at once out of a palette of 65,535; display 380 hardware sprites that can be smoothly enlarged or reduced; emit CD-quality stereo sound through 15 channels (seven of which are devoted to digitized speech); and has a staggering 330 megabits of memory. For this reason, cartridges for the system are the size of video cassettes. The manufacturer boasts that the system has 32-bit quality game play. Actually, it's a 16-bit plus and 8-bit processor put together, and the results are incredible.

I managed to purchase the Neo-Geo at a store in downtown Toronto at tremendous cost, and so far I know of no other place in Canada (or America, for that matter) that sells the system. I was wondering if you would know when this system might become available to the open market in Canada and what the price may be (I assume still more than \$200 a cartridge).

—Mike Goldman
Toronto, Ontario,
Canada

answ er

Since we get so many questions about the Neo-Geo, I thought I'd print these two letters that express the questions heard most often about this system.

The best way to understand the Neo-Geo and why it and its software costs so much is to think of it in terms of buying a kit-operated coin-op machine, which is basically what this system is. The Neo-Geo system is the same technology SNK employs in its arcade coin-ops, minus the cabinet and artwork. In those terms, the cartridges are pretty reasonable, since most arcade "kits" generally cost at least \$500 for a hot new title. SNK took a shot that there would be enough arcade fans around who would be willing to shell out \$1,000 for the state-of-the-art home system, and subsequently spend a couple hundred beans for software. If SNK can sell enough Neo-Geos, then the price of software would theoretically drop.

SNK faced a variety of problems in trying to sell this system, but the toughest challenge seems to have

been distribution, which is to say: where exactly does one sell a \$1,000 video game system with \$200 cartridges? Many major retailers were simply not interested, since the product didn't fit anywhere within their existing price points.

The reason Mike is having so much trouble finding Neo-Geo product, however, is the result of SNK concentrating on the U.S. market, where it has finally attained some success. Neo-Geo hardware and software is being sold at Macys stores in New York, at Babbages and The Wiz.

SNK spokesman Kent Russell explained to the Doc that a key to the Neo-Geo's success is exposure. "We tested in four Macys in New York," he said, "and in two of the stores, the system wasn't displayed and it didn't sell well. In the other two stores, where the system was hooked up to a display monitor at the front of the store, they sold off the shelves."

SNK Home Entertainment has also devoted a lot of energy to exploiting the video-rental market and has begun a special weekend rental program in which consumers get a Gold System Neo-Geo (the basic system and two controllers) for an entire weekend for \$30. Blockbuster Video in Memphis and the 20/20 chain in Los Angeles are already part of this program, which is showing encouraging signs early on.

Another of the handicaps SNK faced was its extremely ill-advised ad campaign for the Neo-Geo. One ad featured the line: "If you're still playing Sega, NEC or Nintendo, you're nothing but a weenie!" Even worse, a sheet of specifications comparing the Neo-Geo, Super Famicom, TurboGrafx-16 and Genesis contained incorrect information (which SNK subsequently corrected).

Even this series of setbacks couldn't stop the Neo-Geo, for one very good reason: As the letters above will attest, this is a killer system with a high level of user satisfaction. You will never come closer to having state-of-the-art arcade technology in your own home; the Neo-Geo, after all, is state-of-the-art arcade technology.

As for new software, no football game has been announced as of press time. The games listed in the SNK press kit were *Baseball Stars Professional*, *Top Player's Golf*, *Riding Hero* (a motorcycle race simulation) and *The Super Spy* (a first-person arcade action thriller). Kent Russell added that

four titles: *Ghost Pilots*, *Sen-Go-Ku*, *League Bowling* and *Alpha Mission 2* were due for release by late April.

Meanwhile, back in Japan, Neo-Geo software support from ten new third-party publishers has been announced, and a pair of new research-and-development branches have been opened, so things look pretty hopeful for the future.

Stay tuned to VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT for the latest information on this fascinating system!

ques tion

There are adapters for playing NES games on a Famicom and Famicom games on an NES. MegaDrive game boards and Genesis cartridges are almost interchangeable. Does anyone make a PC Engine to TurboGrafx-16 converter? It seems like it would be a simple device, but I have not heard of any. The CDs are interchangeable, but the cards are not (arghh!). Thanks.

—James D. Pollock
Bothell, Washington

answ er

Good question, James. The editors at VG&CE's main office in Southern California have told me there are numerous sources for PC Engine-to-TurboGrafx-16 adapters that seem to work as designed. As an example, GAMEEXPRESS in Studio City, California, offers one for about \$40. Your best bet is to check with some of the mail-order companies that advertise on the pages of VG&CE, and be sure to compare prices and delivery times for your own protection.

Finally, the latest news on a CD Drive for the Sega Genesis: There is such a drive, as everyone in our hobby seemingly already knows, but Sega of America promises that it will not be released in this country until there is an impressive catalog of software already available for it. In other words, watch for its release in Japan. If it's successful, there should be enough software to merit release in North America within six months to a year.

And that should wrap things up for this issue. Remember to send your questions, comments and corrections to **Game Doctor, 330 S Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV, 89107**. See you next month. ♪

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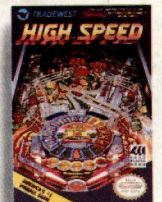
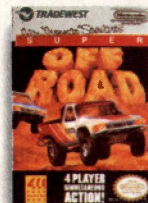
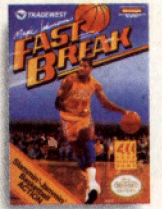
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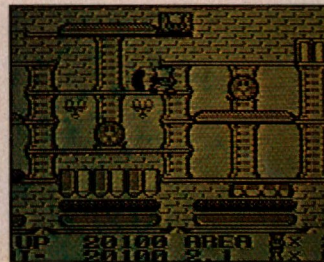
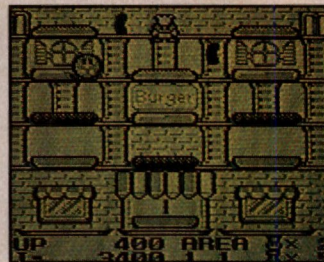
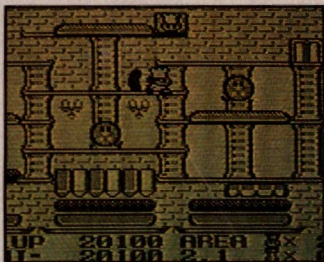


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