Inside Games Update™

A Wee Bit O' H.E.L.P.

Millions of computer owners enjoy a some relaxation every now and then with a entertainment of some genré loaded into their machine. With developers scrambling to produce games that are more and more difficult to solve, it results in adventures whose quests seem beyond normal human comprehension. During these difficult times, you need to figure out *how* to conquer a particular game segment.

Enter **H.E.L.P.**™ (Held End Losing Play). Simply write to us with your query regarding *how* something should be addressed and we'll do our best to answer your question. Additionally, your plea for H.E.L.P. will be read by the subscribers to this publication in the H.E.L.P. section. Those who most correctly answer a cry for assistance from others to guide them through the darkness of confusion will find their solution(s) published within **The Clue Corner**. Also, several game companies have pledged leading software titles as awards for those who are selected as the best and most thorough tipsters!

If you have a game hint you've developed and tested successfully over hours and hours play, and you wish to share it with other gamers, you can participate in a contest that will provide an award for the best general hint received each month! This may be for any game, including video games and computer games that havea been on the market for some time. You may fax your H.E.L.P. inquiry, an answer to a H.E.L.P. query, or your general hints to (209) 832-5742. Or, write to *Inside Games Updaqte* at 521 Czerny Street, Tracy, CA 95376. We look forward to your participation in ensuring that gamers are always on top of each situation!

By the way, please note the change in format. We listened to our readers, some of whom prefer to read their issue on their computer screen. With the small column format, the three-column formatted areas were difficult to read on-screen. Now we have broader columns at a smaller text point size making the newsletter far more amenable to on-screen viewing. We hope this meets your needs!—*P.J.*

—*Mudgeon's Distillations* —

An alleged intelligence report from a historical site somewhere along the still-under-construction, digital communications superhighway

Aiding & Abetting

The AV computer family from Apple apparently has some sound problems. Over a year ago, Apple recommended that developers pay attention to the DSP chip for such matters. If code addressed the Apple Sound Chip *instead* of the DSP chip, there would be problems! Now the fruits of many developers' labors are not functioning correctly because some did not heed this advice.

Two areas of assistance are enroute. First, for those who are interested, a couple of developers have managed a patch that fixes *some* of these sound problems that are evident in games or other multimedia venues.

The name of the patch is "**AV Speedup 1.1d1**" and you can download it from AppleLink via the following pathway:

Developer Support =>
 Developer Talk =>
  General Technical Discussions

There are also a number of comments regarding this particular AV problem from other developers in this discussion area. Certainly anyone developing games that need to run on an AV should check out this area on AppleLink right away.

Secondly, *Apple Directions* magazine is preparing an article discussing the AV sound bug for an upcoming issue. If you already receive this publication from Apple's

Developer Press, you may find your answer right there in those inked pages. If not, hopefully you know someone who *is* a subscriber!

Building Big Bucks

Big bucks investment into **Knowledge Adventure** by the likes of **Paramount** and **AT&T**. The company's *Dinosaur Adventure* is one of the most popular educational titles selling for PC/MS-DOS platforms. Now that they've managed to collect over $6.5 million in capital, expect even more cool titles!

Acquired It All!

A real Ripley coup by **Sanctuary Woods**. That company has acquired exclusive rights to **Ripley's Believe It or Not** properties. They encompass a wide variety of media, from film and video to cartoons and puzzles. Sanctuary Woods will be producing several titles based on these products and they outbid several other software companies for these rights.

Chompin' Compression

For PC/MS-DOS'ers involved in multimedia creation and development, of more than passing interest is **Sigma Designs'** new MPEG multimedia playback controller card. It packs one heckuva fair SRP at $449 and gives you the C-Cube CL450MPEG decoder chip and is fully compatible with the White Book standard.

Not only can the board also operate with DOS and Windows' applications as a SoundBlaster compatible sound card, but it also packs 32,768 colors at 30 fps with 1024 x 768 graphics resolution. The board will ship with a *Return to Zork* from **Activision** plus a demo CD and an enhanced Windows driver. Sounds like a winner!

Combo Video Board

With MPEG audio and video encoding become such a hit in interactive entertainment development, it's no wonder such works are also occurring in the Macintosh world as well. From **Optimage** comes *DVA*, which not only features full video to disc title creation, but also CD-I support with full video sequences!

Look for a compression ratio of 225:1 at full VHS resolution. A disc-building engine and a mastering tool kit are included. The SRP is a hefty $795.00.

No Avoidance with NES

You're not going to be able to easily escape the **Nintendo** influence—not even if you travel by plane. The company's *Nintendo Gateway System* will soon find a home on airplanes and in hotel rooms, cruise ships

—imagine the possibilities.

Airlines, such as **Northwest Airlines**, will package a special version of the SNES system that'll fit into every airplane seat. The 10-inch LCD monitor will offer 10 SNES entertainments, several movie selections, air telephony, shopping and travel info services, even destination weather data.

When you're not flying, you'll find a bedside controller in your hotel room. This controller hooks the SNES system directly to **LodgeNet**'s *The System 3000*. Pretty soon, you won't be able to get away from gaming.

Sound Support

Sierra now fully supports the **Gravis UltraSound** board for online gaming. Until now, only General MIDI and FM sound cards were supported. Nice move, and one that'll result in happy subscribers.

No 3D0 Doldrums

Attention to the **3D0** platform continues. The latest convert is none other than **Macromedia** who have agreed to develop a software player that'll port Mac or Windows files to the 3D0 system. This product is due for release late in '94.

Also on the 3D0 bandwagon with a new set of object-oriented authoring tools is **Amazing Media** (415/453-0686). They'll be porting versions of their Mac and Windows products (*Space Shuttle* and *Oceans Below*) to the 3D0 platform.

Toying with One Another

There's no toying around in the latest alliance between **Hasbro, Inc.**, and **Virgin Interactive Entertainment**. For about $25 million, Hasbro is going to acquire about 15 percent of the game company.

Earn Your T

StarPlay Productions (303/447-9562) is going to be awarding free T-shirts to Mac gamers who earn the highest score each month playing their new *Crystal Caliburn* pinball game. [See the review section below for a complete look at this great, new arcade treat!-Ed.] All you gotta do

is be certain you're a registered user (yeah, *mail* in that registration card), and you could be on your way to earning one of these rare T's.

Deadly New Stuff

Another small, but quite significant, game publisher is **Deadly Games** out of Lake Success, New York (516/482-4000). You may recall their *M4* tank simulation game and *Bomber* , two of their past Macintosh successes.

Get ready for more—this Christmas, they're expected to release a brand new submarine simulation for the Macintosh and their *M4* game for the PC/MS-DOS platform. Wishing them well . . .

Big Time Aiding & Abetting

Whooooaaaaa . . .seems the biggies are really getting their act together to do more than paint their lines along the yet-unveiled national digital highway. Now you've got Pacific Bell aligned with AT&T! What's this world coming to when those who were busted apart enjoin in that Beatle phrase, "Come together . . ."

What PacBell is planning to accomplish over the next seven years or so is to upgrade its core network infrastructure. They're then gonna pop advanced voice, video services, and data into their integrated telecom info and *entertainment* network. (Who says there's no money in games!)

This is gonna cost them . . .(or is it their customers . . .) $16 billion to accomplish. No small potato*e*s here. They're expecting nearly 2 million homes to be "wired" into this mother of all superhighway communications nets by the close of 1996.

Seems the technology to pack all of these capabilities over a single network is going to be provided by AT&T, thanks to this strategic partnership. Hmmmm, sounds almost incestuous . . .former members of a former family joining hands to garner even more profit. You can expect such goodies as home shopping, games, interactive news, movies and TV shows on demand.

The bottom line is that during the 1995 to 1996 time frame, fully interactive digital and telephony services will come online for consumer consumption. Naturally, fiber optics and coax will be used to run into neighborhoods of 500 homes or less directly from PacBell facilities. No change will be required to your home's current wiring or cabling schemes.

First sites for this deployment include San Francisco, Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego. Bandwidth is packing out between the 50 to 750 MHz range in the forward direction, and the 5 to 40 MHz range in the reverse direction. With such a commitment from these two major telephony companies,

you'd *better* believe the digital superhighway is just around the corner. These folk don't invest in dead technology!

Title Temptations

With CD-ROM technology, and the increased proliferation of CD-ROM drives on Macs and PCs, you can now find almost any subject matter that you dream of on this media.

For example, if you're into fly fishing, try the new MPC compliant *Learning Fly Fishing: The Multimedia Guide* from **CD-ROM, Inc**. (303/526-7600). With photos and full motion video and sound, narrators Gean Snow and Mel Hardman treat aficionados of the sport to 58 minutes of fly fishing instruction. And for only $49, who'd have thought of fly fishing without getting one's hip-waders wet?

Another new MPC CD-ROM title is *The American Indian: A Multimedia Encyclopedia* from **Facts On File** (800/322-8755). For more CD-ROM entertainment title news, read **Within The Cellophane,** *Inside Game Update*'s new product news section . . .

A Moving Experience

Packin' up and movin' out to new digs—that's what **New World Computing** is up to. Their new address is 29800 Agoura Road, Suite 200, Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Their phone number is now 818/889-5600, with fax to 818/889-5682. Substitute the last four with 5684 and you'll dial into their BBS.

Major Motion

Gaming is going to be responsible for big buck revenues when the convergence takes place, and Bill Gates knows it! That's why he's acquired part of **Continuum**'s development and technology. This company is producing CD-ROM titles which will now move under Microsoft auspices.

But that's not all Microsoft has done—they've also signed an agreement with **Byron Preiss Multimedia**. This deal'll enable Microsoft to copublish CD-ROM titles from that company, such as *Isaac Asimov's The Ultimate Robot*.

Those who don't think Gates' company is going to be a significant force in interactive entertainment had better take a cold shower in reality!

Other significant stories include Robert Murdoch's purchase of **Delphi**, the **Silicon Graphics** and **Nintendo** union (with **IBM** manufacturing the box!), and **The ImagiNation Network** (formerly The Sierra Network) moving its online gaming to the **Sega** *Genesis* product line.

A Healthy Experience

Lastly, to help those of us so dedicated to gaming that we have a hard time getting off our butts to exercise, **HeartBeat** has created a new exercycle that uses a pulse rate to animate a character that appears on your screen. Expect this $160 to $200 devices just before Christmas this year, with attachments for the **Sega** *Genesis* system.

They've also signed a licensing agreement with **Electronic Arts**. Big time stuff here! All you'll do is clip a pulse detector to your ear lobe and then enter whatever heart rate you wish to achieve into the unit. If you don't reach, or maintain, that heart rate, your on screen character doesn't do well against some of the hostiles that'll be after you. You'll even find this baby in the **Nordic Track** catalog!

WITHIN THE CELLOPHANE
NEW PRODUCTS OF NOTE . . .

There are few software offerings that garner instant recognition. There are even fewer that develop such a following that a TV show is required to take advantage of a software title's popularity.

However, mention *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* and you realize, instantly, you're talking about a classic title. **Brøderbund Software** (415/382-4400) has now released the *Deluxe Edition* of this program, available for approximately $60 in most retails stores.

This is one heckuva enhanced version as it offers over 60 countries, 130 digitized photos, 150 traditional and folk music selections, Carmen and 19 villains plus 10 additional talking characters, 3,200 clues with higher levels of difficulty, 500 digitized foreign language clues, hundreds of animations, and 3 world map representations . . .*phew!* The cool thing is—the *Deluxe Edition* is available for Macintosh and PC/MS-DOS platforms with CD-ROM drives!

One of the most highly respected, and beautiful, golf courses in the world is Pebble Beach Golf Links. **Access Software** (801/359-2900) has released their true-to-life <u>Pebble Beach Course</u> disk for their <u>Links</u>, <u>Links 386 Pro</u>, and <u>Microsoft Golf</u> programs for PC/MS-DOS platforms.

More than one man-year was involved in producing this course. The simplicity of installation with your Links program means that, once on your hard disk, all you have to do is select the course you wish to play once you boot your simulation! The SRP is $39.95.

Other news of interest involves a new, Macintosh version of Links. You should expect to see this fantastic conversion released next year. But, this Links isn't just a conversion—the program has been recoded to take advantage of the Mac interface and graphics capabilities! In fact, one of the best Mac programmers in the business is hacking at the code even as this issue goes to press. Expect a classic Mac offering that'll send thousands of units. I can't wait to get my hands on it.

And for PC/MS-DOS gamers, Access indicates you can expect a new course about every eight weeks or so.

You've seen 'em—you've wanted 'em—and now you can own one! That's right, those great flight simulation cockpits that abound in arcades and entertainment centers can now reside within your *own* entertainment center.

Simpkins Design Group formed their own division, named it **FLY•IT**

(619/434-1940), and have produced a low-cost cockpit motion platform. Cockpit bodies that reflect W.W.I, W.W.II, contemporary fighter, civil aviation, or helicopter themes can be attached to this platform.

All you do is plug the platform into your personal computer, load in your program, and fly your simulator! Highly suitable for

other areas, such as retail establishments, FLY•IT deliveries will commence in early December of this year.

Many Mac users already know and enjoy *The Oregon Trail* from MECC (612/569-1500). Players become pioneers enroute to Oregon and they must make life or death decisions while enroute to their destination during the early western frontier days of the United States.

Now there's a version for Windows and MPC platforms. Added enhancements include expanded graphics and artwork, stereo sound, and digitized speech. The SRP ranges from $59.95 for the Windows version to $79.00 for School MPC.

MECC is also included on Apple's new CD-ROM-based sales vehicle, *The Software Dispatch*, which is being distributed to a broad range of markets. What a great way to buy software!

What's the sports world coming to? Parachutists targeting the ring of the world heavyweight fight, only to become entangled in the ropes and careening into the spectators, who pummel away at him! And what's going on in the ring? Well, find out for yourself with *Body Blows* from **MicroLeague Interactive Software** (302/368-9990).

This new fight program is the result of an alliance between MicroLeague and Team 17 Software Ltd. of West Yorkshire, England. This fight sim not only requires you defeat your opponents, but you also must solve a mystery! With four modes of play, including tournament play for as many as eight players, and four different closing sequences, there's a lot of punch to this package. The SRP for PC/MS-DOS computers is $39.95.

Also coming from MicroLeague is *Alien Breed*, described by the company as a futuristic maze of adventure that requires you to not only destroy aliens, but also a space station. This offering is also for PC/MS-DOS platforms.

Mac gamers also have a treat heading their way. It's called *Silverball*, a terrific pinball game with four different tables of play. Plus, when you mail in your registration card, you receive more tables for this pinball sim.

Arcading has never been easy with a Mac, basically because so few good arcade games have been released for this platform. Thankfully, **Inline Software** (203/435-4995) has released *Firefall Arcade* with an SRP of $49.95.

You've got to destroy nasties called fireworms as they work their way down your Macintosh screen. The more you destroy, the more points you receive. The higher the level you achieve, the more aggressive become the fireworms.

You can collect a wide assortment of tools to assist you in your task, from powerups, such as double ships and unit invincibility. The game should appeal to both novice and experienced arcade gamers. You must have System 7, 256-color capable Mac, and 3MB of free RAM.

Yet another arcade treat for Mac gamers is *Spin Doctor* from **Callisto** (508/655-0707). With over 100 levels, this is also a game of skill. You must maneuver your white wand from dot to dot on your screen. But there are many obstacles that will try to hinder your progress, such as rotating color wands, acid droplets, bombs, and spikes.

To earn your Doctorate of Spinology, you must earn three keys. If you light your fuses at just the right moment, you could blow your enemies away, but those sparks had best be avoided. The game's SRP is $59.95 and it runs on any Mac that supports 256 colors or grayscale, running Macintosh System Software v. 6.0.7 or higher.

What a great occasion, as **Cyber-dreams** has finally released the much-awaited *Darkseed* adventure game for

Mac gamers. If you'll recall, the PC/MS-DOS version won the 1993 SPA "CODIE" award for the Best Fantasy Role Playing / Adventure Game.

The game is based upon the artwork of H.R. Giger. He won the Academy Award

for the designs used in the movie *Alien*. And the artwork is truly revolutionary for a computer game.

There are two worlds in this adventure. The first is the Normal World, and the second is a biomechanical world called the Dark World. Into this environment is thrust Mike Dawson, writer, looking for a quite place to be creative. He certainly finds more than he bargained for in the Victorian home in Woodland Hills, California. And the house turns out to be more than an enigma!

Other games under development by Cyberdreams include *Cyber Race*, a 3D combat and racing simulation; *I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream*, written by famed science-fiction author Harlan Ellison. In this game you find yourself inside a super computer; *Dark Seed II*, with more aliens from the Dark World. Also offered is *Hunters of Ralk*, the first adventure written by the creator of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons™, Gary Gygax.

To CD or not to CD, that should no longer be the question. Point of fact is that CD-ROM-based entertainments are quickly becoming the stars of many company's product lines. Here are some of the latest and greatest available for CD-ROM'ers:

- From **Brøderbund Software** @ 800/521-6263: *Arthur's Teacher Trouble* and *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego? Deluxe* or Macintosh.
- From **Compton's New Media** @ 800/862-2206: *The Grammy Awards: A 34 Year Retrospect* for PC/MS-DOS.
- From **Creative Multimedia Corp.** @ 503/241-4351: *Beyond The Wall of Stars* for Mac and MPC.
- From **Dr. T's Music Software** @ 617/455-1454: *Dr. T's Composer Quest* for MPC.

- From **Ebook** @ 510/429-1331: *Don Quixote, a Multimedia Storybook* and *Star Child* for MPC.
- From **Texas Caviar** @ 512/346-7887: *Annabel's Dream of Ancient Egypt: A Gateway Story* for Mac and Windows.
- From **The Software Toolworks** @ 800/234-3088: *Chessmaster 3000 Multimedia* (MPC) and *Capitol Hill* (Mac).

• Product Perusals•

Macintosh Arcade Game of the Week
MacAttack from Gametek
Recommendation: Buy it!

For those of us who've been around the computer gaming industry for a while, some games automatically register with a "positive" and "knowing" nod of the head. For more contemporary gamers, try *Tempest*. If you wanna go back a couple of years, how about *Terror Tunnel* from Adventure International in the 80's for the Apple][!

There really hasn't been much of an attempt to bring such arcade excitement to the Macintosh—until now! Several companies have released new arcade delights. One of the newest to be released is Gametek's *Mac Attack*. The company has implemented the environment very well, bringing to full force the hysteria you need to combat the various and sundry creatures that come ambling toward you through the NET (equate that with "tunnel").

Your objective is to clear the NET of all hostiles—and believe me, this is NO easy task! You'd better get those fingers warmed up on your mouse, 'cause you'll be ramming to the left and right trying to shoot and destroy the approaching nasties.

Cool Features

• Extremely smooth animation.

• Highly responsive mouse movement and button firing sequences. You are able to move quickly, and at will, to different sectors of the net to destroy those who approach.

Negative Bits

• Problems with installing the game! If you don't install correctly, you can only play the first three levels of the game. We continually tried to install properly, but always came up with an error message that the disk was locked and couldn't be used.

All-in-all, a most satisfying arcade experience. This offering is going to require a

good many hours of practice before you actually feel as though you're making headway in destroying the nasties charging toward you.—*Mudgeon*

Macintosh Adventure of the Week
Star Trek 25th Anniversary
** from MacPlay**
Recommendation: Gotta Have It!!!

If you enjoy the original Star Trek television series and books, then you'll covet MacPlay's latest release, *Star Trek 25th Anniversary* (ST25). The game is steeped in the tradition of text-based, adventure games. However, ST25 offers graphics, animated characters, and the actual sound effects from the TV series. The game's opening animation reveals the Enterprise flying through space, the strident theme music playing its familiar tune, just as the opening scenes grabbed viewers when the TV show aired.

The game begins on the deck of the Enterprise. A message arrives from Star Fleet containing information about your first mission, which is but the first of many such operations you must undertake, all depending upon your powers of deduction and reasoning abilities for success.

Once you understand the first mission, there are a variety of options for you to select to begin the mission. Commands are keyed to your current location. If you're on the bridge, the command icons deal with ship systems such as navigation, weapons and communication. When you leave the Enterprise with a landing party, the commands change to allow you to direct the movement of the crew, talk to other members of your party or to any aliens, to obtain and use objects or to operate machines or tools.

You use the keyboard to switch back and forth between three modes of operation; character movement, character selection, and command selections. All commands may be activated from a menu of icons or from the keyboard.

Control over the landing party is your key to mission success. This control is obtained via a single icon called the Command Interface. The Command Interface icon graphically represents a person holding an orb in one hand and the other hand extended outward. By clicking on the orb, you receive an inventory of all objects. Click on the eyes of the Command Interface and you can further identify certain objects that might be of interest to you. When you click on the outstretched hand, you're able to retrieve objects of value.

Click on the mouth of the Command Interface and you can speak in a realistic manner with the crew or other characters. You may also receive a list of verbal responses from which you must select the appropriate answer that best fits the current situation. The choice you make branches the game in a specific direction.

The keyboard commands use appropriate mnemonics to help you remember the function of each key. For example, pressing the letter "S" while on the Enterprise's bridge raises the ship's shields. The letter "W" arms the Enterprise's weapons.

The most awkward part of playing ST25 is getting used to the character movement mode and the Command Interface. The manual offers a good overview of all keyboard commands, so keep it close at hand during play. The manual also contains the star chart needed to navigate to your next mission.

Much like the adventure games of the past, ST25 takes you to numerous worlds where you're confronted with aliens. You must communicate with them and determine what obstacles must be overcome. For example, if you encounter a sick or injured character, you can use Dr. McCoy to heal them, perhaps using those berries you found on the planet.

Truly, Star Trek 25th Anniversary takes you were no game has gone before. Check out the hints for this game in *The*

Clue Corner later in this issue. And you PC/MS-DOS gamers, don't forget there's a best-selling version for your machines as well!—*Mark and Eli Veljkov*

System requirements–Macintosh:

Any Macintosh capable of 256-color display, 1500K of free memory, and Macintosh System Software v. 6.0.7 or higher. A 68030 processor or better is recommended.

Macintosh Arcade Game of the Week
Crystal Caliburn Pinball
  from StarPlay Productions, Inc.
Recommendation: A Must Have!

Perhaps you recall those great pinball games from AMTEX such as *Tristan* and *Eight Ball Deluxe*. Now Little Wing, the developers who brought those marvelous pinball games to your Mac, have debuted their new publisher relationship with *Crystal Caliburn Pinball*. It's truly a great pinball sim!

What causes this title to be so absolutely marvelous is the ease with which you can play the table itself; unlike previous versions, each element is easy to see. The colors are vibrant, the animations extremely satisfying, and the sound effects and music that accompany game play are top notch.

This pinball game appeals to both novice and experienced pinballers. Employing quick reflexes, strategy, and accuracy, you'll find yourself totally addicted to your game. Fortunately, you only have to worry about four keys to operate the game: "Z" for the left flipper, "/" for the right flipper, "Shift" for the plunger, and the spacebar to nudge the table every now then (hopefully without a TILT as your reward).

You must complete a quest through the pinball play. You must try to bring the Holy Grail to Camelot Castle. This is accomplished through shooting through ramps and lanes, acquiring as many bonus points as you are able, earning additional Knights for the Round Table, and hitting bumpers and spot targets. Other goodies, such as Multi Battle and the Excalibur Field Multiplier, all add to your score total, but do require additional dexterity and accuracy on your part.

The well-written manual details every aspect of the table, from the shots required to sustain Multi Battle and winning the Jackpot, to the location of spot targets as well as ramps and lanes. Gamers should seriously study the entire layout before beginning play to fully take advantage of every shot.

For example, if you shoot the Glass Island Ramp within 2 seconds of shooting the Camelot Castle ramp, you receive an additional 200,000 points.

The entire game is full of nifty little features that haven't been in a pinball sim before.

You can accolade ("acquire") Knights by shooting the Camelot Castle Ramp when the Accolade Knight Indicator is lit on the table. Each time you obtain a new Knight, you increase the Knight Value Indicator, which is worth 100,000 points *per* Knight. If you accolade 12 Knights, the Get Holy Grail Light comes on the table, worth 500,000 if you manage to obtain it. To garner Grail Power, you have 5 seconds to shoot the Camelot Castle Ramp.

Cool Features

• Totally addictive game play! I sat down to get involved for no more than a half-hour of intense review activity. When I finally decided I had to quit, nearly two hours had passed by and I had only learned about half of the sim's features.

• Highly responsive flipper action tuned to your keyboard keys.

• Totally applicable music and sound effects, all based on table activity.

• High score record keeping.

Negative Bits

• As your ball approaches the Merlin Hole, it occasionally stutters as though running at fewer frames per second than other areas of the table.

• With 13-inch monitors, you cannot see the entire table. This means when you need to put a ball in play, the screen shifts to show the bottom of the table. After you release the plunger, the screen shifts to reveal the entire playing surface of the table.

Crystal Caliburn is the best pinball simulation yet released for the Macintosh. This offering is totally original in concept and design. Without doubt, it'll leave you enamored with its play, strategy, and sound and music enhancements. By the way, a PC/MS-DOS version is due out later this year.—

Mudgeon

System requirements–Macintosh:
Macintosh System Software v. 6.0.7 or later (fully System 7 compatible), 4MB RAM, one 1.44MB high density disk drive, and approximately 2.8MB of free space on your hard drive to merge and unpack the game files.

Hardware Pick of the Week
Altec Lansing ACS 300 Speaker System from Altec Lansing
Recommendation: Own a pair!

Although the main selling point from the company is that these speakers are designed for multimedia computer users, their use as the general speaker system for my Mac is perfect. They add quality to the sound

generated by every program I use, most especially the games!

These aren't your run of the mill speakers. They pack digital signal processing (DSP—you've heard about that with the Quadra AV systems), an amplified subwoofer, and twin amplified stereo speakers. You can even blend sounds from two sound sources. There hasn't been a single hertz of distortion, and I've jammed sounds through them that have made other mini speakers scream with agony. Plus, their design enables you to position them in almost any area you wish—on the wall, attached to your monitor, or as bookshelf speakers. What's even better is the fact that these puppies are magnetically shielded. That means no more video display distortion if the speakers happen to be close to your monitor.

The brief user manual adequately describes how to set up the hardware and the cabling that's included with this package. The speakers consist of one main speaker and a satellite. Sound controls are divided between the speakers, with volume, mix and treble frequencies on the left speaker and balance, DSP control, and bass on the right speaker. I did find the controls to be a little awkward to use due to their small size and positioned so closely to the speaker control face.

With a frequency response between 35 Hz to 20 kHz, a pair of these speakers combined with the subwoofer unit will provide your computer with all of the sound output you'll require.— *Mudgeon*.

PC/MS-DOS Sim of the Week
Coaster from Walt Disney Software
Recommendation: Try it out first!

If you've ever wondered what it would be like to design a roller coaster, Walt Disney Software has debuted a unique title for your enjoyment. With Coaster, you not only learn how to design a roller coaster, but you get to ride them as

well. This title certainly wraps a coaster-mania's dreams into a software package.

Thanks to a well-designed user interface, and a complete tutorial, you'll find yourself designing a new coaster ride right from the start of the program. After you've placed the boarding platform for your coaster on the screen's grid, three windows are visible. They include the Viewport, which allows you to travel forward or reverse along a wireframe representation of your coaster, checking for design mistakes. With the included counter, you always know which piece of the coaster needs adjustment.

There's a grid manipulation window which enables you to rotate your design grid to various angles and different perspectives for making editing your design much easier. And then there's the track selector with a variety of track pieces, their lengths, heights, angles, lifts, and so forth. By clicking on any of the elements in the track selector window, you begin the process of building your coaster.

Once you've built your Coaster, it's going to be judged by the pros. However, if you've constructed a roller coaster that's unsafe, these judges aren't stupid—they're simply not going to ride your creation. In fact, you get the hint when they appear on screen after your invitation with an arm over the shoulder of a crash-test dummy. They inform you they'll ride your coaster only when the crash test dummy comes back in one piece.

Oh, here's a real tip for you . . .make certain your creation stays within the grid boundaries, otherwise you'll find yourself with 48 feet of straight track running off into never-never-land, never to complete your coaster.

Cool Stuff

• One of the few PC/MS-DOS games that ships today on only one disk! And you know what's great? It only required a minute or so to install!

- Unique font-end interface. Move your mouse and you easily access the three available commands: design a coaster, ride a coaster, or exit to DOS. Nothing could be simpler.

- To help you become accustomed to coasters, the game ships with 14 predesigned coasters, including the Matterhorn!

Negative Bits

- VGA only graphics mode—if you don't have a VGA card in your computer, don't bother buying this simulation.

- Yet another DOS extension to learn. This time it's ".TRA" which stands for TRACK.

- When building your coaster, the program should allow you to manual key-in various attributes, such as degree height and so forth, instead of repeatedly clicking on the adjustment arrows. Also, pressing your mouse button while accessing an

adjustment arrow does not rapidly increase or decrease the values assigned to that button. Every single change requires a single click of your mouse button.

• You can only alter a piece of track, not delete it! This makes for some very trying editing of track, when it would be so much easier just to get rid of the section and replace it with track more suited for your design.

The coaster reviewers who rate your ride certainly leave a lot to be desired with their comments, which are usually pretty lame. The pre-designed coasters are great for examining how they work and trying to apply their engineering aspects to your own coaster. But after you've ridden them a few times, the thrill is gone. The real fun with this simulation rests with the design aspect. It takes more work than you think to create a totally radical, yet safe, coaster. You might want to give this simulation a try.

System requirements:
80386 CPU or faster, 640K RAM with 543K free, VGA graphics adapter, hard disk drive, Microsoft-compatible mouse. Expanded memory is required to play digital sounds.

Crystal Crazy: The Quest Continues
   from Casady & Greene
Recommendation: Maybe!

Crystal Crazy continues the arcade-style tradition of it's predecessor, Crystal Quest. Crystal Crazy offers 133 different levels of play called waves; that's quite enough to keep even the most expert arcade gamer busy.

   Crystal Crazy possesses excellent graphics as well as humorous sound effects that continually lure you into playing the game for longer periods of time. The basic idea in Crystal Crazy is to control your "space cow" spaceship to sink pool balls, smash breakable objects, paint and erase pictures, build jig-saw puzzles and, last but not least,

collect crystals. All of these activities earns you points—the goal, of course, is to obtain as many points as you can.

   You can even be awarded bonus points for completing a wave in less than the allotted bonus time. You must do all of this while trying to avoid over 20 different "nasties" that include Bundlers, Zinkleflashoxicateionizer (all one word mind you), Shipnappers, Fracture Fluffies and Underjerkers to name a few. However, Crystal Crazy is not all nasties. There are goodies, too, that you can collect to help you with your quest. You can collect free lives, bonus waves, bonus multipliers, and bonus points. In addition, there are goodies to help you defeat the nasties that include smart bombs, a rubber hat, a mace head, body armor, a super gun, explosive shots and guided missiles.

   With all of these nasties and goodies going for it, you might think that Crystal Crazy is a complicated game. Well, you're right—it is! Crystal Crazy is a fun to play until you begin to encounter the more difficult waves. Frustration can then set in as your space cow becomes more difficult to control with the mouse, all the while the nasties come faster and more furious.

   It was a grand idea that the Crystal Crazy package include a help card, complete with all of the nasties, goodies, and navigational aids available to you. On a standard Macintosh, you use your mouse to control your space cow's ship and to fire your gun. Your keyboard is used to control basic game commands such as Quit, Save, and Abort. In addition, the spacebar is used to set off a smart bomb—quite useful when you want to clear the screen of all the nasties. Crystal Crazy is a game simple in concept but difficult to learn and master. You do need patience with this title.

   Overall, Crystal Crazy carries on the tradition of Crystal Quest, but with several new twists. The game use humorous sounds and good graphics to keep you entertained. However, the difficulty of controlling the space cow

ship with the mouse and the speed and number of the nasties can make Crystal Crazy quite frustrating. For players that enjoy this level of arcade challenge and occasional frustration, Crystal Crazy is a sure winner. For players who enjoy more action and control in their arcade games, Crystal Crazy may prove to be too slow and frustrating.—*Mark and Eli Veljkov*

Rules of Engagement 2
   from Impressions
Recommendation:
Leaning toward Forget It!!

Where are we and how do we get out!? Rules of Engagement 2 (ROE2) is the follow-up product to Impressions' successful, original Rules of Engagement game offering of last year. The concept of hurtling through space destroying beings who refuse to submit to your divine may not be an original plot, but the presentation is excellent on screen. This title certainly has "Eye Candy" appeal.

ROE2 offers new ships as well as an improved artificial intelligence (AI)—this is where the game really shines. The introductory animations and screen art are quite good, but present nothing new or technologically different than other games.

The player is thrust into a menu screen which allows you to create your "Captain Character" and then select the various aspects of your mission. Although presented in an easy to grasp method, this approach, unfortunately, also leaves you hanging after you start your mission. A map system does appear, enabling you to maneuver your ship or fleet to direct confrontation with the enemy, but this display is quite "busy." Those of you who enjoyed ROE will want to purchase ROE2, but I feel you'll probably be disappointed by the sequel.—*Manny Granillo*

Liberty of Death
  from KOEI
Recommendation: Forget It!

The American Revolution was an exciting period of history. Any game encompassing this environment should offer abundant possibilities. Unfortunately, this title falls far short.

Mix the standard "look and feel" of other KOEI titles with this game and you end up with a simulator that appears to be a large database instead of a game. In fact, much of the game information is handled through dialog boxes that have nothing to do with the actual game! The player is left to personally handle too much game information which interferes with the actual game play.

The graphics are quite good for an EGA quality game, but please, let the EGA graphics mode die an honorable death! EGA is nowhere! VGA should become the game graphics standard. Unfortunately for KOEI, they are using the same engine they incorporated for their early 1988 title "Nobonaga's Revenge."

I was looking forward to this title as I thoroughly enjoy learning more about our nation's history. It's too bad that this historical simulation lacks basic design principles and doesn't relay to the player any of the feel of the Revolutionary War. If you enjoy history, I believe there might be some value to this title—play it for what it's worth, otherwise, await KOEI's next offering.— *Manny Granillo*

THE CLUE CORNER & H.E.L.P

Mac Attack!

Watch out for the white eggs that roll forward down the NET "lanes." If you shoot one, or it arrives at your end of the net, it hatches two, rather nasty, spider-like NET creatures. These suckers'll destroy you! One method of combating these malevolent beasties is to wait for them. When they arrive and begin to close in upon you from either side of your firing unit, continue to depress your mouse button and keep firing. The idiotic critters'll jump right into your line of fire. However, if your unit is not directly in the *center* of your lane, these obnoxious puppies'll nick you on your side. You'll have an exploding experience, should that occur!—*Mudgeon*

Star Trek 25th Anniversary

MacPlay provides a hint line if you get stuck (900-370-PLAY). Be forewarned, however—the hint line *costs money*. The rate is $1.25 for the first minute and $.75 for each additional minute.

1) Collect as many objects as you can. You never know when something might be useful.

2) Items such as an uncharged Phaser Welder can be charged through use of the Phasers you brought with you.

3) Don't be too quick to use the killing Phasers. The less violence, the better your rating after you've completed your mission. Also, you may need to get information from those aliens you are otherwise shooting.

4) Try everything! Look at everything! Let Mr. Spock have a look at even the most mundane objects, such as wires. There may be something he will be able to accomplish that others might overlook!

5) During a planet landing, pay attention to the all-important Command Interface pointers. The pointers highlight in red when you point at something that might be useful.

6) On the bridge, when in battle, don't be too quick in chasing an enemy. You may be able to lure the enemy vessel toward you by moving very slowly or perhaps not even moving at all!—*The Veljkov's*

Activision

BattleTech:
The Crescent Hawks Inception

Kris Morton, of Oak Harbor, Washington, writes, "I recently received *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawks Inception*. I am at the point where I need to find the access code for the cache. I have also rescued a Crescent Hawk member from prison. My problem is, I can't locate any other members, and Jason can't figure out the riddle in the laboratory. Any information would be appreciated." OK, readers, there are quite a few Battletech commandos out there . . .how about giving Kris some assistance?

Richard Greene, of Jacksonville, North Carolina, has come to Kris' assistance. He writes,

"First, start with a 50 ton Chameleon from the Citadel. Then, while training, invest, invest, invest! Next, try to crash a part at Starport. Go to Mechi-lube and check it out [but be careful!]. Go to *all* hospitals and ask about Dad. Go and "spring" the other Mechwarrior. Finally, go to the hermit and the non-player characters (NPCs) will answer your questions. By the way, the first NPC can help you to enter the cache!"

Sierra

King's Quest VI

With the release of *King's Quest VI* in Macintosh format by Sierra, the following are a few inside tips to help you maneuver deeper into the adventure:

1) Be certain to grab a mint when in the Pawn Shop. Perhaps you possess something regal that the pawn shop owner might trade for that magical map.

2) The magic map is certainly going to be of use to you in reaching the Isle of Wonder.

3) Smell Gnomes detest smelly flowers.

4) Perhaps the lettuce is of the iceberg variety and is of use on the Isle of the Beast to move past a particularly bubbly obstacle.

5) Wallflowers do, indeed, enjoy music!

6) When tossed into the catacombs, try North, North, East, East, North, to enter a room full of skulls. Grab the shield in the room to the East and North after watching a hint to the West, West.—*Mudgeon*