

INSIDE GAMES & ENTERTAINMENT UPDATE

Volume 3, Issue 3

3Dfx: PACKIN' POWERFUL 3D

Graphic acceleration technologies and boards are becoming THE peripheral device for consumers . . . as well as hardware manufacturers who are starting to enjoy the idea of bundling such digital processing with their systems. One of the leading companies in this arena is 3Dfx and they have now announced two new game titles that'll be available for use with their Voodoo Graphics(TM) product via Orchid Technology's Righteous 3D(TM) board this summer. The titles are none other than Gremlin Interactive's Whiplash/Fatal Racing and their VR Soccer 96/Actua Soccer game. Gremlin is one of the first companies to actually use 3Dfx's detailed fine-grained texture technology for true, real-time, photo-realistic graphics in 3D gaming. Using Interactive Motion Technology(TM), international and premier league players were captured, in action. Then, the Motion Analysis System affords game designers the capabilities of then placing the motion directly into the game.

Activision: PINHEAD INTO BLAST CHAMBER

Talent is a commodity all game publishers wish to possess. Those who have proven their success in other entertainment genres are among the highly prized. And so it is that Activision has acquired the services of Gary Tunncliffe, who is the creator of the legendary Pinhead character from the Hellraiser series. From Image Animation, he has now teamed up with Activision to bring the athletic warriors from Activision's soon-to-be-released Blast Chamber to life. Under his direction, technicians have created a life-size costume of the title's helmeted, bomb-laden, futuristic athletes. This costume will be incorporated into the game's package design and advertising and promo campaigns. The game sets as many as four players in the future where each is challenged in a race against time. Each player controls a genetically engineered athlete who has been raised from birth to be the ultimate fighting warrior. You must maneuver their character through obstacles to obtain control of a powerful, pulsing crystal. They must then place the crystal into the appropriate time clock before a time bomb strapped to the character is triggered. This title is going to be released for the Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn, Windows 95 and DOS machines this October.

Activision: CLASSIC DEBUT

Many of us who have enjoyed interactive entertainments for a number of years remember well the delightful text adventures from Infocom. With spirited descriptions, your imagination provided the graphics as you ventured into science-fiction and fantasy worlds limited only by your sense of wonder. Activision has now assembled several of the classic Infocom titles--in fact, more than 30 such titles--onto a single CD-ROM. This is a "must have" collection if you enjoyed such games as Bureaucracy, Leather

Goddesses of Phobos, and Zork I. The CD is entitled The Infocom Masterpieces and also includes six, all-new games that won the Society for the Preservation of Adventure Gaming's first annual text adventure authorship competition. These new titles are The One That Got Away, Mind Electric, Change in the Weather, Uncle Zebulon's Will, Toonesia and, The Magic Toyshop. This is a hybrid CD offering and runs on Macintosh, DOS, and Windows 3.1/95 machines.

American Express & Microsoft: DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT
That's the well know sales pitch of American Express, but a more recent venture includes Microsoft Corporation in an effort to provide a comprehensive online corporate travel booking service. Business travelers will be able to make reservations from their PCs. American Express and Microsoft have already begun developing, and will soon begin testing, the corporate online travel product with full roll-out expected in the first half of 1997. Driven by the Microsoft Travel Technologies platform, users will be able to access online reservations, destination information, negotiated discounts and travel advice. All transactions will be backed by American Express' world-wide customer service.

America Online: CYBER COMICS
No, not at the Improv, but on the Web. Marvel is on America Online in The Cyber Age of Comics, and is one of the first elements to be a part of Marvel Online. There are areas such as the latest news flashes and Marvel chat rooms. Or, you can become a knowledge master in the Marvel Trivia Game and pump questions to Marvel editors, writers and artists featured in the live interviews.

Apple Computer: QUICKTIME 2.5 BREAKS FREE
The long-awaited iteration to Apple Computer's QuickTime has occurred, with version 2.5 now available for Macintosh computers. This technology stores, edits and plays sync'd graphics, music, text, sound and video. This particular version has been optimized to meet specific requirements for use in broadcast, film, the Internet and the music industries. You can download this new version from Apple's WWW site at <http://www.quicktime.apple.com/>. There is no charge for the software.

INDEPENDENCE DAY MOVES TO SECOND BEST
A Time To Kill, the big-screen adaptation of John Grisham's racially-charged legal thriller, ended Independence Day's lead at the U.S. box office. Since opening, A Time To Kill has earned \$19.3 million. After 20 days in release, Independence Day has earned \$198 million, making it the fastest movie to pass the \$200 million mark. That breaks the record of 23 days set by Jurassic Park in 1993.

Billboard Magazine: TOP TEN VIDEO PURCHASES

The August 3rd issue of Billboard magazine lists the following as the top ten in video cassette sales:

1. Playboy: The Best of Jenny McCarthy, (Playboy)
2. Heavy Metal, (Columbia TriStar)
3. Jumanji, (Columbia TriStar)
4. Ghost In the Shell, (Mango)
5. Clueless, (Paramount)
6. Mortal Kombat-- The Movie, (New Line)
7. The Aristocats, (Disney)
8. Babe, (MCA-Universal)
9. Sabrina, (Paramount)
10. Playboy's Rising Stars and Sexy Starlets, (Playboy)

Casady & Greene: MACWORLD MAGIC

One of the largest tradeshow for the Macintosh community is Macworld Boston. This year, despite some upheavels at the Cupertino-based company, proof continues to remain evident that Macintosh users and gamers are among the most loyal system advocates that ever existed. One of the most loyal of Macintosh developers is Casady & Greene and they are going to debut several programs at this year's show. First, there's Macworld Game Hall of Fame(TM), which is a rare collection of game classics, now on a single CD-ROM. The games include five Macworld Magazine Game Hall of Fame winning entertainment titles: Glider 4.0(TM), Crystal Quest(TM) with CritterEditor(TM), Mission Thunderbolt(TM), Sky Shadow(TM) and Crystal Crazy(TM). A new game is called Stepping Stones(TM). The characters in this new entertainment title resemble toys that you might find at the bottom of your old toy chest. Here, the idea is to help the robotic Ted escape from the infinite maze of blocks, smiley faces, copters, and so on, into the rainbow escape hatch. This game is a challenge for all ages of gamer and possesses some highly unusual graphics. A third entertaining product is Origami, the Secret Life of Paper(TM). This title demonstrates the thousand-year-old art of paper folding through QuickTime movies, art galleries displaying over 100 art projects, hands-on folding projects, history lessons, and more. There's even Origami paper included in the package, plus step-by-step instructions on how to turn recycled paper into hand-made origami paper. All products are for the Macintosh computer and will release this fall.

ClassicVision: ACQUISITION OF TIME LINE

ClassicVision Inc., a complete motion picture production company that specializes in making documentary films and restoring classic movies, has acquired Time Line Entertainment Inc. Time Line's experienced, highly regarded staff includes producers and directors of more than 50 documentaries that are now being broadcast on the A&E and Discovery channels . Time Line Entertainment is now a wholly owned subsidiary of ClassicVision.

Comfy: DAYCARE CAN GET KEYED IN

Very young children require special hardware and software to accommodate their early learning needs. One of the most successful companies in this genre is Comfy who have now introduced the Comfy CD program. This new effort enables care providers to enrich their charges' learning environment with multimedia hardware and software while receiving substantial discounts on the latest computer systems. Three options are offered to day care centers. The first two options allow a qualified Child Development Center to purchase a computer through Comfy for a volume discount price. The third option is designed for centers that already use computers and allows these locations to buy the Comfy Activity Center and Comfy Software at discounted price. The Comfy Activity Center plugs into a Macintosh or a PC and offers a youngster an alternative to a confusing keyboard. They see an inviting array of large, colorful pads and buttons that are compatible with their dexterity and attention patterns. These products have been designed for children as young as 12 months old.

DATAQUEST PREDICTS ROBUST ONLINE FUTURE

The area expected to grow by leaps and bounds in the online world will be security solutions for online commerce, order processing, and personal finance--to the tune of \$13.1 billion by 2000. This projection is according to a Dataquest Inc. (<http://www.dataquest.com/>) study. Dataquest estimates the market for encryption software for secure communications, remote access and electronic commerce at \$5.9 billion this year. It is predicting a jump to \$6.9 billion in revenues in 1997. Once folks are convinced that the Internet has progressed in its efficiency and cost-effectiveness, the futurologists see the demand for security hardware and software as going totally gangbusters.

DREAMWORKS DREAMS OF OLYMPIC GOLD

DreamWorks Television offers the first multimedia Olympic Collection electronic catalog entitled The Olympiad's Greatest Moments. This is the U.S. Olympic Committee's official history of the modern Summer Olympic Games (1896-1996) and may be found at <http://www.olympicsdw.com>. This site not only lists every major Summer Games Olympic record but also delivers, in detail, the entire Official Centennial Collection.

EIDOS: FUTURISTIC TANK SIM

Not so many months ago, three companies joined forces to become Eidos Interactive. That combo company has now published Shellshock for the Macintosh, PC, Internet and consoles. You're in the future--violence is rampant. Justice is long forgotten. The world is run by thugs, but five, highly trained commandos known as Da Wardenz fight the good fight using a fully armored, state-of-the-art M-13 Predator Battletank. Battle occurs in a first-person perspective over a variety of fractal-mapped 3D terrains. As

many as eight players can enter combat over a net. There's also an original soundtrack by William Floyd, a.k.a. Bar None. You can glom onto more info at the company's WWW site at <http://www.eidos.com>. And here's something that'll cause you to be somewhat awesome during the game . . .hit your ESC key and then enter "ratty rat ratty" and see what invincibility can do for your ego!

Electronic Arts: HORRIFIC FUTURE FOR SATURN'ERS

As the Sega Saturn continues to battle the Sony PlayStation for console dominance, 'tis the calibre of the software that could well determine the overall winner. Electronic Arts is attempting to help Saturn retain a significant portion of the marketplace by releasing Shockwave(TM) Assault for this platform. This new version has the five extra missions from Operation Jumpgate(TM) that were previously available as an add-on disk for the original 3DO version of the game. This title is of the science-fiction genre where you, from the cockpit of a F-177 space aircraft in the year 2019, fly over texture-mapped landscapes fighting rendered, 3D alien craft. You'll experience real video and radio broadcasts from other pilots as they fly combat missions around the world. Earth is bombarded from space by an unknown alien attack and, as our planet's defenses are systematically destroyed, the stage is set for a novice pilot to fly death-defying solo missions in an attempt to save mankind. The Shockwave Assault development team enlisted professional actors and a movie director, a best-selling novelist/screenwriter, and top computer artists to create the finished product which also features Dolby(TM) Surround Sound.

MORPHING ENEMIES

There is also an exclusive publishing agreement between Electronic Arts and Delphine Software International. This agreement is now culminating in the fourth title called Fade to Black, which is the sequel to Flashback: The Quest for Identity(TM). The sequel uses a new 3D engine and offers a much richer and deeper storyline. For the PlayStation, there are 13 diverse levels as well as numerous 3D animated characters. Conrad B. Hart is the main character in the year 2190 wherein an evil species of malevolent master brains have taken control of the Solar System. This alien race controls an alien army of Morphs whose metabolism allows them to adopt any shape they wish. Conrad is returning home while in a cryogenic sleep but is intercepted and imprisoned on the moon by the Morphs. A human rebel faction, intent on overthrowing their alien masters, persuades him to join their rebellion. The game blends arcade action and strategy in a 3D masterpiece.

SPLIT-SCREEN SIM

Now enroute to Saturn gamers is Road & Track Presents: The Need for Speed, a driving sim that lets players compete against a friend in single monitor, split-screen mode. You enter the world of high-performance driving in one of eight exotic sports cars. This title features a frame rate of 30 fps, an improved physics model (courtesy of input from Road & Track editors), photorealistic graphics, and new light-sourcing. The latter allows you to preset the time of day for each track. There's a 3D engine that lets you switch, on-the-fly, among four real-time racing views. Fourteen music tracks have been added to the game. There's even a stats and graphs option,

with voice over from the editors, that displays key performance measurements as well as information on the engine, chassis, and driveline. The PlayStation version of this title shipped last March.

EMMY TIME, AGAIN, IN LA-LA LAND

Seems like this just happened not too long ago but, the Emmys, TV's awards to the brightest and the best, are about to happen again. NBC's E.R. received 17 Emmy nominations to lead the field in television's premier awards for a second year in a row. The show's strong performance helped NBC amass 88 nominations to lead the networks sweepstakes. CBS was second with 67 nominations followed by Home Box Office with 66. Another medical drama, CBS'Chicago Hope, took 15 nominations including best drama series as did E.R., Law and Order, NYPD Blue and The X-Files. Shows nominated for best comedy series were Frasier, Friends, The Larry Sanders Show, Mad About You and Seinfeld. The nominations, voted by members of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, were announced by five-time Emmy Award winner Tracey Ullman who is nominated again this year for a writing achievement award for her HBO show Tracey Takes On The Emmys will be presented in Pasadena, California, on Sept. 8.

EMMY NEWS ENTRIES

The 17th Annual News and Documentary Emmy Award Nominations have been announced. There were 111 nominations from 1,300 entries for calendar year 1995. The actual award show is scheduled for September 11th in New York City. Leading the networks was ABC, with 29 nominations. They were followed by the Public Broadcasting Service (with 27 nominations), NBC (with 20 nominations) and CBS (with 19). The other networks, in order, are The Discovery Channel, TBS, A&E, AMC and Cinemax (with three each), HBO and The Learning Channel (with two each), CNN and syndicated television (with one each).

Empire Interactive: PARTNERSHIP ROLLS ONWARD

Game publishers are a gregarious lot--they love to combine business with friendship and glom onto agreements with a variety of companies. These associations not only increase their own SKU count, but they also broaden their product lines. Empire Interactive has now signed an agreement with TalonSoft for that company's Battleground 5: Antietam and Age of Sail titles, both to release this fall. And, just released by Empire, is Battleground 4: Shiloh. This milsim covers the two days of April 6th and 7th, 1862. This is when the Confederate Army launched a bold attack on U.S. Grant's Union Army. There's lavish attention to detail, superb graphics, and full color re-enactment videos. You can also play this title head-to-head with your friends via modem-to-modem, null-modem or email. There are also multiple scenarios including The Surprise Attack, Hornet's Nest and Pittsburg Landing. This title is for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95-based machines.

Exhibitor Relations: TOP TEN MOVIES AT THE BOX OFFICE

The top 10 movies at the U.S. box office for the Friday to Sunday period of July 26-28, according to studio estimates released by Exhibitor Relations Co.

1. A Time To Kill \$14.5 million
2. Independence Day \$13.2 million
3. Phenomenon \$6.3 million
4. Courage Under Fire \$5.7 million
5. Supercop \$5.5 million
6. Kingpin \$5.0 million
7. The Nutty Professor \$4.9 million
8. The Adventures of Pinocchio \$3.8 million
9. Multiplicity \$3.6 million
- 10 The Frighteners \$2.7 million

FCC--LISTEN UP!

A group of IMPORTANT FOLK are banding together to present an American argument. Microsoft Corp's. CEO, Bill Gates, is joining Steven Spielberg, Clint Eastwood, Dustin Hoffman, Robert Redford, Martin Scorsese, Robert Zemeckis and a host of other well-known, high-tech and film industry company leaders to form the Americans For Digital TV. This group will confront the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regarding restrictive standards relating to the next generation of television sets called High Definition Televisions (HDTV). This American media group is reacting to the FCC which is considering standards proposed by a group of foreign television manufacturers who have formed the Grand Alliance. The Alliance proposal reportedly contains 18 different standards, some of which are not compatible with displaying standard computer-driven data and images on HDTV sets. The computer and film industries don't want their efforts regarding a marriage between computers and televisions deterred, and they warned that, should the foreign standards be accepted, such could result in consumers being forced to use inferior technology.

FormGen: NOTHING HAS CHANGED!

As you'll recall, only a few weeks ago, FormGen was acquired by GT Interactive. FormGen, currently riding the tidal swell of acceptance for their Duke 3D twitch, is working closely with their new parent company on a number of new products. First of all, the company has a new T-1 line and their WWW site is a great place to locate screen shots and demos. You can reach it a <http://www.formgen.com>. The next game heading your way that uses the same engine as Duke 3D, is Shadow Warrior, with the shareware version to reach stores before the end of the year. Just a couple of months later, the complete version will release. In this title, you become a ninja! In August, XenoPhage reaches retail distribution. This is a fighter from Argo Games and Apogee. There's panning, scrolling, huge sprite action. Watch for

demos to be available on a number of magazine CD-ROM inclusions in the future. By the way, the winners in FormGen's Duke Nukem 3D Media Buds Level Creation Contest are Steve Klett, John Di Saia and Martin Kozicki.

Gaylord Entertainment: LORDY, IT'S MORE COUNTRY FOLK!

The country entertainment and lifestyle areas have expanded on the Web--thanks to Gaylord Entertainment Co.'s site COUNTRY.COM, which is due this fall. The push for country will be in three areas: the total country lifestyle, from music to motorsports to outdoor and country life. Secondly, Gaylord has great marketability on networks such as TNN and CMT which can draw in a big crowd on the Web. And lastly, the loyalty from the artists, drivers and outdoor enthusiasts towards their fans, which is strong.

Hollywood Pictures: PREVIEW OF THE MATERIAL GIRL

Folks can get a peek of Madonna as Evita on Wednesday, July 31, when a newly completed preview trailer for Hollywood Pictures' feature film debuts via satellite. Written and directed by Alan Parker (Fame, The Commitments), Evita doesn't arrive in theaters until December, but this preview satellite transmission will provide an advance look at the film. Television stations across the country will be able to download the transmission and use it on their regularly scheduled news and entertainment programs.

IDG Books: WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE

Are you a computer trivia kind of person? You may find a good challenge at the IDG Books Dead or Alive Contest with questions like--Commodore Vic 20, Apple Lisa, Netscape Navigator... are these dead or alive in today's computer industry? The information is based upon the book PC Roadkill, a comical satire of the computer industry with the features such as a brief quiz on the companies, products, and people of the computer industry. To test yourself, simply visit the PC Roadkill section of IDG Books' World Wide WEB site at <http://www.idgbooks.com> and enter to win a limited PC Roadkill t-shirt.

Instant Sports: COLLEGIATE SPORTS IN REAL-TIME

There are a number of sports sites on the World Wide Web, some rather eclectic in their information offering, others backed by huge corporations, and others that present sports information in rather unique ways. Instant Sports falls into the latter category, as the popularity of their Instant Baseball(TM) WWW site has now afforded them the opportunity to sign an agreement with STATMAN Information Systems Inc. to bring college football and basketball cybercasts to their site. To be called Instant College Football(TM) and Instant College Basketball(TM), you'll get real-time, play-by-play updates of your favorite college football and men's AND women's basketball from your home or office computer. Web coverage for the football site will start on August 28th with college football's Summer

Kickoff Classic, which finds Penn State versus USC. The Java-animated version will be available in September. The basketball coverage will start in December. The raw sports data of all "Big 10" and "Ivy League" conference games is licensed from STATMAN, with other schools and conferences to be added throughout the 1996-1997 season. This data drives Instant Sports' text-based and Java-animated computer sims of the events on the football field or basketball court. STATMAN will co-brand their WWW site as an affiliate of Instant Sports. These sites are all free to users and are supported through advertising sold by Instant Sports.

Intergraph: 3D SOLUTIONS FOR GAME DEVELOPERS

A big solution for game developers--real-time 3D on the Intel/Windows NT platform and real-time 3D authoring tools--has been developed through the cooperation, and long term relationship, of Intergraph Computer Systems and MultiGen Inc. This is the first step for both companies in aggressively marketing MultiGen's new GameGen II products and Intergraph's high-performance TDZ(TM) 3D Graphics Workstations into the game development arena. This announcement coincides with MultiGen's product announcement of GameGen II for Windows NT, demonstrating its product on Intergraph's TDZ 3D Graphics Workstation. More info is available at <http://www.intergraph.com/ics>.

Interactive Magic: NOT READY, WON'T SHIP

Many times, a scheduled product release date means late hours for programmers and marketers when a title starts to slip. In many cases, patches hold a program together simply so that planned ship date is met--many times, such forced title debuts lead to disaster. Interactive Magic has no plans for such to occur to their highly anticipated sim, *Destiny: Man's Journey Through Time*. Frankly, the game is not ready, so the company is going to continue to work on the project. There is a new tag line: *World Domination from Stone Age to Space Age*, and there's a new WWW site for the game at <http://www.imagicgames.com/mediaroom/> where you can view screen shots and other information about this upcoming game.

Interplay: ANYTHING BUT NORMAL HITS THE SHELVES

Working with third-party developers, many mainstream game publishers are finding gold in them thar agreements. One of the hottest titles to be heading toward your retailer is *NORMALITY(TM)*. This is a fully 3D rendered adventure game which finds Gen-X daydream, Kent, as the headliner. Interplay plans on spending nearly one million dollars in promotion this title with marketing, public relations and a sales blitz. *NORMALITY* was developed by Gremlin Interactive and will ship on July 30th. An interactive preview of the game was released in May, and retailers throughout the nation will also be equipped with demos and Point Of Purchase materials. Select retailers are also offering a *NORMALITY* screen saver, free with the purchase of the game, while supplies last. Pre-launch activities included a "Rub Out *NORMALITY*" scratcher mailer sent to 50,000

die-hard adventure gamers with a rebate offer of up to \$20 at retail. A NORMALITY WWW site features cool movie and soundfiles and will also offer hints and tips as well as an online contest and "Are You Normal?" surveys. There are over 120 locations to discover as 17 characters come to life. Plus, the title has a hip soundtrack. This game will appeal to a broad range of gamers.

NEW JAPANESE CHIEF

Interplay is quite the international game publisher, as well. In September of 1995, the company formed Interplay Japan. The company has now appointed Toshihiro "Ted" Fukudome as that company's Representative Director and President and he'll oversee the marketing and promo of Interplay products within the Japanese market. Previously, Fukodome was the President and Representative Director of Mattel Japan. He successfully engineered Mattel's re-entry into the Japanese market.

InterVU: NOW ARRIVING FOR MACS

The talk about video compression and graphics playback has certainly reached well into the PC industry. Now the very first audio and MPEG player for the Macintosh has been released by InterVU. InterVU's MPEG Player 0.95 is a beta plug-in for Netscape Navigator 2.0 and 3.0. The plug-in will offer first-frame previewing, streaming and full-quality MPEG playback, from either a cache or a hard drive. You'll be able to hear and view video during streaming preview, or when played back from your selected cache. First-frame technology allows you to see the first frame of the video to help you decide whether to download the complete offering. Once downloaded, you can then view the video in streaming mode as it downloads from the WWW site. A 28.8 kbps modem connection will provide transmission of images at a few frames per second. The InterVU player downloads the entire MPEG file, regardless of your modem speed, which allows you to then playback the video at full MPEG quality. THIS means you'll view the highest-quality video possible. You can download the current version from <http://www.intervu.com>.

The Learning Company: READER RABBITS MULTIPLY

The Learning Company (<http://www.learningco.com>), a subsidiary of SoftKey International Inc., has a new program that can strengthen the reading skills of five- to eight-year-olds. Reader Rabbit's(R) Interactive Reading Journey(TM) 2, available this fall on Windows and Macintosh CD-ROM, is based on the most successful reading CD-ROM of 1995 entitled Reader Rabbit's Interactive Reading Journey 1.

Interactive Reading Journey 2 continues the adventures of Reader Rabbit, Sam the Lion, and Mat the Mouse, as they search for Sam's imagination through 15 reading lands comprised of multilevel activities. There are newcomers that include Buster the Car, Sparky the Imagination, and Booker Frog, that build on newly-learned skills as children read, listen, respond, click on educational animated hot spots and think their way through the program. Children can learn essential reading skills with the thirty original

storybooks featured in the program. There's also a record and playback feature that helps wee ones develop reading confidence and expression, while sixty questions throughout this adventure encourage children to voice their ideas as well as oral reading skills that include pace, voice inflection and word emphasis.

Macromedia: FREELOADING CAN BE FUN

Companies are want to agree . . . conflict is not the true mettle of business, competition is . . . but when two companies can agree on a joining of forces, seems as though just about everyone is a winner. This has happened for Macromedia and FreeLoader, Inc. They have come to terms for the latter's WWW offline browsing and agenting software to be distributed from the former's WWW site at <http://macromedia.com>. FreeLoader's software will also be distributed with the Macromedia Showcase(TM) CD-ROM. This product ships with every Macromedia product that is sold. And, as turn about is fair play, FreeLoader will bundle Macromedia Shockwave(TM) with its FreeLoader service. This technology allows you to download multimedia content and then view the goodies offline on your browser or screen saver.

LORD WON'T YOU GIVE ME A MERCEDEZ-BENZ?

The Mercedes-Benz SLK roadster is getting great promotion on the Web at <http://www.wardsauto.com>. This site was created in anticipation of the North American launch next February, which should prove to be an extremely popular event. Premium automakers, such as Mercedes, BMW, and others, believe that roadsters will eventually pass sports and utility vehicles in popularity. They had also better hope American wallets get fatter, as well.

MicroProse: RADICAL RACING

Few companies launch a product with more than 60,000 units. Unless pre-orders and other elements are in place, to head into distribution with more than 100,000 units is certainly rare. MicroProse has now launched their Grand Prix II for PC CD-ROM--to the tune of some 300,000 units, the largest initial release for the company this year. You'll join a FIA Formula One team and race on some of the most challenging courses around the world. This title puts you in the driver's seat as you practice, challenge for the pole, and go head-to-head with actual Formula One drivers on tracks in Monaco, Brazil, France and beyond. The game provides every aspect of the Formula One circuit and includes pull pitching and rolling, crashes, engine blowups and detailed 3D effects. There are even the same trackside sponsors you'd see at the track itself. There are enhanced camera views let you watch the race from several different angles. A replay feature lets you relive the finest moments from any of the available views.