Jeff Hurlburt   TX

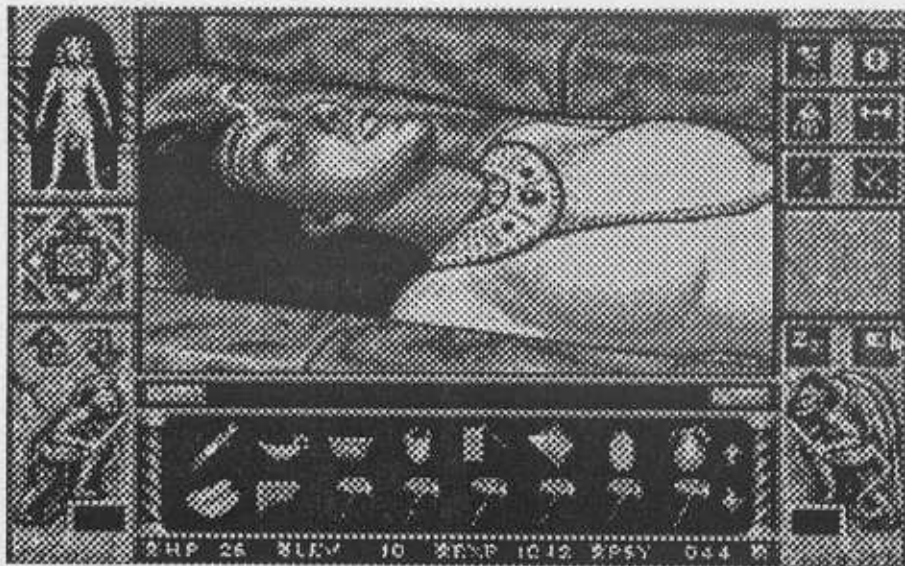# The PRODUCT MONITOR

RATINGS

Superb	★★★★★
Excellent	★★★★
Very Good	★★★
Good	★★
Fair	★
Poor	☹
Bad	☜
Defective	☀

The Big Shop

Once you get used to the 30' ceiling, endless aisles, gaudy displays, hologram 'You Are Here' signs, crowded demo kiosks, punch fountains ...— that is, once you become moderately acclimated to the biggest computer stuff shop in the galaxy, you are ready to do some serious browsing.

Rounding a corner, you come upon the glass-domed "Adventure Town" annex. ...

Despite the two Elvira's, Accolade's **WaxWorks** ★★★ ($59.95) is still something of a surprise. You expect the usual stabbed, staked, poisoned, slashed 'you lose' body graphics; there's even a "depicts graphic violence" warning on the box. You do not expect to find four, different, realistic (3-D forward view), realms of horror! Alas, your insane twin has tampered with dread forces. Soon he will be ready to gate-through unspeakable evil into the world via the exhibits at Uncle Boris's Waxworks. YOU must enter each realm— an
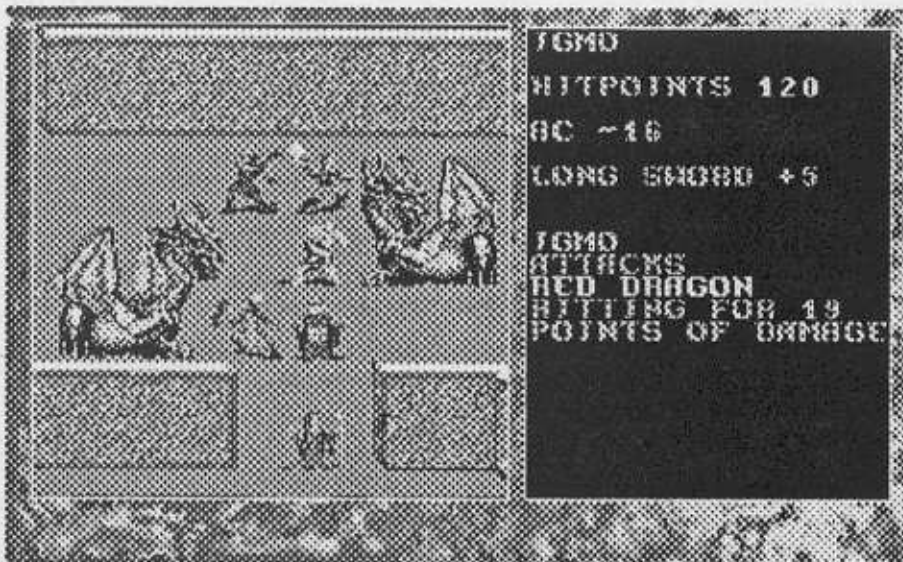
Egyptian tomb, a grave yard, an alien mine, and Jack the Ripper's London— and in each defeat your twin's alter ego. Aside from one glitch— blowing the whistle at the wrong time can hang the game, this is a smooth-running, attractive quest, with SB/Roland music and effects to

set the right mood. Expect traps, puzzles, lots of 'atmosphere', and hours of horribly challenging fun!

If diskette count means anything, then, for sure, Infocom/ Activision is back. **Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2** ★★★★R ($69.95) comes on 17 720K diskettes because piles of attractive artwork spanning events on three planets plus SB/ Roland sound effects, music, AND 100% speech uses LOTS of disk storage. It's not wasted. This is a cute, well done 'friendly creature from outer space' scenario which you can play as 'the guy', 'the girl', or 'the monster'. Events and objectives change accordingly. The format is basically 'picture-text' featuring clickable get/identify for on-screen items and multiple-choice dialog options. One of the dialog icons, a screw, explains the R rating addendum. Count on ample clues, Save Game slots, babes, and hunks in a smooth running adventure good for several hours of 'adult' fun.

Touted as "The FINAL BATTLE" **The Dark Queen of Krynn** ★★★ ($49.95) brings

back the draconians in force! This time you face the '1st Team' with a bigger gamescape and more involved scenario to match. (Hint: Unless you're a mapping fanatic, get the $12.95 Clue Book.) As in other goldbox releases, you can look forward to attractive 3-D perspective 'exploration mode' views and, when you encounter opposition, a monster picture followed by SSI's smooth-scrolling, multi-screen combat display. Count on many tough, well-designed tests of your tactical savvy featuring good use of barriers plus

the fun of animated characters and monsters, great weapons effects, and sound guaranteed to work the kinks out of your board. This one is too tough to miss.

Sierra's **King's Quest VI: Heir Today, Gone Tomorrow**

★★★ ($79.95) finds Prince Alexander shipwrecked far from Daventry on the Green Isles, supposedly the homeland of his beloved Princess Cassima. It is; but, evil forces, get-this-to-do-that missions, and logic puzzles soon have you hopping amongst nearby islands on fairytale mini-quests. As usual with **KQ** walk around-in-the-scenery adventuring, the scenario is a bit weak on clues— get a hint book/sheet— and strong on atmosphere. Except for a minor glitch (you can get stuck playing the flute on the pier), look for a user-friendly interface, beautiful animated graphics, and excellent SB/Roland sound & music. With hints at the ready, **KQ6** is cute, low-pressure questing especially suited to younger players.

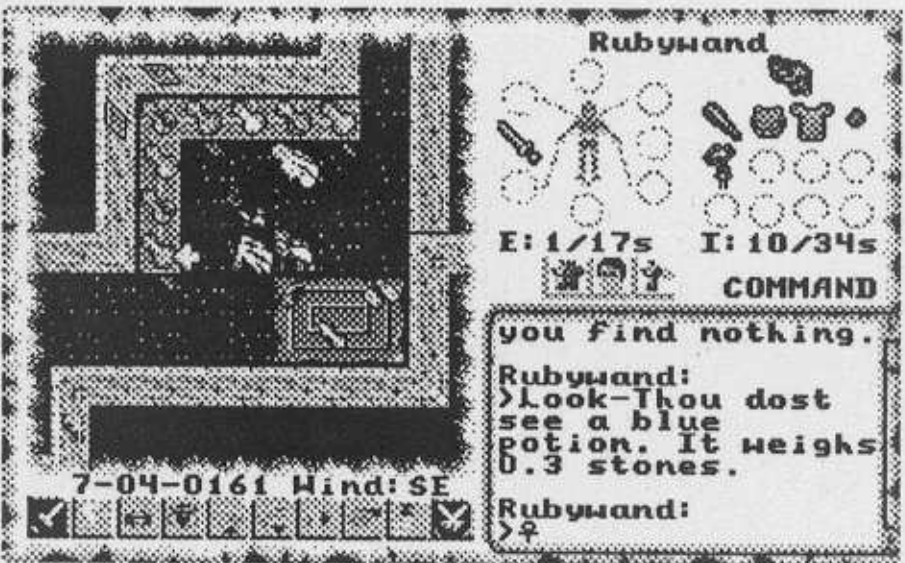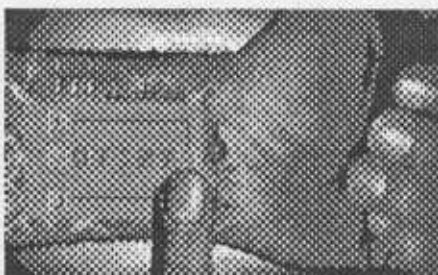**Ultima VI: The False Prophet** ★★★ ($69.95) calls

you to back to Britannia on a multi-continent quest to stem a gargoyle invasion and free the eight Shrines of Virtue. It's an undertaking nicely matched to a very attractive, detailed gamescape backed by fine SB/Roland music. You can put up with the game's clumsy tactical combat because the real challenge is to explore lands crammed with fun places to go and interesting characters to meet. '**False Prophet** is long-play adventuring aimed at experienced players who enjoy 'getting into' a well developed alternate reality.

Offering larger character figures and enhanced detail, **Ultima VII: The Black Gate** ★★★ ($79.95) sets a new standard for top-down view high-perspective adventuring graphics. The move toward exploration and clue-hunting is even more pronounced in 'Black Gate, which actually begins with a grisly double murder. Along with the rise of a pacifist cult called "The Fellowship", a mysterious suppression of magic, and visions

of an evil "Guardian", there is plenty to occupy you (the Avatar) and those who join your party. The simplified combat scheme, which lets your comrades fight with little or no supervision, turns out to be a major improvement over earlier more flexible (but harder to control) systems. Look for quality SB/Roland music and the

best effects ever. Also, expect a distinctly somber, 'serious' turn in your Ultima questing.

Patterned on those 50's movie serial cliffhangers, **Amazon** ★★ ($59.95) does indeed seem to leave your character in successively more perilous predicaments. It started the day the lab director informed you that your brother's Amazon expedition had been wiped out. Something didn't 'smell' right— it seldom does when military secrets may be involved. Within a few Chapters, you're crash landing in the Amazon jungle, sneaking aboard a river pirate's boat, and battling bad guys at a rope bridge! Like other Access walk-around-in-the-scenery action adventures, **Amazon** employs quality SB/Roland sound and a variety of attractive displays to present its puzzle busting and arcade challenges. (A 640-res SVGA option is new.) Unfortunately, many of the action/arcade sequences run at 2 or 3 times 'sane speed'! The resulting frequent, unavoidable frustration explains why an otherwise 4-star product rates 2 stars.

The **Koshan Conspiracy** ★★★ ($59.95) is UBI Soft's second B.A.T. scenery-with-text action adventure. This time your Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters agent must defeat a Koshan plot centered around control of precious Echiatone 21 deposits. Most of the action is set in Roma II, a large city on the planet Europa which a fanatic past ruler modeled on ancient Rome. It is a colorful, complex, technologically 'mixed' environment complete with gladiatorial games, slaves, and privileged nobles. As in B.A.T. I, your built-in Bioputer gives you a valuable edge in dealings with humans as well as the many aliens encountered. There is some combat (which may be real time or "strategic"); but, mainly, the challenge is to acquire information and power. Expect good sound plus a variety of attractive exploration, combat, and simulation (VGA or SVGA) displays. Also, if this is your first B.A.T. experience, plan on a couple hours for getting acclimated to the versatile, yet 'different' interface.
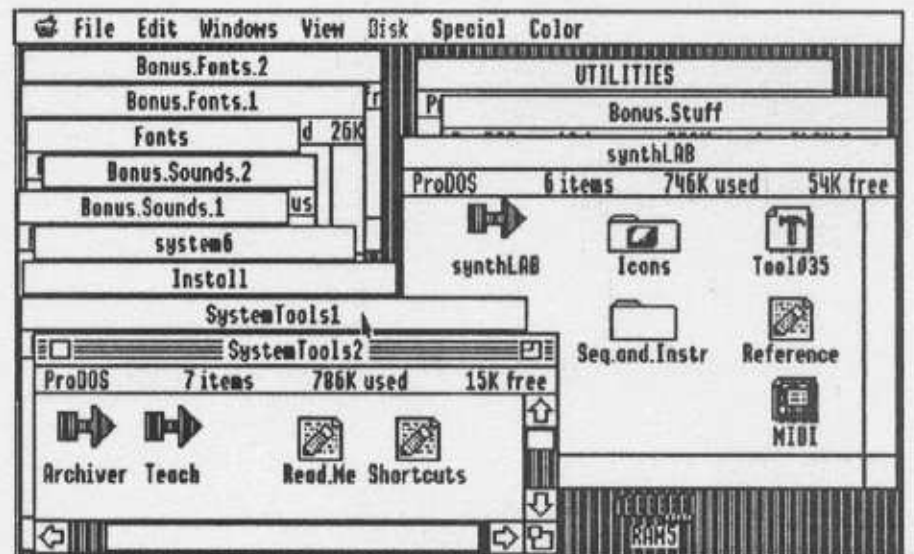
There's another adventure display ahead; but a flashing sign draws you through an arch to the "Virtual Reality Zone". ...

So far, at least, the hallmark of VR game design is that walls, doors, (tables, torches, monsters, ...), etc. are generated on-the-fly. This way, size and perspective are supposed to be more accurate and 'real'. SSI's **Legends of Valor** ★★ ($59.95) sends you, a humble yet brave peasant, off to the sprawling city of Mitteldorf to seek your fortune. As you hunt odd jobs, buy/sell, explore Guild mazes, and battle trouble makers, excellent speed and perspective control do place you IN the environment. If you do not mind a lack of detail and 'just fair' sound, there's quite an adventure ahead. (HINT: Despite maps and a good manual, getting started is very rough. Edit an early saved game file to give yourself about 5,000 gold.)

Set in a haunted, monster-infested Louisiana mansion, Interplay's **Alone in the Dark** ★★★ ($69.95, by I Motion) delivers near 'canned animation' detail plus great SB sound with some music. You've been hired to catalog the mansion's antiques; so, via KB or Joystick, you guide a realistically 'motioned' male/female action figure up stairs, along halls, etc.. You can push crates, open chests, pick up lanterns, ... and, fortunately, wield swords (bows, guns, ...) against nasty wolves, zombies, and other critters. (SWACK! and blood flies as the wolf staggers back.) Speed, even on a '486/33 is a tad below optimum; and, at times, getting into the correct position to manipulate an item is a bother. Still, with so much weird stuff to explore, **Alone** has a way of drawing in any player who appreciates a good horror story.

Including manual and video tape tutorial, Domark's **Virtual Reality Studio** ★ ($89.95)

is a graphics/programming utility for creating your very own VR worlds. The principle is simple: you mold cube, pyramid, etc. shapes, combine them to form complex items (like tables), add color, and then place them in an "Area" (e.g. a room). Since each world or "Freescape" can have up to 254 Areas, you can produce fairly complex, colorful environments. A Freescape programming language lets you animate objects and set up responses to collisions and other situations. You can also design overlay templates with clickable buttons for controlling movement, shooting, and similar game-type actions. **VRS** even includes a sample fly-around-and-shoot arcade game complete with SB effects. Unfortunately, your sounds palette is somewhat limited, and a generally cumbersome interface hobbles most design activities, especially object creation.

Back on the main concourse someone in a big purple lizard suit gives you a balloon and steers you into the "Learning Wares" exhibits. ...
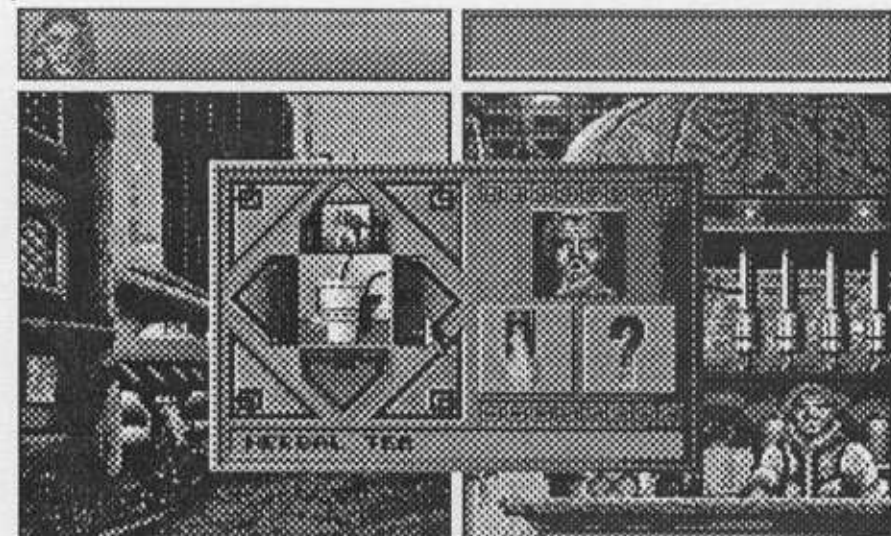
Disney's **Follow the Reader** ★★★ ($49.95, $69.95 with Sound Source hardware) aims to teach reading skills, chiefly word recognition, to young children (ages 5-8). Set in Mickey's house, a park, and a beach, FTR's chief 'gimmick' is involvement: the learner does not merely read text on the screen; he/she gets to select key object and action words. So, in his garage, Mickey may BUILD a TOY CAR or a KITE. In the kitchen, he may DRINK MILK, EAT a BANANA, ... Via Sound Source or SB, a teacher voice speaks the sentence, and Mickey performs the action. Naturally, you get sound effects and Mickey talks, too: "Yum, that was delicious", as do other characters encountered. With lots of places to go and lots to do, many stories are possible; AND, stories may be saved for later playback and/or printout! Pretty cute. If my niece's reaction is any indication, this one's a winner!

At last, a punch fountain! Taking time for a cup, you notice an especially large demo area just to the left of the fountain. Wandering over, you discover "Nuts & Bolts"! ...

When the **QC System 6 Bonus Pack** ★★★ ($79.95 for IIgs) arrived and twelve diskettes slipped out onto the table, my first thought was "You've got to be kidding!" They're not. Besides all of System 6.01, you get piles of Sound and Font files, Utilities (like FLASH.BOOT), and Desk Accessories (like a neat MEMORY USE bar graph windowlette), plus Clip Art, Icons, and Finder extensions. Some handy shareware releases like GS.SHRIN KIT are included, too. Possibly the best 'Bonus Pack goodie is Quality Computer's own 152-page 'System 6 Book. Loaded with screen pics, hints, and short cuts, it delivers the kind of Sys'6 and Bonus stuff coverage you need to get the most from the new operating system. PLUS, QC will add info about hard drive, accelerator, and other ways to boost Apple II performance via their 49-page Apple Enhancement Guide.
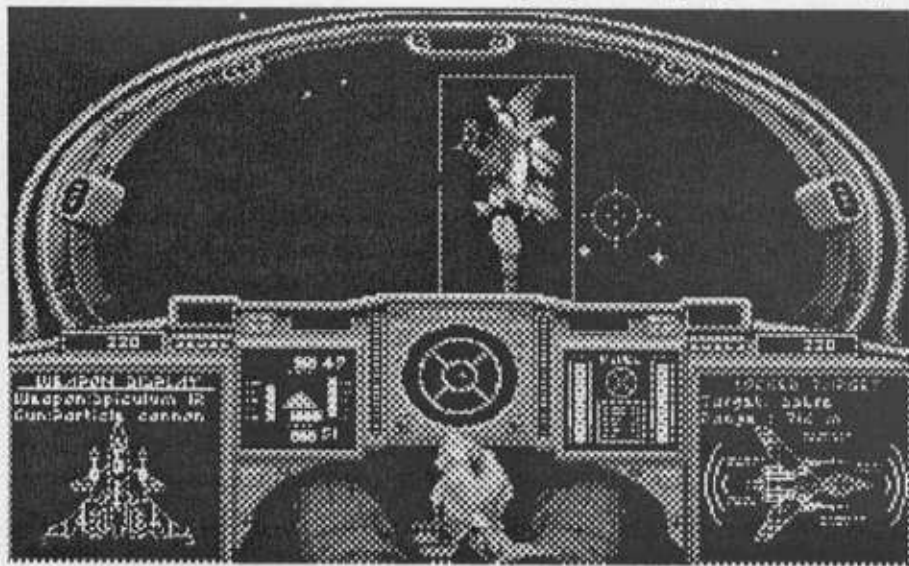
Epyx's **Getaway: Laptop Entertainment 6-pack** ★★★ ($39.95) aims to 'recharge your batteries' on those long plane rides, waits in the outer office, or wherever you tote your trusty (512K or better) PC laptop. Via KB or mouse you can play Solitaire (Klondike or Las Vegas), pick your level in the scrabble-like "Word Salad", and take on 1-3 of 9 computer opponents in

Dominoes. There's also a dice pattern-making teaser called "Cascade", 63 levels of "Stuffing the Briefcase" fitting-in puzzles, and 20 levels of a cute 'Master Mind'-style challenge named "Totem". You can even check machine performance using the "Profiler" utility. Each user-friendly implementation includes on-screen directions and sensible features (such as 'Add Word' and 'Game Save' in Word Salad). With 'PC speaker' sound, the package delivers crisp 640-res monochrome displays optimized for LCD. (Getaway' also comes in an EGA-SVGA color Windows version.)
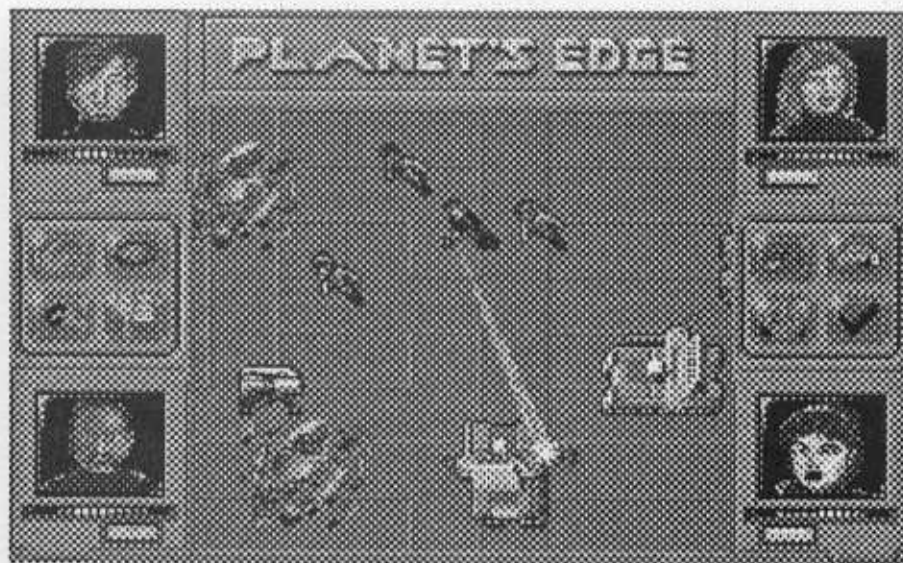
After fifteen minutes sampling Klondike and Dominoes, you start to try Totem when loud WHOOSH and KAPOOM! sounds draw your attention to a darkened area ahead. The large neon sign proclaims: "Space Wars Command Center"! ...

Weaving realistic, high-challenge space combat with absorbing scenarios, Origin's **Wing Commander II** and the first **Special Operations** add-on pack both earned top ratings when first released. The **Speech Accessory Pack** ★★ ($19.95) arrived a bit later. Though much of the scenario dialog is still text-only, the Speech' accessory does, as claimed, enhance WC2 storyline enjoyment and combat.

In 'Special Operations 2 ★★★ ($39.95) Earth's struggle against the Kilrathi tigermen takes a new turn as you lead multi-part missions against the traitorous "Mandarin" humans. Overall, the assignments seem a tad easier— in part because you get to fly the new, top-secret Morningstar— and most players will probably need to fly fewer total missions than in SO1. (True, a few missions may demand 10-20 attempts!) Count on ample challenge and another 'grabber' storyline. Backed by great SB/Roland sound & music, SO2 is guaranteed ultra-addictive—I played it nearly non-stop!— and a sure winner for teenage stick aces.

As Planet's Edge ★★★★ ($59.95) opens, Earth has been THOOPed! That is, one moment it's there; then— thanks to an alien dimension twister— THOOP! it's gone. Only another Alien device, constructed

from ultra-rare components, can reverse the effect. New World's "Space 1999" scenario in-reverse leaves it to a small colony of scientists and Space Force volunteers (your four characters) remaining on the Moon to save the day. Imagine a space combat/trading challenge spanning eight multi-system empires which actually lets you LAND on many of those planets you orbit. Then, imagine finding a large, colorful, developed, different (robots/colonists/ bugs/ castles/...) Ultima-look, adventure on each! THAT plus fine tactical combat, decent space battles, solid SB/Roland sound, and the fun of steadily enhancing your ship (AND putting the hurts to arrogant anti-Earther aliens!) is Planet's Edge. Auto-mapping and good in-game hints means you don't need the $19.95 CB; however, the 224-page book is so beautifully done, you'll want it anyway. Look forward to a unique, addictive, LONG-play adventuring experience.

Accolade's **Star Control II** ★★★ ($59.95) begins on a grim note: the evil alien Ur-quan Hegemony has won the war and confined nearly every human to Earth beneath an impenetrable "slave dome". However(!), in an obscure corner of the galaxy your stranded research team has discovered a cache of Precursor technology including a ship! SC2 launches you on a quest of liberation spanning thousands of planets in hundreds of star systems. Except when playing the optional 1 or 2 player "Melee" game, simple arcade combats are just a small part of the challenge— good thing, because 'spongy' controls result in only mildly entertain-

ing battles. To complete the numerous mini-quests and build your ship's capabilities, you will explore planets (in a neat little skimmer craft), gather raw materials, and wheeldeal with verbose aliens. Backed by rich SB sound (including voices) and quality documentation, SC2 is colorful, durable crusading fun.

Continuing on past another punch fountain you turn into a new passageway and discover .... !
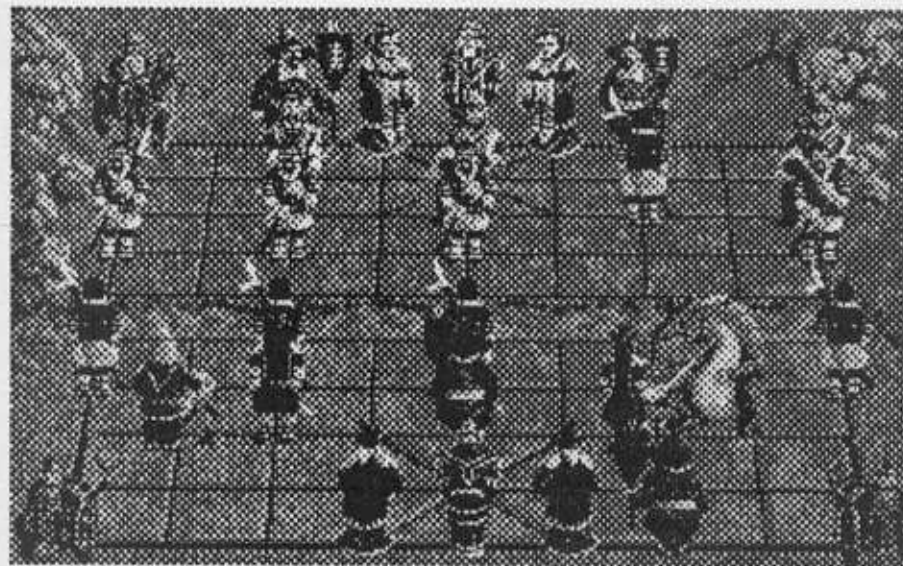
Battle Chess II

★★★

$49.95 for CGA-VGA 640K PC

Interplay

AdLib or Sound Blaster recommended

Several years ago a board game maker produced "Elephant Chess", an early Indian precursor to modern chess modified to include the medieval Chinese addition of Cannon pieces. (A Cannon attacks like a rook but only at targets "screened" by one intervening piece.) Maneuvering your 16 pieces against a decent opponent on EC's 9 x 10 board can be an absorbing, addictive challenge, especially since play is so different from chess. Unfortunately, it has always been difficult to find willing adversaries.

What luck! Contrary to my expectations, Interplay's Battle Chess II is not just chess 'done in Chinese'; it's my old friend Elephant Chess! (But, without the elephants. Interplay calls the game "Chinese Chess".) You get the same slashing bashing 3-D animated ac-

tion and sound of the first "Battle Chess"— axe-wielding pawns lop off heads, rooks transform into dragons and gobble knights, etc.— and a computer opponent who never makes excuses or complains about "weird chess off-shoots". Naturally, you can also take on a second human player at the computer or, via modem, anywhere in the world.

Standard options include 2-D 'plain board' views, Show legal moves, Take Back, Replay, Setup a position, Game Save/Load, and selectable Level for computer play. As in the first "Battle Chess", Replay does not include showing the animation sequences— too bad, because it would be fun to see movie-style replays of saved matches from start to finish. The program supports Roland, but players get only music (even if Sound Blaster is selected for "effects"). If you want to hear the music AND all of the juicy grunts, growls, and clangs that add so much to the fun, go with a non-Roland option for Music and SFX.

The **Battle Chess II** manual includes a thorough tutorial and records of several "Historic Games". Together with the 'Show legal moves' option, that's more than enough help to get new players started. As to winning, expect to 'take your lumps'. Even as low as Level 3 (30 seconds per move), the pro-

gram is a versatile, aggressive opponent. Supplied on both 3.5" and 5.25" media, Battle Chess II would be good for many hours of entertaining competition on just the no-frills 2-D board. With animated combats, it ranks among the top board game values ever!

Honneywell Mouse

★★★

$79.00 for PC XT/AT

Honneywell

Interface: PC serial (PS/2 mouse available for $79)
Mechanism: Dual axial transducer opto-mechanical
Resolution: in screen dots per inch of movement (Horizontal samples using Microsoft mouse driver 9.0)

Highest (slow)- 9.8 dots/inch
Default (med.)- 320 dots/inch

Lowest (fast)- 1143 dots/inch
Connectors: DB 9-pin (on mouse cable) plus 25-pin adapter
Buttons: Two keys (Three-key model available)
Click Force- 57 grams,
Stroke- 1mm
Chord: 4.9 feet
Size: 4.0"L x 2.5"W x 1.25"H

Honneywell says this is the Last Mouse you'll ever need to buy because there is no ball to pick up dust and grease, no clogging of rollers, etc.. Yet, unlike purely optical units, you need no special grid pad. Honneywell claims you can use Last Mouse on any flat surface!

The secret is a patented pressure transducer system. Last Mouse has two round feet tilted at right angles which press lightly upon your pad or table top. Actual support is via four padlets at the case corners. When you move the mouse, one foot detects horizontal drag and the other detects vertical drag. Incredibly, the scheme works! Mouse pad, waxed wood, formica, whatever... Last Mouse's feet keep up and your cursor moves smoothly around the screen.

Finished in non-reflective 'computer platinum', your "Last Mouse" is an attractive unit shaped a bit like a VW Bug. Flat sides, smooth edges, and the arched top facilitate easy gripping and supply some palm support. The two button plates are large enough for either to serve as the dominant Clicker; so, the mouse is truly ambidextrous. That they curve down to the front encourages the activating fingers to curl slightly, a position which tends to produce miss-clicking. For 'touch-press' (normal) clicking, a cure is to simply ignore the down-curve feature. Users who prefer 'tap' clicking are in for a special treat. Switch tension, speed, and position could hardly be better.

Now, a question to test your Mouse User Quotient: "What is the most overlooked part of mouse design?" ... Color? Neat logos? Weight? Sound? If you answered "the chord", you get a pat on the nose. I've tried numerous mouses on several different machines and have yet to find one with a completely satisfactory chord, even when the chord is mentioned in the features list! To maximize convenience and user comfort, a chord should be supple enough so that when you position the mouse you can relax your grip and the mouse will stay put. Last Mouse's chord is less supple than usual; and, with no ball, the unit is much lighter. This mouse almost always moves a bit when released.

Last Mouse comes with an adapter plug, a 9-page manual, and HMOUSE driver software on 3.5" and 5.25" diskettes. HMOUSE lets you specify which COM input the mouse is plugged into plus vertical and horizon-

tal speed, dominant button, and acceleration. The driver works fine; but, you may never use it. Last Mouse is fully Microsoft compatible; so, you can stick with the drivers and set-up menus supplied with DOS 6 and Windows 3.1. Better yet, you can upgrade to Microsoft's version 9.0 MOUSE driver and access features like Screen Wrap, Snap-to, and Magnify!

Rugged and ambidextrous, the **Honneywell Mouse** is an obvious choice for schools and other hostile environments. Its case is sealed; and, cleaning, when needed, will involve little more than wiping the bottom with a damp cloth. But, then, any user can appreciate the benefits of starting a computing session without wondering if this is the day you'll have to pop out the ball and de-gunk clogged rollers. Add good looks, a uniquely light, glassy feel, and New Technology bragging rights: Honneywell's mouse is a 'must try'. It could end up First Choice for your Last Mouse.

Microsoft "Ergo" Mouse 2.0

★★★★

$125.00 for PC XT/AT

Microsoft

Interface: PC Bus Mouse (PC serial and PS/2 versions available for $109)
Mechanism: Ball opto-mechanical
Resolution: in screen dots per inch of movement (Horizontal samples using Microsoft mouse driver 9.0)
Highest (slow)- 12.7 dots/inch
Default (med.)- 427 dots/inch
Lowest (fast)- 1280 dots/inch
Connectors: Round InPort plug and interface board
Buttons: Two keys
Click: Force-   63 grams
Stroke-   1mm
Chord: 6.2 feet
Size: 4.5"L x 2.5"W x 1.5"H

Yes, Microsoft's first new mouse in years is a great 'looker'. Better yet, the glossy off-white 2.0 mouse is sized and sculpted in line with ergonometric principles to enhance user comfort and reduce hand/wrist stress; and, it works! The gently humped case fits into the palm 'like a glove' supporting the hand while placing clicker fingers at just the right angle over large down-sloping keys. To reduce 'chord pull', designers added weights— when you relax your grip, the "Ergo Mouse" stays put! Extra weight also enhances user comfort because when moving the mouse there is something to 'work against' and supply feedback.

That designers have made it easier to remove the ball for cleaning is certain (eventually) to strike users as ironic. For some reason the new mouse

seems to require cleaning MUCH less frequently!

The **Mouse 2.0** package includes a manual, bus interface card (unless you get a serial-input version), and version 9.0 driver software. Screen Warp, Snap-to, and other 9.0 features work as advertised and may be valuable aids for heavy graphics and cut/paste text users. However, the new driver IS large. You may find it best to stick with an earlier driver when booting DOS, because some applications (e.g. games) will not 'fit' when 9.0 is installed! Microsoft should offer some means of customizing the driver which allows reducing memory usage.

Like your keyboard, the mouse you use is an integral part of your day-to-day computing experience. It is, simply, incredible that some users invest a pile of $$$ on software, or a CD ROM, or whatever... and make do with a $19.95 'bargain mouse'. For productive, fun computing, get comfortable with "Ergo" Mouse.

Guest Reviews

Focus 80 Hard Disk ★★★★
$449.00 list, for Apple IIe/IIgs

Parsons Engineering

A review by J. Seymour

Everyone kept saying: "If you want a REAL 90's IIgs, you MUST get a hard drive." I kept looking at Apple II HD prices and cringing. As JH noted several months ago, you can run HyperStudio and many other large systems on non-HD machines if you have a big RAM Disk. Unfortunately, everything just continued getting bigger. Booting the newest GSOS and loading the latest version of some favorite program was taking more time than ever and piling up 3.5" drive 'user hours'. When Parsons offered their plug-and-go 80MB 'hard card' at a decent price, my resistance crumbled.

Except for having to scooch my expansion memory card just a tad, installing **Focus 80** in the (preferred) Slot 7 position was the proverbial 'snap': no cables, power supplies, etc. to mess with. I set Startup Slot to "Scan", booted, and viola! was at the System 6 desktop in a little under 20 seconds. On the desktop were CONNOR80.1 and two more 26+MB hard drives just waiting to be loaded with HyperStudio, AppleWorks GS, Platinum Paint, (Lost Treasures of Infocom, Space Fox, Super Convert, ORCA Logo-3D) ... . WOW!

Focus 80 comes set up as three "drives" (partitions) with System 6 plus utilities to do 'low level formatting' and change partitioning— you can have up to eight "drives" if you like. (The Focus utils are also supplied on a separate diskette.)

Otherwise, except for a folder of miscellaneous 'golden oldie' utilities (e.g. Lifeguard), the new hard drives are empty.

The Trash icon is replaced by Bill the Cat (who makes a spitting sound and opens his mouth when you 'trash' a file) and a Focus Control Panel lets you set disk-ON time-out. (If the hard drive is not accessed within the "time-out" period, it turns OFF to reduce power supply stress and heating.) I did some checking and found that most of the time-out choices are really twice the actual period recognized. (For "2 minutes", the drive turns OFF after 1 minute of inactivity, etc..) Bill Parsons assured me this minor bug will be fixed.

As for heating, etc., my machine (including accelerator card, stereo board, ... and System Saver IIgs) has the original power supply and I noticed no problems during several long-use sessions. Re-revving the hard drive after a time-out OFF takes an extra 5 seconds; so, I generally set Time-Out to "Never" (always ON) unless I'm planning a lot of 'old-II' activity (such as playing a DOS 3.3 game).

Since **Focus 80** represents my only experience with current Apple II hard drives, comparison with other available units is not possible. I can say the '80's speed numbers compare VERY favorably with those for some popular units tested by in Cider several months ago. As to Noise, a frequent complaint of many HD users, the Parson's drive is practically silent! Including manual and diskette, this is an impressive product at an impressively reasonable price. (And, "educational users" can get significant discounts.) If you're ready to multiply your IIgs computing power, plug in Focus 80!

Encarta ★★★★
$395.00 list, for 2MB VGA-SVGA '386 PC

Microsoft

A review by J. R. Bruton

When I was in public school and had to do a report on geography, history, or whatever the teachers assigned the class, my chief information resource was an encyclopedia. After completing the task, rather than putting away the books, I would start browsing if only to look at the pictures.

My first experiences with **Encarta** have been much the same. Microsoft's encyclopedia on a CD-ROM contains a big chunk of the text from Funk & Wagnall's 29-volume "New Encyclopedia" (1992). But, in the world of multimedia, you also find 256-color high resolution pictures, animations, voices, and sound effects! More than ever, the user is enticed to jump from topic to topic— there are

more than 25,000— to read, view, hear, and explore.

No question, a database and Windows + Multimedia constitutes a new, more powerful genre of information software; and, as usual, "new" and "more powerful" translate into enhanced hardware requirements. Microsoft states that Encarta needs at least a '386 PC, 2MB of RAM, VGA monitor, hard drive, sound card, and an MPC (Multimedia PC) standard CD-ROM drive. The system I use is a 33MHz '486 with 8MB RAM, local bus video, and a Sound Blaster Pro with CD-ROM MPC kit.

Access delays run about 5-10 seconds for most topic lookups. Delays on the same order (roughly 5-15 seconds) apply for loading optional demonstrations (e.g. of the Bernoulli Principal), music samples for a composer, foreign language examples, etc.. 'Blazing speed'? No; but, then, similar timings hold for more complex tasks, such as doing an encyclopedia-wide references search! The bottleneck is the standard 150KB/sec CD transfer limit; so, anyone just now looking to add MPC capabilities should consider spending a bit more to get one of the newer "double speed" CD-ROM drives. Of course, if your system is still sloughing along on 2-3MB, the quickest way to speed up Encarta (or any Windows program) is to load up on RAM!

Installing Encarta involves little more than starting Windows and executing Setup from the CD-ROM (typically, drive D:). About 5.5MB of quick access support stuff is written to an "Encarta" subdirectory on hard disk and the "Microsoft Multimedia" folder appears on the desktop. Here you find icons for a Quick Tour, READ.ME tips, and the encyclopedia itself.
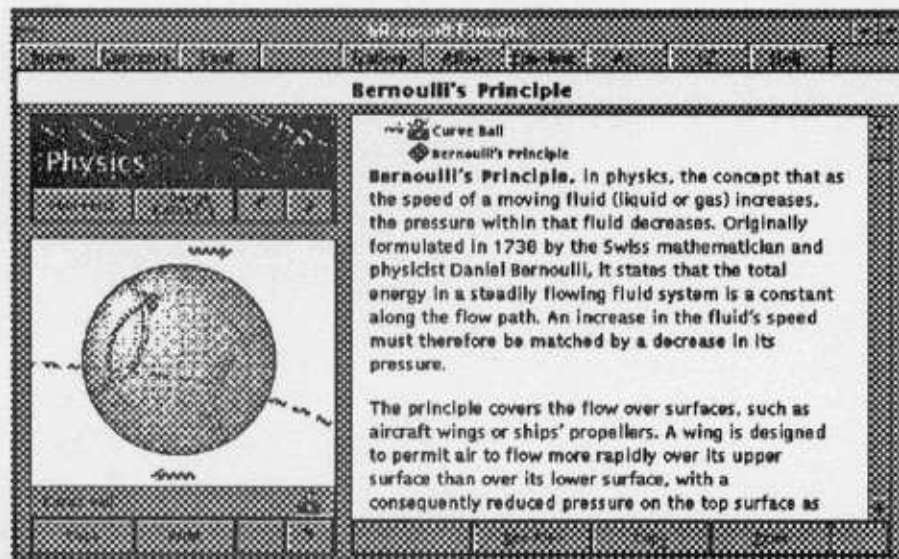
To run the program you just double click on the Encarta icon. The easiest way to get to a subject of interest is to select "Contents" and start typing in the item you wish to look up. As you type the letters, topics appear on the current contents list based on your input. Usually, your topic will show up long before you've typed in the complete heading; and, you can click it— a very handy feature, especially if you are not sure of an item's correct spelling! Want to 'branch out' your explorations? Just click the "Show List" box to get a display of related (clickable) topics.

Suppose you want to look into an item which may not appear as a topic? Or, perhaps, you want to zero-in on entries which contain a pair of items (for example, find entries with "Bees" AND "Honey"), or look for just pictures, ... or otherwise tailor your search. Just click "Find" and you'll soon have a list of

topics whose entries include the target item(s).

Sometimes, what you really want is 'the big view'. For example, when you are trying to decide upon a Social Studies project, you do NOT want to look at every possible topic! One approach is to click "Timeline" and scroll (left-right) through the multi-track presentation which begins at 10,000 B.C.. If some period or milestone looks like a good prospect, clicking on text or an icon can 'bring it to life' with a discussion, images, and maps.

A more general 'big view' solution is Encarta's Category Browser. Among the nine Interest Areas you will find the sciences, mathematics, arts, ... along with (since you're doing a Social Studies project) "History", "Geography", and "Social Science". Clicking an IA icon produces up to fifteen Categories (e.g. "Explorations and Explorers"); and, clicking a Category results in a scrollable list of topics. With just a few clicks you have 'stacks' of project ideas AND you get a good idea of available information resources for each!

Bernoulli's Principle

Physics

Curve Ball
Bernoulli's Principle
Bernoulli's Principle. In physics, the concept that as the speed of a moving fluid (liquid or gas) increases, the pressure within that fluid decreases. Originally formulated in 1738 by the Swiss mathematician and physicist Daniel Bernoulli, it states that the total energy in a steadily flowing fluid system is a constant along the flow path. An increase in the fluid's speed must therefore be matched by a decrease in its pressure.

The principle covers the flow over surfaces, such as aircraft wings or ships' propellers. A wing is designed to permit air to flow more rapidly over its upper surface than over its lower surface, with a consequently reduced pressure on the top surface as

Naturally, all or part of an entry's scrollable text can be lifted, pasted into Encarta's on-line Word Processor, printed, and/or sent to some other Windows application. The same goes for charts and pictures, which can be pasted into WP documents along with text. Or, you might capture a pic to the Clip Board, hop to another Windows application like PaintShop Pro, process and save the picture in any of several formats, and hop back into Encarta, all in less than a minute! Even the sound tracks can be copied.

The interface to do all of this becomes second nature after a few minutes— of course, since Encarta 'works just like Windows'. To answer any questions there's on-line Help, a colorful Quick Reference card, and two cute Getting Started booklets (featuring the legendary Quick Brown Fox). Mainly, such materials supply helpful reminders, clue you in to additional features (like the Reference Wizard to configure searches, the on-line Atlas, bookmarks, ...), and describe shortcuts. As

with other Windows applications, the buttons, lists, etc. 'look like what they do', the system delivers rapid feedback, and, even a total novice isn't going to 'ruin the program' with a miss-click. In short, you are free to learn about using Encarta by using it!

Does Encarta replace major multi-volume encyclopedia sets? Sometimes. (Certainly, its handsome book-size case takes less space!) The books, with tissue-thin sheets and small print, pack a good deal more text and can show more pictures and charts. Encarta's topic entries are, generally, briefer; but the program can bring together entries— plus maps, pictures, charts, demonstrations, sounds, ...— so quickly that many topics can 'acquire' depth of coverage rivaling that offered via book sets.

I was amazed at the amount of text, sound, and graphics information contained on Encarta's one CD. It is my understanding that Microsoft uses a special compression technique called "fractal imaging" to pack in piles of pictures. So, when I looked up "Arizona", there were

excellent shots of the Grand Canyon to supplement the text. Checking "U.S. Presidents" produced photographs plus actual sound track excerpts from some speeches! Whether it's tracking down Transylvania, comparing classical composers, checking out flute design, discovering principles of flight ..... the odds are good that you'll find what you want in Encarta. This may be just a discussion to satisfy curiosity; or, for students, "everything" may cover what's needed for an A+ report. And, since many topics come with extensive bibliographies, those pursuing in-depth research will discover a flexible, responsive launching point.

Encarta is a new breed of computer software. It is not a game, although a trivia game is included in the package. It is not 'business software' either; nor is it a dry data collection. Encarta IS a slick information resource that turns your PC into a versatile, fun-to-use reference tool you WILL use! Encarta deserves its high recommendation.

Fast Frames, Updates, Etc.

Award Notice!!! (Ta-ta-taaa-ta-taaa)

The ballots have at last been counted; and, the 1992 **Programming Anomaly of the Year Award** goes to the "Amazon" project managers, programmers, and arcade-ace play testers. Nearly all members of the Academy agreed that setting speed for action sequences at two to three times comfortable adventure player levels 'did the trick'.

True, one younger voter objected "Hey, it's still a pretty good game." "Piffle", shot back a glitch-hardened veteran, "that's the whole point; you take a really great product and ZAP it with some easy-to-spot, easily fixed near-bug. Why, the speed thing probably involves only a few bytes; yet, it's guaranteed to send your typical 'arcade skill challenged' adventure player right up the wall in frustration. If that's not award-grade anomalyzing I'll eat my hat!"

I must concur. Also known as "The Thexder No-Joystick Control Memorial Trophy", the splendid torpedo-shaped monolith is nowhere more richly merited.

[WARNING: As always, should evidence reach PM offices of tampering to remove the cited anomalies (e.g. in some fawning attempt to curry a four-star rating), this award will be withdrawn, notice published, and all rights and privileges accruing to said award forfeited.]

ACCESSing SVGA Golf
★★★★

It's taken several months, but, now, nearly all Access Links courses are available in stunning 256-color 640x480 SVGA. Good thing! There just hasn't been time for much jetting around to the tour sites this year. Here are the SVGA courses I've tried:

Set in North Carolina, Pinehurst's #2 is a par 72 challenge whose pine-lined fairways lead you up down and around to a series of undulating greens. With accuracy and a little luck, you won't spend too much time bouncing shots off trees in the woods.

The Belfry's par 73 Brabazon in Wishaw, England caters to big-hitters. Be ready to thread a few water hazards and rocky bunker on the way to some tricky multi-tiered greens.

Built on a solid lava base, the par 72 **Mauna Kea** takes you on a tour of Hawaii's Kohala Coast including a spectacular third hole oceanside cliff-to-cliff challenge. Watch out for the palm trees which compete with bunkers and craggy rough to

trap errant shots along the rolling greens.

Innisbrook's Copperhead at Tarpon Springs, Florida is a par 71 oak-woods wonderland of lakelets and bridges. Beware the Copperhead's twists and streams.

Winding along Alberta, Canada's Bow River, the par 71 **Banff Springs** course employs fir tree and water hazards to reward accuracy. The par 3 "Devil's Cauldron" hole offers a special challenge.

Firestone and **Pebble Beach** are also available in SVGA; but, I haven't played the new versions yet.

Each course ($29.95) is compatible with **Links**, **Links 386 Pro**, and **Microsoft Golf** for **Windows**; and, each comes with an authentic score card, which usually includes a handy map. Also on-diskette you will obtain the current main program upgrade as of the course release date. (If the version is more recent than the one you're using, the course install program offers to do the upgrade.) As of the last time I checked, we are at version 1.10.

Mike's Magic Chip Shot Chart

Just in time for the '94 season Computist's own resident Links pro, Mike McLelland, has developed a super-accurate chip shot guide. Use it and win!

Next

Expect Sir Tech's **Crusaders of the Dark Savant**, SSI's **'Prophecy**, and Interplay's **Battle Chess/Multi-media** plus, as usual, ... More!

Vendors

Access Software: 4910 W. Amelia Earhart Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84116 atten: Susan Dunn (800-800-4880/801-359-2900)

Accolade: 5300 Stevens Creek Blvd., San Jose, CA 95129 atten: Melinda Mongelluzzo (408-985-1700; orders: 800-245-7744)

Activision/Infocom: 11440 San Vincente Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049 atten: Tricia Wright (310-207-4500)

Domark: 5300 Stevens Creek Blvd., San Jose, CA 95129 atten: Caryn Mical (408-985-1700; orders: 800-245-7744)

Epyx: 600 Allerton St., P.O. Box 8020, Redwood City, CA 94063 atten: William Lanphear IV (415-368-3200)

Honneywell: 4171 N. Mesa, Building D, El Paso, TX 79902 atten: Mary Jo Farell (915-543-5503)

I-Motion: 1333 Ocean Avenue, Suite J, Santa Monica, CA 90401 atten: Marie Atake (310-306-1600)

Interplay Productions: 17922 Fitch Avenue, Irvine, CA 92714 atten: Ann Emmerth (714-553-

6655; orders: 800-969-GAME) Fall '92

New World Computing: 29800 Agoura Road, Suite 200, Agoura Hills, CA 91301 atten: Scott McDaniel (818-889-5600)

Origin Systems: 110 Wild Basin Road, Suite 330, Austin, TX 78746 atten: Wayne Baker (800-999-4939)

Parsons Engineering: 5010 Rimhurst Ave., Covina, CA 91724 atten: Steven Parsons (818-966-5538)

Product Monitor: 7814 Santa Elena, Houston, TX 77061 atten: Jeff Hurlburt (713-645-8680)

Quality Computers: 20200 Nine Mile Road, St, Clair Shores, MI 48080 atten: Walker Archer (313-774-7200; orders: 800-443-6697)

Sierra On-Line: Coarsegold, CA 93614 atten: Anita Green (209-683-4468)

Strategic Simulations Inc.: 675 Almandor Ave, Sunnyvale, CA 94086 atten: Tricia Perez (408-737-6800) dist: Electronic Arts

Ubi Soft: 1505 Bridgeway, Suite 105, Sausalito, CA 94965 atten: Mary Lynn Slattery (415-332-8749)

CHIP SHOT POWER	8 Club		9 Club		Pitch Wedge		Sand Wedge		
	h	s	h	s	h	s	h	s	
Max	49 43	45 43	41 36	38 36	34 29	31 29	73 62	65 62	⇐Total ⇦in the air
3	41 35	37 35	35 30	32 30	29 25	27 25	63 54	57 54	
2.5	31 27	29 27	27 23	25 23	23 20	21 20	48 40	43 40	
2	22 19	20 19	56 48	51 48	47 40	43 40	34 28	30 28	
1.5	44 36	40 36	38 32	35 32	31 26	28 26	19 18	17 18	
1	21 17	19 17	22 15	18 15	15 12	14 12	10 8	9 8	
	h= hard greens				s= soft greens				

Mike's Magic Chip Shot Maker for Links '386

Walt Disney Computer Software: 500 South Buena Vista, Burbank, CA 91521 atten: Kirk Green (orders: 800-688-1520; 818-973-4015)

Waggener Edstrom: 2880 Lakeside Drive, Suite 117, Santa Clara, CA 95054 atten: Sue Barnes (408-986-1140)

Jack R. Nissel   **PA**

Softkey for...

Computer Literacy

Control Data Publishing Company

Requirements:
The original disk
A blank initialized disk
A blank initialized slave disk
Super IOB v1.5
A way to reset into the monitor
The controller listed below

To deprotect this title we will use Super IOB with the Swap Controller and use the RWTS of the protected disk to read the original disk then use a normal RWTS to write the information back to your blank disk.

1. INITialize your blank disk
INIT APCOMLIT.START.6502
DELETE APCOMLIT.START.6502

2. Boot your original disk and at the Applesoft prompt reset into the monitor.

3. Move the RWTS to a safe place by entering:
1900<B800.BFFFM

4. Put in your slave disk and enter:
C600G

5. After the disk boots and the Applesoft prompt appears insert your Super IOB disk and save the RWTS to it by entering:
BSAVE RWTS.COMPUTER LITERACY, A$1900, L$800

6. Install the controller into Super IOB, run it and copy your original disk to your blank disk. Answer NO when asked if you want to INITialize the blank disk.

CONTROLLER
```
1000 REM COMPUTER LITERACY
1010 TK = 3:ST = 0:LT =
     35:CD = WR
1020 T1 = TK: GOSUB 490:
     GOSUB 360: ONERR GOTO
     550
1030 GOSUB 430: GOSUB
     100:ST = ST + 1: IF ST <
     DOS THEN 1030
1040 IF BF THEN 1060
1050 ST = 0:TK = TK + 1:
     IF TK < LT THEN 1030
1060 GOSUB 490:TK = T1:ST
     = 0: GOSUB 360
1070 GOSUB 430: GOSUB
     100:ST = ST + 1: IF ST <
     DOS THEN 1070
1080 ST = 0:TK = TK + 1:
     IF BF = 0 AND TK < LT
     THEN 1070
1090 IF TK < LT THEN
     10201100 HOME : PRINT
     "COPY◊DONE" : END
10010 IF PEEK (6400) < >
     162 THEN PRINT CHR$ (4)
     "BLOAD◊RWTS.COMPUTER◊
     LITERACY,A$1900"
```

Checksums
1000-$356B	1040-$6342	1080-$6CA2
1010-$3565	1050-$ABA3	1090-$496E
1020-$6170	1060-$20C0	10010-$8DD7
1030-$7771	1070-$28C5	

Softkey for...

Focus on Physical Science
Focus on Life Science
Focus on Earth Science

Merrill Publishing Company

Requirements:
The original disks
4 blank sides for each title
Super IOB v1.5
The controller shown below.
DOS 3.3 system master

Jim Hart told me about the similarity of the protection of these programs to the protection of Word Attack and when I tried the controller in issue 46 of Computist that was written for Word Attack it normalized these programs for me.

1. Boot your DOS 3.3 system master and at the Applesoft prompt put a blank disk in the drive and enter:
INIT HELLO
DELETE HELLO

Do this for all four sides of your blank disks

2. Install the controller into Super IOB, run it and copy all four sides of your original program to your blank disks. Answer NO when asked if you want to INITialize the blank disk.

CONTROLLER
```
1000 REM FOCUS LIFE,
     PHYSICAL, EARTH SCIENCE
1010 TK = 3:LT = 4:ST =
     15:LS = 15:CD = WR
1020 POKE 47405,24: POKE
     47406,96: POKE 47497,24:
     POKE 47498,96
1030 POKE 47829,3:T1 = TK:
     GOSUB 490: GOSUB 210
1040 GOSUB 190: GOSUB 610
1050 TK = TK + 1:LT = LT +
     1: IF PEEK (BUF) < MB
     AND TK < 35 THEN 1040
1060 POKE 47405,208: POKE
     47406,19: POKE 47497,208
     : POKE 47498,183: POKE
     47829,213: GOSUB 230
1070 TK = T1:LT = 35:
     GOSUB 490: GOSUB 610: IF
     PEEK (TRK) = LT THEN
     1090
1080 TK = PEEK (TRK):ST =
     PEEK (SCT):LT = TK + 1:
     GOTO 1020
1090 HOME : PRINT "COPY◊
     DONE" : END
5000 DATA 213,170,181,215,
     170,151,213,170,150,213
     ,170,151,215,170,150
5010 DATA 215,170,151,221,
     170,158,221,170,159,213,
     170,181,223,170,158
5020 DATA 223,170,159,221,
     170,158,221,170,159,223,
     170,158,223,170,159
5030 DATA 213,170,150,213,
     170,181,213,170,151,215,
     170,150,215,170,151
5040 DATA 213,170,150,213,
     170,151,215,170,150,215,
     170,151,213,170,181
5050 DATA 221,170,158,221,
     170,159,223,170,158,223,
     170,159,221,170,158
5060 DATA 221,170,159,223,
     170,158,213,170,181,223,
     170,159,245,170,182
5070 DATA 245,170,183,247,
     170,182
```

Checksums
1000-$356B	1060-$044B	5020-$B8EB
1010-$3189	1070-$B732	5030-$C2D7
1020-$C562	1080-$045C	5040-$2755
1030-$545E	1090-$50E7	5050-$C31C
1040-$DDB4	5000-$C979	5060-$735C
1050-$A5C8	5010-$0053	5070-$BF41

3. When you get the Applesoft prompt after copying your original enter RUN and press return. You will be all set to copy the next side of the program.