



SIERRA

NEWS

MAGAZINE

Volume 3, Number 1

Spring 1990

SIERRA

TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Issue

1980-1990

THE SIERRA NEWS MAGAZINE

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The *Sierra News Magazine* is published for the dealers and customers of Sierra On-Line, Inc.
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Sierra On-Line stock is listed on the
NASDAQ Exchange as SIER.

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You may reach the hint system by dialing **1-900-370-KLUE**. Our California customers need to call **1-900-370-5113**. ALL hint questions MUST be directed to the previously mentioned "900" numbers, as there will be NO hints given on our Customer Service lines. This service is available 24 hours a day. The charge for this service will be 75 cents for the 1st minute and 50 cents for every additional minute. Long distance charges are included in this fee. **Callers under the age of 18 must get their parent's permission before calling the hint line.** At this time, the automated hint system is only available within the United States.

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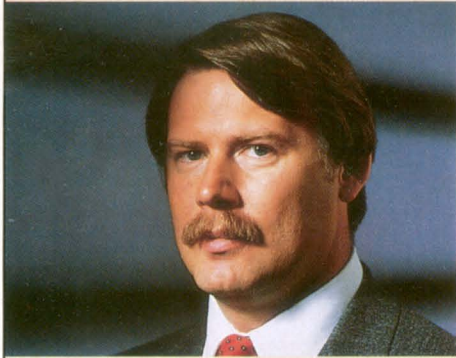
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Sierra News Magazine

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



By Ken Williams

This year, Sierra is celebrating its tenth anniversary as a software company. Simultaneously, Brøderbund and Origin Systems are also celebrating theirs. I really can't recall any other software companies that have been around that long except Microsoft and Digital Research. There are no companies I can think of celebrating their eleventh, twelfth or umpteenth anniversary. The personal computer software industry is only a little over ten years old.

Through the years numerous magazine articles and books have told the history of Sierra. What I've tried to do here is to document the evolution in the computer and software industry that has taken place during my career. Separately in this newsmagazine are articles by Doug Carlston, President of Brøderbund, about the industry's early days and by my brother, John Williams, about Sierra's growth as a company. I hope you enjoy our nostalgic memories.

For a person interested in computers there cannot have been a better time to have been born. My career in the computer industry began at a time that allowed me to witness, in a very compressed time period, the complete evolution of the computer industry.

My first memory, vaguely recollect, of a computer goes back twenty years to 1969 when for some reason I received a tour of the UCLA college

campus. I was in ninth grade in high school. The college had a computer of some sort with a teletype machine attached to it. On that machine was a game called Star Trek. It was based very loosely on the TV show and was displayed entirely in text on a teletype (think of it as an extremely slow typewriter). You could pilot a spaceship through the galaxy battling Klingons. I fell in love, knowing even then that my future would be in computers.

In 1972, after a brief stint in college, computers were well along in their evolution. It was not unusual to find large mainframe computers filling whole rooms. My first jobs were in the Los Angeles area working for service bureaus. What a service bureau did was to provide data processing services for companies too small to have their own computer. Remember that in those days almost any computer was a million dollar purchase and that very few companies could afford one of their own. So instead they would send their work out to a service bureau who would provide services to hundreds of businesses.

The service bureaus I worked for had a combination of "state of the art" equipment and left over junk from the early days. Being inexperienced, I was the one who operated and programmed the junk machines.

Have you ever seen a deck of computer cards? They are 8" by 5" cards with 80 columns of holes, each column representing one letter or number. During the seventies the computer industry was heavily dependent on cards. To this day, even on personal computers, you find little details, such as the default size of text files at 80 columns, that only make sense when you remember that the industry's roots are in decks of cards. Some of my first programming assignments were to physically arrange wires in a patch board so that two decks of cards could get merged together in a proper sequence.

For instance, if your company had a mailing list, you would punch each customer's name and address into a card. Your customer list would be represented by a deck of cards with little holes in them. We had another machine that would sort the cards. And we had a machine that would read a card at a time and display it on the printer. When you added a new customer we could either sort the entire deck of cards or sort just today's additions and then merge them into the big deck.

Can you imagine this? I don't believe I saw my first tape drive connected to a computer until 1974. Tapes were great. You could put an entire customer list on ONE TAPE! The reels of tape were 3/4" thick and about ten inches around. The tape decks stood about six feet tall and were incredibly noisy. An incredible experience in those days was to watch a sort in progress on a tape drive. You have to visualize this. We have a customer list on tape. What is actually on the tape is an exact magnetic copy of thousands of cards each representing one customer. Somehow we want to sort this list from the random sequence it is now in into zip code sequence. At most, computers in those days (which my current employer could afford) had 1 to 2K of memory. Obviously you couldn't read the tape into memory. So, what you did was to use multiple tape drives, usually three. This would be a fun program for the hackers amongst you to write. Sorting in those days was a big part of our lives. Data processing really came down to: punch it on a card, load it on a tape, merge it into to master data base, and print it.

Somewhere in the mid 1970's Roberta started working as a computer operator and later as a computer programmer. Roberta was a great computer operator but an OK programmer.

Continued on page 35

Paul Mace
GRAPHIC SOFTWARE

King of Arts

It's your turn to get creative. GRASP, the multimedia system for IBM PCs and compatibles, let's you do it all. Draw backgrounds and characters, then animate them. Add music and sound effects. Program keyboard and mouse responses to create your own games!

GRASP makes animation easy, with simple commands to display, fade, and move images on screen. GRASP includes PICTOR, the paint program that lets you create your own images; CAP, which captures screens from other programs and games; and INSET, which prints images on your printer! And with GRASP you can add studio-quality sound accompaniment through your music card or CD-ROM player.

Need more? GRASP has all the features of Basic, C, and other programming languages. Keep track of scores, display text, and get user input from the keyboard and mouse. GRASP works in CGA, EGA, VGA, and extended VGA modes, up to 800x600 and 1024x768.

GRASP version 3.5 -- \$199 plus \$6 S/H.
Hard disk and 256K RAM required.



"Grasp is clearly the hands-down winner in terms of sheer power, flexibility, and speed. Nothing else even comes close."

—PC Magazine

**THE
FIRST
TEN
YEARS**

1979

June

- Apple releases the Apple II+ with 48K (*Ken's first computer*)
- CompuServe enters the information service industry
- Apple releases first printer - *Silentype*

1980

March

- Apple FORTRAN released

May

- Ken and Roberta release

Mystery House

September

- Apple 3 released
- Sierra (*On-Line Systems*) releases its first action game

1981

March

- Sierra (*On-Line Systems*) releases its first word processor

August

- IBM PC released

1982

April

- Sierra wins Video Magazine's Arcade Award for *Jawbreaker*

September

- Sierra wins Softsel Hot List Best Seller Award for **Frogger**

1983

January

- Apple releases Lisa computer

March

- IBM PC XT released
- Apple IIe released

April

- Apple hires John Scully
- Sierra wins Electronic Games Magazine's Certificate of Merit for Best Arcade/Action Computer Game for **Crossfire**
- Sierra moves headquarters from Coarsegold, CA to Oakhurst, CA

SIERRA'S

FIRST

A Relatively Long Article on the Short

by John Williams as told to Marti McKenna

The story of the beginnings of Sierra On-Line has been told a dozen times over the last years. There was the first profile of Ken and Roberta in September 1980 of now defunct (but then all powerful) *Softalk Magazine*. There were the accounts of their growth published in the book *Hackers*, and the book *Software People*, and a variety of articles in such publications as the Wall St. Journal and People Magazine. A number of these accounts were written by myself for inclusion in Sierra's catalog and this magazine, and even more of them appeared in the industry journals that seem to come and go with the emergence of each new personal computer.

For those hundreds of thousands (perhaps millions) of Sierra game players that have read those accounts, I offer a different view of the emergence, adolescence, and now some would say dominance, of the software company that people now know as Sierra On-Line, Inc.

For the record, my name is Williams too (just like Ken and Roberta). The first name is John. I'm the Williams you haven't heard of or from, working behind the scenes as a marketer and promoter of the products of Sierra. I was an observer of Ken and Roberta long before they got involved in the computer software industry. (*As the joke goes, I've known Ken since practically the day I was born*). I've seen a side of the emergence of this company that few others have seen.

In The Beginning — A Call From Ken

In early 1980, when Ken and Roberta launched the company that would be known as Sierra On-Line, Inc., I actually had had very little contact with them. Their home was the small town of Simi in southern California, thousands of miles away from Illinois where I was going to school. The first I learned of the company was in May of that year when my oldest brother, Ken, gave me a call that would change my life.

I'd like to say that it was a momentous conversation, but that wasn't the way it seemed at the time. It went more along the lines of Ken on the phone saying "*Hey John, Roberta and I wrote this piece of software and the computer stores out here seem to sorta like it. If I send you a few copies of it, would you sort of, you know . . . show it around to the computer stores out there?*"

My response was "*Uh, sure . . . I guess*" and a little later in the conversation I learned from Ken that software was something that ran on computers. At the end of the call, I remember that I had no idea what the software did, what it looked like, or even what a computer store was. I looked "computers" up in the Yellow Pages, found a list of what I assumed to be computer stores, and looked for Ken's package to me in the mail. In doing this, I unknowingly became the first-ever "distributor" of On-Line Systems (*as Sierra was then known*) products outside the state of California.

The product was, as those familiar with the story know, **Mystery House**. I examined the package as soon as I got it, and it claimed that what I would find inside was a computer game.

To be honest, this surprised me. Ken didn't have a fun bone in his body back then (*he was a chronic workaholic*). I'd have expected it to be a database or a compiler (*whatever those*

TEN YEARS

History of Sierra On-Line, Inc.

were). Anyway, I took it to the Computerland in Downers Grove, Illinois the next day. The rest (*for me at least*), was history.

Wherever I visited a computer store, be it Peoria, Illinois or New Orleans, Louisiana, the game was a hit. Never mind that I had to hand the game disk to the retailer I was trying to “sell” the game to because I didn’t know how to boot a game disk from BASIC. I always walked out of the store with an order. It seemed that Roberta and Ken had written a game that all those Apple owners out there (*of which we knew there were at least 50,000*) definitely wanted to play.

Software Capital of the World - COARSEGOLD, CALIFORNIA???

Around Christmas of 1980, Ken invited me to join Roberta and him in a little town where he had moved. I loaded up my Pinto station wagon for the ride. I arrived about the 12th of December as On-Line Systems **Employee Number 0001**.

It didn’t seem like a good move at the time. I earned more in a month distributing Ken’s games than I would in my first year as a company employee. Also, the company was based out of this itty bitty little town called Coarsegold, California. Our facility was a cramped 10x10 room.

It was pretty dismal and definitely not high-tech (a word I learned much later). It was not an auspicious beginning for the company that would become the town’s—and the county’s—biggest employer.

From the first few years, all I can remember of the company is its steady growth. We went from one employee (*yours truly*) to two, to ten, and so on. We even hired a real computer programmer after about six months (*Warren Schwader, who’s still with the company*) and a few “customer support” people to help us handle the volume of calls we got for adventure game hints each day.

As our facility got more professional, we moved to automated equipment. At first “automated” meant that we started using something called “Seal A Meal” (*a kitchen appliance that melted plastic bags closed*) instead of putting our disks in Zip-Lock baggies. Inside of a year, we had no less than

two “state-of-the-art” dual disk drive Apple II systems. This cut our duplication time to under 5 minutes per disk, and we were finally able to keep up with demand for our products.

The Early Success

We were all excited that the business was booming. Our success at the office of course meant some rewards at home too.

There was the day that Ken bought the first desks and chairs for the company, and I got to take my dining room table home. Ken never did take his bar stools and floor lamps home, but he owned the place.

When we made the “big switch” from TVs to computer monitors at the office and stopped using portable TVs, I watched television at my house for the first time in years. I remember that some people at the office didn’t think the move to these computer “monitors” was such a good idea.

I even remember the giddy and giggly party Ken had the day we hired our twenty sixth employee (*the last company Ken had worked for had only employed 25*). It had a “cowboy” theme, and we all wore cowboy hats (*which isn’t at all out of place in our*



Some early Sierra staff members in a relaxed moment circa 1981. SCI system co-developer Jeff Stephenson is third from the left, and a very young John Williams is on the far right.

small town). We invited the whole industry and everyone came. The area only had about 15 hotel rooms then, so much of the

1984

January

- Macintosh 512K released
- Sierra releases *King's Quest I*, its first 3-D Animated Adventure Game

August

- IBM PC AT released

April

- Apple IIc released
- Sierra wins Family Computing Magazine's Critic's Choice Award for *BC's Quest for Tires*

November

- Tandy 1000 released

1985

April

- King's Quest II* released

Summer

- Atari releases the 520ST
- Sierra moves headquarters from Golden Oak Drive to the Sierra Professional Building
- Commodore releases the Amiga
- Sierra wins Family Computing Magazine's Critic's Choice Award for *Fuzzywomp*

1986

September

- IBM PC XT/286 released
- Atari releases the 1040ST

April

- Apple releases the enhanced Macintosh 512K

September

- Apple IIGS released

November

- King's Quest III* ships

1987

April

- IBM PS/2 line introduced (including the PS/2 Model 70/386)
- Atari begins shipping MEGA computers
- Sierra wins Software Publishers Association award for *Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards*
- Sierra wins Softsel Hot List Hottest Product Award for *King's Quest III*

industry slept on the floor of my living room that night. Others stayed at one of the many "programmer houses" Ken had bought to house company employees, and a few even slept in their old campers and Volkswagen vans (*it was a very different industry then*). A whole bunch of "the industry" even spent the weekend with us, going to nearby Yosemite [National Park], and doing some early water skiing on local Bass Lake.

For a while, it seemed that the world was our oyster and that, as hard as we tried, we just couldn't do anything wrong. Sure, we had a few games that didn't sell the way we wanted them to (*one of our games called Theology had ended up selling less than 100 copies*) and we also had some legal hassles (*because of copyright issues we had to rename our first word processor from SuperScript, to SuperScribe, and finally to ScreenWriter*), but in general, business was great. Our competitors were our friends (*there was plenty of business for all*). The computer companies loved us, and the public just couldn't seem to get enough of our software.

Our First Lawsuit

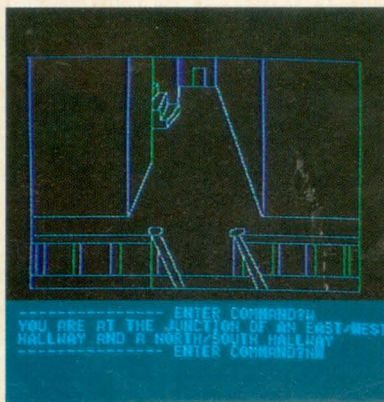
Somewhere around 1982, the company hit its first rough spot. We were like a five-year-old on our first day of school. It seemed that the fun was over . . . now we had a lot to learn.

Around that time, we met our first bully. It was the big kid on the block, Atari. We made the mistake of selling a game that looked a whole lot like one of theirs (*ours was a truly original and fun game called Gobbler, theirs a virtually unknown game called "Pac" something or other*).

We were young and sort of foolish, and we thought we could take on this big company. Unfortunately, Atari had these lawyers (*about ten of them*) and we didn't. Atari sued us for trademark infringement, counterfeiting, copyright violation and everything else they could think of.

Along with the "preliminary injunction" that the Atari lawyers sought, they also had gotten a judge to send Federal Marshalls up to Sierra to confiscate our "counterfeiting machines" (*which meant any computer we had on the premises*). Not knowing we could go to jail for it, we hid the computers in the trunks of our cars. The loss of revenue associated with having our computer equipment confiscated was meant to cut off all our revenue. However, our heavy legal fees might well have done the job themselves.

When it went to court, it was an interesting situation. We were young, upstart hackers facing one of the finest pinstriped legal teams in the nation. When I look back at the time, I realize that we didn't eventually "win" the Atari case, we (*computer hackers*) were just such a new phenomenon that we literally confused both our opposing counsel and the courts into submission.



The graphics in Sierra's first game offering, "Mystery House", look crude in comparison to today's products, but the whole concept of text + graphics was pretty revolutionary in 1980!

Ken and Roberta attend the 1989 Software Publishers' Association Awards Banquet and walk off with the "Best Adventure or Fantasy Role-Playing Game" award for *King's Quest IV*.



Rather than go into the case and the various arguments, this piece of the trial proceedings, where an Atari Lawyer tries to get Ken to produce the initial design documents on our game, just about says it all . . .

ATARI LAWYER (to Ken): *Isn't it a fact that typically the programmer who designs these games at least produces a flow chart then writes out the source code manually prior to punching it in?*

KEN: *No.*

ATARI LAWYER (trying to be sarcastic): *You mean they simply sit down at the keyboard and write the program???*

KEN: *My programmers are too lazy to make any sort of a flow chart. In most cases, they don't even know where they're going when they start a program. They just try to get a routine working then put in a background, and from that they usually move toward some game.*

Exchanges like this, along with the fact that our programmers couldn't even find their source code or other initial programming code (they didn't label their disks and there was no such thing as a "hard disk" then), combined into a favorable verdict. The judge declared that there wasn't enough evidence around for Atari to make any sort of claim to anything. I think he was just hopelessly confused by it all . . .

If Atari had won this legal battle, the whole company would likely have been lost to them, and the company known as Sierra wouldn't exist today. Instead, the action makes a great story, and resulted in one of the biggest collector's items in the lore of the company—it's a baseball-style 3/4 length sleeved tee-shirt with the simple inscription "On-Line: 1, Atari: 0."

Eventually, of course, Ken voluntarily overturned the Atari vs. On-Line Systems verdict, acknowledging that Atari did in fact have an "intellectual copyright" to the design of this computer game. It was the first legal decision over whether one computer company could "own" a computer design (at least if they could own a screen that had a little guy in a maze munching dots with things chasing him) and it could have served as a legal precedent



Although we have outgrown the Sierra Professional Building, it still houses our Quality Assurance and Public Relations Departments, and several Game Development teams.

Some early Sierra products and awards — the beginnings of a continuing trend of innovation and excellence.

in the numerous "look and feel" lawsuits currently running around the industry.

Instead, it is virtually ignored by the legal community—which is probably just as well.

For those who are interested, this period of Sierra's history is very well chronicled in a book called *Hackers* by a guy named Steve Levy. (Steve actually lived in my house when he wrote the book). I'm a little embarrassed by what's written in it, to be quite honest. It's sort of like when your Mom brings out your baby pictures to show to your friends (and proceeds to tell them how hard you were to potty train). We did a lot of just plain dumb stuff back then. We were lucky enough to grow out of most of it. Sierra was fun then (sort of like a fraternity or a summer camp) but we grew up before we knew it.

Sierra Grows Up

It was early 1982, and Sierra couldn't keep up with the demand for its products. We were growing out of our office space quicker than we could find new space (there was less than 5,000 feet of office space in the whole town then). Our sales were often held back because we couldn't afford enough raw materials to build product. Just as we were sure that the company couldn't take any more growth, along came the big company — IBM. We had to grow, and we needed money to do it.

We learned the meaning of the word "venture capital" that year. No one here at the office ever quite figured out how Ken did it, but he made a deal with financial wizard Jacqui Morby of prestigious **TA Associates** of Boston, and took in a few million bucks in venture capital money for a comparatively small piece of the company.

This wasn't a "sale" of the company by any means. When we were given the money, it was made very clear that they expected us to put every cent of it back into Sierra. We needed to upgrade management (the average age of a manager then was probably less than 25). We needed to get a better manufacturing facility. We especially needed better marketing and better R&D (Research and Development).

Briefly put, along with the taking of venture capital came the "growing up process." The computer industry at that time was looking at better than a 300% compounded growth annually, and the projections were even better.

A Computer in Every Home?

At the time Sierra took its first venture capital, the idea of a computer in every home was not just a goal or dream for those of us in the business, it was the actual sales forecast for the industry. Apple introduced the portable and sleek *Apple IIc*. Commodore had the *VIC-20* and the industry leading *Commodore 64*, Atari had the *Atari 400* and *800*. Texas Instruments looked like it might take over the market with its *TI99*, and even Coleco (makers of the astoundingly

-Sierra wins Computer Software Service "The Movers Award" for *Donald Duck's Playground*

1988

-Sierra moves from Sierra Professional Building to current headquarters at 40033 Sierra Way in Oakhurst, CA

September

-Apple releases Macintosh IIx

-Apple IIc+ released

-New configuration for Macintosh SE released

-**Sierra goes PUBLIC!**

-Sierra wins top honors in five categories at the 11th annual presentation of the Golden Oak Awards:

Best of Electronic Video:

Sierra On-Line Video Catalog '88

Best of Print:

Manhunter: New York Poster

Publication:

Space Piston Comic Book

(from *Space Quest II* package)

Poster/Four Color:

Manhunter: New York Poster

Sales Promotion, A/V or

Electronic Sale Presentation:

Sierra On-Line Video Catalog '88

-Sierra wins three Computer Entertainer Award of Excellence

Best Adventure/Fantasy

(with graphics):

Manhunter: New York

Best Educational Program:

Mixed-Up Mother Goose

Exceptional Achievement in

Graphics and Sound:

King's Quest IV

1989

January

-Apple releases Macintosh SE/30

-Sierra wins Computer Gaming World's Special Award for Achievement in Sound for *Space Quest III*

Space Quest III

March

-Apple releases Macintosh CX

June

-IBM PS/2 Model 70/486 introduced

-Sierra ends '89 with 240 employees!

popular ColecoVision game machine) was taken seriously with tape drive based *Coleco Adam*.

A stampede of major companies from Parker Brothers and Mattel to Texas Instruments and Apple, invested hundreds of millions of dollars to launch computers that were positioned as "the TV's, stereos and appliances of the future."

...And Reality Comes Crashing In

Sierra, with its eager new "Fortune 500" style management team and its wealth of venture capital, managed to invest in each and every one of these ill-fated computers. We made software products on cassette for the *Vic-20* and the *Atari 400*, cartridges for the *Coleco Adam* and the *Commodore 64*, we even spent hundreds of thousands of dollars developing product for the Texas Instruments *TI99*, which wasn't even out of development yet when the "consumer computer market" collapse happened at the end of 1984.

By the end of the year, we were in a very tight jam. We had tens of thousands of game cartridges for cancelled and bankrupt computers like the *VIC-20* and the *Coleco Adam*. We had cassette programs for the *VIC-20* and the *Atari 400* and *800* that we couldn't sell. All told, it was a few million dollars worth of inventory that we might be able to sell for 3 cents on the dollar.

To add insult to injury, at the time it looked like our biggest losses were going to come from the library of software we had developed for IBM's disastrous PCjr computer. This computer, which was promised as IBM's entry level system for every home, had been a major disappointment for the company. Its unique graphics resolution of 16 colors, (not the standard 4 color CGA offered then on the *IBM PCXT*) made it incompatible with other MS-DOS based IBMs and compatibles, and the market for games on the IBM PC was worse than bad then anyway. We felt like the only company in history that had bet on IBM and lost.

Our investment in Apple's new flagship Macintosh was also a bad decision for the time. The computer was labelled "the computer for the rest of us." Although it sold more than 50,000 units in its first 100 days of release, it had not become a good market for computer games. "The rest of us," it seemed, didn't like the look of computer games on a black and white screen.

We were broke, in debt, and out of luck. Through a massive layoff, we went from over 130 employees to less than 35 in a matter of weeks. Our board of directors (made up of mostly the *venture capitalists that had given us money in the first place*) brought in a "hatchet man" to help us wind down the company, dispose of its assets, and negotiate its way out of leases and overdue debts.*

It looked like the party was completely over, when a most unlikely company saved Sierra in its hour of need.

* This "hatchet man" was Bruce Davis, now President of *MEDIAGENIC* (formerly *Activision*). *MEDIAGENIC* is now one of the industry's largest publishers of computer and video games.



As the years went by we continued to diversify our product line, but developed fewer arcade games and more 3D Graphic Adventures. The production of hint books was a major step, and not one everybody wanted to take.



“It’s been a heck of a decade, and I think we can all look forward to another one that’s at least as interesting.”

Radio Shack to the Rescue(?)

From my discussions over the years with Srinivasan**, who was a software buyer for Tandy Corporation at the time, I gathered that Tandy’s decision to make its first MS-DOS compatible was made sometime after the announcement of the PCjr, but before its tragic demise. Noting immediately that the PCjr lacked refinement, Tandy’s goal had been to “improve and refine the design of IBM’s PCjr.” Within a few months it became known as “What the IBM PCjr should have been.”

Tandy Corporation, which had developed the industry-pioneering, but now somewhat embarrassing, TRS-80 personal computer, suddenly had themselves a major success story in the Tandy 1000 computer. With its quality 16 color graphics, its 3 voice music and its IBM and IBM PCjr compatibility, it quickly became the industry leader in home computing.

The products that Sierra had originally designed for the defunct PCjr had a whole new market. Better than 8000 Radio Shack and Tandy Computer centers were new outlets for Sierra’s MS-DOS software. Sierra’s *King’s Quest I* adventure game, HomeWord word processor, and its line of MS-DOS based arcade games quickly became popular with Tandy computer owners, and with this rise in popularity came the recovery of Sierra.

Good Times Return . . .

The success of Tandy was a precursor to the success of MS-DOS as a standard for the home (*as opposed to business*) market. Other MS-DOS computers were released at a price range acceptable to home users. The addition of EGA to MS-DOS machines made them acceptable from a graphics standpoint. Other computers targeted towards the home were introduced by Atari and Commodore. The Atari ST and the Amiga were quickly added to the list of hardware platforms supported.

Sierra’s line of products grew to include *Space Quest*, *Police Quest*, and *Leisure Suit Larry*. These games, and their sequels, were well received by computer audiences. This success helped an older, wiser, and somewhat battle-scarred Sierra to grow back into a leadership position.

By the middle of 1987, Sierra was back in good shape. Although the company had bailed out of the then lucrative Commodore-64 software market a little early, our products for MS-DOS based home computers had quickly become the premium products in the marketplace. MS-DOS was rapidly becoming the home computing standard.

** Srinivasan is now Sierra’s Director of International Sales and a valued member of our management team.

We also were growing so fast that we again needed additional capital for growth. As we had spent all of the venture capital we thought we were going to get, the decision was made to take the company public. We hooked up with a great investment banking group, tore through the mounds of legal paperwork and red tape that the SEC had managed to invent over the last century, and wrote up our "prospectus" which was basically a full explanation of our business. Finally, it seemed, we were ready to become a publicly traded software company.

We set the magic date that we would offer our stock for the first time. It seemed like a great date—before Christmas (*when the company does its biggest sales of the year*) but after our new products were released for the year. This would be the time that Sierra looked its best and full of potential.

... And The Stock Market Crashes

Our magic date, it turned out, was the one now known as "Black Monday." The day the U.S. stock market took its biggest dive since the great depression. We, of course, had to cancel our initial stock offering as the investment bankers we had worked with on the deal had been dealt a deathblow. The stock market would not recover to the point where there could be another successful offering for some time to come. It was costly, confusing and heartbreaking for Sierra. On a personal level, it might equate to failing your final exams in your senior year. (*Editor's Note: In October of 1988, one year after "Black Monday," Sierra did finally go public, at \$9.00 a share. As of this writing, Sierra stock is up to \$19 3/4, and can be found on the NASDAQ Exchange under "Sier"*).

We didn't know it at the time, of course, but there was a silver lining for Sierra in all this. When E.F. Hutton talked, we would no longer have to listen, and our growth continued in spite of the failed offering.

Sales continued to grow, and Sierra had a couple of cards up its sleeve that would make it an even a better investment during a stock offering some time in the future.

King's Quest IV and the SCI Standard

Since the beginning of Sierra's history, Sierra has always had a programming language of its own with which we built our computer games. In the very beginning, it was the first of many incarnations of AGL (*Adventure Game Language*), which created our very early hits like *Mystery House* and *Wizard & the Princess*. Later, a dozen different versions of AGI (*Adventure Game Interpreter*) helped us launch the *King's Quest*, *Police Quest*, *Space Quest*, and the incomparable *Leisure Suit Larry* series."

In the spring of 1988, this chain of proprietary languages got one link longer with the development of the Sierra Creative Interpreter (*or SCI for short*). This new language had better graphics and animation capabilities than AGI, and had more to offer in terms of flexibility for programmers doing code for parsers and pointing devices. This meant that games programmed in SCI



Some products from recent years pose for their portrait with the original Sierra logo, the world famous Halfdome in nearby Yosemite National Park.

would require a lot more memory and a fairly fast processor — many PCs might have a hard time running them. This worried us a little, but we thought we had a solution.

King's Quest IV was Sierra's first SCI release, and it was a beauty. The graphics were breathtaking, the animation was far superior to the AGI games, and SCI would allow us to include a fully orchestrated film-score quality soundtrack, which we did, although it was a big gamble. The game was previewed at the June 1988 Computer Electronics Show, where we erected a mini theater complete with a 46" color monitor, a stereo system, an IBM 386

computer, and a Roland MT-32. The shows were invitation only (*no competitors allowed*), and took place every couple of hours. During one demo (*which basically consisted of the game's opening cartoon*), as King Graham fell to the ground, and the music swelled dramatically, a woman who was watching began to cry. I feel bad even saying it, but it was then that we knew we had a winner.

To avoid excluding users with low-end machines, we simultaneously released an AGI version which, frankly, paled by comparison. That fact wasn't lost on the public, who were already a step ahead, having seen the need to upgrade their systems for more practical reasons. The average productivity program was demanding as much from a computer as an SCI game, more in some cases. The SCI version of *King's Quest IV* turned out to be just the kind of progress users were looking for from us. (*The AGI version, for those who are interested, is still available directly from Sierra, but it's the SCI version you'll find on the shelf at your local software store*). That little experiment taught us a very important lesson: never underestimate the awareness of our users. You're moving ahead, and so are we.

With the astounding success of Roberta's *King's Quest IV*, it seemed only natural that Sierra's other designers would latch on to SCI: *Police Quest II*, *Leisure Suit Larry II* and *Space Quest III* weren't far behind, and each enjoyed its own version of *KQ IV*'s prosperity. Our users' response to the graphics, animation and sound in Sierra's recent releases has been so overwhelming that we're currently in the process of converting some of your old favorites to the SCI format.

In keeping with Sierra's tradition of "looking ahead," our Research and Development staff is, at this very moment, looking ahead to the next big techno-wave of the future: CD-ROM. It's hard enough to believe that we've gone from a game on one floppy to games that barely fit on ten floppies, but in a couple of years we could be looking at these same 10 disk games on one little Compact Disc.

Yep, a lot has happened in ten years — sometimes it seems like just last week I drove into Coarsegold, other times it seems like I've been here forever. Either way, it's been a heck of a decade, and I think we can all look forward to another one that's at least as interesting. I don't have any inside info for you on Sierra's plans for the '90s, but you might want to check out Ken's article, page 4, and keep watching the Sierra NewsMagazine for late breaking stories.



...What Lies AHEAD?

Projections for the Coming Decade

By John Williams

Throughout most of this magazine, we'll be concentrating on what Sierra has accomplished in the last 10 years. Looking back has been fun in a self-indulgent sort of way, but now I think it's time to look ahead. Where will Sierra be in ten years? What products will we offer?

Well, 10 years is an awfully long time, and any attempt to guess where computers will be will likely be wrong. But it's okay to look at "logical extensions" of what's going on today, both in the industry and in the research and development labs here at Sierra. As you might imagine, I spend a lot of time talking to the major players in the computer hardware industry, so this article will give you just a glimpse at what's going on in research and development at Sierra and in the Silicon Valley. The following "guesses" at what the next decade will bring are based partially on facts, but are mostly provided for your enjoyment.

Multimedia: Graphics and Sound

If you're an IBM owner that has recently upgraded to VGA, an Amiga owner, or one of those lucky Mac owners with a color screen, you already know that better computer graphics make for better computer games and applications. But "graphics" are just part of the equation in the "user interface." There's also animation (*screen movement*), soundtrack, and the way that the computer communicates with you (*text, icons, speech synthesis, etc.*).

In the last year, the hot new buzzword for the industry has been "multimedia" and it looks to be the future of computing. Multimedia combines television quality graphics, voice output, stereo soundtracks, quick screen animation and an intuitive user interface into one package. Everyone from Apple and IBM to Phillips and Sony seems to be jumping on the multimedia bandwagon, and multimedia machines and applications are slated for mass distribution as early as next Christmas. It's no big secret that Sierra is working on a multimedia version of King's Quest V for these new machines, and has plans for other multimedia products in the future.

While there are many differing views of what multimedia will mean, from Apple computers much publicized "Knowledge Navigator" to the multimedia "VCR" style product being championed by AIM (*a division of North American Phillips*). Everyone seems to agree though, that television quality pictures, true stereo and voice output, and ease-of-use and quick response from the computer will be the main components. The surprise is that, for the most part, hardware manufacturers seem to be delivering on the promise.

In September, Sierra plans to introduce its own hardware package that will help current MS-DOS users upgrade their computers to Multimedia status (*all the components are currently available*). Other publishers and manufacturers will probably follow suit. Multimedia is *not* just a guess, it's a reality.

CDs Solve the Storage Problem

Not so long ago, few home computer owners would have imagined that they could outgrow their 20 meg hard disk. Today, people seem to run out of room on their 40meg, and even 80meg hard disks every time they try to load a new Sierra game (*most of which require just over 1 meg of storage each*). This has us very concerned about how users will feel when they see our upcoming VGA King's Quest V — it looks like it's going to weigh in at just over 10 meg!

The answer to the storage question, at least for the next few years, seems to be the CD. Anyone who has visited a record store over the last few years is already familiar with these bright and shiny disks. They've virtually taken over the market for prerecorded music (*in fact, it's hard to find a record in most "record stores" anymore*). For computer owners and software publishers, the introduction of CD will be even more significant; CDs hold the equivalent of literally hundreds of floppy diskettes, can be transported and stored easily, and they're virtually indestructible.

For publishers, CDs represent a welcome solution to the problem of how to deliver increasingly larger software products to the public. For instance, the VGA version of Space Quest IV currently looks like it would have to ship on about 40 low density 5 1/4" IBM diskettes. It quite literally *would not* fit in our current box. As it stands, it looks like we will ship it instead on twelve 1.2 meg (*High Density*) diskettes, which is still a lot of hassle both for us and for you. Imagine how much easier it will be for us to duplicate, package and ship (*and for you to have to deal with*) only one small compact disc.

CDs are just beginning to make serious headway on computers, but the evolution of the media is already well underway. Tandy has already announced a future ship date for their THOR technology, a CD that will not only let you read data (*current CD technology is read-only*) but also write to the CD. This is already fantastic, but the price makes it even better; \$500 is the promised price, for a 500 meg CD drive — that's just *one dollar per megabyte*. That's the best example I can think of to show the promise that CDs have of being faster, cheaper, and more convenient than currently available diskette and hard disk storage techniques.

Communications and Connectivity

In a recent address to the collective computer hardware and software industry, industry visionary (*and Apple and Next computer founder*) Steven Jobs called the 1990's "the decade of interpersonal computing". When he said it, Jobs was actually referring to the way that computer networks would change the way companies did their computing in the coming decade. Formal and informal "work groups" forming within a computerized network to help the corporation get the job done. The beginning of a new way for the corporate world to communicate.

I think Steve Jobs was thinking too small.

I agree that "interpersonal computing" — the idea that the individual computer owner will soon find himself acting as part of a bigger connected computer community — is the next step in the evolution of personal computing. But I disagree with Jobs vision of the company office as the birthplace of this technology. In fact, as every avid user of Compuserve, GENie or Prodigy knows, interpersonal computing is already a reality.

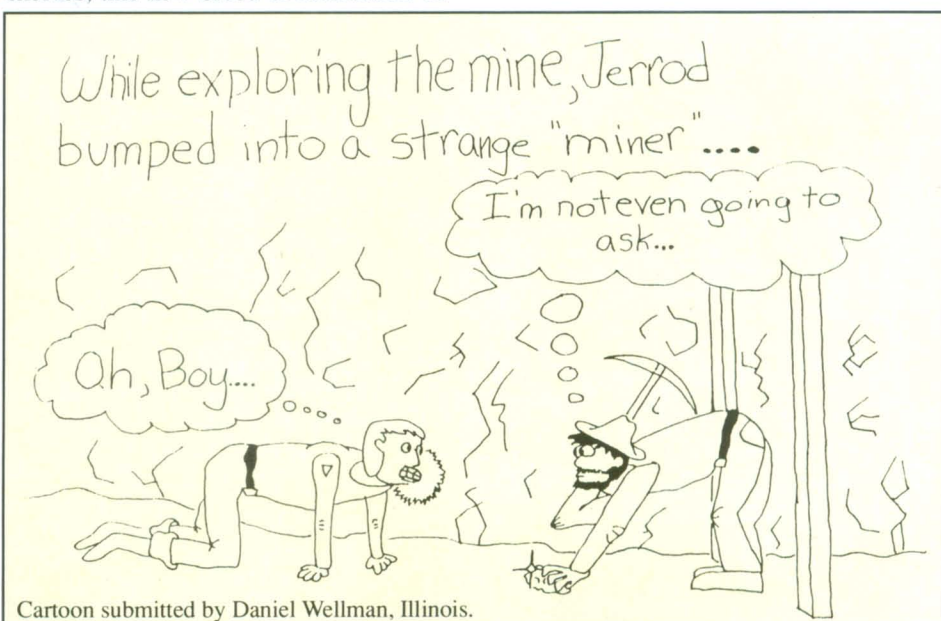
Interpersonal computing is alive and well and living on BBS's and on-line services all over North America and Europe. From the various sysops of FIDOnet that have formed a task-force to keep data moving across the country, to the "informal work group" of hint givers and hint askers I see crop up to solve each new Sierra adventure game as it hits the retail shelves, this new breed of interaction be-

tween computers and computer users seems to be more than just a passing fad.

Another aspect of personal computing that will grow and prosper in the coming decade include multi-player computer games. If you can imagine a Leisure Suit Larry game where every character you see is controlled by a real person, or a Leisure Suit Larry sequel where every Lounge Lizard at the Disco represents a potential new friend, you begin to see just one of the uses Sierra has planned for interactive computer gaming. Sierra is already hard at work on ways to exploit these new technologies. Recent rumors of a modem based Leisure Suit Larry games do, in fact, have a grain of truth in them.

Other potential markets for multi-player computer games include classroom simulations where all the students participate, and cross country game shows where everyone on-line has a shot at winning the grand prize. The possibilities are practically endless.

Now that we've followed the threads of today's technology to their logical conclusions, we can only sit back and watch it all happen. It's hard to imagine that in another 10 years we'll be bringing you the 20th Anniversary issue of Sierra News Magazine. In that issue I expect to look back on this one and laugh about how different things are from what we all thought they'd be — much the way I laugh today at how we saw the future of the industry in 1980. I hope you look forward to that day as much as I do.





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Sierra's Silpheed

System requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatible with 256K RAM, DOS 2.0 or higher, CGA, EGA, or monochrome graphics adaptor, and headset or external speaker.
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B. DAVIS

Bill Davis Creative Director

By Nancy Smithe

Bill Davis, appointed Creative Director at Sierra On-Line in July 1989, comes with an impressive record of achievements. After graduation with high honors from The Chouinard Art School with a BFA, he designed and directed or co-directed over 150 animated television commercials for clients, including McDonalds, Dole, Burger King, and Toyota. He has also done children's illustrations for Sesame Street, Children's Television Workshop, The Electric Company, and MacMillan and Co. For the past 11 years Bill was a Designer/Director for Kurtz and Friends, a top Los Angeles producer of animated commercials. While there Bill designed, animated and directed the short film, "Logo Interruptus," which was part of Annecy89 International Animation Festival in France. Bill was lead graphic artist for NBC studios and has designed and illustrated over 200 of the "More to Come" slides for The Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson. Awards which Bill has won include an Emmy in 1978, three President's Awards from The Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles, two Mobias awards from the U.S. Television and Radio Commercials Festival, two Silver Plaque awards from the Chicago International Film Festival, an IBA award, and a Gold Medal from the International Film and Television Festival of New York.

In this issue we are premiering a new regular feature of the Sierra News Magazine, *Interactive*, a regular cartoon feature by Bill Davis. The first cartoon of this series is on page 19.

The list of awards you have won is impressive, including an Emmy. How did the winning project develop?

At the time I was on staff at NBC in Los Angeles, in the Graphic Art Department. The Art Director from a project called “NBC—The First Fifty Years” came to our department instead of going to an outside film company. They wanted to use somebody inhouse. I don’t know if that was for budget reasons or if they just had a feeling of team spirit. We didn’t ask why, we just took it and ran with it. I storyboarded it, and created all the artwork with other designers in the department. I had never really worked with animation prior to that time and we didn’t have the facilities to physically produce it, so I worked with an outside animation producer. We took it to Bill Melendez, famous for the “Peanuts” animated TV specials, and they helped me physically produce it. They had the expertise to fill out the exposure sheets properly and set up the cells so the camera man would understand it. This was my first animation project and I really needed their technical abilities.

You spent years designing and directing animated television commercials. Tell me about your part?

There is a lot of collaboration in film with a lot of different people. That was the hardest thing for me to get used to initially because I came from an illustration background where I did the whole thing. The owner of the studio where I worked also directed, and we would kick things back and forth. And there was another designer there that we kicked ideas around with. Once I had designed a commercial—this included storyboarding, designing the characters, laying out the backgrounds and character action—I would “hand it out” to the animators, and give them all necessary direction. Animators are to the animation industry what actors are to the live action film industry. They take the “layouts” and run with them. Once in a while you disagree with the direction they run in, but most of the time it’s a plus. The project is “plussed” through the entire effort. It’s a true team effort.

Your commercials are often very humorous. Did you get to develop the humor?

Yes, that is basically my work. We would get an agency storyboard, and they were usually pretty dry—just kind of an outline of what they wanted. Then I would work on it and turn it into a “production storyboard,” a “working” story board. I would write a hundred gags, and in some situations present all the gags to the agency letting them take their pick. Then we’d fight back and forth over which were the better gags. Maybe only 3-5 gags out of the hundred would make it into the final story board.

Interactive (facing page), a cartoon by Bill Davis, is a new regular feature of the Sierra News Magazine premiering in this issue.

So many times the title of “director” means getting “kicked upstairs” into administration and away from creation. You were able to be a director and still be creative.

Yes. I think you might be confusing the producer with the director. Anyway, that was the wonderful thing about the small studio I worked with and what I liked about commercials. Since commercials deal with 60 or 30 second, or even 10 to 15 second spots, you can end up doing ten or twenty films a year. So there is a short time span per job. They range from six to ten weeks per project, so you can work on several projects a year with different stages of several different projects overlapping each other. With that small studio I was able to design everything I worked on. That meant I designed the characters, I did the story board, I worked out the color and I actually “laid out” the action and background for each scene. I didn’t do each individual drawing. And like I said earlier I didn’t give actual “life” to the characters. That’s the realm of the animators. They actually give motion to the characters. And I would direct that motion. It’s relatively easy to direct in animation because you do a lot of the directing with your drawings.

How do animators give the “life” to the characters?

Well, they think in terms of motion. They take multiple static drawings and create the illusion of motion. They understand motion, they analyze motion. The way a character walks or moves makes a big difference in how you perceive the personality of that character.

Is there an equivalent to “Lights, Camera, Action,” a time when you photograph all the pieces into an end result?

Yes, but that’s an animation camera man all by himself late at night, lonely, in a little dark room with just a few lights and his animation camera. Unlike the live action film camera man, he sits down and shoots one “cell” at a time based on exposure sheets. Every cell is annotated on a sheet of paper called an exposure sheet.

This tells him what cell to shoot at what field size, and how many frames to shoot of that particular cell; it indicates camera trucks, background pans and many other pieces of technical information. The job is pretty much mapped out, and it’s a pretty tedious job for the camera man, who is usually shooting it at night when everybody else is home sleeping. But don’t get me wrong—there are good camera men and bad camera men.



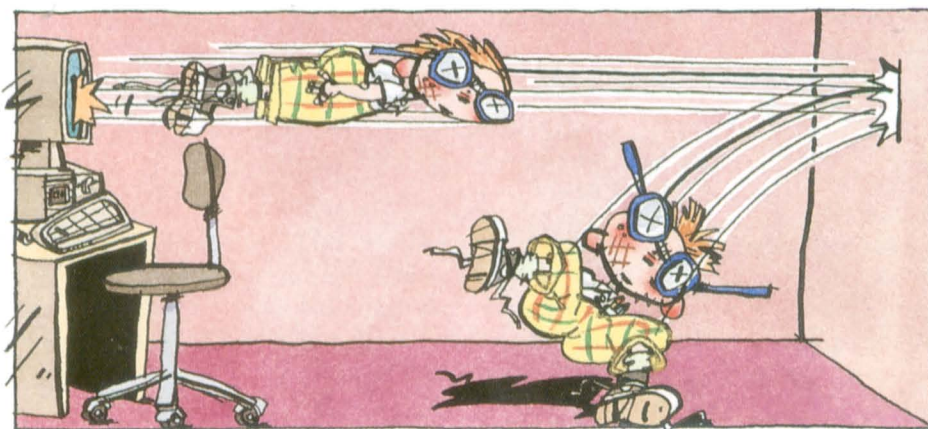
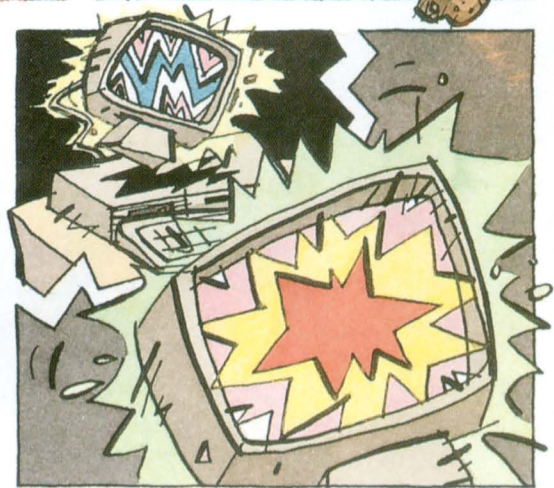
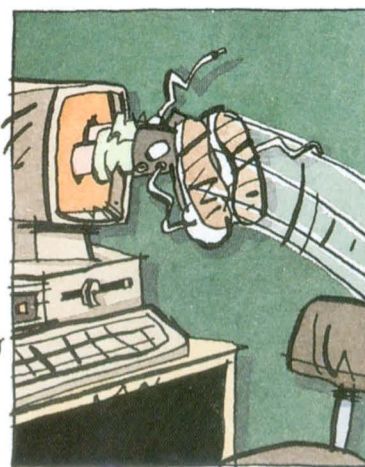
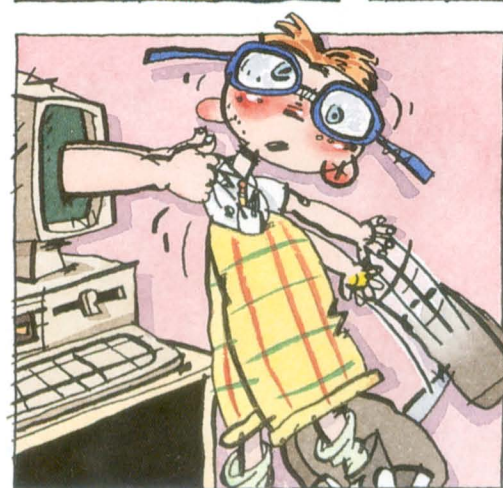
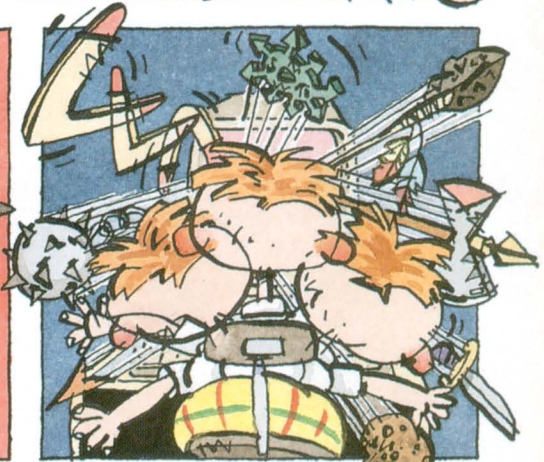
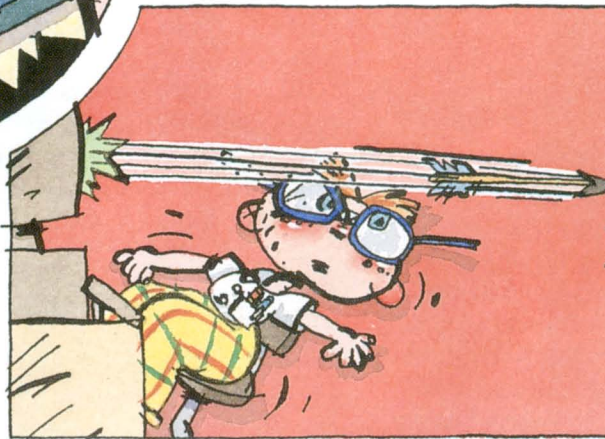
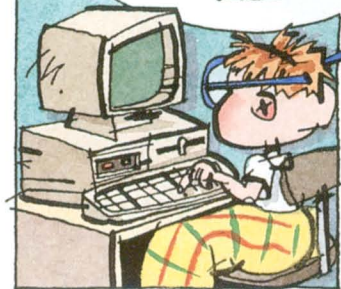
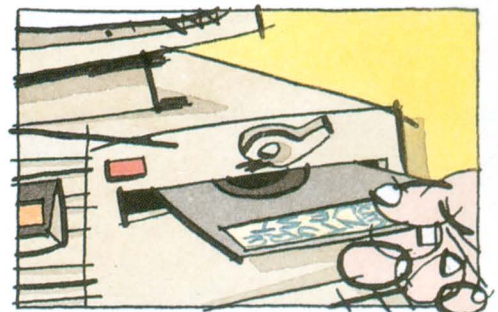
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“So your first animated project won an Emmy?”

“Right. That was thrilling.”

INTERACTIVE

By Bill Davis



How did you happen to get into doing animated cartoons? Did you always want to do it, or was it one of those “I started out to be something else” stories.

No. From way back, as far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be an artist in some form. My earliest interest was animation. When I got into Art School and became very “serious” I kind of abandoned that whole direction. I was going to be a painter for a long time. I still haven’t given up on the painting thing, I just don’t depend on that for an income. I kind of got side-tracked into illustration. In art school I would go back and forth between advertising, package design and paint-

“Computer game technology is going to enable us to make games more and more theatrical, more and more like real films . . .”

ing. I finally ended up with illustration because I really wanted to draw and paint, and advertising and package design took you away from that. Painting really looked like a long shot, as far as making a living, and illustration was one of the last commercial majors in art school where you could really concentrate on drawing and painting. So I stuck with that. And I think if it hadn’t been for the Emmy Award for that one project at NBC I probably would never have gotten back into the animation business. That got me a lot of notoriety and actually one of the animation production companies who had bid on the project—Kurtz and Friends—became my eventual employer in the animation industry.

Johnny Magpie told me you grew up a “surfer punk” in LA, but he isn’t always accurate. Any comment?

The term “surfer punk” was yet to be coined in those days. Surfing was my life from the age of 13 to 18. That whole lifestyle, at that time, had a great effect on how I perceive things today. The truth is I continued to surf up until the move to Sierra. It’s something I’m really going to miss, cowabunga.

Johnny Magpie also told me you were a painter for the old Laugh-In show, and painted Goldie Hawn...in a bikini?

This Johnny Magpie wouldn’t happen to be . . . [the rest of this sentence was edited out — his guess is too close to our closely guarded secret of Johnny Magpie’s identity, says the Editor]. I was fresh out of art school, the new kid in the department. I was forced to paint hundreds of bikini clad starlets. It’s all kind of a blur.

To come to Sierra you moved away from the city and into the mountains—a big change. What made you interested in doing that?

I think Sierra On-Line. Although the country has been a dream for years. We tried to pull that off in the early 70’s. My wife, my son and I moved to New Hampshire and I was free-lancing out of New York and Boston. That worked really well for several years then economics got tough. This was before FAX machines and Federal Express, and I realized I had to move back to a big city. I had worked at NBC prior to that, and they offered me my position back. So I went back to Los Angeles and kind of gave up on that

dream, thinking, oh it’s not really possible to move out into the country and do the kind of work you do. I hoped it would be someday, maybe if communications kept going the way they were. Then I received the offer from Sierra. And not only was it an opportunity to move into the country, but, also, to take animation into this new, exciting direction.

As Sierra’s first Creative Director, what “new and exciting directions” do you see opening up?

I think Ken’s vision for Sierra is to move it more toward the film industry, interactive film, and I think his intention in creating this position was to bring someone from the film industry to Sierra. We are seeing film companies getting into the computer game industry and I think this is an indication of the direction the industry will be heading in the future. Computer game technology is going to enable us to make games more and more theatrical, more and more like real films, animated or live action.

I’d like to ask you to “compare and contrast” Sierra On-Line and films. First, how is computer video similar to the film industry?

They both have animation, and in some cases live action (although in computer video the live is digitized). Up to now computer animation has been limited by its hardware, but I think every one is speculating that with the promise of CD technology coming to the industry memory is going to expand

“Another major difference between the film industry and computer games is the interactivity present in the games. . . . The player controls the story line. That makes it different, that makes it very different.”

and hardware is going to be available to extend the the limits of software, both the audio and the visual. Pictures and music take up the most space on disks, and that has kept us from doing things like speech. With a larger space to put down our sound and pictures we should be able to make our animation fuller (more lifelike), and have more music and add things like speech.

The idea being that we wouldn’t be using a computer disk any more, but actually using a CD?

That’s what we hear.

Now, how is computer video different from the film industry?

At this point it is different in that you have the memory on the floppies to deal with. In film you can shoot as much film as you want. And as long as you can get an audience to sit in the theater to watch it, timewise there are no limits.

Compared to the way you worked before—story boards and coding each picture with color—there is a change, isn't there?

Yes, but I think we want to try to implement that here. At Sierra projects are getting so large, and we are getting so many projects, we are concerned about losing quality. We are going to take some of the techniques that have been used in the film industry to manage gigantic feature projects and apply them here. I think we'll gain in efficiency along the way also. It will enable many more people to work on a project, finish that project quickly, and not lose quality. With a story board you are able to visualize an entire project at the beginning and locate the pitfalls, the problem areas, ahead of time before anyone sits down at a computer to work on anything. We won't have to trash large sections of a game that have been developed because they don't work with another part of the game. We should be able to prevent those types of things from happening.

Another major difference between the film industry and computer games is the interactivity present in the games. In the film industry stories are linear. You plan a film from beginning to end and you control a viewer all the way along. It is a little bit more

complex in a computer game because your players can stay in a room for any length of game, it is their choice, and they can go off in any direction they want to go. That makes it different, that makes it very different. The player controls the story line.

“Education?

Study art, study photography, study film and study literature.”

What advice have you for a youngster wanting to do what you are doing? What kind of education or background would be needed?

Study art, study photography, study film and study literature. Writers like Dickens are wonderful for character development. So I would say literature, art, music, photography and filmmaking are all very important.

Computers, perhaps?

Computers...well, if people can't learn to use computers, we *are* in trouble so I would say it is good to have some computer knowledge. You don't need to be an expert, you don't need to be a programmer. A computer is a tool, like a paint brush.

I think it is more important to get a strong background in art, music, photography, filmmaking, and literature.



For more on this topic, read *Keeping Up With Jones, The Cinematic Process*, on page 38.

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HEARD IT IN THE HALLWAY RUMOR MILL

Editors Note: Like those "Elvis sighted at wedding of Bigfoot and space alien" articles you've read in other computer magazines, the rantings of Johnny Magpie should be taken with more than a few grains of salt and tongue planted firmly in cheek. Sierra management does not endorse (and only barely tolerates) the inclusion of this article in the Sierra News Magazine.



By Johnny Magpie

THE MAGPIE HITS A HOMER...

Despite the semi-libelous "disclaimer" repeatedly placed at the beginning of this column, or maybe because of it, this reporter thought he'd begin his periodic tirade in print with an "I told you so" update from the last column. In that column, I printed the much denied rumor that "King Graham would star in *King's Quest V*." This rumor is completely true.

Roberta admits that Graham's the one. Despite Roberta Williams' tight little lips and the strong arm security wall around the *King's Quest V* development project, this reporter was the first to announce that King Graham was definitely going to be the star of this eagerly awaited sequel.

Although she is still saying she won't say anything about the new project, **Roberta confirmed this fact in not one, but two sources.** Roberta's first big slip up came with an outrageously rare message on Prodigy's Adventure Game board which many thought was from an imposter. This reporter, through a little research, confirmed the validity of this when the Prodigy ID number used turned out to belong to none other than Ken Williams himself.

The second source of the King's confirmation came from Japan, where **Roberta spilled the beans to reporters from Login Magazine** (Japan's top computer magazine). Perhaps Berta thought she was too far from home for news of *King's Quest V* to make it back, because her indiscre-

tions supplied the Magpie with his next big news on *King's Quest V*.

Remember that you heard it here first people — ***King's Quest V* is being developed for three different computer formats at the same time.** That's right, Roberta's development group has three completely different machine versions of the product underway. Word is, Roberta brought in an amazingly creative artist from a popular NBC television show to manage the graphics and animation development. (No, the artist is not Bill Davis who did the graphics for Johnny Carson.) **Three completely different sets of graphics are being produced.** Bigger news still is that the **first graphic from *King's Quest V* will be found in the June 1990 issue of *Compu! Magazine*.** MORE ON THIS NEXT ISSUE!!

Also true, though harder to believe, is the silly rumor that the **Two guys from Andromeda were working on a new version of "Mixed-Up Mother Goose."** Look to the "PRODUCTS FOR YOUR COMPUTER" article in this very issue as proof that Mark Crowe and Scott Murphy were spending their time on a new SCI version of this children's game.

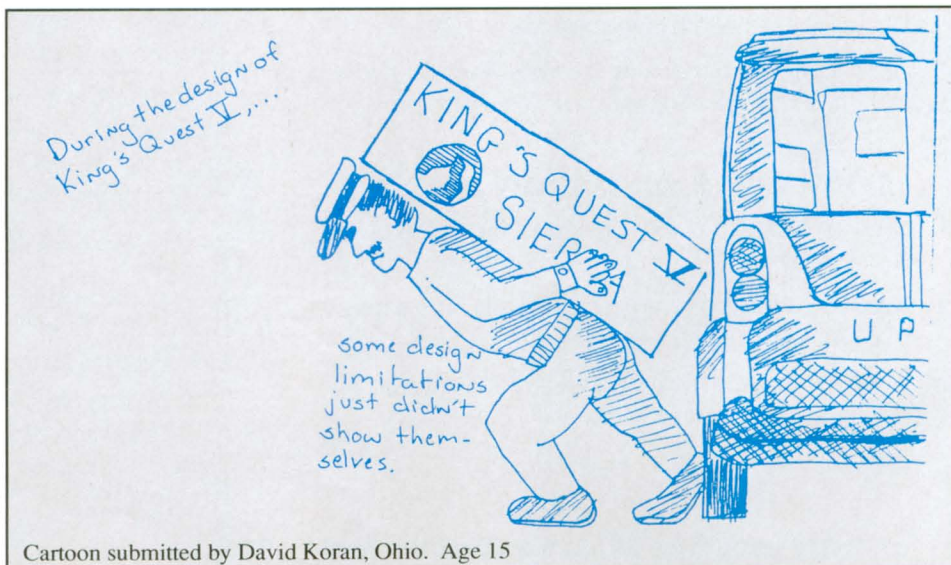
In a not-so-rare disagreement with management, the Magpie would like to ask

Ken Williams this question.... **Why have the two guys from Andromeda been working on this SCI conversion while the fans are screaming for *Space Quest IV*?** Come on Ken, how do you explain this waste of talent???

Interested and infuriated fans should write Ken Williams an angry note about this one — care of this magazine.

Speaking of *Space Quest IV*, here's a rumor that isn't true... The Magpie can — on occasion — be wrong, and my report on the *Space Quest IV* soundtrack was one of these occasions. **The *Space Quest IV* game will not have a reggae soundtrack** as reported by this reporter last issue. Both Scott and Mark sought me out to pick on me about this issue personally, and again as a pair, and I haven't heard the end of it yet. (I'm sorry, guys, so cut it out, okay?)

This is it for the "Heard it in the Hallway" column this time readers. I know the Magpie column is usually longer than this, but it seems that I'm getting a little competition these days. For real dirt from Sierra read **What Lies Ahead** (page 13). . . John Williams gives away more company secrets in those few pages than I did in my last three columns!



Cartoon submitted by David Koran, Ohio. Age 15

LETTERS

Ten-year-old Fan Reports Falling Victim To King's Quest Disease

Dear Roberta and Ken

I think I discovered a new disease. K.Q.D. (King's Quest Disease) Any time of day or night I have to play one of your games, mostly *King's Quest*. One time I played your games from 8 at night to 1:30 in the morning. All the rest of the night I dreamed about all the games. I usually play *King's Quest I* a little bit, then II, III, or IV a little bit. I then go to bed thinking of how to solve each puzzle I run into. I love *King's Quest*. Changing the subject, I am 10 years old. I have been playing your games for a couple of years. I want to ask a couple of questions. What's the gnome's name? In *King's Quest I*, where is the rope to bring goat to the bridge. I simply can't get past the shark in Quest IV, or the trolls in Quest IV. I know to save my game, and to come back later and keep on trying, and stay at the end of screen, but are there any other tricks? When are you coming out with Quest V? What is it about? I thank you and everyone else involved In King's Quest very much.

Love Jenna Feldberg, Massachusetts.

King's Quest As A Spelling Teacher And Appreciation For Goldrush

Dear Sirs

Some time ago, I purchased *King's Quest III* from a local software store. The game appears to be great, but a problem developed. I also have two young boys who love to play your games, but they are somewhat careless. In the course of time they have managed to lose the instruction book which contains the magic spells which are necessary to complete the game. I called the Customer Service Number recently and was told to return Disk I with \$5.00 and you would restore the game and documentation. Enclosed are Disk I and a check for \$5.

I read your latest catalogue which came with my new copy of *Space Quest III* with interest. I would like to add an anecdote to your list. When my older boy was five years old and in preschool, he was just starting to learn to read. We had just purchased the original *King's Quest* and he became extremely interested in it. His cousin

gave him a couple of timely tips, but in order to play the game he had to learn to read and to spell. He was so driven by the game that he would come to us constantly with spelling words until he had mastered them. I thoroughly believe that his desire to play your game was the catalyst in his teaching himself to read.

I also would offer one comment of encouragement. I note in several magazine ratings that *Gold Rush!* does not fare so well. In my opinion it is the best that I have seen that you have produced. The others are so difficult that it either takes us several years to solve or we end up relying on a hint book. With *Gold Rush!* there was just the right balance so that we did not get frustrated yet it was interesting to play. I would like to see more games like this, and I do recommend it as the first game for anyone who has not tried your products.

Douglas Eland, Illinois

This Young Man Is Full Of More Questions Than We Can Classify In One Simple Heading

Dear Sir

I have two Sierra games on my IBM and I love them. I've got *Space Quest II* and I've only got 56 points (and I can't believe I even got that much). I think it is more fun when there are things you have to figure out and when you get to type. And the graphics are the best (thanks to the ace graphic designers).

I want to know if poor old King Graham is going to be the hero or be in another game. (It just makes me feel sad that the legendary King Graham is mostly forgotten in the games.)

I also want to know how the Sierra company puts the information on disks and who does what and how they get the coolest and the awesomest graphics and how Sierra was started. Maybe you could make a game that shows buyers how Sierra makes the games and maybe, if the technology is good enough, you could even make your computer game on that idea. And buyers could learn to make computer games and maybe then — dream — change from being a TV show star to being a member of the Sierra On Line Inc. That's what I want to be when I grow up. P.S. My dad is a political scientist and when I told him I wanted to be a member

of Sierra he said "You mean if you are not smart enough to be a political scientist you will work with computers" and I said "No, if I'm not smart enough to work with Sierra, I will be a boxer, and if I'm not smart enough to be a boxer I will be a political scientist."

Sincerely Jared Hancock, Utah

Kudos For Copy Protection

Dear Fellow Human Beings

Yesterday I purchased *The Colonel's Bequest*. As I was looking through the box, noticing the warranty card, I realized that I have many Sierra games which I have not registered. I thought I would send them all in, assuring gainful employment for one other of my species. (I have sent one or two cards in to you in the past.) Of course, I expect to win a new car or something for buying so many of your games.

I have one or two comments that I would like to make about your games: In particular, about the copy protection. In your earlier products the on-disk schemes were lousy. However, I have just completed *Leisure Suit Larry3* and I think the use of the Nontoonyt tonight magazine actually adds to the game. I have just opened the box of *The Colonel's Bequest* and found the red magnifying glass and the sheet of fingerprints. It makes me look forward to playing the game. I appreciate the need for copy protection; some of us have not yet evolved into high life forms. I also think that you folks at Sierra have earned kudos for your clever integration of copy protection into the game-play itself. Finally, I have greatly enjoyed each of your games (and I am not usually a game person) especially the *Space Quest* series. I would like to see more humorous Science Fiction epics with other characters. Another product I would like to see from Sierra is a game construction program. That would be a great deal of fun. Anyway, I am looking forward to some interesting new products.

Robert Hilleman, Texas.

Editor's Note: We were interested to note that both these gentlemen suggest a game about making games. This suggestion, from different parts of the country, and even different generations, will be passed along. No promises, though.

LETTERS

Rob Holland Tours Sierra

Recently a young man named Rob Holland visited Sierra with his family. Rob is 11 years old. He has started his own software business, which he calls EXIDOS ON-LINE. His latest game is *Name That State* which teaches the user about the 50 states. Other games he has programmed are *House Quest*, *Future Quest*, *Prince's Quest*, *Break In*, and *Spell That Word*. All of his games have animation, graphics and sound. He says he gets lots of help and good ideas from his Mom

and Dad, but most of his inspiration comes from Sierra On-Line.

A few weeks later Ken Williams received a thank you note from Rob. It was on disk and was sufficiently unusual and interesting that we have taken screen shots and reproduced it here. Unfortunately, we cannot show the motion—the plane “flew,” the skier “skied,” and the deer “ran” across the screen.



Ken Williams and Rob Holland



CUSTOMER SERVICE FORUM

COME TOUR SIERRA & VISIT YOSEMITE

By Liz Jacobs
Customer Service Manager

“Look, Mom, there’s Jim Walls, the Designer of *Police Quest!*!”
“Wow, look it’s Roberta Williams. She’s the BEST!”
“Hey look, that’s Sonny Bonds...he works in Customer Service!!”
“I can’t believe it...I actually SAW ‘those two guys from *Andromeda*’!!!”



These comments are routine when visitors are touring our facilities.

I think nothing pleases Ken Williams more than seeing Sierra fans out here visiting “home away from home”. Ken loves to share his excitement about what is happening in this industry with anyone who is as excited as he is.

Your first stop will be the Video Room to see a video of the programmers, computer artists and musicians at work.

Your video tour will begin with a visit from Roberta herself. She will explain the actual role of a “Sierra game designer” and how she develops a concept into an actual finished product. From here, we will visit the desk of one of our graphic artist’s. YOU are actually going to get a peek at the tools that these creative people use to bring those “Sierra graphics” into your home! It is a fascinating demonstration!! Of course, we need you to sit awhile with one of those “programmer types” and get a feel for his part in all of this. There is sooo much brainstorming going on in that part of the building...the temperature is surely 10 degrees hotter than any other room! Then there is Quality Assurance. You cannot believe AAAALLL of those machines lined up wall to wall!! All sizes, all shapes, all configurations, and even all colors! Wait until you see those devilish little grins on the faces of our QA’ERS as

they “beat” on those soon to be released games. Finally, the serenity of the music room, and those brilliant musicians. I’ll have to admit, I STILL think it’s pretty exciting whenever I enter the Music Department with all of it’s high-tech equipment, and I see these great musicians sitting around with headphones on...looking VERY intense, as they delve into their composing mode. And what about those wild and crazy artists in our very own Art Department?? I guess you would have to be a little wild to create those fantastically creative box covers, posters, newsletters, catalogs, and T-shirt designs.

After the video tour you will actually tour the Art Department and see the original art for posters and box covers, and the desktop publishing center for this News Magazine.

You are going to see how the entire creative process works, from the original art work that is submitted by the artist to the VP of Marketing for approval as a box sleeve, to the finished product from the printer. Then there is Customer Service and the famous Sierra BBS!! You’ll meet our resident sysop and BBS programmer. Believe me...modems are going to be the future of computer users. Our sysop will fascinate you with the endless possibilities of the modem and our BBS! When we take you to our Duplication

Department you will hardly be able to hear me over the hummmm of those phenomenal trace machines! The best in the west! And who knows . . . as we wander through the Sierra Hallways we might even come across Ken Williams himself!

One thing is obvious—SIERRA means TEAM. It takes the creativity and effort of everyone working on a project to make it happen. This is what I don’t want you to miss, so...

Make your plans now. Head for California and see all the sights—Sierra On-Line, Yosemite National Park, San Francisco, Disneyland, Lake Tahoe, and the list goes on!!

Sierra offers tours daily at 2:30 pm. If you are planning to come our way, please call me at (209) 683-8989, and I will make sure to have a tour guide available. You need to allow about 1-1/2 to 2 hours for the tour. We’re located about 12 miles just south of the Yosemite National Park entrance on Highway 41. To reach Sierra On-Line from Highway 41 in Oakhurst you turn right at the statue of the “Talking Bear” (the *only* stoplight in town, and it is just a blinking red light at a fourway stop sign). Just past the Post Office you turn left on Sierra Way, and here you are.

Editor’s Note: Because of expansion of the Sierra building, some parts of the tour may be unavailable some days.



24 Hour Sierra BBS – (209) 683-4463

featuring

CODENAME: *Iceman*

by Kathy Sands

IF DECODING SECRET MESSAGES, ATTACKING RUSSIAN WARSHIPS OR A RENDEZVOUS WITH THE USS COONTZ HAS YOU SUNK . . . READ ON ABOUT *CODENAME: ICEMAN*

Did you ever play "Spy" when you were a kid? I remember getting together with friends from the neighborhood, turning the bunk beds into a submarine, writing messages to each other in code and changing into many different disguises. I liked being a spy; that's probably why I like *Codename: Iceman*.

CODENAME: ICEMAN is Sierra's new spy adventure game. It contains a very realistic submarine simulator, demands strategic thinking and planning and requires an eye for detail. We're receiving rave reviews from our customers, everyone loves ICEMAN!!

TAHITI

Life seems so easy at first: dancing, drinking, rescuing drowning women, and playing volleyball in the Tahitian sunshine. But an urgent message from General Braxton, a trip to The Pentagon, and a meeting under maximum security cuts your R & R short . . . soon you're back to work as undercover agent: Johnny Westland.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to navigate a nuclear attack submarine from Pearl Harbor through the Arctic Ocean (dodging Russian Destroyers, enemy submarines and dangerous icebergs) into the Straits of Gibraltar. On an oasis in Tunisia you'll meet up with a CIA agent, disguised as a Muslim, who will assist you in rescuing

the United States Ambassador who's being held hostage by terrorists.

PLOTTING YOUR COURSE

Together, you and The Captain of the USS Blackhawk will open a locked briefcase to review the confidential orders ex-

"Indulge yourself.

**Become the Spy
you've always
wanted to be.**

**Play
CODENAME:
Iceman."**

plaining your assignment and discover a chart with instructions on which direction to travel. Use the electronic table map in the Control Room to plot your course.

DECODING MESSAGES

The Radioman aboard the USS Blackhawk will relay coded messages to you from Washington and from the CIA. The messages will be delivered in Alpha form. Use the Decoding Book found aboard the Blackhawk to substitute the letters for numbers. Next, you'll look at the boxed shaded areas in the Technical Manual that was included with your game. Those numbers represent page number, line and word. For example, if your message was

AA - B - C

And if the Decoding Book said

A=3 B=2 C=1

Your coded message would be

"33 - 2 - 1"

You would turn to PAGE 33 of the Technical Manual and read LINE 2, FIRST WORD.

Use the computer in your quarters and enter that word as the "Primary Word" to decode your first message.

Decoding messages from the CIA is similar. But, you'll need the CIA offsets found on the microfilm. You do have the microfilm, don't you? Well, didn't you ever talk to Stacy back in Tahiti?

ATTACKED BY A RUSSIAN DESTROYER

The trick to sinking the Russian Destroyer is to run silent and run deep. Don't attack too soon and give your position away. When the Destroyer is within range, begin launching decoys for their incoming torpedoes. Lock-on and Fire your missiles. You must successfully hit the Destroyer three times to sink her.

RENDEZVOUS WITH THE USS COONTZ

You'll learn how to signal the Coontz after decoding one of the messages from Washington. But, following the Coontz can be difficult.

The Coontz is the blinking cross on the screen. Imagine your screen is a compass with

0° being North

90° being East

180° being South

270° being West

Then, watch your Heading Indicator. As the Coontz moves, follow her right into Tunisia.

LOCATING THE OIL RIG AND THE HARBOR

You must decode the messages sent by the CIA for instructions on what to do at the Oil Rig and at The Harbor. You will need to set the proper waypoints in the diver to locate the Oil Rig and The Harbor.

By looking at the Oil Rig and the Harbor through the periscope, you can get the

headings. The distance to the Oil Rig and The Harbor can be obtained from the Sonarman.

IF YOU'RE A "WANNA-BE SPY" — PLAY ICEMAN

CODENAME: ICEMAN is one of Sierra's most difficult games. These hints will help you through the most complicated situations. If you're still stuck, you can always call our Hint Line for assistance. Feel free to write to us anytime, and we'll quickly write back to you with a solution to help you continue with your quest. If you own a modem, you can contact our BBS 24-hours a day and have your hint answered immediately. Often, cartoons submitted to The Sierra News Magazine have clues to our games. We also have Hint Books available for every Sierra adventure game with complete answers to all the game puzzles.

If you've ever fantasized about being an undercover agent, if you're intrigued by spy thrillers, or if you ever played "Spy" as a kid, you'll enjoy *CODENAME:*

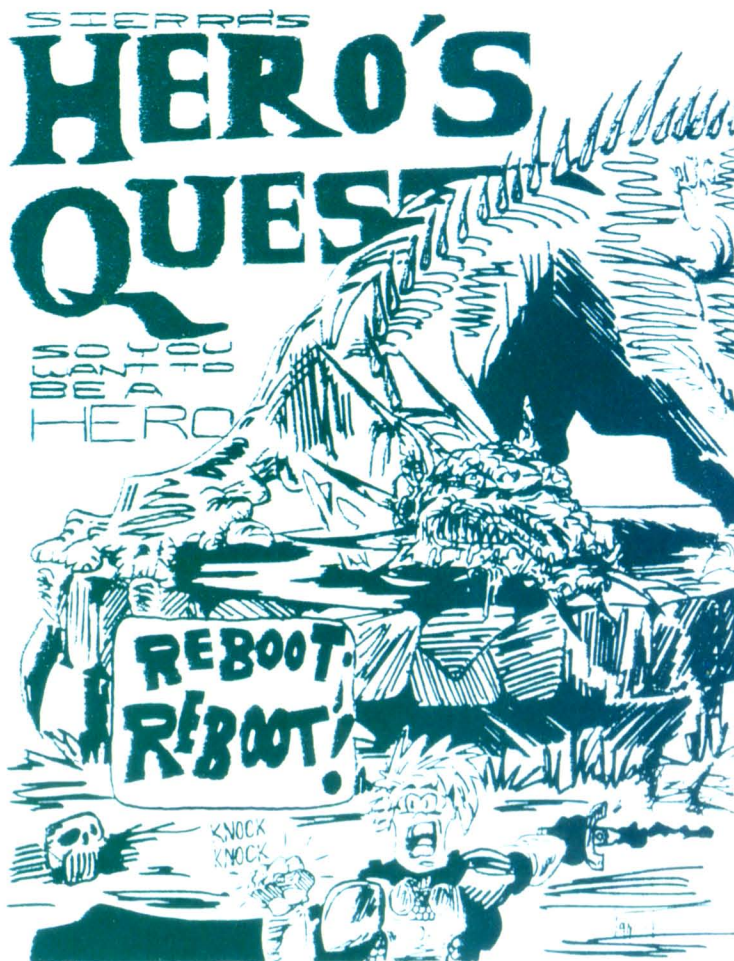
ICEMAN. Indulge yourself, become the Spy you've always wanted to be, play *CODENAME: ICEMAN*.



This is a "hint" for a tough spot in *Leisure Suit Larry 3*



"The Nectarine song in Nontoonyt Tonight was a CAPITAL idea although it didn't seem so INITIALLY."



Cartoon submitted by Dan Santat, California. Age 15

by Ed Ferguson

In this issue we are printing a general round-up of problems people are facing.

Hurried Heroes Paralyzed in Passageways

Q I'm playing *Hero's Quest* and occasionally I get stuck trying to pass through doors or passages. Sometimes it happens, and other times it doesn't. What am I missing?

A Two of the most common examples of this are "entering Baba Yaga's hut" and "exiting the Brigand fortress." If you run into this problem, check your menu and see if you are in 'fast hero' mode. Fast Hero mode was devised for use on slower speed machines to facilitate traveling through the outside world. It was not intended for indoor use. Place yourself in "normal hero speed" and you should be able to pass these obstacles.

Our latest release will not incorporate this feature as a user selectable item. It will only be available on slower machines and will kick in when deemed necessary. In anticipation of your next question, "necessary" is determined by system speed and graphics response, consequently, it is not totally predictable.

Attention All Thieves: When in Doubt, Don't Ask!

Q While playing *Hero's Quest*, I'm in the thieves guild and whenever I "ask about" the rules of Dag-Nab-It, I get an "Oops error" and then the game exits to DOS. How can I play the game?

A The rules are simple. You take turns with the Chief Thief throwing daggers at the board. Each hero gets three turns, and throws three daggers in each turn. As with a dart board, the closer to the center of the board, the higher the score will be. The highest score wins the bet. Adjust the force and angle of the throw with the arrow keys or the mouse, according to your hand position. Press enter or click on the small Dag-Nab-It board to throw.

Unfortunately, if you try to ask about the rules while in the Thieves guild, or while playing Dag-Nab-It, you get an "Oops Error" message and exit to DOS. To avoid this unfriendly situation, save your game when you enter the Thieves Guild. Avoid asking about the game, play, practice, rules, help, or Dag-

Nab-It while in this room. Don't press "?" while playing Dag-Nab-It. In other words, in the Thieves Guild, when in doubt, don't ask. You'll have more fun that way.

Good News and Bad News on the Dreaded Fragmentation Bug

Q Just as I get to the end of *Hero's Quest*, I try to save my character for *Hero's Quest II* and I get the "Dreaded Fragmentation Bug." What's wrong?

A The "Dreaded Fragmentation Bug" occurs at a critical point in the game where many items are being called into play. The error usually (but not always) occurs on machines with system speeds lower than the

recommended 8Mhz. The solution to this is a "good news/bad news" scenario. The most current release of this program will correct this situation, however, you will be unable to use your old save games, and will need to start over. If you have experienced this problem, please call Customer Support at 209-683-8989.

Invalid Disk Change Error Solved by Manual Installation

Q I am trying to install my Sierra game and when I get to disk #2 during the installation, I get the message: Invalid disk change reading drive A. Please insert volume GAMENAME #1 serial 0000 0000. (GAMENAME represents the call letters of the game involved)

MANUAL INSTALLATION OF SIERRA PROGRAMS ON MS-DOS HARD DISK

- 1) Place Disk one of your Sierra program into Drive A, and close the drive door.
Type: **CD A:** \ and press [ENTER]
Type: **C:** and press [ENTER]
Type: **CD ** and press [ENTER]
Type: **MD SIERRA** and press [ENTER]
Type: **CD SIERRA** and press [ENTER]
Note: If your hard drive is not C, substitute the C: above with the correct drive letter
- 2) Now create a batch file enabling normal operation of the game:
Type: **CD C: \SIERRA** and press [ENTER]
Type: **COPY CON KQ4.BAT** and press [ENTER]
Type: **CD KQ4** and press [ENTER]
Type: **KQ4** and press [ENTER]
Type: **CD ** and press [ENTER]
Press the [F6] key, and press [ENTER]
- 3) Make and change to the appropriate subdirectory:
Type: **MD KQ4** and press [ENTER]
Type: **CD KQ4** and press [ENTER]
- 4) For each disk in the set: Place disk in Drive A:, and close the drive door.
Type: **COPY A:*.*** and press [ENTER]
- 5) **SPECIAL PROCEDURE FOR 512K GAMES (As indicated on outer box sleeve):**
Once all the disks in the set have been copied to the hard drive, you must run Sierra's INSTALL program. (If your game is a 256K game, skip to step 6).
Type: **INSTALL** and press [ENTER]
Answer all questions pertaining to your hardware (be sure the answers are correct, as incorrect answers may cause problems while running the game). The final question gives you the option of installing the program to your hard drive. As you have already done this, press [ESC] to skip this step. When the message: 'Setup is Complete' appears on your screen, press [ENTER].
- 6) To run the game from your root directory:
Type: **CD \SIERRA** and press [ENTER]
Type: **KQ4** and press [ENTER]
Note: If the game you are installing is not King's Quest IV, substitute the KQ4 in all cases above with the correct call letters (example: Space Quest III = SQ3).

A You probably are running your system with DOS 4.0 or 4.01, and you probably have a hard disk partition greater than 32MB. The problem usually occurs when trying to load one of the SCI 512K games. IBM recommends that you load SHARE.EXE when you are using hard disk partitions greater than 32MB. SHARE.EXE will load automatically if it is in the ROOT directory, or is in the PATH specified by the system. SHARE provides support for file sharing and "diskette change" protection.

There are three ways around this issue. First, you can prevent SHARE from loading on your system by removing it from the PATH and restarting your system. After installing the game, it is recommended that you return to your original configuration. The second way is to perform a manual installation as listed here. The third way is to create a boot disk, following the steps listed here, with the addition of one item. You must create an AUTOEXEC.BAT file using COPY CON, and insert the statement SET COMSPEC=C:\COMMAND.COM. Boot with this disk and run the installation as instructed. You will not be required to boot with this disk to play your games, after the installation.

New Mac Users Encounter Mysterious Phenomenon

Q I recently purchased a new Macintosh 2CX or 2CI and when I try to run Sierra

games, I get a starburst of colors on the screen, multiple character images, and empty option boxes. Is there something wrong with my disks?

A No, there is nothing technically wrong with your disks. The problem results from the use of Mac's new 32-Bit Quickdraw. On the 2CX model, it is an optional program which is installed in the system folder, and is activated on system startup. You can disable the program by dragging it out of the system folder. Unfortunately, in the 2CI model, 32-Bit Quickdraw is ROM resident and there is nothing that can be done to disable it at this time.

The problem is currently being addressed by our programming staff, and should be eliminated with the release of our Mac products in our new SCI language. Look for these new Mac products to be released throughout the year!

Larry Takes a Fall on Amiga 500

Q I'm running *Leisure Suit Larry II, Looking For Love In Several Wrong Places* on my Amiga 500, and when I get to disk #4, I get a message "Out of Handles" and cannot continue the game. How do I handle this?

A What's happening here is that you cut Larry's parachute so he falls out of the tree, and lands on the ground with a resound-

ing thud. Then Larry starts to see little birdies circling his head. Due to memory management problems on the 500 model with 512K, the loading of these complex sounds causes the "Out of Handles" error.

You can resolve this problem yourself by following the instructions below. If you have any problems, you can get help by calling Sierra Customer Support at 209-683-8989.

WARNING: DO NOT ALTER ORIGINAL GAME DISKS; ALTER BACK-UPS ONLY (This should not be a problem, as this game is not copy-protected).

1. Load Workbench
2. Click on Workbench icon
3. Click on system icon
4. Click on CLI icon

Single drive users:

COPY DF0:C/COPY RAM:

Insert LSL2 back-up Disk 4

RAM: COPY DF0:SOUND.017DF0:SOUND.002

RAM: COPY DF0:SOUND.017DF0:SOUND.008

Double drive users

with Workbench Disk in DF0:

LSL2 back-up Disk 4 in DF1:

CD DF0: (To make sure you are on WB disk)

COPY DF1:SOUND.017 DF1:SOUND.002

COPY DF1:SOUND.017 DF1:SOUND.008

Hard disk users can insert back-up Disk 4 in drive DF0, then:

COPY DF0:SOUND.017 DF1:SOUND.002

COPY DF0:SOUND.017 DF1:SOUND.008

CREATING A SIERRA BOOT DISK

FORMAT a Blank Disk with MS-DOS System files (using the /s option) to make a "Bootable" disk.

FORMATTING FROM A HARD DRIVE

Put the blank disk into Drive A

At C type: **FORMAT A:/S [ENTER]**

Respond to DOS prompts

FORMATTING FROM A FLOPPY DRIVE

Put DOS System Disk into Drive A

At the A type: **FORMAT A:/S [ENTER]**

Switch disk as prompted by Format program

Respond to DOS prompts

Put the CONFIG.SYS file on the new disk using COPY CON.

HARD OR FLOPPY DRIVE

Type: **A: [ENTER]**

Type: **COPY CON CONFIG.SYS [ENTER]**

Type: **FILES=15 [ENTER]**

Press the F6 Key then **[ENTER]**

Label disk: **SIERRA BOOT DISK**

Re-boot the computer using the new, DOS disk you just created.

HARD OR FLOPPY DRIVE

Put the Sierra Boot Disk into Drive A

Turn the computer system OFF then ON **OR**

Press **CTRL-ALT-DEL**

Follow instructions on the Reference Card for running the program.

When To Use A Sierra Boot Disk

Q I am having all kind of problems playing my new Sierra game. Sometimes I can't install it, sometimes it won't boot, sometimes I get error messages, and sometimes it just plain freezes up and I can't do anything until I reset the darn machine! How can I get around this? I just want to play computer games!

A Sometimes when running software that requires a lot of memory such as our games, conflicts can arise between the game and some of the various menuing systems, terminate and stay resident programs, and other after market doodads available for your machine. Our games are best run as standalone software. The easiest way to accomplish this without altering the configuration of your machine is to create a plain DOS boot disk. You can create this disk using a spare floppy disk, and following the instructions in the box to the right. Boot with this disk in your drive A: and play your games. When you want to return to your original configuration, simply remove the plain Dos disk, insert your regular boot disk (or no disk at all if you boot from hard disk), and reset your machine.

Cartoon/Drawing Contest

Winners in this issue:

Klaus Dahlem, page 62
 David A. Handlong, page 53
 L.R. Harskjold, page 41
 Ben Hyde, page 52
 Joshua Jones, this page

David Koran, page 22
 Dan Santat, page 27
 Daniel Wellman, page 14
 Dan Williams, this page
 Andrea Vittek, this page

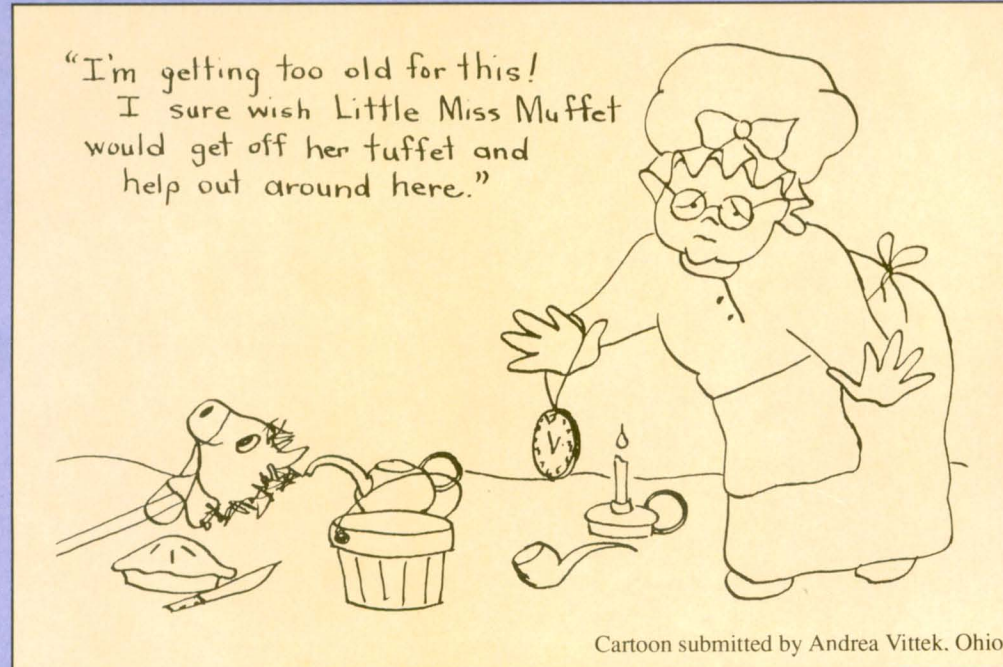
Sierra's Cartoon and Drawing Contest is an ongoing event, so send in your submissions now! Winning entries will be published in the Sierra News Magazine, and winners will receive a Sierra software product of their choice. The number of winners will depend on the quality of the entries, and are chosen at the sole discretion of Sierra On-Line.

Cartoons or drawings must be original ideas, in black ink (not in pencil or in color) on white unlined paper (please do not fold). Bear in mind that large entries will have to be

Cartoon submitted by Dan Williams, New York. Age 13



AFTER BECOMING HOPELESSLY LOST ON HIS WAY TO SAN FRANCISCO, MANHUNTER FORCES SIERRA TO RENAME ITS NEW SEQUEL TO MANHUNTER: TOLEDO!

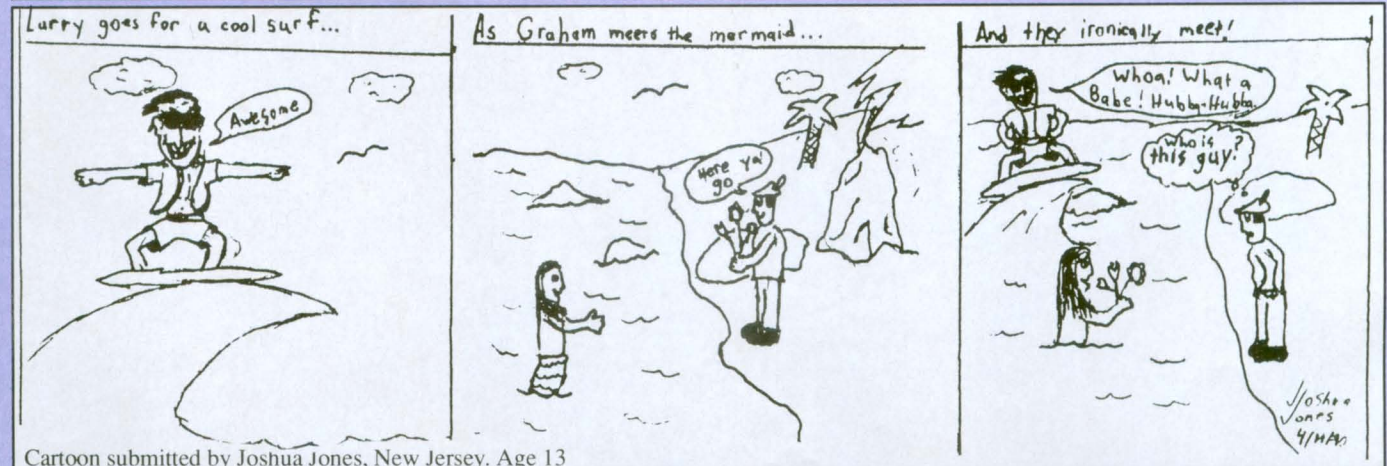


Cartoon submitted by Andrea Vittek. Ohio

reduced for space considerations. Each entry should relate to one or more of Sierra's products. All submissions become the property of Sierra On-Line, Inc.

Submit entries to Sierra On-Line, Box 1103, Oakhurst, CA 93644, Attention: Cartoon Contest, and indicate the product desired and type of computer you have in the event you are a winner. Please include your phone number, and if you are one of our younger entrants, your age.

Please do **not** send correspondence in the same envelope. Address all correspondence to Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614.



Cartoon submitted by Joshua Jones, New Jersey. Age 13

Actually, her employer loved her (Lawrys foods in L.A.) because she used to bring home her work and I'd assist her in her programming efforts by night.

I still remember my first job where I could program through a terminal connected to a computer. What an amazing concept. No card deck! Although the industry was so used to cards in those days that all the editors and compilers still pretended their input was a card deck. The mainframe computers I was working with by 1978 were starting to have awesome computer power, as much as a megabyte of memory and hundreds of megabytes of on-line disk storage. You know, about the equivalent of the 386 I'm writing this article on.

So, as you can see, in six short years I got to watch the computer industry be born. Then in 1978 I saw something be born that I knew immediately was going to be significant. The Radio Shack corporation introduced the first personal computer for the masses — the TRS-80. Apple usually takes credit for inventing the personal computer. However, the TRS-80 really succeeded years before the Apple. Actually other computers, the SOL and the PET, even came before this, they just didn't get as much publicity.

I was at a computer show for mainframe computers when I first saw the TRS-80. There was one in somebody's booth and I believe it was hard at work computing prime numbers. The TRS-80 had a tape drive attached (a home audio cassette player), an enormous 4K of ram and a black/white graphic screen! There were people lined up a hundred deep just to get to touch its keyboard. I was one of them. The year? 1978.

Thanks to a computer owning neighbor, I managed to spend a fair amount of time programming the TRS-80. What a marvelous machine! In late 1979, my brother Larry (also a programmer) called me one day to look at a computer he had started playing with: the Apple 2. The Apple had color but an unreliable tape interface.

Meanwhile, the computer industry had now evolved to the point where I could do my programming at home via modem (300 baud). I used a teletype

machine to dial into a service bureau on the east coast (see how things always come around again). Once in a while, when I was supposed to be working, Roberta and I would cheat and run games off the remote computer. One of those games was called Adventure and was the game that created the entire Adventure Game industry. You communicated with it in sentences like LOOK HOLE or KILL SNAKE. Roberta fell in love. I couldn't get her off my teletype. She'd even wake me up in the middle of the night to bounce ideas off me for how to solve the game.

I wanted a personal computer because I had an idea for a software product that was going to make me rich. What if personal computers could run the same programming languages as the mainframes? In those days Fortran was a popular language. I had just finished programming a Fortran-like compiler to run on mainframe computers. Why not put up a Fortran compiler on a personal computer? People could then buy something for two thousand dollars that would allow them to do on a micro what a mainframe was needed for previously.

For Christmas of 1979 I pestered Roberta into agreeing to buy me a computer. Our big decision was whether to buy an Apple or a TRS-80. When we went to the Apple dealer, Rainbow Computers, in Northridge, California they showed me something new Apple had just come out with. The disk drive. Wow! No more three minute load times for a 100 line program. That made it an easy decision. We bought an Apple 2 with a disk drive (16K of memory) for just under three thousand dollars. It even came with an RF modulator so it would work with our home TV.

Now I had it all, a computer and a project. I started at once on my Fortran compiler. Well, almost at once. First, Roberta talked me into programming a computer game which she designed. I really just wrote it to thank her for getting me the computer for Christmas.

I still remember the night she talked me into it. We were out at a restaurant and she was telling me about playing Adventure and how she had her own idea for a game. She started describing the plot, how there

was going to be this spooky old house with several people locked up in it for the night. One by one they would start turning up dead. Roberta has a voice that carries when she gets excited. That was the first of many occasions, through the decade, when people overhearing our conversations in restaurants would look at us like we were crazy.

Just a couple of months later the game was completed. Roberta called it *Mystery House*. I called the big software publisher of the time, Programma International. They were doing a booming business selling games on audio cassette for Apples and TRS-80's. I mentioned that I was working on a Fortran compiler but that we also had this little computer game. Dave Gordon, Programma's President, went crazy when he saw the game. He immediately offered a 25% royalty for it. He wasn't interested at all in the Fortran compiler.

It was a tough decision to decide to publish ourselves. There were no software distributors in those days. Being a software publisher meant driving from store to store selling from the trunk of your car.

We showed Roberta's game to a few stores though, including Rainbow Computing, all of whom immediately bought copies. Recognizing the writing on the wall I decided we'd be our own publishers. And, as long as we were soliciting computer stores, why not distribute for some of the other hackers like ourselves who were writing software.

I contacted another company in Florida that was doing text based adventure games, Scott Adams International, to see about distributing their games and a company up in Washington, Synergistic, to see about distributing theirs. Ultimately I sold the software distributing end of the business (the total inventory of which fit in two boxes) to a friend of mine, Bob Leff, who turned it into a really huge software distribution company called Softsel and Roberta and I focused on just being a software publisher.

Mystery House was the first adventure game with graphics. By the end of 1980 we followed it up with the first adventure game in color, *The Wizard and the Princess*. In 1983 we shipped the first

Sierra invites you to Come Home & Meet the Family!



That's right — YOU could be the lucky Sierra customer who will be bringing **your** family to meet **our** family here at Sierra On-Line.

The winner of Sierra's **Come Home and Meet the Family** contest will be coming here to Sierra country for a whirlwind weekend in beautiful downtown Coarsegold, including a tour of the Sierra facilities in Oakhurst, a chance to meet your favorite game designers, dinner with Ken and Roberta, and armloads of prizes to take home.

Of course our roving reporters will be there too, taking pictures of all the good times for you to show the folks back home; and we'll be planning a feature article about your trip for a future issue of the *Sierra NewsMagazine*.

Here's how to win:

In the past ten years, Sierra has produced more than 100 products. The entrant with the most complete list of Sierra products produced between 1980 and April 1, 1990 will be the winner. In the case of two or more lists with the same number of products, a random drawing will determine the winner. Winners are chosen at the sole discretion of Sierra On-Line and all submissions become the property of Sierra On-Line, Inc. In the cases of winners under 18 years of age, parental permission is required. All winners will be required to sign appropriate releases to make our insurance people and lawyers happy.



Contest Rules

- You must live within the United States, Canada or Mexico to be eligible.
- The winner will be accompanied by immediate family members (limited to four people).
- Type or print the names of as many Sierra (Sierra On-Line, On-Line Systems) products as possible.
- Alphabetize your list; for this purpose, numbers come before letters, and if a game starts with "The" put it in the "T's."
- Include your name, address and telephone number on your entry.

Mail your entry to:

Sierra Family Contest, Sierra On-Line, Box 1103, Oakhurst, CA 93644

Deadline for postmark is October 1, 1990.

Message from the President, continued from page 35

adventure game with animation, *King's Quest*. In 1988 we shipped the first adventure game with a stereo sound track. I think *Space Quest III* broke new ground by integrating a quality action game, *Astro Chicken*. Later this year we've got some other surprises up our sleeves.

Sometimes I hear Sierra referred to as a niche company. Although we have done several things besides adventure games through the years there has never been a year when adventure games weren't the bulk of our business. An adventure game is really just interactive storytelling. I'm usually reluctant to use the term interactive fiction because that was the trademark of an ill-fated competitor of ours, Infocom. However, it described in the best way I've ever heard

what we do for a living. The only other great metaphor I've ever heard is the film *Westworld*. Do you remember the film? A derivative of it was later made for TV under the name *Fantasy Island*. We create alternate universes where you can live a vicarious existence.

Although I've talked a great deal about the evolution of the computer industry, I've only hinted at the evolution of the adventure game. My belief is that the adventure game will someday encompass most of the other categories of games in the industry. Currently games are thought of as action, simulation, role-playing, board or adventure. Is *Heros Quest* an adventure game or a role-playing game? Is *Iceman* a simulator or an adventure game? Short-term we catch a

bit of flack when we muddy the borders on the different genres. However, long-term I remain steadfast in my belief that it will all come together into interactive fiction. The more we can do to allow you to "step into" a game and actually believe you are a part of the story the better. Some people view adventure games as the highest form of the crossword puzzle genre.

I hope that Sierra through the next decade will show that to be a gross misunderstanding. We are, instead, the future of storytelling. We are storyliving.

See you next time.

Ken Williams

News Magazine Contest #2

Be a character in *King's Quest V*

Anyone can enter and have a chance to be painted into *King's Quest V*. Use your imagination to construct a costume that would fit into the land of Daventry or the surrounding countries. The best costume will win, and the winner will be incorporated into the *King's Quest V* game. Roberta Williams herself will judge the entries.

So put on your costume, have a color snapshot taken, and send us the photo — it's OK to send more than one family member or friend in the same envelope. Be sure to put your name, address and telephone number on the back of the photo.

Winners are chosen at the sole discretion of Sierra On-Line and all submissions become the property of Sierra On-Line, Inc. In the cases of winners under 18 years of age, parental permission and release is required. All winners will be required to sign appropriate releases to make our insurance people and lawyers happy.

Mail your entry to:

King's Quest V Contest
Sierra On-Line
Box 1103
Oakhurst, CA 93644



Deadline for postmark: August 1, 1990

CONTEST WINNERS Spring Issue

The answer was *Mystery House*.

Bobby Covington
Georgia

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Czagas
Florida

Sandra Davidson
Missouri

Tom Hartl
Michigan

Sarah Hayes
New Jersey

Andrew Jones
Maine

Emily Klokkevold
California

Allen Lang
New Jersey

Ryan Stevenson
Illinois

Allison Willits
California

“Poker Showdown, a video game of high tension and realism”

—*The Wall Street Journal*, March 15, 1990, page 1

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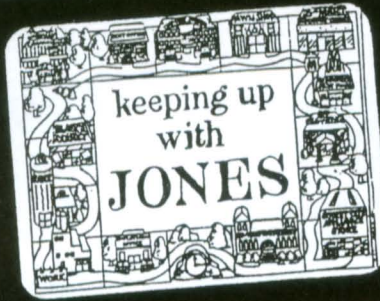
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THE CINEMATIC PROCESS

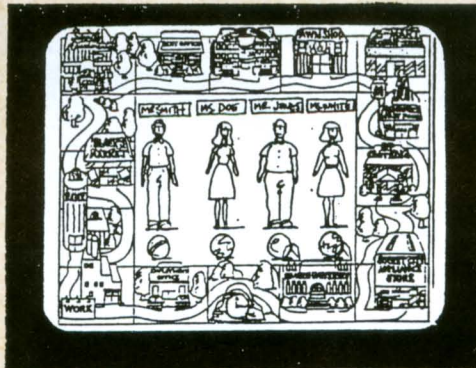


The arrival of Bill Davis at Sierra On-Line has introduced a new cinematic process for putting computer games together. The following story is derived from an interview in which Bill outlined the process.

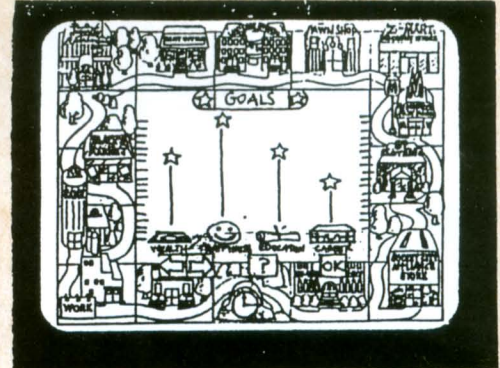
First comes the design document, which is text narrative. (A designer may well groan that the months of writing are covered in one sentence here, but, as the saying goes, "that's another story.") In this case — Keeping Up With Jones — Sierra purchased an existing game. The design was based on this original structure, so it was a matter of the Creative Director, Producer and Lead Programmer getting together and brainstorming about changes or enhancements they wanted to make to the original design. The lead programmer wrote down the decisions in text form. Then Bill took it to storyboard, which means the text narrative drawn in pencil on paper. A storyboard might be likened to a comic strip of the whole game on paper, and laid out on a large bulletin board. The game designer, the art designer, the lead programmer and the music director then meet in front of the storyboard to familiarize all concerned with all facets of the project. It is here that any problems (technical or otherwise) are brought up and worked out between these three. Any necessary changes are made to the storyboard before proceeding to the next step. Each room ("room" is the vernacular for "scene") can occupy

several pages of the story board, depending on the amount of animation in the room. The design team uses the storyboard to see how the game looks as a total entity, before any work on the computer is started.

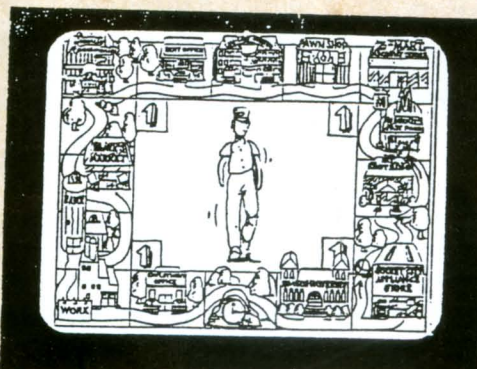
Reproduced here are several of the individual drawings of the *Keeping Up With Jones* storyboard.



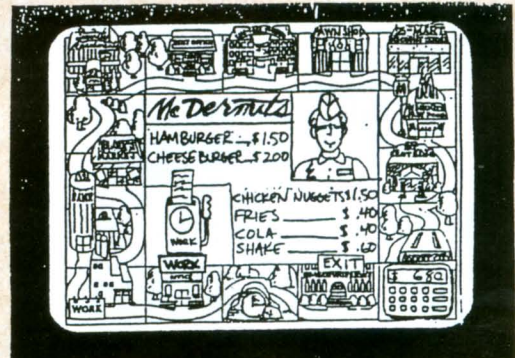
② CHOOSE CHARACTER AND MARBLE. AFTER CHOICE, YOU AUTOMATICALLY MOVE TO NEXT REQUESTER.



④ SET GOALS BY PLACING STAR-STAK LIGHTS UP WHEN YOU REACH THAT PARTICULAR GOAL. CLICK ON "?" TO GET MORE INFO ON GOALS. CLICK ON "OK" WHEN FINISHED SETTING GOALS. CLICK ON "↑↓" TO MOVE TO NEXT WINDOW OR PREVIOUS WINDOW.



⑪ PLAYER #1 WALKS CENTER SCREEN WHILE MARBLE ROLLS INTO LOCATION CHOSEN WITH MOUSE (MC DERMITS). ONCE MARBLE IS INSIDE WE BRING UP NEXT SCREEN.



⑬ WORK CAN BE CHOSEN BEFORE OR AFTER FOOD SELECTION BY CLICKING "WORK" BUTTON. IF SELECTED TIME CLOCK APPEARS AND TIME CARD ANIMATES DOWN INTO TIME CLOCK TO BE PUNCHED AND BACK OUT AGAIN.

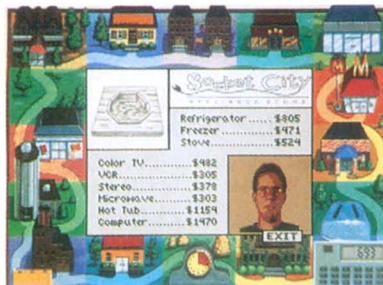
Then several stages follow:
Artists draw the background pictures in pencil on paper.



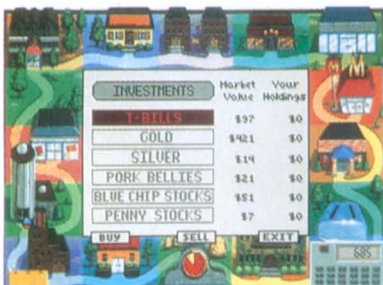
The artists work out the key animation drawings in pencil.



These penciled background drawings and animation drawings are scanned into the computer. The scanner is a wonderful piece of equipment — it literally transfers



the images from the paper to images on the computer screen. Sometimes loops (animation segments) from other games are stolen as temporary stand-ins (for ex-



ample segments of the Hero walking or riding from Hero's Quest I will be used in

the beginning stages of Hero's Quest II). Actual photos are also sometimes scanned into the computer.

This scanned art gets a rough version of the game in black and white up and running on the computer quickly.

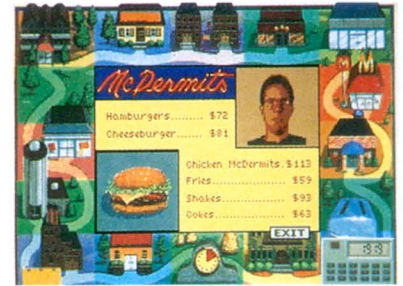
Next the artists concentrate on finished animation. As each piece of animation is finished, it replaces the stand-in version in the evolving game.



Once all the animation is completed, the artists concentrate on finished background pictures and, once again, slowly replace the black and white versions with color. This background artwork can be done in two ways. Either the computer is used to color the backgrounds or the artists paint

in the traditional way and the finished piece is scanned into the computer.

The composer of the music was involved at the initial story board stage to get a



feeling for the overall design. After the initial work is completed and a black and white version is up and running, the composer really gets involved. By playing the black and white version the composer can get a "real time" feeling by seeing how long each scene lasts, seeing the motion, and seeing the parts of the game where sound effects will be effective.

The game is now beginning to be a whole piece, ready for fine tuning and testing.

—Nancy Smith



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WHAT'S HAPPENING ON-LINE

By Kerry Sergent
Head of Sierra's BBS Systems Operations
and Technical Support

Sources for game hints grow!

Coming soon to America's Online and PCLink is the Sierra Hint Library. The entire hint library of Sierra's own BBS, which spans years of compilation and refinement, will soon be available on these services. Both America's Online and PCLink are subscription online systems from Quantum Software and offer a wide variety of additional services. For information and signup instructions on these systems, you can call these toll-free numbers:

1. PCLink (800) 458-8532
2. America's Online (800) 227-6364

In addition, hint support is growing steadily in the private sector. Prodigy users who drop by the Adventure Game Forum in the PC Club (JUMPWORD PC CLUB) can obtain complete up-to-date lists of private Bulletin Board Services that support Sierra games! Just send electronic messages to such groups as the Sierra Expert Club or the Sierra Hint Club and members will be happy to help. Our own John Williams (a long time Prodigy subscriber) is a regular on the service.

Sierra's On-Line

To tell you the truth, when Sierra's On-Line was first released I was skeptical. How could a GAME company produce a competitive communication package that people will use? Already the market seemed inundated by a large number of communication software packages (some just given away with modem purchases, others as shareware, or even free). Having spent a good portion of my computer time on or running Bulletin Board Systems, I also thought that the program might not have the features I look for in a communications package.

I made some interesting discoveries about Online. A while back I was asked to work up a presentation for our Customer Service Representatives at Sierra's busy Customer Service department to demonstrate Sierra's On-Line, to familiarize them with its features, and show them how to help customers with potential problems.

I started with Online's script language. Scripts are long lists of commands for the computer to carry out while using telecommunications (they allow the computer to perform routine tasks automatically). Script languages tend to vary widely between different software packages, and have few common threads. Pick-

ing up a new script language has always been a lot like learning a new programming language. Every time you obtain a new piece of communication software, you have to learn the new language! Having worked with script languages for some time, I was convinced that the commands would, at first, be time consuming to learn and tedious to program, and if not that, then so crude as to be unusable. I was very surprised. In a few minutes (as opposed to hours) I had Online's script function down (Online's scripts are called AUTOLOGON files). I was amazed — I hadn't even opened the documentation. It was TOO EASY! There had to be a catch. These AUTOLOGONS couldn't possibly do what I wanted them to; either there was going to be some problem or I would spend hours debugging or trying to patch in what I needed. I decided to put it to the test with a quick script (oops, AUTOLOGON) that would contact CompuServe, log me on, and gather some quick stock quotes for major players in the high tech stock market.

I ran my AUTOLOGON. The program dialed up Compuserve (a nationally recognized BBS). So far so good. Since I couldn't remember some of the prompts that appear in certain sections (Compuserve is MASSIVE), I needed to customize my Autologon to remember them for me. I didn't even have to slow down. I pulled down the Online script editor and punched in a couple of changes ON THE FLY! I didn't need to save my entire session to disk and review it to see which commands worked. I didn't need to shell to DOS to make changes. I just pulled down a menu. The simplicity was astonishing!

To write my script I used four different function keys: [F3] (Preset), [F4] (Call), [F5] (Wait For), and [F6] (Send). Each Function Key brought down a menu and I made a choice from each menu (choices are in CAPS) by clicking on the appropriate button. Each menu choice brought up a box of possible commands (commands chosen are in *italics*)

From [F3] (Preset) choose SET PARAMETERS. I set *2400 Baud 8N1 XON* — you might need to use different parameters.

Now I chose MOUSE, and set the mouse for *Off* to increase the operating speed while online.

My PROTOCOL was already set for *Xmodem CRC*. Since this is a good all-purpose protocol, I left the setting alone.

From [F4] (Call) I chose CALL and typed in my local CompuServe access number, including the '9' I need to dial from my office to get an outside line.

From [F5] (Wait For) I chose WAIT SECONDS and typed in 2. This told my com-

puter to wait 2 seconds to receive any commands sent to it from CompuServe before it sent anything else.

From [F6] (Send) I chose ^C as a command to send to the CompuServe Computer.

Now I chose WAIT SECONDS 2 again to give CompuServe time to send its next string.

I went back to [F6] (Send) and chose STRING, then entered my **CompuServe ID** followed by the commands ^M and ^J.

I inserted another WAIT SECONDS 2 command to receive the next CompuServe prompt, then chose SEND again, then STRING, and typed in my **CompuServe password**, followed by the ^M and ^J commands.

Next I chose WAIT FOR, then STRING, and entered !, the next prompt Compuserve would send.

I then entered a few WAIT FOR and SEND commands that would take me to the place on the CompuServe board where I could get the stock quotes I wanted automatically:

```
SEND G QQUOTES ^M^J
WAIT FOR SSUE:
SEND APPL,IBM,MSFT,MIND,MGNC,
SEND ERTS,
SEND SIER,SPKR,TWRX ^M^J
WAIT FOR SSUE:
SEND ^M^J
SEND OFF ^M^J
```

The only things I had to type were the phone number, my ID, my password, the stock issues I wanted to look at, and the word OFF to exit CompuServe. The rest was entered with simple point and click menu selections from On-Line!

If you have Sierra's On-Line, a modem, and a Compuserve executive option subscription, feel free to try this script out.

Maybe we'll see you next time ONLINE!



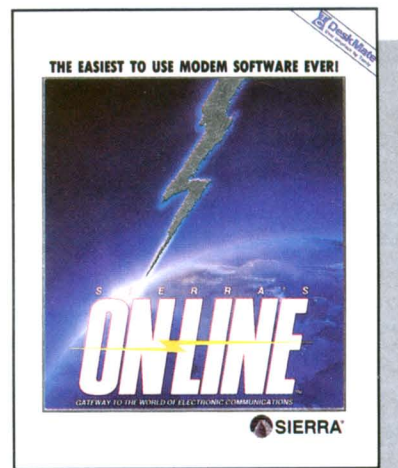
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SIERRA'S ON-LINE



The following is a reprint of a review of *Sierra's On-Line*, written by David Stanton for the March 1990 issue of *Compute!* Reprinted with permission from *Compute! Publications, Inc.*, P.O. Box 5406, Greensboro, NC 27403 © 1990. All rights reserved.

Few computer experiences can surpass the excitement of telecommunications. Unfortunately, few experiences can be as maddening and difficult at the same time. Selecting compatible hardware and software, configuring everything properly, and connecting with even the simplest local BBS can often be more of a challenge than most potential telecommunicators are willing to tackle.

Sierra's On-Line is trying to change that. It's billed as *the easiest to use modem software ever!*

Sierra's uninitiating manual is 72 pages of clear, understandable prose. Its introduction promises that beginners will be telecommunicating in less than an hour. I started my timer and began following directions.

Backing up the unprotected originals took about four minutes using DOS's DISK-COPY command. Reading directions and installing *On-Line* on my hard drive required five minutes more. *DeskMate* users could install the program onto their desktops in about the same time. Alternatively, *On-Line* can be run directly from floppies without *DeskMate*. Since the package includes both 3-1/2 and 5-1/4 inch sizes, virtually any functioning MS-DOS system will do. Just select the proper drive, type ONLINE, and wait a minute or so. Total time from box opening to first glimpse: ten minutes.

Those who already understand Tandy's *DeskMate* interface will feel instantly at ease; others will catch on quickly. Either way, new users will want to read about the program commands and experiment a little, using dialog boxes to set phone numbers, selecting communications ports, and such. Don't change anything yet, though. With *On-Line's* preset configuration—COM port 1, 1200 baud, eight data bits, one stop bit—

the program should work OK for most situations. I decided to save fine-tuning for later. Running time: 20 minutes.

At this point, you can follow the manual's instructions for calling Sierra's own bulletin board system (BBS) in California, or you can attempt to contact a local BBS. Caution: Attempting to contact local BBSs without first becoming familiar with a few technical things can be hazardous to your sanity. For a gentler introduction to telecomputing, call Sierra's board. It's a convenient way to get your feet wet.

Within 45 minutes of starting my times, I began downloading a demo version of Sierra's *Leisure Suit Larry* from its BBS. For those who need special help, the board provides a customer-service section.

On an Ease-of-Use scale of 1-10, *On-Line* rated a 10 in my unscientific test. I don't know how general purpose terminal software for MS-DOS users could be made simpler. But what about power and features?

On-Line supports a maximum data-transmission speed of 9600 baud, fast enough to

handle the most efficient phone-line connection but a bit slow for direct exchanges using a null modem. The program provides an easy-to-use AutoLogOn Editor for creating automatic log-on files. Review Mode allows users to scroll through the program's memory buffer to find stuff that scrolled off the screen. In Host Mode, your computer can await calls from remote terminals and answer automatically.

For CompuServe's CB Simulator or Chat mode on your local BBS, try *On-Line's* Conference Mode, a split-window arrangement that separates your outgoing messages from incoming ones. The program also handles ASCII, several variations of SMODEM and YMODEM, and CompuServe's Quick B+ protocols.

Overall, *Sierra's On-Line* offers an attractive blend of simplicity and power. Advanced users will find it a solid performer for regular use. Beginners should have little difficulty making it work. If you've been avoiding telecommunications because of its difficulty, you're out of excuses.



Cartoon submitted by L.R. Harskjold, Texas

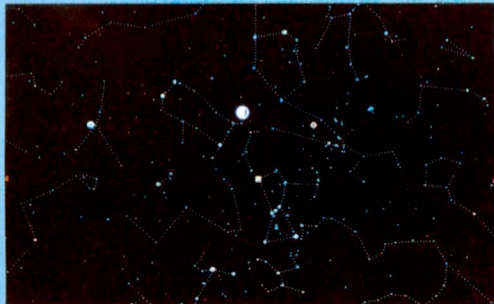
Sierra's On-Line is available for MS-DOS computers with 512K, \$69.95, and can be purchased through your local software dealer or by calling our order number, 1-800-326-6654.

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Customer Service (209) 683-8989 Orders 1-800-326-6654

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- IBM-compatible
- 512K RAM
- VGA, EGA, CGA, and Hercules® monitors

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Dynamix



Happy to be a part of the Sierra family, Jeff Tunnell (l) and Damon Slye (r) founders of Oregon-based Dynamix, Inc.



by Marti McKenna

In March 27, 1990, Sierra announced intent to acquire a small but exceptionally innovative software company — **Dynamix, Inc.** The two companies

had been in close contact since the licensing by Sierra of Dynamix's 3Space technology (a powerful 3-dimensional modeling and display system, developed by Damon Slye, head of Research and Development at Dynamix), in mid 1989. Ken Williams thinks they're going places, and called the acquisition a strategic move: "The Dynamix technologies not only provide superior entertainment products

Arcticfox used a new version of the 3Space system selling over 100,000 copies and taking home the SPA Gold Award.

for today's computers, but offer a superior platform for the development of optical-based products for the next generation of computer systems."

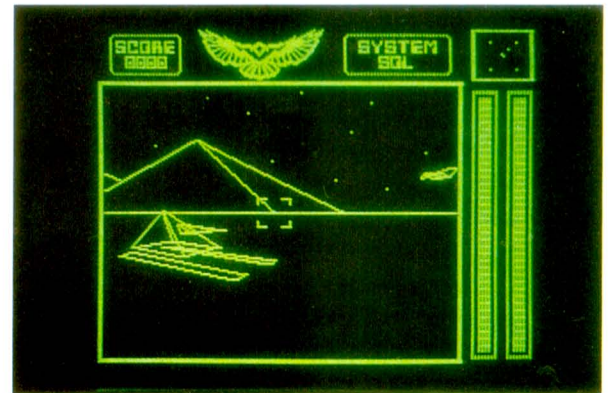
When you take a look at the recent direction of Dynamix's Research & Development team, there can be no doubt of the accuracy of Ken's observation; like Sierra, Dynamix has seen the future of interactive entertainment, and its name is CD-ROM. In addition to the commercial photographic equipment, color photo developing lab and color digitizers already in use at Dynamix, their Image Production department now boasts a full filming studio with which they intend to take full advantage of the high quality graphic capabilities CD-ROM technology will bring to the industry.

Dynamix President Jeff Tunnell feels that the alliance is "...a terrific pooling of talents...through our work over the last months with Sierra we have found that our development practices and the marketing philosophies of our two companies are very similar. I believe the two companies will work very well together." While Sierra and Dynamix will indeed work together in many areas, and a great deal of the 'pooling of talents' will surely take place, Dynamix will remain a separate entity, continuing to operate pretty much as usual from their western Oregon offices.

Dynamix, Inc., based in the beautiful community of Eugene, Oregon, was founded as *Dynamix Software Development* in 1984 by Jeff Tunnell, owner of a Eugene software store, and Damon Slye, a University of Oregon computer science major. Like Sierra, Dynamix, Inc. specializes in entertainment software for high end home computers. The company's first product was an arcade game called *Stellar 7*, the first product to use Dynamix's proprietary **3Space** technology. The game had a big cult following — in fact, it is reported to be the favorite computer game of author Tom Clancy (*Hunt For Red October*). Next, Dynamix published *Sword of Kadash*, a 'Dungeons and Dragons' type adventure, which was to be their last original game for a while.

In 1985, Dynamix Software Development signed on as a developer for *Electronic Arts*, and subsequently designed *Arcticfox*, the first game released for the Commodore Amiga. *Arcticfox* used a new version of the **3Space** system, and was an instant hit, selling over 100,000 copies and taking home the SPA's Gold Award. Dynamix went on to develop such popular games as *Skyfox II* (for *Electronic Arts*), *Pete Rose Pennant Fever* and *Mech Warrior* (for the *Activision* label). In September of 1986, Dynamix Software Development became Dynamix, Inc. In two years, the company had grown from 2 to 15 employees, was incorporated, and had moved to a building that would contain their growing employee base. It was a smart move, because by the summer of 1989, their numbers had grown to 26, and they needed every last hand; that was the year they published *David Wolf: Secret Agent* and *A-10 Tank Killer* — the first two products to be designed, developed and produced completely in-house, and the first to bear the *Dynamix* label.

The *A-10 Thunderbolt II* (aka *Warthog*) is known as 'the most devastating and indestructible ground support plane ever built'. It's ugly (hence the nickname), and it isn't terribly fast, but it can out-maneuver the fastest MIG, and its 30mm cannon can reduce an enemy tank to so much scrap metal. They say it 'Flies Low and Hits Hard', and you can take *that* to the bank.



One of the original *Stellar 7* game screens. The first product to use the Dynamix 3Space technology.



The 1990's version of *Stellar 7* using 256 colors, digitized VGA graphics and phenomenal sound effects.

The A-10 Thunderbolt II (aka Warthog) is known as “the most devastating and indestructible ground support plane ever built.”

If that sounds like your kind of flying machine, then this is your kind of flight simulator. *A-10 Tank Killer* puts you in the cockpit of this big mean hunk of steel — an actual digitized A-10 cockpit with an amazingly realistic instrument panel including working gauges, and a strategic mapping system that keeps you informed of enemy movement.

As Captain Buck Ryan of the 23rd Tactical Fighter Wing (better known as the *Flying Tigers*), you'll fly 7 missions accompanied by your smart-alec copilot, Jake Styles, and usually one or two wingmen. You'll experience complex character interaction, including constant feedback from Jake, and frequent radio traffic in the form of messages from your wingmen, your Commanding Officer, even distress calls from ground troops in trouble. Each mission has its own objective, which you'll learn about in a briefing with Commander Cord, your tough C.O. He'll brief you again after the mission to let you know how you did, give you a pointer or two, and fill you in on further enemy activity (a glimpse of missions yet to come!).

This realistic environment is enhanced by full, 256 color VGA support, Ad Lib and Roland MT-32 supported music and sound effects, intensely real animated explosions, and a war that continues regardless of your participation. Dynamix recently released Simulation Module #1, an add-on with 7 new missions, just in case you survive your first 7 — I didn't.

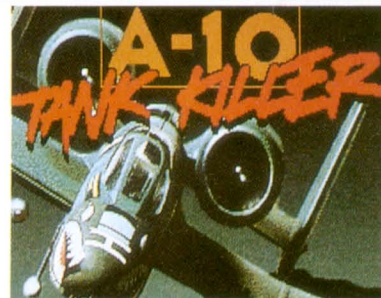
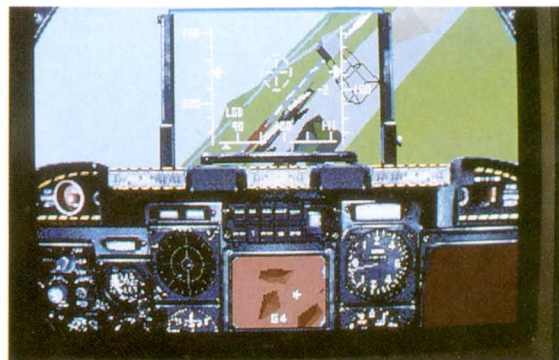
James Bond, look out — here comes Wolf — David Wolf — and he's bad. He's hot, he's cool, he's smooth with the ladies and rough with the bad guys. David Wolf is an American secret agent, and he's the best we've got.

Wolf's next mission is going to take the best *he's* got. *Viper*, possibly the most deadly crime force in the world, has stolen a top-secret U.S. stealth fighter, and with it the fighter's designer, the beautiful and brilliant Dr. Kelly O'Neal. Wolf must overcome impossible odds to recover the jet, and Dr. O'Neal, before *Viper* can carry out their threat to nuke the U.S. capitol.

The Dynamix ad for *Secret Agent* reads “It's unlike anything you've seen...”, and they mean it. The beautifully digitized and animated story (using live actors and real sets!) surrounds five action-packed simulation experiences, for an interactive suspense-thriller unlike anything I've seen. As I watched the story unfold, I had the opportunity to battle *Viper* as the pilot of an uzi-equipped hang-glider, to drive Wolf's high-tech, fully loaded sports car in one deadly car chase after another, to experience a potentially fatal free-fall from 15,000 feet, to parachute drop onto a speeding truck, and finally, to pilot the elusive stealth jet and engage in an intensely frustrating battle against a heat seeking missile and several venomous *Viper* jets before emerging a hero. Much of this action I didn't survive the first time around, but Dynamix's nifty VCR Interface allowed me to ‘skip’ back to each simulation scene and try it again. Each event effected the story, and I was treated to several possible endings as I played, some less desirable than others — like watching the White House go up in a cloud of radioactive dust!

As of this writing, Sierra has begun distributing *Secret Agent* and *A-10 Tank Killer*, and is looking forward to doing the same for three new products Dynamix plans to release this year.

A-10
TANK KILLER



DAVID
WOLF SECRET AGENT



“A terrific pooling of talents...I believe the two companies will work very well together.”

Dynamix President
Jeff Tunnell

RED BARON

This 256 color, digitized flight simulator is a thrilling historical recreation of flight during W.W.I. In *Red Baron*, you'll fly up to 12 different, accurately modeled aircraft on either the German or the European side of the war, against realistic enemy intelligence unrivaled in home computer simulations. Dynamix's 3Space™ 3-D creates a convincing environment using breathtaking VGA graphics, and the exciting original soundtrack takes you back in time as you battle or even become the *Red Baron*!

STELLAR 7

A decidedly 1990's version of Dynamix's first game, this time with full 256 color, digitized VGA graphics and phenomenal sound effects. Take command of the *Raven*, an intergalactic war tank, and battle enemies on seven different worlds on a mission that puts the fate of planet Earth in your hands. All the excitement of the original *Stellar 7*, in a truly state-of-the-art arcade game.

THE RISE OF THE DRAGON

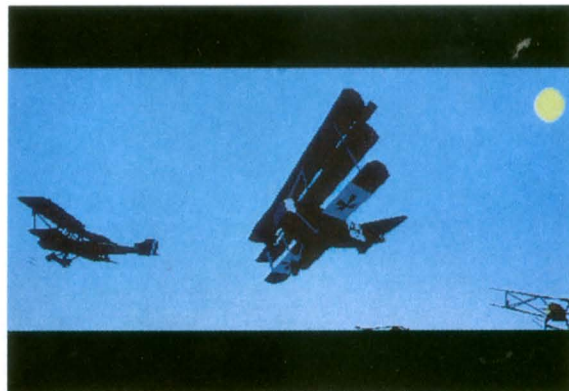
This futuristic, private-eye adventure is a totally new type of interactive game. As a 21st century private investigator, you'll wander a city gripped by evil as you attempt to unravel the darkest, most deadly mystery of your career. Using a completely 'point and click' interface, this game lets you explore a real-time environment as you pick up and use objects, talk with other characters, solve intricate game puzzles and do battle in numerous arcade sequences throughout the game. The product of Dynamix's new *GDS (Game Development System)*, *Dragon* combines animation, interaction, puzzle-solving, cinematic storytelling techniques and Dynamix's *VCR Interface™* for an action/adventure game unlike any you've seen.

We're proud to welcome Dynamix, Inc. to the Sierra family. Here's looking forward to a long and mutually prosperous relationship with the common goal of bringing you the best in home entertainment at the high standard of quality you've come to expect.

HEART OF CHINA (Working title)

High adventure comes to your computer screen in *Heart of China*. The action begins in revolutionary China, 1930. As reluctant hero "Lucky" Jake Masters, you are hired to rescue Kate Lomax, the kidnapped daughter of a wealthy American investor. Held by the leader of a war-torn feudal state, her life is now in your hands. In your mission to reunite father and daughter, you enlist the aid of a street-wise ninja, Chi, and set out to storm the kidnapper's fortress and rescue the heroine. You'll travel through such exotic locations as Hong Kong, Katmandu, Istanbul and Paris in an adventure that spans the entire European continent.

With an entirely "point-and-click" interface, breathtaking graphics, character interaction, puzzle solving, action simulations, cinematic cutaways and meanwhile screens, *Heart of China* takes adventure gaming to all new levels of excitement and challenge!



Red Baron



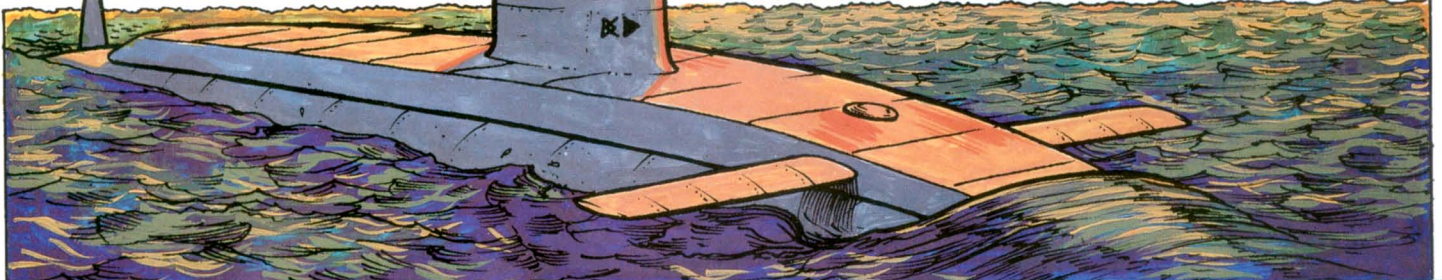
The Rise of the Dragon



Heart of China

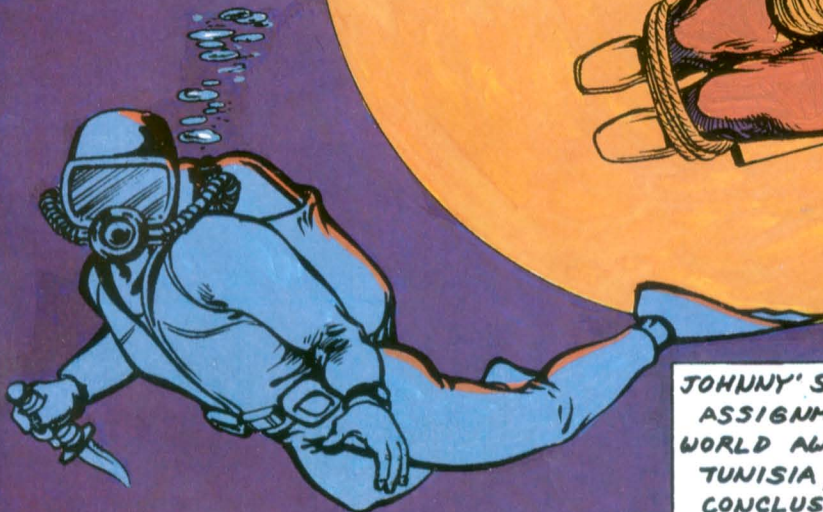
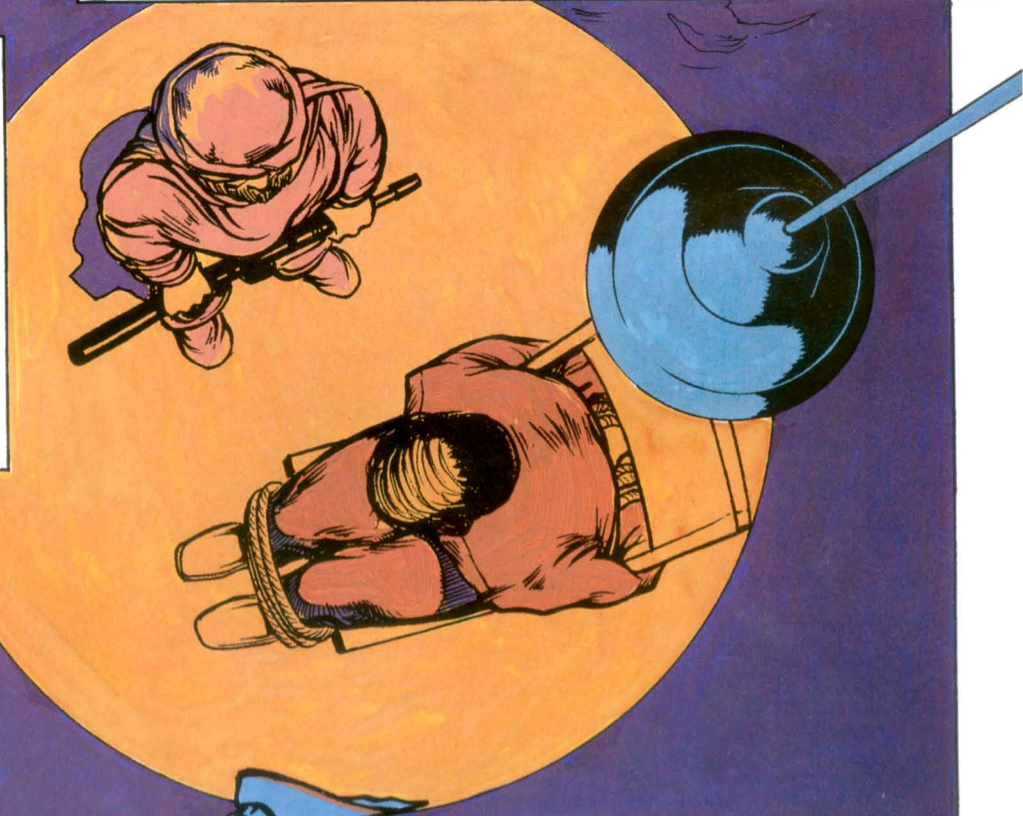
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ICEMAN

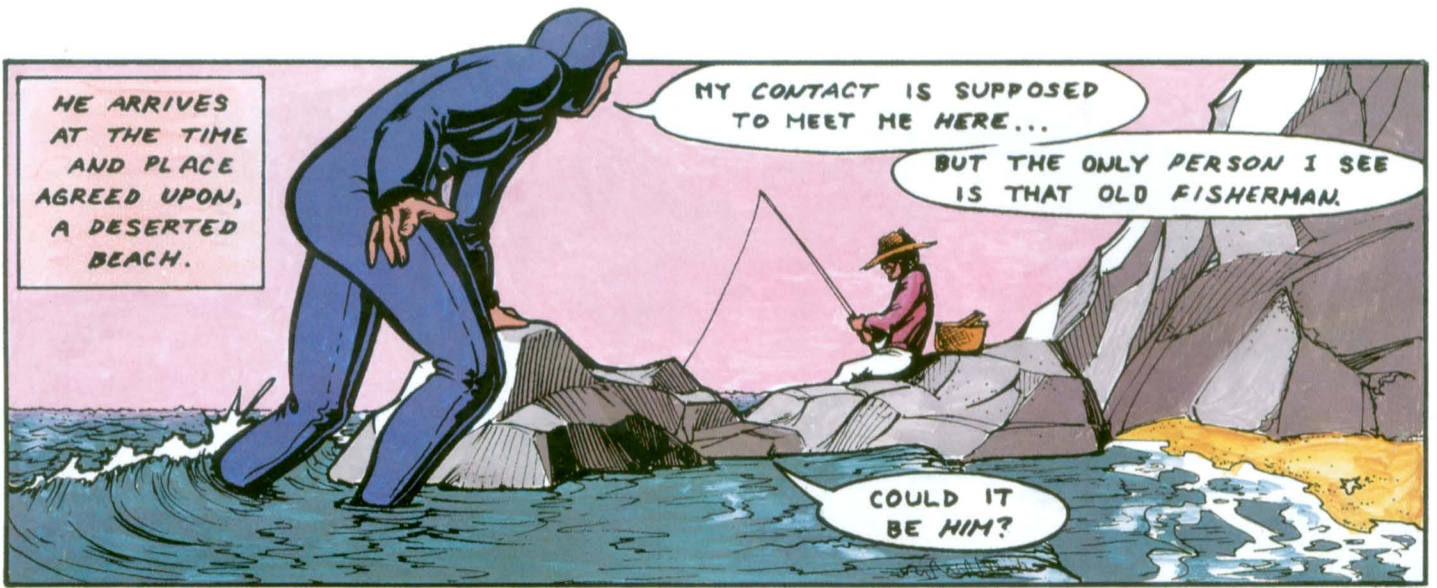


FROM THE BEACHES OF TAHITI TO THE HALLS OF THE PENTAGON; FROM THE SUNSHINE AT PEARL HARBOR TO ICY BLACKNESS BENEATH THE ARCTIC ICE, AND BEYOND...

THE YEAR IS 2010. A UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR IS BEING HELD HOSTAGE BY TERRORISTS IN A PLOT TO CONTROL GLOBAL FUEL SUPPLIES. ONLY ONE MAN CAN PREVENT THIS INCIDENT FROM LEADING TO GLOBAL WAR. HIS NAME IS JOHNNY WESTLAND.



JOHNNY'S LATEST AND MOST DEMANDING ASSIGNMENT BEGAN DAYS AGO, HALF A WORLD AWAY. NOW, OFF THE SHORES OF TUNISIA, THE NAVY SEAL NEARS THE CONCLUSION OF A RESCUE MISSION... OR AN ACT OF WAR.



HE ARRIVES AT THE TIME AND PLACE AGREED UPON, A DESERTED BEACH.

MY CONTACT IS SUPPOSED TO MEET ME HERE...

BUT THE ONLY PERSON I SEE IS THAT OLD FISHERMAN.

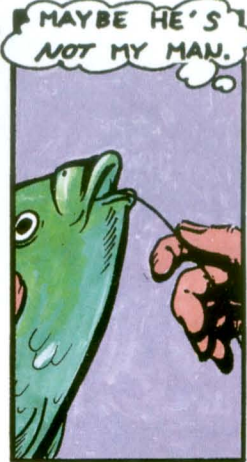
COULD IT BE HIM?



بسی حس و در پستانس نیاب



A DEAD FISH. GREAT.



MAYBE HE'S NOT MY MAN.



BUT WHAT'S THIS?

A MAP?



I HOPE THE MAP IS ACCURATE — I'M NOT GOING TO GET FAR WEARING THIS WET SUIT.



THAT WAS CLOSE. NOW TO FIND MY DISGUISE.

ACCORDING TO THE MAP, IT SHOULD BE SOMEWHERE IN THIS OLD BUILDING. I WISH I KNEW WHERE.



A GUARD! GOTTA' HIDE FAST!



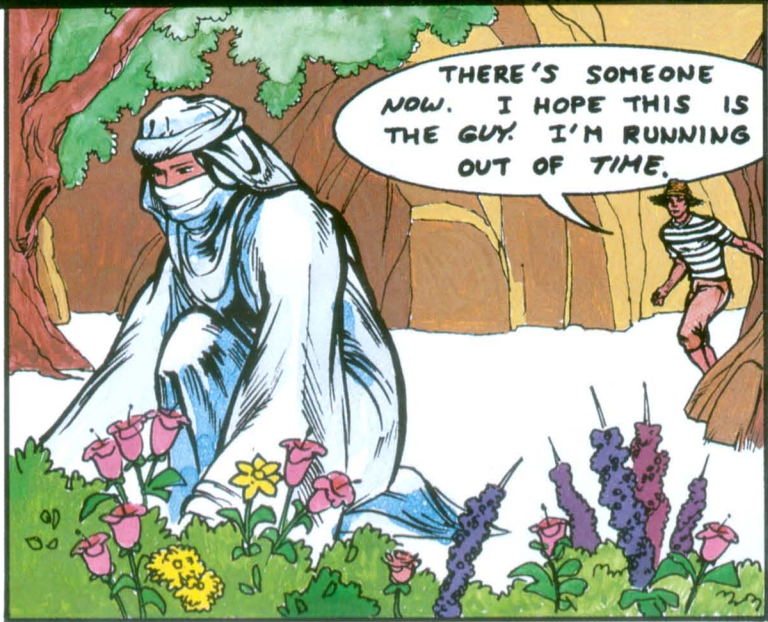
JOHNNY FINDS THE HIDDEN CLOTHES AND PUTS THEM ON. TIME IS GROWING SHORT.



ANOTHER GUARD. AND HE'S SEEN ME. GUESS I'M ABOUT TO FIND OUT IF THIS DISGUISE WORKS.



SO FAR SO GOOD. THERE'S STILL ONE MORE CONTACT TO MAKE— WISH HE'D HURRY.



THERE'S SOMEONE NOW. I HOPE THIS IS THE GUY. I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME.



بِسْ حَسْبِ وَدَرِ بَسْتَانِش



HELLO, COMMANDER. I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.

THE EYES ABOVE THE VEIL LOOK SOMEHOW FAMILIAR.



ANOTHER PIECE OF THE PUZZLE FALLS INTO PLACE...

THIS LOOKS LIKE THE PLACE.



NOW LET'S SEE IF THE KEY SHE GAVE ME FITS THE LOCK.



SHE SAID THERE'D BE SOME THINGS HERE FOR ME...

... BUT THEY'RE PROBABLY HIDDEN.



AND THAT'S A GOOD PLACE TO START LOOKING.



HE SOON FINDS A DART GUN.

NOW I NEED A PLAN.



FROM HERE, THERE'S NO TURNING BACK.

HELLO...

DON'T MOVE!



WHAT'S THIS?

HMM, THIS JUST MIGHT WORK.

SHE REALLY DID HER HOMEWORK ON THIS ONE.



MOMENTS LATER.

THIS IS IT!

KNOCK KNOCK

CAN JOHNNY WESTLAND OUTWIT THE TERRORIST GANG AND RESCUE THE AMBASSADOR WITHOUT PLUNGING THE WORLD INTO WORLD WAR III? FIND OUT WHEN YOU PLAY CODENAME: ICEMAN, ON SALE NOW.

SIERRA PRODUCT INFORMATION

NEW VERSIONS OF SIERRA CLASSICS

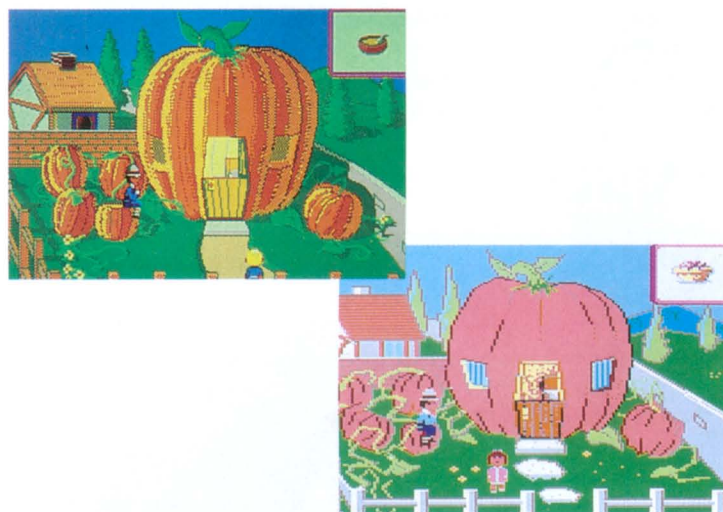
The original *King's Quest* and *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* rewritten for SCI

Sierra is pleased to announce that two of its most popular and best-selling products of the last six years have now been rewritten to take full advantage of Sierra's new SCI technology.

King's Quest I — new and old



Mixed-Up Mother Goose — new and old



Improvements to these titles include new, improved higher resolution graphics and better animation. Also, optional music card support has been added for Adlib, Roland MT-32 and LAPC-1, Brown-Weighs' GameBlaster and SoundBlaster cards, and the Tandy's standard three voice music output.

The new versions of *King's Quest* and *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* require 512K and a CPU of at least 8MHz is recommended. The products support all major graphics cards, but owners of CGA may want to upgrade to EGA before they upgrade to the new versions of these products. CGA support is in black and white only. Suggested retail prices are \$39.95 for *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*, and \$59.95 for *King's Quest I*.

SPECIAL UPGRADE OFFER FOR CURRENT OWNERS!

If you currently own *King's Quest* and/or *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*, Sierra offers a special upgrade policy for you. Follow these instructions for your new version:

- » For *King's Quest I*, send \$20 check or money order (to cover the cost of the new upgrade and shipping and handling) and either the disk #1 or the front cover of your documentation (new documentation will be forwarded to you).
- » For *Mixed Up Mother Goose*, send \$15, check or money order (to cover the cost of the new upgrade and shipping and handling) and either the disk #1 or the front cover of your documentation (new documentation will be forwarded to you).

Be sure to include your return address and whether you want 3.5" or 5.25" disks with your order. Send to: Sierra, ATTN: Fullfillment, P.O. Box 485, Coarsegold CA, 93644. If sending via UPS, send to Sierra, Attn: Fullfillment, 40033 Sierra Way, Oakhurst, CA 93644.

HOT ACTION GAME FROM JAPAN DEBUTS FOR MAC

Thexder — the Japanese and U.S. Best-seller Moves to the Macintosh and Macintosh II

Despite the lack of Sierra's SCI programming language for Mac until September, Sierra's commitment to games for Macintosh



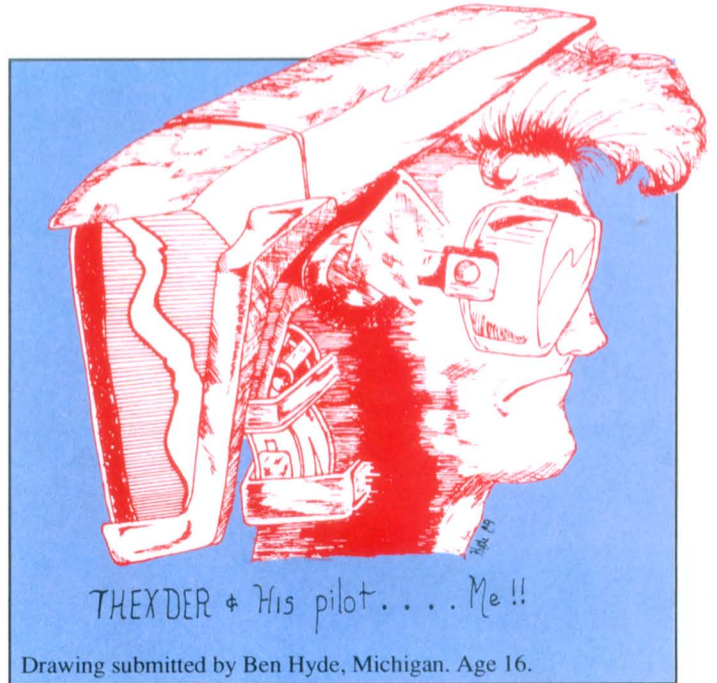
Thexder
on MAC II

begins with new *Thexder*, an exciting action game Sierra found in Japan and has transported to America.

Built around the popular toy concept of the "folding robot," the main character in the

Thexder action game is a automaton that can change from a Robot to a jet-plane, and back again, in the touch of a button. *Thexder* offers 18 different levels of hot and heavy arcade action, and features a hot and heavy soundtrack that will draw you into the action.

The suggested retail price for *Thexder* is \$34.95.



AMIGA ADVENTURERS TREATED TO THREE NEW SIERRA ADVENTURE GAMES DURING SPRING

Leisure Suit Larry 3, Hero's Quest and new *The Colonel's Bequest* for the Amiga.

It would put it mildly to say that *Space Quest III* was Sierra's largest selling release of all time. The reaction that game players have had to Sierra games created under SCI has been tremendous, and three more new ones are on the way or in Amiga owners hands now.

Our bestselling designer, Roberta Williams, offers Amiga owners a different sort



of entertainment experience with the release of *The Colonel's Bequest*, the industry's first interactive play. Loosely based on a popular stage production called *Tamara* that has been playing in the Los Angeles Area for years [now starring Shelly Hack, of former *Charlie's Angels* fame], this combination adventure game/murder mystery and play puts the player in the role of an innocent bystander caught in a combination family reunion and slaughter. Definitely not for the weak of heart....

For those Amiga owners looking for something completely different in the way of Sierra offerings, new *Hero's Quest* merges the best features of both Fantasy Role-playing and computer adventure formats. Choose from a fighter, a mage or a thief as your onscreen incarnation, and try to save the town of Spielberg.



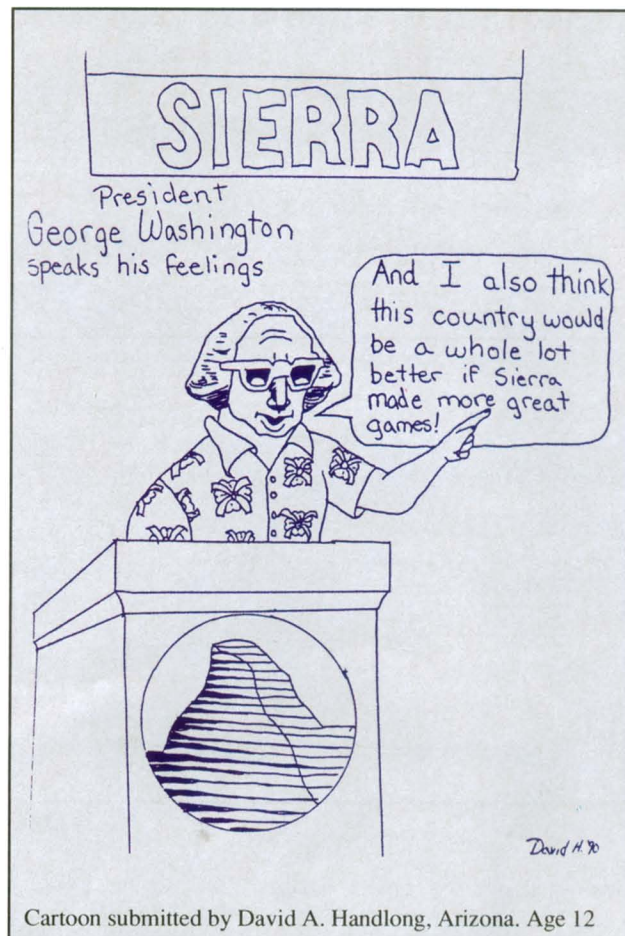
Last but not least is the long awaited *Leisure Suit Larry 3—Passionate Patti in Pursuit of the Pulsating Pectorals* for the Amiga. Third in the ever-popular *Leisure Suit Larry* series, by Al Lowe, this hilarious adult adventure is the first Sierra game to allow you to switch roles in mid game! Become Larry Laffer and Passionate Patti in an outrageous adventure in the steamy jungles of Nontoonyt Island.

PRODUCT SHIPPING SCHEDULE

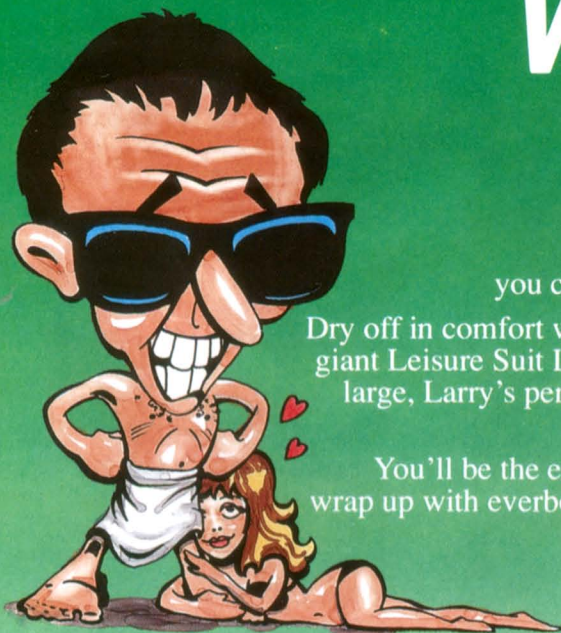
TITLE	May 1990	June 1990	July 1990
<i>Codename: Iceman</i>		Atari	
<i>The Colonel's Bequest</i>		Atari	Amiga
<i>Conquests of Camelot</i>		Atari	
<i>Hero's Quest</i>	Amiga Atari		
<i>Hoyle's Book of Games</i>	Atari		
<i>Keeping Up With Jones</i>		IBM (VGA)	
<i>King's Quest IV</i>		Amiga	
<i>Leisure Suit Larry III</i>	Atari		
<i>Manhunter: San Francisco</i>	Amiga		
<i>Manhunter: New York</i>	Apple IIE/IIC		
<i>Police Quest II</i>		Amiga	

PLEASE NOTE: Computer software development is a very inexact science. The projected ship dates above are provided for general information only, and should not be depended on. Sierra On-Line, Inc., and publishers of computer software in general, have a very poor track record of meeting projected shipping schedules.

Sierra also has other projects pending. This shipping schedule includes only those projects that are sufficiently advanced for us to feel comfortable projecting a shipping date.



TAKE A SHOWER WITH LARRY!



For the first time ever, you can have Larry all to yourself!

Dry off in comfort with this colorful, heavy-duty, giant Leisure Suit Larry bath towel. Luxuriously large, Larry's perfect for a night at the hot tub, or just for hitting the shower.

You'll be the envy of all your friends as you wrap up with everybody's favorite good-time guy.

Get one for a pal!



To order, use order form on page 59

AN EXCERPT FROM:

Software People: An Insider's Look at the Personal Computer Software Industry

*The following is an excerpt from the book **Software People: An Insider's Look at the Personal Computer Software Industry** by Douglas G. Carlston, published in 1985 by Simon & Schuster and reprinted with permission. Mr. Carlston is President and co-founder of Brøderbund Software. He called one section of his book "The Brotherhood" — the nickname for an informal association of friends in the software industry. A portion of that chapter is reprinted here.*

There truly was a sense of brotherhood among the California game companies, but that didn't mean we always shared our trade secrets with one another. Sirius, as the "leading company," seldom shared information with the rest of us, although we socialized together. The Sirius people saw us as competition, and they wanted to win. Brøderbund's relationship with Ken and Roberta Williams, however, extended much further. Although we wouldn't have expected anyone to give us information that had been obtained at great cost, like the secrets of the Atari video game machine, we helped one another when we could.

Ken and Roberta Williams's company—On-Line Systems, or, as it was called later, Sierra On-Line—constitutes its own software empire up there in the gold rush country of the Sierra foothills. Ken Williams himself is a major part of anybody's history of the software industry. He has cooked up and implemented more ideas over the past four years than anyone else in the industry, and, as an innovator, he has no match.

Ken is a big, amiable, slightly sloppy-looking man with a congenial twinkle in his blue eyes. His wife and business partner, Roberta, is tiny in comparison with him, and in contrast to his aggressive and outgoing style she has to push through her natural shyness in order to speak out on matters she feels are important. She has strong opinions and is less carefree than

Ken. There is a combination that works—she channels his raw energy and focuses his creative ambitions. Although Ken is the programming talent in the family, they might never have started their own business if Roberta hadn't taken the initiative to create their first product.

Without Roberta acting as a rudder, Ken would probably be over his head in projects,

“Ken Williams himself is a major part of anybody's history of the software industry. He has cooked up and implemented more ideas over the past four years than anyone else in the industry, and, as an innovator, he has no match.”

instead of just up to his neck. A short list of his achievements—and attempted achievements—is startling. He started the distribution company that later turned into Softsel, the world's largest distributor of computer software. He and Roberta added the first graphics to adventure games and co-founded On-Line Systems. He co-founded one of the first mail-order businesses, Calsoft. He co-founded one of the

earliest magazines, *Softline*. He wrote one of the first game generators that could be used by a nonprogrammer. He was one of the very first publishers to take in venture capital to accelerate the growth of his business. And he got into licensing deals long before most of the other cottage publishers dreamed that such marketing activities could be within their financial reach.

As an example of his continual exploration of new possibilities, one day in 1982 Ken called me and said that he had a proposition for me to consider. How would I like to form a company with him to put computers and computer software into hotel rooms? He had done a lot of thinking about it and suggested that we meet in Los Angeles to try to whip the idea into shape.

So I flew down to L.A. while Ken and Roberta drove down from their Sierra foothills headquarters in their big pickup. They were buying a motorboat and were planning to haul it back home the next day. We all went to a steak house and talked about the plan. What emerged was a blueprint for an intriguing new business that might permit us to profile our software products for a lot of bored travelers. However, the whole idea depended on finding the right person to run the business. Ken clearly didn't have the time, and neither did I. When we were unable to find the right manager for the business, we let it drop, but the episode gave me a sense of the way Ken's creative mind works. He not only comes up with an extraordinary number of ideas, but he pushes and prods them along until a lot of them come to fruition.

But our discussion in L.A. wasn't the first time we had talked about joining forces. In the summer of 1981, Ken extended invitations to about fifty people—including Gary, me, and our sister Cathy—in the microcomputer industry to join him on a whitewater rafting trip down the Stanislaus River, a beautiful, exciting,

Sierra riverway that would be buried forever by a new dam only a few months after our trip. That trip was the first time I had spent any time with Ken or Roberta other than at a trade show, and it was a pleasure to see them away from the competitive pressure. Of course, it was impossible for fifty computerists to go anywhere without talking shop, and the river guides frequently had to shout at us: "Hey, forget computers. Look around you!"

The river guides had a point. The river was extraordinarily beautiful. We had water fights. We swam and ate and spent our time in honest sunlight—a refreshing change from being squirreled away in musty offices or basking in the midnight glow of computer screens. Ken rode down some of the rapids while standing on the bow of his raft and holding the bowline like a pair of reins. At other times we all swam through the rapids, shrieking like kids in the ice-cold water. And in the evening when everyone gathered around the campfire, Ken and I wandered off and speculated about whether or not we should merge our two companies. It was good fun. What was more important to us than the possibility of an actual merger was our willingness to consider it in the first place. In effect, the merger discussions were a way of saying to each other: "I like you and respect your business and your abilities." We also shared a desire to be important, and if merging our companies could make us important in the eyes of the world, that might be reason to at least consider it. The merger never happened because of geography (we didn't want to move to the Sierra foothills and they didn't want to move to San Rafael) and because there were no real benefits to such a measure (our companies were too similar). The competitive sides of our personalities were never too deeply submerged either. On the second day of the trip, we came to a place in the river where the water was deep and smooth, and cliffs rose up above the river banks. Ken hollered: "Stop the boats! We're going to go up there and jump off," and he went tearing up the cliff. Lots of people followed and started jumping into the river from the cliff. But when I got to the top, Ken and Roberta were still standing there, looking down. Ken came over to me and said: "I've made a big mistake. How would you like to do me a favor, Doug? Why don't we walk down to the boat. If you go with me, nobody will think anything of it."

"We can jump off this. It's not so bad," I replied.



Counter-clockwise from left front: Ken Williams, Gary Kofler (Sega), Doug Carlston, Judy Rabin, John Heuer (Roberta's father), River Guide, D.J. Williams, Roberta Williams.

"Why don't you take a look," he said.

It did seem like a long way down, but everyone else was jumping off and surviving. By this time my sister Cathy had joined us. Cathy is not very afraid of water—when we were growing up in Iowa, she was voted outstanding swimmer in the state two years running. Furthermore, she is nine years younger than I am and was then still too young to have any sense of her own mortality. She was clearly ready to jump off the cliff.

I said to Ken, "Well Cathy will take one of your hands and I'll take the other, and I'll grab Roberta's hand and we'll jump off together. What do you think?" "Okay," he said. We linked hands and headed for the cliff's edge until Ken put on the brakes. "I'll do it next time," he said.

So Cathy and I jumped off. It was fun but not so much fun that we wanted to try it again, so we didn't go back up. Eventually everybody jumped, but Ken and Roberta climbed back down. Ken said, "I think my reach exceeded my grasp. I pushed myself a little further than I was ready to handle." It was rude to leave them up there like that. But it is a fair analogy to our business relation-

ship. We are friends, but the competitive spirit is never too far away. I doubt that any of us would do anything that would harm any of the others, since their opinions of us are important. But we all like to win, and if the other falters, we aren't likely to wait too long for him to catch up.

In the business arena, when Ken and Roberta came out with their low-priced word-processing program, *Homeword*, he called us to bet that it would displace Brøderbund's word-processing program, *Bank Street Writer*, on the charts. In fact, our vice president of sales and marketing at that time, Tom Measday (who is now president of Avant Garde), bet Ken \$500 and lost it three weeks later when *Bank Street Writer* temporarily fell to the number two position behind *Homeword* on the Softsel chart.

But if Ken and Roberta weren't gamblers at heart, there never would have been an On-Line Systems in the first place. They would still be in the San Fernando Valley, living off Ken's earnings as a programmer, instead of residing in a mansion in the Sierra foothills running their own software empire.

THE SOUND OF ADVENTURE



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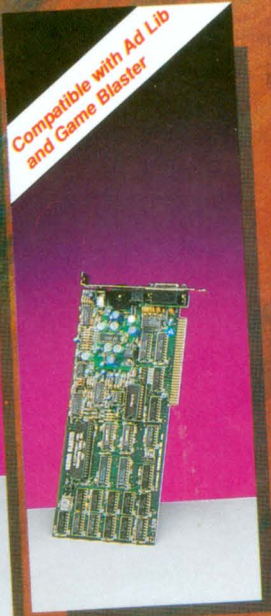
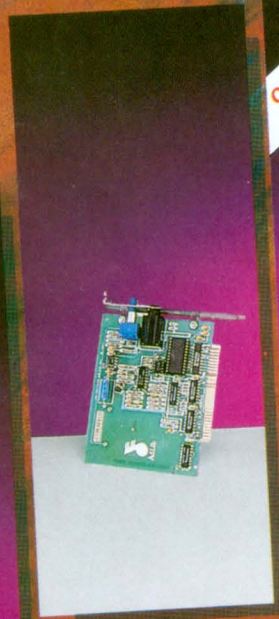
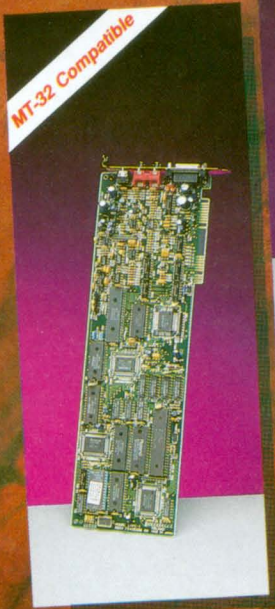
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DISCLAIMER

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** Hercules not supported.

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**** Full 256 color VGA

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IBM owners, will your machine accept (check those applicable):

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Space Quest II	2.0F	ALT D	2.328	REMOVE COPY PROTECTION
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Space Quest I	1.0Q	TITLE SCREEN	.071	PROGRAMMING REVISION
Space Quest II	2.0F	CTRL V	.099	REMOVE COPY PROTECTION
ATARI ST				
Leisure Larry II	1.002	ESC & ABOUT LSL2	1.001.008	MT-32 SUPPORT ADDED
APPLE IIgs				
Kings Quest IV	2.0H	OPTION D	2.007	PROGRAMMING REVISION
Police Quest I	2.0B	OPTION D	1.007	HANDCUFF PROBLEM IN BAR
Smart Money	1.5	TITLE SCREEN	N/A	PROGRAMMING REVISIONS
Thexder	2.7	N/A	N/A	ADDED SAVE GAME & IMPROVED JOYSTICK
MACINTOSH				
Gold Rush	2.01	SELECT THE	1.78	ADD MAC SE-30 SUPPORT
Kings Quest I	2.0C	GLOBE ICON	1.50	COLOR ON MAC II
Kings Quest II	2.0R	THEN SELECT	1.50	COLOR ON MAC II
Kings Quest III	2.14	"ASK ABOUT"	1.52	COLOR ON MAC II
Leisure Suit Larry	1.05	FOR VERSION	1.55	COLOR ON MAC II
Manhunter NY	1.22	NUMBER	1.79	ADD MAC SE-30 SUPPORT
Space Quest I	2.2		1.64	COLOR ON MAC II
Space Quest II	2.0F		1.73	HARD DISK INSTALL
MS-DOS				
Helicopter Sim.	2.0BH	TITLE SCREEN	N/A	ADDED FEATURES
Kings Quest III	2.14	ESC /ASK ABOUT	2.936	MCGA SUPPORT
Kings Quest IV AGI	2.3	"	3.002.086	HERC MONO/PCJR SUPPORT
Kings Quest IV SCI	1.006.004	"	0.000.502	HERC MONO SUPPORT/ WATER FALL PATCH
Heros Quest	1.001	"	0.000.056	PROGRAMMING REVISION
Leisure Larry II	1.002	"	0.000.490	HERC MONO/PCJR SUPPORT
Homeword II	1.11	TITLE SCREEN	N/A	FIXED MEMORY PROBLEMS
Manhunter S.F.	3.03	ALT D	3.002.149	DISK SWAPPING PROBLEMS
Police Quest II	1.002.011	ESC /ASK ABOUT	0.000.490	ADD HERC MONO, PCJR & GAMEBLASTER SUPPORT
Silpheed	2.4	TITLE SCREEN	N/A	PCJR & GAMEBLASTER SUPPORT ADDED
Space Quest I	2.2	ALT D	2.917	MCGA SUPPORT
Space Quest II	2.0F	ALT D	2.936	MCGA SUPPORT
Space Quest III	1.0U	ESC /ASK ABOUT	0.000.490	PROGRAMMING REVISION
Thexder	REV.C	N/C	N/A	1.2 MB DRIVE SUPPORT

See
**PRODUCTS FOR YOUR
COMPUTER**
page 46
for news of
Mixed-Up Mother Goose
and
King's Quest I

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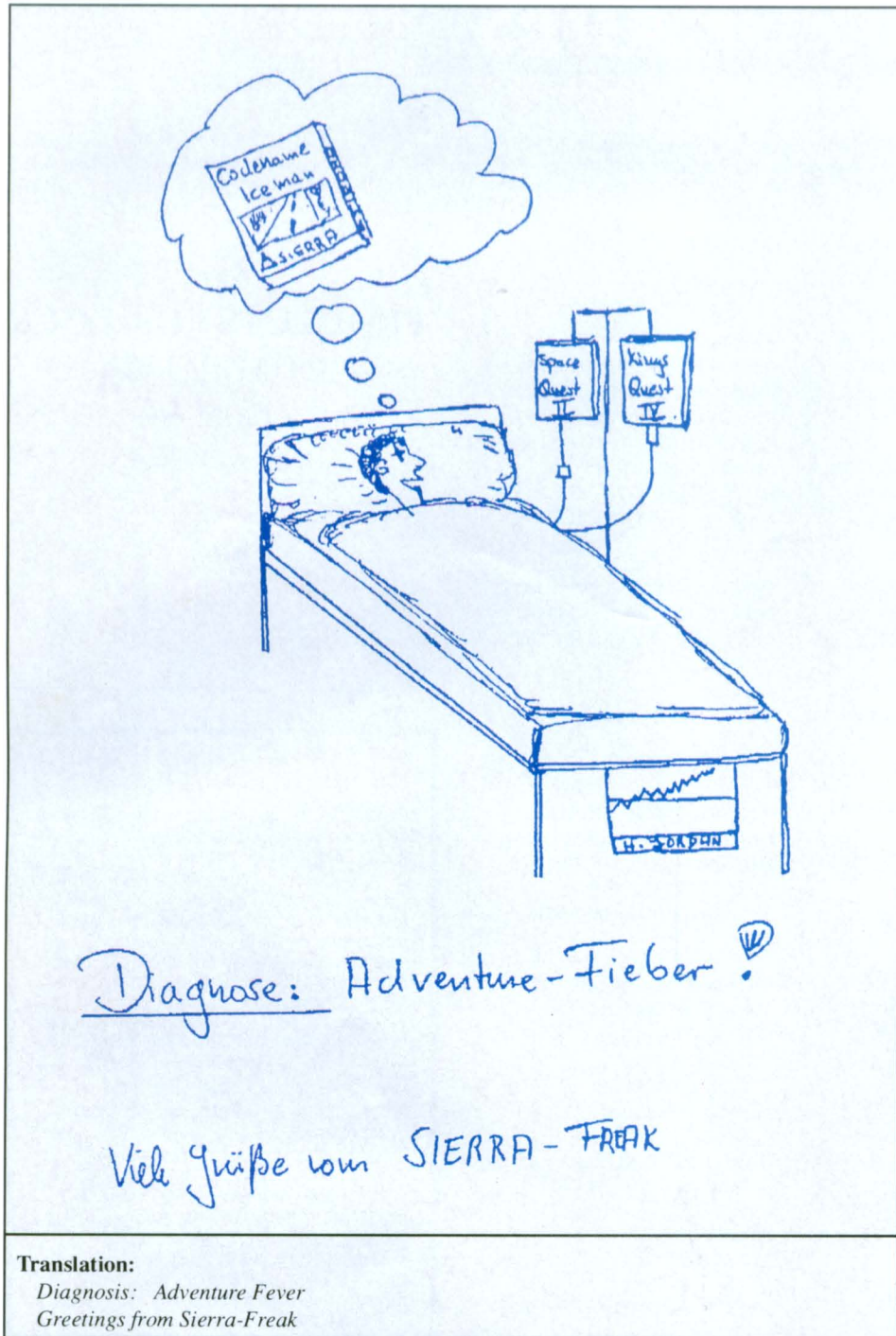


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This cartoon came to us from West Germany . . . by FAX!

Submitted by Klaus Dahlem



Coming Next Issue

A Preview of:

King's Quest V

Space Quest IV

Hero's Quest II

SIERRA'S TOP TEN BEST SELLERS

January 1 - April 30, 1990

CODENAME Iceman
Conquests of Camelot
Colonel's Bequest
Hero's Quest
Leisure Suit Larry 3
Sorcerian — Master Scenario
Space Quest III
King's Quest IV
Hoyle's Book of Games
Roland MT-32

Sierra will be at the following Trade Shows over the next few months.

June 2-5	CES	Chicago
June 29-July 1	AMI-EXPO	Chicago
September 13-15	One Computer Show	Honolulu
September 14-16	Applefest/Computerfest	San Francisco
September 15-18	World of Commodore	Valley Forge, PA

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15 ADVENTURES IN ONE GREAT GAME



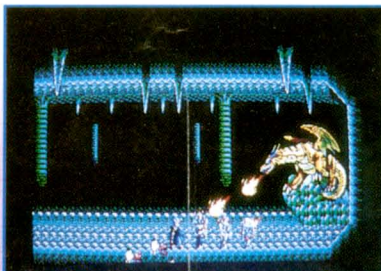
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NEW DIRECTIONS IN GAME PLAY

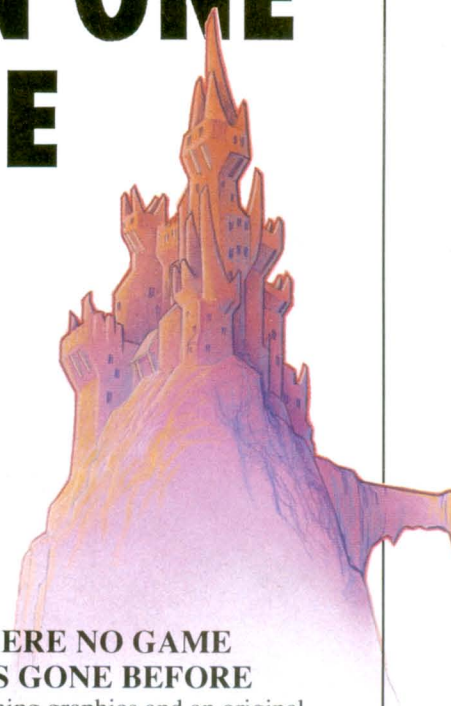
Use wits, muscle and magic against a wide spectrum of enemies, from fantastic dragons and monsters to evil sorcerers and wicked thieves. 7 magic elements combine to form powerful magic spells.

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The folks at *Advanced GRAVIS Computer Technology* have recently made it possible for Sierra to present you with a line of products we're sure you'll like; *Gravis Analog*, a precision joystick that can take what you dish out, and *Eliminator Game Cards™*, the game card with guts. We're sold on this stuff, and here's why...

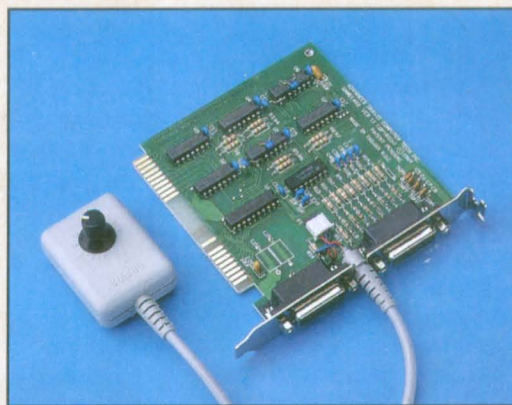


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Fred Blechman
Computer Shopper

Nobody is harder on a joystick than Sierra's own Quality Assurance department. We've tried those *other* joysticks, and frankly, they just don't stand up to much. Gravis, on the other hand, is alive and well after nearly a year of 'round the clock' abuse. Furthermore, the Gravis joystick is unsurpassed in its smooth, precision control, which *you* adjust to preference, and its wide, solid base helps keep it stationary, even during your most ferocious battles.



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