



by John C. Dvorak

## OF SEXISM AND SILICON SINNERS

The Macintosh is a screwball computer and it attracts screwballs to it. For the most part, this is a good thing because many of the creative types out there are screwballs (you know who you are) and so the Mac gets some of the most interesting software. When religion, bigotry and narrow-minded pig-headedness enters the equation, though, then tolerance for screwballism fades fast.

It happened a few weeks ago. I decided to review a couple of new Mac games. Both must have been written by fanatics of one sort or another. The first is considered one of the finest Mac games of the year and the other was brought to my attention as the most offensive software package ever seen (to date).

*MacGolf* came first. It's been reviewed in the pages of this magazine and it's one hot game. Except for the hokey screen rewrites that make the game take as long as a real game of golf, it's a fun example of elaborate interactive games. As I played with the thing I kept mumbling about the screen handling, which includes a complete (and sluggish) screen rewrite even when nothing has changed in the picture.

The game shows a golfer hitting the ball with nice digitized sounds of balls falling into the drink, crowds shouting "yay" and stuff like that. There are plenty of parameters and the game is fantastic.

Anyway, that's what I thought until I showed the game to a female golfer. She wasn't used to a 140-yard 9-iron shot. In the real world when she hit a 9 iron it went 40 yards. "280 yard drives!" she exclaimed. "Where's the girl golfer?"

Yeah, where is the female golfer? Will it offend someone to have a female golfer who doesn't hit the ball quite as far as a male golfer? If you have to make up for it, then just make her a better putter.

Okay, just as I was figuring that a female golfer in the game would offend some feminist somewhere in Berkeley I

received a copy of the most insensitive, and to my mind, the most self-righteous and possibly most offensive adventure game imaginable.

The game is called *Real Life—the Greatest Adventure of All*. It walks you through a town where you are confronted by whores, derelicts, gamblers, panhandlers, bums, sleazeballs, scuzzbags and immoral clergymen. Yeah, REAL LIFE. Just like in Anytown, USA.

The game is written by some sort of self-righteous Bible thumper. You know the kind. Smile on his face; Lord in his heart; sinners everywhere. The idea of the game is to take you to some sort of understanding of real life. This is done by introducing you to some religious fundamentalist concepts (a.k.a. religious fundamentalist bigotry). You walk by



the Catholic Church, St. Gerard's. You're introduced to Father Mike. What do you find out about Father Mike (and presumably all Catholic Priests)? "Father Mike is a great guy. Especially on Bingo Night, after a few beers." This is followed by a snide remark about Catholicism.

The Catholics are not the real brunt of the program. It's when you arrive at the United Protestant Church that you experience the nastiness of this program. Here you find a church that once boasted 5000 members, but now has only 500. Hey, it's obviously because of its doctrine: "humanistic with a touch of scripture." The preacher talks about "social reform, women's rights and about the virtues of Communism." Not Communism, mind you, but the virtues of Communism. Finally the program tells

you that the preacher is a practicing homosexual.

To hear the preachers preach in any of the churches you have to keep punching the mouse button to let time pass until you get to Sunday. It's then that you find out that the preacher at the United Protestant Church is named Reverend Bruce (what else?! He even talks with a lisp! Give me a break! What is this software company's problem? In this game of *Real Life*, the world is filled with slime, the Catholics are stupid Bingo addicts and anyone who doesn't belong to the Fellowship Church is a gay stereotype.

Right you are, I forgot to tell you about the Fellowship Church. That's the good one with the best parishioners. In fact, it's "the fastest growing in town." It has a "strong scriptural foundation."

Golly, I wonder what Church the programmer belongs to? Hmm, let me guess.

So the program lets you roam around and listen to all sorts of "foolish" people who don't know anything about real life. Heck, they are atheists and agnostics and college kids, and what do any of them know? Nothing, that's what. Why? Because they don't go to the Fellowship Church, that's why.

All the while the program quotes the Bible at you and encourages you to have sex with strangers, roll in the hay and drink and smoke and gamble so the program can deduct points from your score. After all, we are all sinners.

You have plenty of opportunity to be a scoundrel. Curiously enough, the beginning of the game asks your age and sex. One category is "under 13." Even if you click that level, it doesn't seem to affect the game one iota. In fact, YOU, as a 13-year old still get propositioned for a roll in the hay. It's sick.

The program goes so far as to condemn you for giving money to a beggar. All beggars are really rich and have limos. You're a sucker! If you take a wrong turn and decide to leave via the door of death (suicide) it condemns you with a dozen screens of scripture. Hey, do it! It's a game—nobody died!

This is a game to avoid. I think back a day or so when I last saw *MacGolf* and I now could care less about the girl golfer or anything else. Let's keep politics and ideology and bigotry and religion out of the computer room and off the floppy disk.

It's time to amend the constitution. We need more than separation of Church and State. We need separation of Church and Solid-State! ☹

# GAMES TO SHOOT OR BOOT

## STRATEGY

The Ancient Art of War (Broderbund; \$49.95) recreates a number of famous historical battles, and gives the armchair general the option to pick his or her computer-controlled opponent. Armies consist of knights (armed fighters), barbarians (your basic big lug), archers and scouts, and scenarios range from the mythical (Race of the Gods) to the pseudo-historical (Custer's Last Stand). Each battle is based on capturing a given number of enemy flags. When you get tired of the scenarios provided, you can make your own.

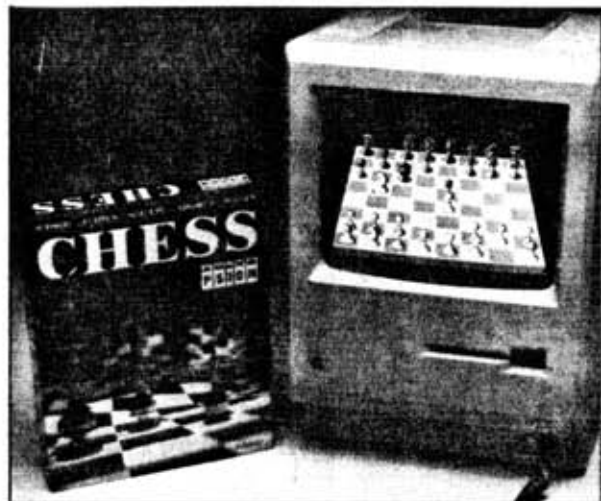
**Balance of Power** (Mindscape; \$54.95) is the first computerized peacegame, requiring players to walk the delicate balance between over-aggression and wimpiness in the nuclear age. Can you, as President of the United States or Premier of the U.S.S.R., maintain the peace without losing too much global prestige?

## WORDS

Like crossword puzzles? **Word-Play** (Palantir; \$49.95) might just be the ultimate play on words, offering crossword addicts more than 50 disk-based games ranging in difficulty from Easy all the way to Diagram-less. Puzzles are laid out on a 23 by 23 square grid, with an option to create your own crosswords when you've played through all the games. The Proof option even lets you see how you're doing on a puzzle-in-progress.

**Perplexx** (Hayden; \$39.95) has its roots in the board game *Scrabble*, allowing up to four players to test

Two different views of the playing field — and enough foreign languages to baffle Henry Kissinger — are available in *Psion Chess*.



their verbal skills against each other or the computer. The rules can be changed, and the game's 90,000 word dictionary will prove up to most verbal challenges.

## CHESS

**Psion Chess** (Psion; \$59.95) offers great graphics and an unusual three-dimensional mode that lets chess players see the board as if they were actually sitting in front of it. It also features a tournament-style time clock, and a choice of play languages including French, Spanish, German, Italian and Swedish.

On the other hand, **Sargon III** (Hayden; \$49.95) contains a much larger selection of complete games on the disk, plus adds openings and endgames just so you can practice up for those big games. It lacks a game clock, but makes up for that with a terrific 100-page manual that provides a tutorial on the basics of chess, plus includes a listing of classic

games contained on the disk and a good-sized bibliography.

## BOMBS AWAY!

Not all games are good. What follows is a list of absolute clunkers, games that you wouldn't want to play, even if *they* paid you.

**Real Life** (Relational Systems Corporation; around \$40) might be about real life if you're a member of a hell-and-brimstone born-again society that thinks that everyone who doesn't belong to their sect is a wino, hooker, gambler or child-molesting homosexual. Jerry Falwell might not be offended by the content of this text adventure — but everyone else will be.

**Monkey Business** (The Other Valley Software; around \$30) is an unbelievably bad rip-off of the old arcade hit, *Donkey Kong*. But its thick, low-res graphics and choppy sound effects make this game look like it could have been programmed in the 1970's for the old Atari 2600 cartridge machine.

**Scott Adams Adventures** (currently available in a set of twelve from Star Systems Software; \$59.95) first appeared at about the same time as the original *Wizardry*. Unlike the latter, these are outdated, clunky and offer about as much chance for creativity as a standard rat's maze. If you don't think along the same quirky lines as Scott Adams, you'll never get very far in these games.

Tracie Forman Hines is the Senior Editor of *MacUser*.

**Balance of Power** challenges players to keep the peace, even when their honor's at stake.



lator Plus so when I press ENTER it won't be a plus, nor plus a minus, nor even minus a divide. How did that ever get past them?

DR. TODD M. A. PETERSON  
RIVERSIDE, CA

*That was fixed in the latest System software. Get Finder 5.3 and System 3.2 —SB*

#### FUN IS A MATTER OF OPINION

Thanks for your column, "Sexism and Silicon Sinners," in the June *MacUser*. I appreciate your exposé of *Real Life...* and I share John Dvorak's opinion of Bible thumpers.

I'd like to suggest, however, that commercial software, especially games, can be a perfectly appropriate place to editorialize. What is *Balance of Power* but an exciting editorial in game form? Another game is called *The Ancient Art of War*. The very title suggests that there's something noble and artistic about the moral slime from which we're still trying to crawl (I have my opinions, too).

Every game that pits the good guys against the bad editorializes as to who's good and who's bad—*MacVegas* is an editorial in favor of gambling.

Editorials add an interesting dimension to software. Let's encourage it and see what new areas of creativity and idea exchange this can open up for us—even if we don't like some of the ideas expressed.

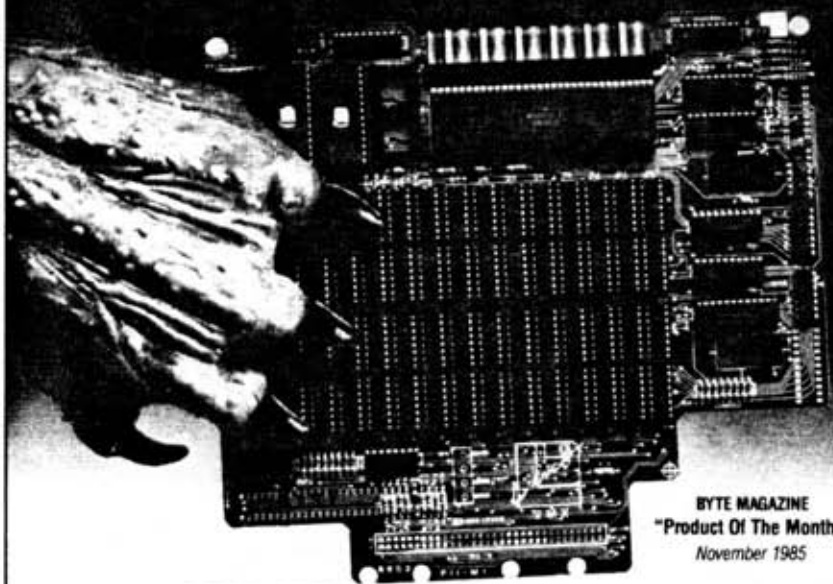
GREGG SANDERSON  
SAN DIEGO, CA

People marketing such programs as *Real Life...* should be decent enough to voluntarily mark their product, and their ads, with a statement notifying buyers of the "true" content of the program. In this case it appears that buyers innocently purchased a product believing it to be a recreational adventure game. Respectable religious orders would not seek to deceive the public regarding the content or nature of their literature and materials.

Mr. Dvorak claims to dislike bigotry and stereotyping. But the statement that, "This is done by introducing you to some religious fundamentalist concepts (a.k.a. religious bigotry)," is an outrageous assertion. I have never attended a single fundamentalist church that has ever espoused nor promoted "bigotry" or "hatred." The only exposure I have had in my life to really flamboyant, vitriolic bigotry and stereotyping has been that as promoted by John Dvorak!

BRYANT ROSS  
INYO KERN, CA

## LEVCO'S 2 MEG EXPANSION BOARD CREATES MONSTER MEMORY FOR YOUR MACINTOSH™



BYTE MAGAZINE  
"Product Of The Month"  
November 1985

### THE MONSTERMAC™ CLIP-ON.

#### BOOST SPEED BY 30%

Now you can turn your friendly Macintosh into a real Monster. Levco's MonsterMac enables the memory in your computer to run up to 30% faster than a standard Macintosh. This proven upgrade also provides 256K of PROM space, and the first real Macintosh expansion port for peripherals such as the new Levco OverDrive SCSI internal 20 megabyte hard disk. The whisper-quiet Levco MacBreeze™ piezoelectric fan is included to keep your Macintosh running cool, even when the demands are hot. MonsterMac also provides a true motherboard emulation mode, to functionally "turn off" the extra memory for those rare programs that don't understand a world beyond 512K.

#### YOUR MOTHER WILL LOVE IT

Levco offers the MonsterMac with clip-on convenience, for simple, quick installation and no modifications to your Macintosh motherboard. MonsterMac works with old or new Apple ROMs and with either 128K or 512K Macintoshes. Most importantly, MonsterMacs are available now!

*"The MonsterMac receives the highest recommendation for its speedy 2 megabytes, its compatibility with all the test software, and the lure of a real bus expansion port."*  
MacWorld, February 1986



6160 Lusk Blvd.  
Suite C-203  
San Diego, CA 92121  
(619) 457-2011

#### SAVE \$50 ON A MONSTERMAC!

Levco is offering a \$50 rebate for those who purchase a MonsterMac before October 31, 1986. Just send this coupon to Levco with your MonsterMac order, or bring it to a participating authorized Levco dealer for an installed MonsterMac. Call Levco for the participating dealers in your area.

Customer Use  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Levco Use  
Dealer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Installation Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
MonsterBoard Serial Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mac Motherboard Serial Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Offer good only on purchases made after April 1, 1986.

Mail completed coupon to: Levco 6160 Lusk Blvd., Suite C-203, San Diego, CA 92121  
Offer void where prohibited by law. One coupon per customer.

MonsterMac, MacBreeze and OverDrive are trademarks of Levco. Macintosh is a trademark licensed to Apple Computer, Inc.

For Free Information  
Please Circle 185 On Reader Service Card.



JEFF HURLBURT  
7814 SANTA ELENA  
HOUSTON, TEX.  
77061

# The Games of 1986

Dear Julie,  
Attached is the review of "Real Life". I hope it will be of some help in future designs. Please keep me on your list for new products and other for your help.  
Jeff

by Jeff Hurlburt

This month we wrap up the annual reviews with the emphasis on adventuring. While pure arcades command an ever shrinking share of game production, adventures continue to proliferate, often incorporating arcade sequences which once would have been released separately. Much the same sort of transformation has occurred with simulations and other game forms. Everything, it seems, plays better (and longer) as an adventure; and, with the best numbers, variety, and overall quality ever, 1986 has been a super year for computer wizards, warriors, explorers, and detectives.

My goal in these reviews is to make it easier for you to zero in on the best values for YOUR entertainment dollar. At a local software parlor it's difficult to give even one adventure (let alone several) much of a tryout; so each review aims to supply the maximum information in the space available. Game type and, if multi-player, number of players for which the product is designed are shown up front, along with peripherals requirements/options and machine compatibility. I've tried all the games on the IIs; and "Apple II series" now includes the new gs model. The bulk of each review describes the game, with the remainder devoted to critique, publisher information, pricing, and ratings.

Comments and ratings reflect my evaluation based upon playing a game and, sometimes, watching as others try it. Each game is rated in five areas and "overall" on a ten-point scale: 10= SUPERIOR (rarely awarded; indicates a breakthrough of some kind), 09 = Excellent,

07 = Good, 05 = Fair, 03 = Poor, 01 = Rotten.

**Graphics (GRFX)** is the first area rated. It concerns quality of artwork, clarity, impact, smoothness, speed, and realism. Good **Support Materials (S.M.)** include clear, thorough directions for play. In some cases attractiveness, tutorial value, or effectiveness in creating 'atmosphere' may be important. **Playability (PLAY)** relates to how much extraneous activity is required to play the game. Good parsing, rapid "save" and "restore" functions, efficient menus, smooth controls, and readily available "Help" screens are features which enhance playability.

**Difficulty (DIFF)** is self-explanatory for single-player games. For others it relates to how much effort is required to achieve a decent level of play. Unlike other areas, the rating here simply reflects "level of". An "8" is "very tough", which may or may not equal "very good". High **Interest (INTR)** games are good at attracting and holding player attention. Typically, these are the adventures you can't wait to continue and the arcades you play, and replay, for hours at a time. The **Overall (GAME)** rating amounts to a summary of player reaction(s) during tryouts. For educationally-oriented games, a second summary rating (/ED) of **educational value** is included.

In case you are relatively new to adventure gaming, here are a few guidelines which may help in selecting the best entertainment values: Text and picture-text adventures tend to be problem/puzzle oriented; so they are especially well suited to multi-player participation. Picking an attractive scenario is important, since for maximum enjoyment you must be willing to involve yourself in the game situation. Other adventures are beefed-up simulations (flight,

space war, etc.) which usually incorporate low to medium difficulty action sequences. Some of these can be very long-playing, whereas others are short duration contests offering high scores competition and multiple replays. Finally, map and map-maze adventures like the *Ultimas*, *Questron*, *Bard's Tale*, etc. all emphasize exploration, combat, and character development. Often these are the longest playing of games; so if you find one you like, you're in for many hours of fun.

## The Never Ending Story



(Picture/Text Adventure)  
Compatibility: 64K Apple II series  
Requirements: One disk drive

Scientific scepticism, the "realistic" approach to child rearing, and similar influences have taken their toll on Fantasia. Indeed, the personification of disbelief, known as the Great All Consuming Nothing, is swallowing the land of imagination and wonder at an alarming rate. In DataSoft's *The Never Ending Story* you are Atreyu, a boy of magical Fantasia whom fate has chosen to restore faith in fantasy and thus

OK, so maybe you should have filed a complaint and had Leeds arrested. At least that way he wouldn't have had the chance to nearly run you down at the park AND take off with your horse, Energise, in the trailer! (Obviously the guy is a hotheaded nut; and if Energise isn't back by... well, the caller claimed your horse was left with another trainer.) After such a morning it was bad enough to come home and read that nasty little piece in the paper; but why should anyone break into your workroom and wreck almost every toy model in the place? (Leeds again? an angry competitor?) Just what the blazes is going on?!

Set in a semi-rustic preserve of racing parks and stables north of London, *High Stakes* is one of those snowballing, race against the clock adventures. Typically, you begin unconcerned as time ticks away on every move; that is, until it starts to look like a deadline of some kind is approaching. Then, when everything seems about to fall into place, there's a frantic rush to make sure you're not the one everything falls into place upon. You can count on doing some amateur detective work in this one; but, fortunately, not so much as to seriously strain the capabilities of a mediocre parser backed by an efficient multi-position save/restore. Late night drives along deserted roads, sudden violence, an attractive stranger, and the smell of big money all lend a distinctly Phillip Marlowe flavor to one of Mindscape's better role-playing fantasies.

Available from: Mindscape, 3444 Dundee Road, Northbrook, IL 60062. (312) 480-7667. \$39.95

GRFX	S.M.	PLAY	DIFF	INTR	GAME
NA	07	07	07	07	07

## Real Life

(Text Adventure/Simulation)

Compatibility: 128K Apple IIe, IIc

Requirements: One disk drive

In case you have wondered where your present computer gaming, thrill seeking existence is leading, Relational Systems is ready with *Real Life*. This adventure/simulation, so the publisher claims, will help you determine where you're going and, perhaps, how to avoid getting there. Set in the streets and buildings of a modern city, *Real Life* comes with a few hint sheets, and a map with a plastic overlay marked-off in ninety-plus squares. Since directions are on diskette, there is no game manual.

After entering a name, gender, and age, you find yourself in a parking lot behind an office building with a few bucks in your pockets,

dirty, and dressed in rags. Not a very promising beginning for your quest of self discovery; but then the idea is to force some sort of action. You may, for instance, enter the building and look for a washroom; find your home on the map and go there; or forget about your appearance and just explore. For each location there is a description of surroundings and a multiple-choice type listing of your options (which do include a game save).

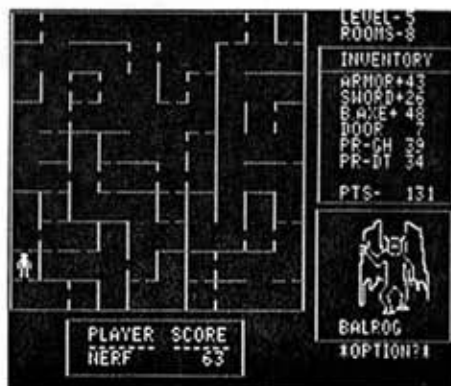
As you move around there are opportunities to interact with twelve or so key characters. Some, like beggars and pushers, are after your money and may get you into trouble; others, such as a prospective employer, may offer helpful advice and even a job. Of course, there is no requirement that you keep to the straight and narrow. You set your own goals; if the outcome is satisfactory, you win.

Predictably, in a text adventure which lists all player options on the screen, there is little real opportunity to explore any given situation. In fact, most of your *Real Life* decisions turn out to be strategic—mainly a matter of going somewhere so that something can happen to you. (So when forced to buy something which subsequently fails to appear in your inventory, don't worry; it wasn't important anyway!) The game could provide some useful insights into values, especially in a classroom setting with an instructor to guide discussion of experiences. As leisure time entertainment, however, *Real Life* is unlikely to satisfy experienced adventurers.

Available from: Relational Systems, P.O. Box 83070, Troy, MI 02140. (313) 645-5090. \$29.95 (first 100 orders per month FREE)

GRFX	S.M.	PLAY	DIFF	INTR	GAME/ED
NA	05	07	07	05	04/06

## Warrior's Realm



(Maze Adventure)

Compatibility: 48K Apple II series

Requirements: One disk drive

For any true-blue, monster-bashing hero, the ultimate reward is not wealth or power; it is fame, the grudging respect of peers, and a place in the songs of minstrels. In Gerhardt Software's *Warrior's Realm* your way to glory is up, through as many as ninety-nine levels of 10x10 randomly created mazes. Enter where you dare; but remember, the further down you start, the more monsters there are to bash, the more points to be gained, and the more brilliantly your achievement will shine in the Heroe's Hall!

Featuring non-arcade combat very similar to that found in such favorites as *Phantasy* and *Bard's Tale*, *Warrior's Realm* is a player-paced, swords and sorcery test of strategies and nerve. In this game you are, for the most part, only as good as the weapons, armor, and magical items you carry at the moment—that is, except for base hit points, a character 'develops' by acquiring goodies. Better swords, axes, and armor are obtained in treasure chests, along with a plethora of nifty magical artifacts. The latter include scrolls which absorb the attacks of specific monsters, cast lightning bolts, and charm monsters to fight on your side! There are potions to heal or show the location of hidden stairways, and wands good for death blasts or immediate passage to the next level. The power in such devices is expended all too soon, so they must be continually replenished.

Still, if you could keep a tenth of the items won, there would be no contest; but you can never carry more than seven. Thus much thought goes into making such decisions as whether to dump a scroll still good for taking 20 balrog or dragon hits in favor of one good for absorbing 50 troll or giant strikes. Or what about dumping a potion worth two healings to pick up a three-kill deathwand?, etc.. Everything depends on your current situation, which, of course, is always changing! Fortunately, you only face one adversary at a time; and, except for wandering monsters, you can usually break off combat if things really get hot.

Offering several new wrinkles in the venerable mazes and monsters theme, *Warrior's Realm* is a well thought-out, smooth-running product. The game's magic system is among the best you will find anywhere, and the Heroe's Hall display of winners' names and data is a strong plus. Graphics, sound, and speed are adequate; and save/restore functions work well. Supplied with a detailed manual, *Warrior's Realm* is persistently addictive, fun, and as challenging as you dare to make it. Available from: Gerhardt Software, 32600 Concord Drive, Dept. 401, Madison Heights, MI 48071. \$29.95

GRFX	S.M.	PLAY	DIFF	INTR	GAME
05	07	08	04-08	08	07