Letter from the Editor

Readers will notice some changes about the Newsletter this month, and I'm not really going to dwell on them, because they're mostly cosmetic. One is that we've changed our name to "Inside Erin" from "Sextra-Curricular Activities." The reason for the change is essentially that Erin features heavily in the letter and on the web site, while there's really no content about school or any other kind of curriculum to make the pun work. So, tada! There you have it, our new masthead. Along with the new masthead, we've implemented a simpler graphic design. We also have a mission statement now, so check it out.

I feel like we've been pulling our hair out over the last few months about what makes good AIF and whether good AIF and good IF overlap. All this probably has diverted our attention from what we're really after – that is – a simple good time with an erotic game. In response to this, I'm going to dedicate this essay to just one aspect of successful AIF: that of the NPC.

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This Month in AIF by BBBen

July was a good month for AIF. We got three new games, active discussion on the forums, and a new name and look for the newsletter. There hasn't been any really big news this month however, perhaps since things are still settling down after the CCAB competition.

We got an Inform game this month, which is a rarity these days. According to the master list, the last Inform AIF game to be released was around two years ago, but many of the dates on the list are based on the dates that games were uploaded to the AIF Portal rather than when they were actually released, and I suspect the last Inform release was actually much earlier.

Two of the new games this month were released without notification to the rest of the community. Actually *Train* was released last month, but wasn't mentioned until now because the forums weren't informed of it. *Crawler's Delight*, meanwhile, was uploaded to the AIF Archive 2 without even a notice there. I wonder about this, because I for one don't check for games so vigorously to be able to pick up on these low-key releases. I would suggest that anyone planning to release a game should announce it on the AIF Archive and the AIF Community Portal (and possibly AGX) or nobody's going to know about it.

Interview with BBBen by A. Ninny

BBBen is the "Energizer Bunny" of AIF. Amazingly, he wrote six high-quality games last year and is tireless in promoting AIF and in providing new ideas and new content for the newsletter and for the community as a whole. I decided it was

Mission Statement

Inside Erin is written and published by people who enjoy AIF. It is done for fun, but we also have some goals that we seek to achieve through the newsletter:

1. To encourage the production of more quality AIF games by providing advice from game developers, and by offering constructive criticism that is specifically relevant to AIF.

2. To encourage activity and growth in the AIF community. We aim to generate a constant level of activity so that there aren't long periods in which people can lose interest in AIF.

3. To help document and organize the AIF community. This is done through reporting on games and events, as well as by helping to organize community-wide activities such as competitions and the yearly Erin Awards.

high time to find out just what makes him tick. So to start out, I asked him just that.

BBB: Partly it's the pseudonym. In case you hadn't guessed, BBBen is not my real name. I am a young man, and I really wanted to get some writing experience, but actually sitting down and writing is hard. I found that AIF was for starters a really fun thing to write (interactive sex scenes!), but also that since I was writing under an assumed identity, it was extremely liberating. Hence I was able to write what I wanted to write in a much more casual way without being constrained by my own inhibitions. I'm very grateful for the interest and support I've received from the community by the way, as I feel like I've learned an enormous amount about writing since the end of 2003.

Another point is that obviously I like to write, and writers like to be read. The AIF community, while not huge, does actually read the prose I put out there, which is a hard thing to make happen under normal circumstances. AIF may not have the respectability of non-pornographic fiction and it may not have the sheer volume content the erotica has, but I can think of few mediums that are more exciting than interactive sexual text games, and as a consequence the audience tends to appreciate most of the content out there.

AN: So, what is the significance of the pseudonym?

BBB: Well, the name in itself doesn't mean anything really. I just needed a five letter name for a site called CHYOO, which is a choose-your-own-adventure erotic fiction site that I wrote a little bit for before starting to write AIF. Still, that very meaninglessness is what I like. I enjoy writing more or less anonymously.

AN: I've described you in the past as being an idea man: someone with lots of good suggestions for improving the community. In fact, this newsletter could be said to be your brainchild. Where does all this creative energy come from and what else do you have up your sleeve?

BBB: I could also describe myself as a bit of a meddler, who is always telling people what to do and not accomplishing very much myself, but let's go with your description because it's nicer. Really, I'm probably just lazy and fussy. I tend to spend a lot of time thinking about stuff without getting much done, and I like things to be perfect, provided it doesn't make too much work for me.

I also think that in the AIF community in particular we have had a lot of wasted potential. There have been plenty of little articles and reviews floating around intermittently in the community even without a formal forum for them, so why not put them together in a newsletter?

Thankfully, other people have actually followed through on some of the stuff that I just talked about. When I thought it would be really great to have a new AIF Portal (not that I was the only one saying it), Matrix Mole came up with the server space. Later the Masterlist and the new AIF Community Portal were developed by other productive people.

I have a few ideas about collective writing projects that will probably never get off the ground, such as the Virtual Erin idea that I was working on a while back that would be so large as to require lots of authors. I'd also really like to hold a mini-comp in which all the entries are tied together by one common thread, like for instance that they are all held in the Green Hotel and include the theme of Avarice, or they're all about the amoral, millionaire playboy, Randy Gunn. However, this is probably never going to happen, as there just aren't enough authors in the community. Still, I can dream.

Another thing I've been bringing up lately is that now we have so much in the way of resources, we could actually use more people around. I'm not 100% sure how to get more people in, but I have been trying to find some way to draw in people from the much larger erotica community, that is, writers of non-interactive sexual fiction. I think there would be an appreciable number of erotica writers who would love the chance to make an interactive story on one of the easier writing platforms like ADRIFT.

AN: You are one of the only authors who has used the same cast of characters in more than two or three games (OEJ's Sam Shooter cast is the primary exception). How do you feel that re-using the same characters affects the creation process?

BBB: Initially I really got a kick out of the idea of showing that Janey, Lin and Debbie, these three

hot girls, would actually live a life with the main character where they were effectively all his girlfriends. It's a bit of a lame fantasy I know, but I found the idea of making these characters less disposable than the usual AIF girls really cool.

Having repeat appearances by characters gives the opportunity for character development, which in some cases I really enjoyed. Two scenes come to mind as examples of this: Debbie shows some vulnerability in CW1 (when she lets slip that she loves the player); and Lin starts to really come out of her shell over time and in CW2 with Diana, she takes the role of sexual 'teacher' that Debbie had taken with her in the Sleep Over.

It also exposes the strengths and weaknesses of specific characters in the story. I don't think I've managed to achieve what I wanted to achieve with Janey over the course of the series, but thankfully I still have the conclusion in which to wrap that up and I'm focusing on making that work this time around.

AN: Does it become easier or more difficult to write them with each subsequent game?

BBB: Definitely more difficult. To some extent it has to take away from the excitement of the scene to know we've already been here and done this. People talk about the difficulty of writing the "rub tits" tasks in yet another game, but try writing the "rub Lin's tits" tasks in yet another game and you'll really grasp the problem. I think the experience in handling characters over time has been very valuable however. It really makes me think about ways to make each encounter unique, so I'm not producing the same sex scenes with different names over and over again. I'm glad I did it, just don't count on me doing it ever again.

AN: In the *Crossworlds/Normville* series, the same main female NPC's all are featured in each of the games. The male PC is a generic 'fill-in-your-name.' Despite this, do you feel a distinct personality coming out in him? Do you wish you'd given him a name?

BBB: In point of fact yes, there is a part of me that makes me want to have given him a name. In future projects of mine you may notice a tendency toward making similar but more fleshed out male PCs that do actually have names. Kenji from *Pervert Action Crisis* and Peter from *Nouveau Rich*, despite being different from each other will both be university students in their early twenties.

Over time I was inadvertently developing a character for the male PC. He feels to me a bit like many of the main characters in hentai games like *True Love* or *Runaway City*, if a few years older. He's earnest and fundamentally a nice guy, but he's a young man that does enjoy sex with lots and lots of girls. He's fairly confident but unassertive. Apart from that I'll leave it to the reader's imagination about what he's like.

I do still enjoy the ability to put my own name into an AIF game and pretend that it's me that can get three girls like Debbie, Janey and Lin all at once, however, so I don't regret it too much. I guess I had to develop the character a bit, because Janey wouldn't just fall in love with any idiot; there must be something a bit special about him.

AN: How do you feel these games would be different if you'd made the male PC a stronger character?

BBB: Probably they would be a bit more like *Normville High*, in which the male PC is still unnamed, but where I think there is a clear personality evident. That was a case of designing a game where basically the players could effectively assume a character in a teen movie, rather than being themselves.

Making the main PC a developed character seems to me to be a trade off between good story telling and immersive fantasy. *Crossworlds* is all about fantasy, so I guess in the end it had to be an unnamed PC. Wait for CW4 if you want a clearer idea about what I mean when I say *Crossworlds* is all about fantasy.

AN: To carry over on a theme I raised in my editorial, can you tell us who the NPC's are or what in your life you draw on to render them?

BBB: Some of them are pure fiction, others have been drawn from fiction, and others are somewhat based on real people. To illustrate, Lin is based on a real girl I knew in high-school. Debbie comes partially from a couple of different girls I knew in high school, but is mostly made up from scratch (unfortunately I never really knew her). Samantha in *Normville High* is drawn

from teen movie conventions. Princess Diana from CW2, despite her joke name, was based physically on a girl that I've seen pictures of on the internet, and Beatrix from CW3 was from an anime girl I've seen on the internet.

For CW4, apart from the established characters, I have one based on someone from real life, one complete fiction, one inspired by a girl I've seen on the internet, and another from some anime hentai stuff from the internet – so I guess you could say that there is a certain pattern in how I construct characters.

Working up characters in AIF obviously comes down to the question of "what turns you on?" and so it's a bit different from character development in other forms of fiction. I've generally restrained from writing about people I've been close to like old girlfriends, though I must admit that some of my characters in development have been inspired by more personal experiences.

AN: In *Crossworlds Part 2 - The Flower Opens* **you designed some extremely intricate sex situations, I'm thinking especially of the one in which the male PC makes a telepathic connection with one of the female NPC's in order to participate in the scene.** *Crossworlds Part 3 – The Final Far Far Away Frontier* **didn't have anything so tricky. Were you worried that the audience would be disappointed you didn't up the ante on complexity as the series progressed?**

BBB: A little. There is a feeling of pressure that I have to make *Crossworlds* more impressive with each new installment, and I was very pleased with that scene and also a few other ideas in CW2. Writing CW2 was one of the most energetic periods of writing I've ever had, whereas CW3 really dragged and ended up taking much, much longer. I didn't have the same fire for CW3, and that probably shows.

AN: Do you have anything to equal or surpass that for the fourth installment?

BBB: In terms of complexity, hmm… probably not. However, for CW4 I've been working on making everything richer and more detailed. I try to make every sex scene unique in as many ways as possible, and some of the scenes in CW4 will hopefully stack up pretty well with my previous games.

My agenda has always been to raise the sophistication and detail of each game over the previous one, and in some respects I think I accomplished that with CW3. I think CW2 had some real problems with gameplay, and the technical level and amount of detail was not brilliant. For CW3 I worked much harder to provide a slick production that was much more playable and intricate. For CW4, my agenda is to try to make everything deeper and to avoid the problem of CW3, which was that some of the sex scenes felt less inspired to me.

AN: I think you've become one of the best AIF authors when it comes to using ADRIFT. What do you think are the most important things authors need to know about getting the most out of the system?

BBB: I can't deny that I've been getting better with ADRIFT's technical aspects, but then that's not too hard considering the mess that my early games were in. A lot of the improvement I must say is due to good beta testing on my last couple of games. I suppose I've picked up a few tricks along the way as well. Anyway, thanks for the compliment.

I guess I'd say that ADRIFT is more powerful than it seems. People think it can't do very much because the really easy to use elements of it are quite simplistic. There are more advanced functions however, such as ALR (ADRIFT Language Resource) files that are still relatively easy to use and make the engine capable of so much more. There are clear instructional tutorials out there that are not too hard to find on this stuff, so have a look if you want to write in ADRIFT.

I'd advise new authors to start simple and try to keep the work manageable. Most authors learn a lot about technical implementation as they've written more games. Once you've gotten a start, try to set the bar a little higher with each new project, which is what I did and I found that it meant I could relax and not overreach my capacities, but still feel like I was making better and better games. As you get to know the system you'll be able to employ the advanced features more easily and you'll find that the possibilities really open up for game design.

AN: What are your favorite three AIF games?

BBB: I like a lot of AIF games, some of them for very unpretentious reasons, others for their sophistication. I think if I had to name three then it would be the three games that I really loved and replayed a lot before I started writing.

1. *Encounter 2: The Study Group* by Chris Cole. I loved the characters and the intense, heated atmosphere of this straightforward game. I think Encounter 2 had an obvious influence on me considering that the first game I wrote, Sleep Over, had quite a similar premise. At the time I didn't think I was writing under the influence of anything else, as I did plan to have those three girls appear in the *Crossworlds* series, but looking back I think the influence is pretty clear.

2. *Sam Shooter: Graduation Day* by One Eyed Jack. A fantastic game with some great scenes that can be funny and sexy at the same time. Again, I think some level of influence shows from this game in CW1. In fact it's largely coincidental that the second installment of *Sam Shooter* and *Crossworlds* are both set in a sudden shift to a fantasy world, but I got really creeped out when I saw that SSIV was set in hell, as I had originally planned CW4 to have demons and so forth in it (the plan has changed, by the way).

3. *Dexter Dixon and the Search for the Prussian Pussy* by A. Bomire. While I can't point to any obvious influence from this game on my own writing, I do know that playing this game really impressed me with the standard to which AIF can aspire. *Dexter Dixon* was the first game I played that I really felt demonstrated that AIF games could be nearly professional in quality.

On the subject of inspiration, I would just like to say that in a funny way Vachon's games were very inspiring to me. They gave me confidence that I could master ADRIFT to an acceptable degree and that I could write something that would be taken seriously. I don't think I'll put any of his games on my top three, however.

Our thanks to BBBen for providing insightful responses to our questions. BBBen's released games include:

The Sleep Over
Janey's Diary
Crossworlds Part 1 - Normville
Crossworlds Part II - The Flower Opens
Normville High (Winner of A. Bomire's 2004 Mini-Comp)
Crossworlds Part III – The Final Far Far Away Frontier
BBBen won an Erin awards for best Female NPC for Debbie from the *Crossworlds* series.
His AIF web site can be found at http://bbben.aifcommunity.org

Letter from the Editor (Continued)

Seeing as how most AIF games set the PC as either a nameless 'you' or a fill-in-your-name 'you', most of the interest must be generated through the NPC's. So who are all these NPC-women and why do I want to get dirty with them (other than that I can)?

What's mostly clear is that the best NPC's are usually the ones provided with interesting backgrounds. This takes an author who cares enough about his creation to give her more than the description of her appearance in a couple of lines of hasty prose. Maybe there's partial information given about her in advance, and you're set up by the writing in the game so that you to are required to find out more about her. There should also be some interaction with her that allows the PC to connect some meaning to her outside of an SSS. This extra effort by the author makes her sex scenes more fun. NewKid is a master at this. Ms. Wynne in HI has the perfect blend of a bit of information given up front, with knowledge and desire increasing gradually through the game. I think she's one of the best NPC's in all of AIF. LoveLettersToLove packed an encyclopedia of background into his NPC's for *Escape Pod*, and though their backgrounds aren't entirely relevant to the action, they do help keep the characters focused and consistent throughout the game. BBBen is another author whose NPC's are rich, mainly through gradual character development. He talks about how they came to be in his interview in this issue of *Inside Erin*.

The other thing NPC's need, I think, is the right amount of physical description. Authors sometimes go overboard, and setting the correct balance between players' imagination and author's vision is a difficult challenge. Take Fanny from *Moist*:
"Fanny is queen Morghana's maid. She is a gorgeous young girl in her early twenties. She has long, blond hair and beautiful, round, firm tits. Below her small waist she has a well-rounded ass."
She's pretty minimal, but I think she's classic in a fill-in-the-details kind of way.

Another convention is for authors to describe their NPC's in relation to known people, which is fine, but unless the NPC actually is the celebrity or TV character, I think the author needs to still fill in a few descriptors of her.

Personally, I like at least one but possibly more bits of personality built in to the NPC's physical description. As an example, I offer this AIF-type description of a woman I spied recently on the train; she instantly made me want to include her in an AIF:

"Stranger girl is very thin, with olive-toned skin and medium-length dark hair. She's wearing sunglasses (yes – in the dark train shed) so you can't see her eyes, but her lips are full and her eyebrows are heavy. She's wearing a flowing knee-length pink tube dress with a ruffled upper section that she barely fills. She probably doesn't realize it (or maybe she does?), but you – and everyone else – can see her white thong right through her dress."

While the real woman I'm describing may not be everyone's (or even my) perfect specimen, she certainly projected enough sexiness and personality that make it possible, through minimal description, to give readers the elements that attracted me to her. Plus, there are those questions posed in my description of her, the answers to which could become important elements later in the game.

It is my plea, then, for authors to concentrate on building enough interest into their NPC's so as to give players something to go on, and to players to really use your imaginations and add the spark that makes an NPC come to life.

Stripping in an SSS by BBBen

A critical element to the SSS (Steamy Sex Scene) is the stripping system. The way that characters remove their clothes is dealt with in a variety of different ways, again varying from author to author. The stripping system of each author seems to be different from the next, with perhaps some exceptions in the case of TADS games that use the same libraries. Authors will tend to pick and mix between different elements, and often I am sad to say it is pretty confusing as to what is required. Often in less polished games it seems like the author doesn't really know what system they are using themselves.

The most detailed approach is to make every item of clothing on the NPC an object, and make them each individually removable. Then a variety of sexual acts (usually just the more basic ones like "rub tits") will be possible in a variety of states of dress and undress. This system will often also require items of clothing to be removed in a specific order or for certain acts of foreplay to be conducted before clothes can be removed (like in *Rogue Cop*, where you have to "lick panties" before you want to remove them). This can be used as a 'game' element, potentially adding a small level of challenge to a sex scene.

Sometimes an author will have clothing removed in the course of sex, so that a player would "rub tits" on a fully clothed girl, and she would then remove her blouse in the course of the resulting action. Another variation on this idea is simply having the players get naked automatically when the conditions are met to start the SSS. For instance, you give the girl a pencil so she can finish her homework, and so naturally she wants to sleep with you. As soon as you give her the pencil you get a description of the two characters stripping off.

The way a PC's clothing is removed varies and can be mixed and matched as well, so that the command "strip" might remove all the PC's clothes but none of the NPC's clothes, or the PC may have to remove their clothes piece by piece, or possibly it may not even be an issue. Also, the NPC may have to be ordered to remove their clothes, and you cannot do it for them, as in "betty, remove papier-mâché hat". In some detailed games you can choose between having the NPC remove their clothes, or removing them yourself.

Generally once the PC is naked he/she cannot go outside, but in many cases this rule is not applied, particularly if the player's clothes are not described and are not items. Sometimes there are fairly complex rules regarding clothing and where you can go, and other times it is more or less assumed that you don't care what the PC is wearing.

I am generally trying to avoid saying "here's what I do…" but in such a confused and pluralistic case as stripping I think I have to. The system I use is to have a simple command of "strip" to remove the clothes of both characters at the same time, and "dress" to return them. The clothes are not simulated as separate items, but rather each character is treated as having two states – clothed and naked – and the descriptions of characters are based on those two states. The player cannot

leave the room while undressed, but generally can get dressed and undressed at will without ending the SSS. I preferred this system both as a player and a writer because it was clear and straightforward, and also because I personally don't find the stripping sequence all that engaging. Nevertheless, many players and writers consider it one of the most critical parts of an SSS.

What system an author uses is really down to how much focus they want to put on the stripping process, how much realism they want to include in the game (how "simulationist" they want to be), and how straightforward they want the process to be for the player. I would suggest that the most important thing when determining what stripping system to use is consistency and clarity. Don't assume that the player is going to know haw to strip, and don't make it too guess-the-verbish.

This Month in AIF (Continued)

There's been a little talk about a new AIF comp, with a focus on story elements and centred at the AIF Community Portal. While I think this is potentially a workable idea it's probably a bit soon after the CCAB comp to be thinking about it just yet. I'm sure before too long there will be another comp or mini-comp, as they've proven to be quite a popular medium for producing games and encouraging new authors.

As I've got an article and an interview in this month's issue, I don't have all that much to say here. I'll just say that the AIF Community Portal is coming along well, and the more people participate in it the better it will be.

New games for July 2005

Train – by Sly Old Dog, released 21st June – You are a commuter on a long train trip who will pass the time playing with a submissive schoolgirl. Note: This game was not announced to the general community upon release, so this notification is late.

Casting – by Fellatrix_uk, released 7th July 2005 – You are an attractive young blonde woman from Essex, England, looking to make your way in Hollywood by any means necessary.

Crawler's Delight – by A. Troll, released 15th July 2005 – Captured in the middle of an IF dungeon crawl, you are chained up and at the mercy of the wicked goblin queen.

AIF Scuttlebutt by A. Ninny

Hey, Kids!

Two new games are currently in beta. One is the third installment in **David Whyld's** series of choose-your-own-adventure games that currently includes *Choices* and *Decisions*. The new game is reportedly entitled *Options*. The other new game is by **Captain Cranky Pants**, whose previous game was *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Sex.*

Another point of interest is that we've been mentioned in *SPAG*, a newsletter for the IF community. Our thanks to **Paul O'Brian**, the outgoing editor of *SPAG* for the blurb. *SPAG'*s home page is http://www.sparkynet.com/spag/.

A. Bomire is working on a tutorial for writing AIF in TADS 2. We wish him success in this endeavor. We also wish for more A. Bomire games...

There has been quite a bit of discussion lately on the Yahoo! AIFarchive group about AIF dating sims written in TADS. Hopefully, we'll have something along those lines to play one of these days. We'd be interested, if someone wants to write a piece about what actually goes into a dating sim, in publishing something detailed about it.

Chris Cole has selected a list of teen models to appear in a new game tentatively entitled *Those Teasing Teens*. We understand he hasn't started working on it yet, but we do know that Chris can crank out games pretty quickly. Again, we hope to see this thing some day.

If you're working on something and want it mentioned here (or if you think I know about it and want it concealed), write me at aifsubmissions@gmail.com. Seeya next month!

Erin Street: Interviews with AIF Players by A. Ninny

We've heard quite a bit from a lot of AIF authors about what makes good AIF, and what should be happening in the community to promote AIF. But let's face it: a lot of people just want to play it, and we've heard very little from them to tell us how they feel about these questions. I decided that should change, so I grabbed a couple of AIF players by the elbow while they walked down the street and put a few questions to them.

This is the first in a series of brief player interviews that will appear in *Inside Erin*. This month, we thank Jon and T.E.W. for participating in the interview.

Inside Erin: **What kind of AIF games do you enjoy playing, and why?**

T.E.W.: I prefer AIF games with a decent background story and some puzzles. I prefer TADS games since TADS works best with my screen reading software. I have found that the new Inform games also works well with my screen reader. I prefer the longer games with several NPC's (both sexual and non-sexual.)

Jon: I find in general the AIF games that actually make you pause and think about them - not just reading thru text scenes that seem similar to 15 other games, those are the AIF games I truly enjoy playing. When it's a good game it leaves a memorable impression on you and you are even willing to play it again to try to catch all the points. When it's a cookie-cutter game you finish with like 80% of points and don't want to even bother to find that last bit. Also, I am strongly against games that force you to do one thing or another. When a game tells you what your player doesn't want to do or what your tastes are, it takes away the interactive part and becomes just a story to read. Some authors will surely say it is the author's tastes that are represented, well, yea you are right, but your players should decide what they want to do with the character (within logical reasons).

Inside Erin: **It has been suggested that without a solid story, an AIF game is pretty much worthless. How important to you is the story in an AIF game?**

T.E.W.: The story in an AIF games is more than less important to me. I'll give a sex romp a try but unless it is written well it won't hold my interest and I won't be inclined to complete it.

Jon: I think a good story to an AIF game really does help, without story or something cohesive you are just muddling around looking for the next sex scene. The only way that you can save this is with great sex scenes, I have played authors' games that the story was horrid but were saved due to sex scenes. So for the most part, I think a story can make or break a game.

Inside Erin: **What are your two favorite AIF games (and why did you choose them)?**

T.E.W.: My two favorite AIF games are *Backlot* and *Ideal Pacific Coast University*. Both of these games have strong storyline, are extremely well written with puzzles that make you think or search, are very well tested and play easily and are written in TADS.

Jon: I think the first would be *Dear Brian,* simply because it was so enjoyable and gave many options. While puzzling in parts, it wasn't a guess-the-verb or a find-an-object-in-a room-the-author-never-mentions type of puzzling. It also had wide variety of sex scenes, it gave a little something for everyone. My other favorite would probably be one of the One-Eyed Jack games, but I can't quite pick a favorite among them as I loved all of the Sam Shooter series. They were games that had great stories and kept you coming back to find everything, but never prevented you from completing the game if you didn't get everything.

Inside Erin: **There are a few of us who seem to be scurrying about, making portals and newsletters, running comps, etc. From the player's perspective, do you think all this is helpful to you, and could anything be added/changed to make it more useful?**

T.E.W.: I find [the newsletter] interesting and especially like the interviews and reviews. I'm not an author so the more technical aspects don't interest me much, but I'm glad they are there to give authors some ideas and resources. I would find it useful and helpful if www.aifcommunity.org had news updates so I could determine whether any new games had been posted since the last time I checked.

[Editor's note: we do make an effort to post new game releases on the newsletter web site, but an announcement at the Community Portal is a good idea as well.]

Jon: I think [the newsletter] is helpful, but it varies from being helpful to being useless as there are so many things out there and most are not spoke of enough to get to know what they are. It would be nice if a nice, single, easy-to-navigate website were brought back. It would have a message board inside and other things in different parts of the one site instead of having to comb thru Yahoo! groups to find what you are looking for. If all were brought under one, it could advertise contests where it isn't possible for someone to miss it. This could get us away from the having to go to 5 different locations to get some information.

[Editor's note: this is the goal of the AIF Community Portal, which in time we hope will supplant the Yahoo! Group and be a one-stop-shop for all AIF info.]

Inside Erin: **Finally, in the same vein: What do you think could be done to increase player participation in things like competition and awards voting?**

T.E.W. I think getting some of the better written games on the IF archive would increase participation and acceptance. That is how I first discovered the genre. I ran across Moist and Gamma Gals on the www.wurb.com Baf's Guide page. People would enjoy One-Eyed Jack, A. Bomire, and the like if they had a chance to see the humor, technical implementation, and sauce in a good game.

Jon: Honestly, I don't think you can make people participate, and more often then not you are going to get maybe at most 10% that do participate in questions, surveys, competitions and such. You can appeal to those that are creative but the lurkers will remain lurkers no matter what you do. You will just end up stressed out due to lack of participation if you worry about a contest not having many entries or end up sounding very sarcastic and that just pushes your borderline people away.

*   *   *

If you'd like to participate in a future "Erin Street" interview, send an e-mail to the Editor. If nobody volunteers, you might find yourself grabbed by the elbow with a microphone shoved in your face like Jon and T.E.W. were!

Game Reviews

Train, a review by A. Ninny

Game info:	*Train* released June 21, 2005
Author:	Sly Dog
Platform:	ADRIFT 4
Size:	30KB
Content:	m/f, m/m/f , underage, mild coercion/rape
Game Type:	T&AIF
Length:	Short
Reviewed:	July, 2005
Extras:	None

Basic Plot:

The action takes place on a train during an evening commute. The PC spots a nubile female passenger and coerces her into an impromptu tryst.

Overall Thoughts:

I've always felt that Sly Dog could be a good AIF author. His writing is decent and his story ideas are interesting. His downfall in the past has been that his games have never been technically clean. *Train,* while certainly not glitch-free, is better in that respect, largely, I think, because it is much smaller than his previous two efforts. For you players who have written off Sly based on his games' bugginess, I suggest a play-through of *Train*. Your time investment is small, and you should get some enjoyment from it.

Puzzles/Gameplay:

One interesting thing about the game is that it has a branching story line, and that which branch you take is determined by an apparently random function inside the game. Other than that, the

gameplay is fairly linear and simple, though there are a couple of guess-the-verb problems that could cause vexation.

Sex:

Sly Dog's sex writing is pretty strong, and I thought the game was reasonably hot. The semi-willing Emma is pretty fun to play with, and the way she goads then takes care of the male NPC's is nicely done.

Technical:

There are some issues, especially guess-the-verb problems, and a number of annoying bugs, so I can't, sorrowfully, say that Sly's cleaned up his act. Additionally, Sly's site indicates the game was not beta-tested. Tsk, tsk.

Final Thoughts:

I think Sly has a way to go in his technical implementation of ADRIFT, and after numerous games, it's disappointing that he still doesn't really get it. Still, this game is better than most of his previous efforts and is worth a quick play (or several – to get all the story branches).

Rating: C

Sex Artist, a review by Grimm Sharlak

Game info:	*Sex Artist* released June 20, 2005
Author:	A. Ninny
Platform:	TADS
Size:	409 kb
Content:	m/f, f/f, m/f/f, voyeurism
Game Type:	T&AIF
Length:	Medium
Reviewed:	July 2005
Extras:	Took first prize in Christopher Cole and A. Bomire's AIF competition.

Basic Plot:

You play the part of Buzz, a painter who focuses on the more risqué side of human interaction. Tired of both painting porn actresses and the money-grubbing cock-tease that is your girlfriend Claire, you set out to get some better models while making money to get a little further with Claire…

Overall Thoughts:

Sex Artist took out the first prize in the recent CCAB comp, and A. Ninny's previous comp game, *Parlour* was also highly regarded. So I was expecting big things from this title and for the most part it delivered.

Puzzles/Gameplay:

While the puzzles in Artist can be taxing, the flow of the game itself is rather straightforward – you start the game, you check your messages, you get invited to the opera… And so on. The only real struggles I had were with some of the smaller, but still necessary actions; getting a certain character in the right mood, etc. While it never came down to "guess the verb" some of these situations did have many players scratching their head. So while the puzzles could be tough, they were never illogical.

What hurt the game's enjoyment, initially, were all the error reports Ninny himself was making! However, as long as you have the latest version (v1.1), these bugs are now gone.

Sex:

While the sex scenes in Artist won't match up to the technical achievement that was Parlour (partly due to time considerations, and partly due their being way more sex in this game) the sex is still considerably good and the women are desirable. Watching Liz in the park, Toni posing, or Claire

teasing really makes the player desire the woman in question, making the eventual conquest even more enjoyable.

Not that the sex scenes needed the help. The player, being an artist, will be a voyeur at times, but this usually leads to the player taking part in the action. This action is well written, and has different descriptions depending on the location the sex is taking place in. Overall the sex is a great effort and very well done by Ninny.

Technical:

While the competition edition of Artist had some technical issues, the version now out is technically sound. After a few weeks in the community, no one has reported any issues with the game and this reviewer hasn't noticed any problems either.

As for the technical complexity of the game, the drawing sections are quite well, as the simple "draw" command's outcome changes on previous tasks completed. As stated, the puzzles are logical as well, showing Ninny has a good technical grasp of TADS. Well done all around.

Intangibles:

The almost game-long tease performed by Claire makes the final sex scene one of the most satisfying of recent memory. While the game isn't all about getting with Claire, it's one hell of a reward for completion of the game.

Final Thoughts:

A. Ninny's latest effort well deserved to win the CCAB Comp, with hot sex, hot women and a great original premise. Needless to say, between *Sex Artist* and *Parlour*, A. Ninny is building a great reputation as an author.

Rating: A -

Crawler's Delight, a review by A. Ninny

Game info:	*Crawler's Delight* released July 14, 2005
Author:	A. Troll
Platform:	ADRIFT 4
Size:	38KB
Content:	m/f,
Game Type:	T&AIF
Length:	Short
Reviewed:	July, 2005
Extras:	None

Basic Plot:

You're a text adventure and IF player-character who's unfortunately gotten himself imprisoned by a goblin queen.

Overall Thoughts:

When I first saw this game and noticed the author: 'A. Troll', I admit I was sceptical. It turns out that *Crawler's Delight* is a very interesting little game that runs up many of the clichés of IF and AIF. It is apparently written by someone who has spent a great deal of time in worlds like that of *Zork*, putting chalices in trophy cases. I bet the author really had a ball writing *Crawler's Delight*, and he or she seems to enjoy reminding us at intervals that we're in an AIF-cum-text adventure: "Apparently [the treasures] just don't matter in games like this."

Puzzles/Gameplay:

The story is quite linear, and there aren't really any puzzles. The game gently prompts you as to the sequence of actions, and, considering that for most of the game you're chained to a wall, there isn't a need for alternatives.

Sex:

I liked the sex in the game; it was written very tongue-in-cheek and as a result was quite humorous. The intent, seemingly, was to amuse rather than to arouse, and it succeeds nicely at that, and it has some over-the-top erotic detail to boot.

Technical:

The game seems hastily put-together, but there aren't any serious bugs or guess-the-verb issues – just a few things that weren't correctly (or completely) implemented.

Final Thoughts:

As a game that parodies both AIF and old-fashioned text adventures, this game is a magnificent success. But as it is satire, it is difficult to grade against 'conventional' AIF, but I'll grant it a 'definitely worth your time'-type rating and call it:

Rating: B

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The newsletter is also interested in publishing your erotic short fiction. Send it to the Editor for review and inclusion in the next issue.

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Staff

Editor	A Ninny is an AIF player, author of two AIF games and frequent beta-tester. His *Parlour* received an Erin for Best "One Night Stand" game.
Web Master	Darc Nite is a newcomer to the AIF scene. He is an avid gamer who heard the call for help with the AIF Newsletter.
Staff Writers	A Bomire is the author of several TADS AIF games, including *Dexter Dixon: In Search of the Prussian Pussy* and *The Backlot*. His Games have won numerous awards and Erin nominations.
	BBBen is an AIF author. He has released six games, including the *Crossworlds* series and *Normville High* which won A. Bomire's 2004 mini-comp. Debbie, his popular character in the *Crossworlds* series won the 2004 Erin award for best female non-player character
	Grimm Sharlak is the author of two AIF games: *Breakout* and *Of Masters and Mistresses: Abduction*.
	Richard Gillingham writes with a British accent. He does our proofreading and hopefully his column will appear regularly.

Submitting your work to "Inside Erin"

Please direct all comments, articles, reviews, discussion and art to the Editor, A. Ninny, at aifsubmissions@gmail.com.