Letter from the Editor

In the interest of fullest possible disclosure, I must first acknowledge that what you’re about to read will make me sound like a complete no-hoper who spends all his time worrying about AIF games, newsletters and awards and has no other life (in addition to a fairly ridiculous online name). Well, to be fair, as far as what I put into this newsletter, that assessment is probably true. But don’t worry about me. I have a wife, two terrific kids, a house and a profession that keep me plenty busy, interested and occupied when I’m not working on AIF stuff. Besides, AIF is a far cheaper hobby than, say, model railroading.

For the past month and a half, I have been working with nine other dedicated AIF community members to create a list of Erin nominees. That list is finally being published in this newsletter, along with our invitation and encouragement to the AIF public to vote in the public Erin balloting. You can read more about the vote elsewhere in this edition.

Continued on page 3

This Month in AIF by BBBen

In order to disprove my conspiracy theory about games being released at the end of the month to inconvenience us AIF reporters, David Whyld decided to release his game on the first day of the calendar month. I’m on to him though, you’re all just trying to throw me off the scent now that I’ve twigged to your evil schemes! For month after month I had a nice little paragraph prepared about how this was the first time we’d had an issue without a game release, and month after month I had to withdraw it at the last minute. This month, at least I don’t have to bother writing one.

The Erin nominations are out this month. Give them a read, and

Continued on page 4

Interview with Campbell Wild by A. Ninny

This month’s interview features Campbell Wild, the creator of ADRIFT. We’re very pleased he was able to sit down and talk with us.

AN: I’ve read your interview over at Inside Adrift (Issue #2, October 2002), but many of our readers likely haven’t. Can you give us a refresher on who you are and how you came to be interested in IF, as well as how you came to create ADRIFT?

CW: I’ve been interested in Text Adventures for some time now, and started writing my own from scratch on the Amiga many years ago. At that time, I wasn’t aware of any decent systems out there (especially on the Amiga). I started again...
with a new adventure, but found myself repeating the same parts over and over, so thought it
would make sense to create some kind of system to take different data and interpret it as an
adventure. And so along came “Text Adventure Generator”. This was a very basic command
prompt type utility that asked a series of questions and turned them into a game. It wasn’t very
good, so I soon re-wrote it (“Text Adventure Generator 2.0” - http://www.adrift.org.uk/ftp/games/
ADRIFT2.zip) in DOS. This was really basic, but it allowed simple games to be made and it was
a good learning tool. In 1998 I got hold of Visual Basic 4.0 and started making a Windows
version of TAG which I made public some time in 1999. I announced it on RAIF in early 2000 (it
was version 3.60 at that point), and it’s just grown from there.

AN: ADRIFT has gained quite a bit of traction in the IF community at large, even since
10/02. Part of that can be credited to authors like David Whyld, Richard Otter and David
Welbourn. Do you think that traction is transforming into respect for ADRIFT games in the
greater IF community, or do you see the ADRIFT community as being insular?

CW: Definitely. It’s a bit of a catch-22. The system won’t be respected until there are good
games created with it, and the authors who can create those good games won’t use the system until
it’s got a decent reputation. The named authors (and others) have made a great difference, and the
ADRIFT games seem to be doing better each year at the Annual IF competition. I think part of
that is acceptance of the system as well as better games being created.

AN: I’ve read that you’re working on an upgrade to ADRIFT. Care to share any info as to
release dates, new features, etc?

CW: I’m afraid I really can’t give any information on a release date as I’ve really no way of
knowing at this stage how long it will take, but I would certainly not expect it to be within the next
few months. New features you can expect are:

- All forms can be resized
- Multiple windows can be open at once (e.g. two separate task windows)
- Drag and drop can be used throughout
- There will be a new way of using tasks, so there will be no more need for tasks which re-write
  the parser each and every time giving risk of missing commands.
- There will be user-defined properties that can be assigned to objects.
- The parser has been improved, with much better ambiguity resolution.
- Hints have been separated from tasks.
- The user interface has been re-vamped to give a much nicer look & feel.

And that’s just the tip of the iceberg, but I’m going to leave you guessing for now!

AN: Here’s my pitch for a new feature: any chance for a backwards-compatible runner?

CW: The problem is that it’s Generator that updates the file formats, so having a Runner that
would do the same would not really work. I’ll see if there’s anything I can do tho…

AN: Have you actually made enough money on ADRIFT 4.0 shareware registrations to make
it worthwhile to not just give away the program?

CW: I’m not going to pretend it’s making me millions, but at the same time it’s a nice bit of
pocket money. My enthusiasm tends to pitch and trough, and when it’s at a low the registration
money is enough to keep me going. Incidentally, with the work on the next version, I’m currently
pretty motivated!

AN: Are you going to continue taking paid registrations on future releases and are registered
users of 4.0 going to get the upgrade free?

CW: Yes, all registered users of v4.0 will be able to upgrade to the next version for free.

AN: Do you worry you’ll have to really crank up the features in the next version to make
people download and register it, especially considering that version 3.9 is still free and has a
dedicated group of authors still using it?
CW: I’m not worrying about that at all. I think the majority of people who used 3.90 upgraded to 4.0, despite the registration cost in order to make use of the new features. The next version should be an even bigger jump than 3.90 to 4.0, and my aim is for it to become a proper Tier I development system.

AN: ADRIFT is the most popular platform for the creation of adult IF. What is your reaction to this use of your software?

CW: To be honest, I think it’s great. The whole point of ADRIFT is to make it easy to create text games without having to worry about programming. The AIF community is obviously more interested in writing an entertaining story than worrying about the programming side of things which enables quicker, higher quality games to be written by anybody, including beginners. Long may that continue!

AN: Were you even aware of AIF when you created ADRIFT?

CW: I wasn’t aware of the community. First I knew about it was when I stumbled across the newsgroup alt.games.xtrek whilst searching for ADRIFT. From there I found the website and have dropped in now and again to see how things are doing.

AN: Knowing ADRIFT’s popularity with AIF authors, do you plan on any adult-specific features (built-in layered clothing objects, for instance) in future versions?

CW: Not per se, but the next version of ADRIFT will be much more sophisticated. Specifically, it will be able to load pre-built libraries. To this end, I would think it would be a good idea for the community to work together to build a standard library that supports common themes such as layered clothing, particular actions etc, then host the library on the website so anyone can download.

AN: What kind of IF do you like to play? Any favorite games you’d care to mention?

CW: To be honest, I don’t play IF nearly as much as I write it. The games that introduced me to the whole thing were Graham Cluley’s “Jacaranda Jim” and “Humbug”. I also bought “HitchHiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” a long long time ago, far away…

Campbell Wild is the creator of the ADRIFT IF development system. More information, including downloads of ADRIFT software and news about the new version can be found on his web site: http://www.adrift.org.uk

---

Letter from the Editor (Continued)

I have an almost overwhelming urge to rave about this year’s Erins, to talk about the great games, authors and sex scenes that have been nominated. I’m restrained, though, by what is really a three-way conflict of interest. Yes, from one standpoint I’m a journalist writing about the competition and I have a natural interest in informing the public about the nominees and in drumming up as much interest as possible. On another hand, I’m the administrator of the awards and I have a natural interest to not influence (or appear to influence) the outcome. From a third standpoint, I’m an AIF author and I have a game that has been nominated for several awards, so I have a natural interest in seeing my game do well.

Clearly, I have a couple of options. I could certainly recuse my game from the competition to remove that conflict. But since there’s nothing material at stake, and since there haven’t been as many games released this year as previous years, I think AIF as a whole are better with every available game entered for the Erin awards.

Having decided to leave my game in the running, I could then remove myself from administration of the Erins, but there hasn’t been a mad rush of people offering to take it over. For the AIF community, having someone reliable running the Erins is a big benefit. I’m certainly willing to hand off the Erins next year, so if anyone is truly interested in running them they should get in contact with me.

Things are how they are, and I will work to make the best of it. I will faithfully count the Erin votes so that the public choice is the winner in every category, without regard for my own game. I have nine judges who helped nominate the games, and all of them will be welcome to double-check my tally.
I can’t encourage you enough, if you’ve written, beta-tested or played any AIF games this year, you should vote in this year’s Erin ballot. Last year only twenty-five of you bothered to vote. I’d like to at least double that this year. I’d also like more people to attend the Erin awards ceremony which will be held before next month’s newsletter is published (watch for info on that on the message boards). Last year’s ceremony was a blast.

Wishing everyone a happy and productive 2006!

**This Month in AIF (Continued)**

prepare to vote! I’m talking to the casual players out there – almost nobody has played every game, and the people who have played the most were on the nomination committee. So basically what I’m saying is that if you’ve been interested enough to play an AIF game this month, get out and vote. Don’t feel you’re required to know every game really well, because nobody does, and we need the votes of average, non-fanatical players (otherwise we don’t get enough votes).

In discussion among the nomination committee, we have decided not to go with a Vachon Memorial Prize for the worst game of the year that we previously talked about. The reason is partly because we don’t want to create an environment that is potentially unforgiving for newbies, and partly because we really thought that this year there was a trend toward higher quality games. Oh, and there was a third reason – we don’t want to give any publicity to the crappy games! Go out and play the good ones instead.

Two games this month: the fourth and final of David Whyld’s gamebooks and a dating sim. The latter was released on the AIF Archive 2 without any notifications anywhere. Thanks for using the AIF Archive 2, but we could use a heads up when you release a game (preferably on the first AIF Archive)!

**New Games for December 2005**

*Consequences*, ADRIFT 4.0, by David Whyld, released 1st Dec 2005. The fourth game in David Whyld’s series of gamebooks; the sequel to *Choices, Decisions and Options*.


**AIFA Nominations**

The Adult Interactive Fiction Awards (AIFAs or Erins) are an opportunity for the AIF community to express their appreciation to authors for their efforts in creating the games we love.

This is the fourth installment of the AIFAs, and though there was a slowdown in the number of entries when compared with 2004, the overall quality of the games has been quite high, as indicated by the ratio of games nominated for at least one award to the number of games released in total. Seventeen of the twenty-six games have been nominated for at least one award, and many have been nominated for numerous awards.

Once again, the Erin winners will be determined by a ‘people’s choice’ vote. Everyone (if you’re reading this, then I’m talking about you!) is invited and encouraged to vote for their favorite games, characters and steamy sex scenes of the year. Your votes will determine who will be presented Erins at an awards ceremony to be held in a public Internet chat room at the end of January, 2006. Last year, the ceremony was held in the ifMUD Auditorium, and a great time was had by all. A transcript of the ceremony is available on the AIF Newsletter web site. Details of this year’s ceremony will be announced soon on the Erins web site and on the main AIF message boards.

The ten-member AIFA committee has nominated games in all the categories. We hereby proudly present you our nominees for the 2005 Adult Interactive Fiction Awards:

(All nominees are listed in alphabetical order by game name)

For Best Male Player-Character:
1. Unnamed PC in *Crossworlds Part III – The Final Far Far Away Frontier*
2. David Fever in *Fever Cabin*
3. Unnamed PC in *Ideal Pacific Coast University*
4. Buzz in *Sex Artist*
5. Unnamed PC in *Tomorrow Never Comes*

For Best Female Player-Character:
1. Unnamed PC in *Casting*
2. Melissa in *Choices, Decisions and Options*
3. Lauren in *Lauren’s Awakening*
4. Rachel in *Rachel’s Bad Day*

For Best Male Non-Player Character:
1. Professor Stone in *Ideal Pacific Coast University*
2. Jim in *Sex Artist*
3. Calamaro in *Tomorrow Never Comes*
4. Sir Richard in *Weekend*

For Best Female Non-Player Character:
1. Debbie in *Crossworlds Part III – The Final Far Far Away Frontier*
2. Lori in *Fever Cabin*
3. Gertrude in *Ideal Pacific Coast University*
4. Heidi in *Pool Party*
5. Cathy in *Reunion*
6. Claire in *Sex Artist*

For Best Heterosexual Sex Scene:
1. PC with Mona in *Ideal Pacific Coast University*
2. PC with Gertrude in *Ideal Pacific Coast University*
3. PC with Heidi in *Pool Party*
4. Buzz with Claire in *Sex Artist*
5. PC with Janet in *Tomorrow Never Comes*
6. PC with Amanda in *Weekend*

For Best Lesbian Sex Scene:
1. Betty with Veronica in *Archie's Birthday - Chapter 1: Reggie's Gift*
2. PC with Anna in *Casting*
3. Lauren with Hannah in *Lauren’s Awakening*
4. Lauren with Ashley in *Lauren’s Awakening*
5. Heidi with Alanna in *Pool Party*

For Best Threesome/Orgy Sex Scene:
1. Malcolm with Verrin and Hensley in *Escape Pod*
2. David with Kim and Lori in *Fever Cabin*
3. PC with Tina and Tonya in *Ideal Pacific Coast University*
4. Buzz with Liz and Jim in *Sex Artist*
5. Buzz with Claire and Toni in *Sex Artist*

For Best Sex Overall:
1. *Crossworlds Part III – The Final Far Far Away Frontier*
2. *Ideal Pacific Coast University*
3. *Pool Party*
4. *Reunion*
5. *Sex Artist*

For Best Writing:
1. *Fever Cabin*
2. *Ideal Pacific Coast University*
3. *Reunion*
4. *Sex Artist*
5. *Tomorrow Never Comes*

For Best Technical Implementation:
1. *Escape Pod*
2. *Fever Cabin*
3. *Ideal Pacific Coast University*
4. *Sex Artist*
5. *Tomorrow Never Comes*
For Most Innovative Game:
1. Choices
2. Fever Cabin
3. Ideal Pacific Coast University
4. Reunion
5. Tomorrow Never Comes
6. Weekend

For Best Use of Multimedia
1. Fever Cabin
2. Tomorrow Never Comes
3. X-Men: First Day at the Institute

For Best Puzzles
1. Fever Cabin
2. Ideal Pacific Coast University
3. Reunion
4. Tomorrow Never Comes
5. Weekend

For Best Humor:
1. Crawler’s Delight
2. Crossworlds Part III – The Final Far Far Away Frontier
3. Fever Cabin
4. Ideal Pacific Coast University
5. Reunion

For Best New Author:
1. Captain Cranky Pants
2. fellatrix_uk
3. GoddoG
4. Moriarty

For Best Game of the Year:
1. Fever Cabin
2. Ideal Pacific Coast University
3. Pool Party
4. Sex Artist
5. Tomorrow Never Comes

The award for the best beta-tester of the year is a new Erin this year. We polled all the authors who released games this year and asked them to endorse one of their testers for the award. The testers who received at least one endorsement are as follows:
1. A. Bomire
2. A. Ninny
3. Germ Waster
4. Richard Gillingham
5. Emily James
6. Rob Loggie

The tester who was endorsed by the most authors will receive the Erin. This obviously favors testers who participated in testing more games, but maybe that is one contributing factor in a recipient being Erin-worthy.

We will also present this year’s Badman Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award to one recipient along with the rest of the Erins. We will need your vote to determine who is worthy of this honor.

Please take advantage of this great opportunity to thank the authors without whom there would be no AIF. Vote now and help honor your favorite games and authors with a coveted Erin!

Information on voting, including a downloadable rich text file ballot, can be found by visiting http://erins.aifcommunity.org.

The AIFA nominating committee would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to all the authors who wrote new games this year, whether or not they were nominated for Erins. Without you there would be no AIF community. The games and authors that were nominated are listed below.

1. Archie's Birthday - Chapter 1: Reggie's Gift by Purple Dragon
This Year in AIF by BBBen

2005 has passed, as you would probably have noticed. We have also managed to release a full year’s worth of monthly newsletters now – not a bad achievement for a project some suggested would only work in a quarterly, rather than monthly format. What then can we say about this year in AIF?

The year kicked off with one of my games, *Crossworlds Part 3 – The Final Far Far Away Frontier* on January 4th (I had to mention that because I just don’t feature too much for the rest of the year) and then that was followed up by a brief torrent of game releases. What with the creation of this newsletter, January was quite a busy little month – one of the busiest that I’m aware of, in fact.

After that, however, we noticed a steady decline in game releases. It reached a point where from September to November we only got one game a month. Was this sign of a slowing trend in AIF? Only time will tell, I suppose. Let’s just hope that it picks up again in 2006 – maybe with the appearance of some energetic new writers. It should be noted, however, that the games were good this year, so 2005 was about quality over quantity.

A major feature of 2005 was the appearance, and subsequent disappearance of the AIF Community Portal. For a few months the AIF Community Portal was drawing most of the activity in the AIF community. We had a forum that was not affected by Yahoo!, and had the added bonus of being a nice way to organise content, reviews and links for the AIF world. Unfortunately the whole aifcommunity.org server went down for a brief period with a loss of all data, and took all the websites on it down with it. Since then the AIF Community Portal has been down and has not recovered. Let’s hope it’s not dead and buried.

We had a competition in 2005 – the CCAB comp was AIF’s first full competition, as opposed to the mini-comps of previous years. There was a little disappointment at large about the fact that the comp only got three entries (and two of those seemed to slip in just after the deadline), but due to the size of the games required and the general AIF slowdown already commented upon, perhaps this is not too surprising. Congratulations again to our editor, A. Ninny, for winning with his game *Sex Artist*.

Badman Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award winner Newkid returned to the AIF world (not that he’d exactly departed – he was still around – he just hadn’t released any games for quite a while) with the release of what I am fairly sure was this year’s largest game: *Ideal Pacific Coast University*.

We revived the Erins this year, giving out awards for the games released up to the end of October, 2004. With the revival we tinkered with the format a little and (I think) improved the process quite successfully, so the upcoming 2005 awards (nominations are in this issue) should be better than ever. The 2004 awards can mostly be summed up as being all about *Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned*. It took out seven awards, including the one for Best Game, so congratulations to One-Eyed Jack for producing what is so far the single most decorated AIF game!

And finally, we here at the newsletter have managed to see this whole year through without missing an issue (although I missed one because of computer troubles). Along the way we released quite a few articles, interviews and reviews, went through a name change and picked up a comic strip about our mascot, Erin! Pretty cool, huh?
I’d like to wish everyone out there in AIF land a happy and sexually satisfying 2006. Get that one-handed typing going – the writing of 2006’s games begins now!

Seven Seas of Théah—Episode 2 by Christopher Cole

OPTIONS: At the end of this story each month, you will be given a number of options. Choose the option that you like and vote in the poll at the Yahoo! AIF Archive. The option that gets the most votes will determine how the story continues in next month’s newsletter.

NOTE: You can read background information and other tidbits about this story here: http://ccole.aftermath.cx/theah.htm.

NOTE: Please pardon my French in this episode.

Magnus finished his meal and sat back in his chair, extremely content. Again he took in his surroundings, still a little concerned with the man who kept stealing glances towards their table. He couldn’t tell if the man was more interested in him, Violetta, or both of them.

The blonde-haired wench returned with another round of ale and wine and Magnus thanked her, turning on his best, loosest natural charm. She smiled back at him, her full ruby lips glistening with the hint of sweat from her movements to and fro with platters of food and drink. The sheen also appeared above her breasts and down into her ample cleavage. Magnus began to notice a familiar feeling, one that made his temperature rise and made all other things, including the staring man, fade into oblivion. After all it had been, hmm, nearly two weeks since his last encounter with a woman.

Two weeks!

Magnus nearly choked on his drink, realizing how long it had been since he had experienced the pleasure of a warm, female body against his. But being on the run could do that to a man: make time fly and put all thoughts of pleasure out of his head until the danger died down. Well, for all intents and purposes, the danger had died down, and Magnus decided it was time to have a little fun and forget his worries. He was nearly home after all.

He noticed the blonde wench near a back door, empty platter in hand. She was staring at him, a lone finger lightly tracing circles on the skin above her breasts. She bit her lip slightly and then slowly made her way through the door. Magnus excused himself from the table with a small cough. Violetta simply shook her head and watched him leave.

He made his way past the table with the three men now playing a game of chance, and acting as if he owned the place, walked into the back room.

The door closed behind him and he spotted the girl leaning against a barrel in what was the back storeroom. Her bodice had come undone even further so that it was a miracle of epic proportions that her breasts didn’t completely spill out of the top. As it was, Magnus could glimpse a hint of pink nipple on her alabaster skin. Her curly blonde hair hung loosely down her neck and shoulders and her face was flushed.

“Quel est votre nom?” Magnus said as he moved close to the girl. She was breathing heavily now and staring into Magnus’ eyes as he slid his hands over her bared shoulders.

“Collette,” she breathed.

“Ah Collette,” he said, his hand sliding over to her nearly exposed breast and moving underneath the fabric to cup it. “J’aime vos seins.”

Collette sighed and her body shook slightly under his touch. Her hand moved down his body to the bulge between his legs. She gasped when his lips touched her nipple and his tongue flicked across it as it hardened.

“Est-ceci que vous voulez?” he asked. “Vous me voulez?”


Magnus felt Collette spread her legs as she leaned back against the barrels. As he straightened and leaned into her, moving up to kiss her neck, a loud crash sounded from the main room of the
Recently there have been some posts at the Usenet newsgroup alt.games.xtrek (AGX) about the lack of activity there. Even more recently, there was also a post at the Yahoo! AIF Archive on the same topic. Many of us can remember when AGX was the place to go to discuss any and all things AIF-related. I know it was part of my daily ritual to read up on the activity there as I drank my morning cup of tea and prepared for the day. There were many lively, often heated, discussions.

Who can forget the seemingly innocent comments that lead to a discussion so heated that one of our leading authors left AIF for the better part of a year? But recently, all that has changed. Oh sure, there are still the occasional posts there, but most of them are cross-posted announcements. Or they’re spam. What is happening? To paraphrase Pete Seger - "Where have all the posters gone?"

Surprisingly, this is nothing new for this venerable newsgroup. For those of you who are unaware, alt.games.xtrek was originally intended as a discussion group for a Star Trek game named X-Trek. This was not the Badman game, but a multiplayer online combat game set in the Star Trek universe. Quite a few years ago, the game was rewritten and renamed to X-Trek2, and ultimately Netrek. The followers of this game moved on to alt.games.netrek, abandoning alt.games.xtrek for more than a year. It wasn’t until May 1998 that the group was adopted by players looking for information about AIF games such as Badman's Xtrek, Tenhawk's DS9 and NewKid's The Sexed Generation. So it has been abandoned by its occupants once before, and it could possibly be happening again.

So where are the AIF faithful now? For the most part, they seem to have migrated over to the Yahoo! AIF Archive group. What caused this migration? I think it was a combination of several factors. The thing that probably started the transition was when the AIF Portal stopped being regularly updated. (Note: I don't mean the AIF Community Portal.) Previously, when a new game came out almost everyone sent it to Orgun at the AIF Portal, and the game was made available for download there within a few hours of release. For reasons that Orgun has explained in other posts, this "few hours" became days, then weeks, until Orgun simply stopped updating the Portal.

Left without a common place to send games (the AIF Community site did not yet exist), the Yahoo! AIF Archive group was started simply as a place for authors to post their games and for players to download them. AGX was still the place to be for game announcements and discussions. There was a lot of resistance to having to "sign up" to get what used to be freely available. Yes, Yahoo! doesn't charge for access, but many people resist having to sign up. And for some people the sign up process requires assistance (I have heard from more than one blind person who hasn't signed up for this exact reason). But the Yahoo! AIF Archive was created and through lack of a better alternative became the de facto game repository.

For quite a while, there were very few posts there, just people signing in to scarf a game and leaving. However, as more and more people signed up, they also found it convenient to post questions at the Yahoo! site - mainly about the games they were downloading. Before long, there were people at Yahoo! who had never even heard of AGX.

Contributing to the apparent decline of AGX was the general decline of Usenet in favor of online forums. Even as a die-hard Usenet fan, I have to admit that for some people, newsreaders are not as easy to set up as simply using a browser. And the Deja News/Google Groups feeds were sometimes hours behind. And it is hard to debate the convenience of a "one stop shop" - discuss games, download/upload them, have polls, etc. This need was partially met by the burgeoning AIF Community Portal. Alas, that site succumbed to hardware failure and has yet to re-emerge. All of the users who had begun posting at the new AIF Community Portal seemed to return to Yahoo!, but not to AGX.
Yet another contributing factor was a discussion over at AGX about splitting the posts between the two groups - game play discussion would take place at Yahoo!, and game writing discussions would take place at AGX. While this was meant to more clearly define the sorts of topics discussed in each group, it has actually had the detrimental effect of taking a declining number of posts and making them even smaller. Of course, this could just be a natural reflection of the current decline in game releases, but I have a suspicion that this isn’t the case.

For me, it is a combination of all of these factors that is causing the extreme lull in postings over at AGX. Is it indicative of a natural lull - or is it the outward signs of a more serious condition? I guess only time will tell. It certainly appears that over the past few months that AGX is becoming more and more of a ghost town, with just a few faithful followers hanging on. If these are the last days of AGX, I for one will miss it. It will, indeed, be the end of an era.

---

### Game Reviews

#### Notice Me

**Review by David Whyld**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game Info:</th>
<th>Notice Me released 11/27/05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author:</td>
<td>Wotan-Anubis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform:</td>
<td>ADRIFT 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size:</td>
<td>246 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content:</td>
<td>f/f, voyeurism, bestiality (light)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type:</td>
<td>Fantasy / Sci-fi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length:</td>
<td>Short (less than an hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed:</td>
<td>December 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extras:</td>
<td>Images (in game file, not present in game)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Basic Plot/Story:

*Notice Me* is a fan-fiction game set in the world of *Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance*. Never heard of it? Me neither. By the look of things, it seems to be some kind of generic fantasy world with flying horses (pegasi) and some semi-human races living alongside the human ones, only the semi-humans don’t like the humans on account of them being fully human. Or something along those lines. It might have been a nice idea to have a bit of background included in the game for those people not familiar with the setting, or at least have a lengthier introduction to set the scene. Admittedly, there are a few lines in the accompanying README file but these are too brief to really give you a feel for what's going on.

#### Overall Thoughts:

To begin with, it was possible to forget I was even playing an AIF game. There's a sex dream at the start but after that’s out of the way, it’s onto the game proper. A number of locations are presented to the player, none of them particularly detailed or interesting, and there are a few characters to interact with. Problems present themselves with things referred to in room descriptions being either invisible or just missing from the game. I found some stables yet wasn’t able to go into them or even examine them until they were open. Attempting to head in the direction the stables lay in before they were open hit me with a message saying I couldn’t go that way. Wouldn’t it have been better as YOU CAN'T GO THAT WAY UNTIL THE STABLES ARE OPEN or something along those lines?

Part of *Notice Me* seems to involve getting into the stables and to the pegasi within, yet once I managed to get the stables open I couldn’t find a way to do anything else. Can I ride the pegasi? Move them from the stables somehow? Feed them? I tried as many different verbs as I could think of, yet none worked and so in the end I concluded that either the pegasi can’t be ridden at all or there's just some really obscure command needed for them.

As is usual with AIF games, there are no hints or walkthrough so if you get stuck… you're well and truly stuck. I seemed to make pretty decent progress through *Notice Me* until the time I was told to eavesdrop on a couple of the characters and found the command wouldn’t work. After that, I reached the proverbial brick wall and couldn’t figure out how to get any further.

A few small pictures of the characters in the game are in an accompanying ‘images’ folder but I couldn’t help think it would have been a better idea to have included them in the game itself. What
might have been a better idea still would be for the images to have been converted to JPG format and shrunken down a bit for those poor folk still using a dial up modem. Seriously, there's no need for 800+ KB of BMP images, particularly as they don’t even feature in the game itself.

**Puzzles/Game play:**

Puzzles are generally easy enough to figure out without really thinking about them. Talk to one character and they will give you an item. Give this item to someone else. Repeat a few times. That’s essentially the puzzle solving aspect of the game out of the way.

**Sex:**

I never actually managed to reach a sex scene on my own, but after becoming horribly stuck I decided it was high time to post a message on the Yahoo! AIF Archive and ask for help. Which I did, and promptly received a response. I'm still not entirely sure the puzzle I was stuck on – eavesdropping on Mordecai and Lethe – was a particularly fair one, but after that I managed to progress to the end of the game in short order.

And, lo and behold, I found a sex scene as well. And a better one than usually features in AIF games. This sex scene just progressed from start to finish without me having to guess the verb with relation to which part of the body I'm sucking/licking/screwing first. What a refreshing change. Although, saying that, I'm probably not the only one who read through the near-sex scene with the cat (a transformed woman thankfully) without experiencing a slight feeling of distaste.

**Technical:**

Technically, the game’s above average for the AIF genre, although there are a number of areas in which it could clearly use some improvement. Numerous items mentioned in room descriptions can’t be referred to; dialogue with most of the characters is repeatable – wouldn’t a different dialogue set have been better for the second and subsequent times you speak to them?; talking to Letha after she's moved to the lawn results in “Letheconvo 2”. Definitely a bug. A fatal one? Who knows? I wasn’t able to finish the game, so maybe. It’s certainly proof that the game hasn’t been tested anywhere near as carefully as it should have been.

There’s also a minor bug in a Lethe conversation when she mentions meeting you in the stables, and you respond that the stables are always locked… even if you’ve managed to open them previously.

**Intangibles:**

The aim of Notice Me is… to have sex. Actually, that’s a guess as it’s never stated anywhere in the game what the point of it is, but as it’s an AIF game it’s a fair bet having sex plays a large part in the game. A few puzzles will no doubt be thrown in along the way to give people something to do while they're waiting for the next sex scene, but sex is likely to be the be all and end all of the game.

**Final Thoughts:**

Notice Me isn't a terrible game by any means. With more time and effort expended on making the characters come to life, better care taken with regard to the finer details (examining your surroundings might not be a big deal in a game concerned mainly with sex but it’s sometimes the little things that make all the difference) and some thorough testing, not to mention a clearer indication of what the objective is, there could be a pretty fair game here.

**Rating:** C

**Review by A. Bomire**

**Basic Plot**

This game is fan-fiction based upon the Nintendo game *Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance*. I wasn’t familiar with the game and had to look it up online to determine that it is the latest in a series of *Fire Emblem* strategy/RPG games released by Nintendo. According to the author, this game is a small between-the-scenes outtake from the overall plot. You play the part of Jill, a wyvern rider from Daein who has been accidentally thrown into the midst of her erstwhile foes, a species of hybrid men/beasts. She discovers that not only are the people she's been fighting not monsters, but
that she actually has developed feelings for one of them, Lethe - a catlike person who has the
ability to shape shift into an actual cat. Jill must overcome her own prejudices, as well as those of
Lethe, to find what could be love.

Overall Thoughts

The author points out in his readme that this is an extremely short game (one which he has written
in a single evening). He is correct - this is possibly the shortest game I've ever played outside of a
mini-comp. You may in fact spend more time reading this review than actually playing the game.
The focus in this game is more on exploring the feelings Jill has for Lethe than on typical AIF or
even IF themes. In this aspect, it achieves this goal - you definitely get the feeling of someone
overcoming her own prejudices as she falls for someone she formerly considered an enemy.
Players looking for good puzzle solving or steamy sex scenes will be disappointed, however.

Puzzles/Game Play

There really isn't much in the way of puzzles in this game. As short as the game is, it is almost
linear in its completion. You "TALK TO" the individual characters, who quickly inform you of
what they want done and even at times what you need to do to accomplish your goal. I will say that
I got stuck for quite a while because I hadn't picked up on the verbal clues provided by the author,
but a careful reader will not experience this problem. There are puzzles, but they are of such
simplicity that the game is more of a piece of erotic fiction than a truly interactive game.

Much of the puzzles and game play are accomplished using non-standard commands, which can
generally lead to guess-the-verb problems. However, the author goes out of his way to give you
broad hints as to exactly what commands to use and where to use them to help avoid this problem.
Most players who did get stuck were stuck not because they didn't know what to do, but where and
when to do it. (At least according to the help questions posted online.)

Sex

The sex is almost completely non-interactive. At various points in the game, you issue a command
to start the sexual scene and the entire scene is played out without any interaction from you. This is
similar to the cut-scene sexual interaction many games use - only taken to the extreme. The sexual
interaction is also pretty tame, once again focusing on the feelings being experienced by Jill and
her soon-to-be lover, Lethe, instead of attempting to build burn-up-the-screen hot scenes. Did I
mention that in one of the scenes Lethe (a cat person) is completely shape-shifted into the form of a
large cat? This may not be everyone’s cup of tea.

Technical

Technically, I could not find much wrong with this game. The author points out that attempting to
repeat the "TALK TO" command using again causes some sort of problem, but I didn’t find this to
be the case when I played it. Many ADRIFT games which use "TALK TO" have a problem that
when you exhaust all of the talking points the game reverts to a generic "Use ASK character
ABOUT subject" error message. This game is no different, but I was pleasantly surprised to see
that unlike most games Wotan-Anubis has programmed in responses to using "ASK/ABOUT" for
his characters (albeit simple "I don't have a response for that" type of messages).

Intangibles

Included with this game is a set of pictures of each character taken, presumably, from the Nintendo
game upon which it is based. None of these pictures are actually seen within the game itself. The
author has included them to give the player an idea of the appearance of the characters from the
game.

Final Thoughts

As I finish this game and this review, I find myself conflicted. I couldn't find anything inherently
wrong with it, and I am tempted to give it a higher score than I feel I will because of this. However,
from a strictly AIF game viewpoint, I cannot find anything very good about the game either. The
story is told fairly well, but there is no real “game” here. Overall, I think this would have been
better suited as a piece of erotic fiction.

Rating: C-
Rachel Has a Bad Day, a review by David Whyld

Editor’s note: Several additional reviews of Rachel Has a Bad Day (or Rachel’s Bad Day) were published in the November, 2005 edition of Inside Erin.

Game Info: Rachel Has a Bad Day released 08/03/05
Author: Sly Old Dog
Platform: ADRIFT 4.0
Size: 96 KB
Content: bdsm, m/f, f/f, bestiality (light), rape, underage
Type: Modern era
Length: Medium to long (2-3 hours)
Reviewed: December 2005
Extras: none

Basic Plot/Story:
You play the part of Rachel, a sex-starved woman whose boyfriend wants her to copy some files from a computer at work and then bring said files to him.

Overall Thoughts:
I once wrote an article for the AIF Newsletter about this game, despite the fact that at the time I hadn’t even played it. That might seem like a strange thing to do, but then it wasn’t so much the game itself that I was commenting on as the numerous bugs in it that seemed to have the Yahoo! AIF Group up in arms. Some felt that the game was so buggy it should never have been released in the first place (I’m one of them); others felt that, as it’s a free game and the author is under no obligation to make sure it’s bug-free, that we should just be grateful it had been written at all. After seeing the sheer number of bugs in the game reported by people I decided to avoid it like the plague, or to at least wait until the author got round to releasing a fixed version of it.

But I’ve always been kind of curious as to what it’s actually like. Quite a few times I’ve heard people say that the author, Sly Dog, has the potential to be a truly great writer of AIF, but that he’s so eager to release a game that he doesn’t bother testing it properly beforehand and the finished result isn’t the masterpiece it could be. Most of his games, so I hear, require the player to be almost psychic to figure out the guess-the-verb issues that litter them, and the sheer number of bugs they contain are likely to have even the most affable person tearing his hair out in frustration. The strangest thing is that this has been explained to the author time and time again, and yet he seems unwilling to make even the slightest effort to improve. It’s like he enjoys people saying bad things about his games.

But…

But I’ve always been curious. And, sooner or later, I found myself downloading Rachel Has a Bad Day just to see what all the fuss was about.

The introduction leaves a lot to be desired. And I mean a lot. Aside from completely lacking any kind of depth, it pretty much tells you the entire plot of the game, along with what you need to do. Faced with that – and the plot, let’s face it, isn’t going to be winning any awards – it’s half tempting to just quit straight off. But I decided to persevere.

So is Rachel Has a Bad Day as buggy as it’s reputed to be? Yes. Resoundingly so. I'm not sure if it’s the most bugged up game I've ever played but it’s certainly a contender for that title. Almost every location contains an error of one kind or another; some minor, some major, all a pain. Did the author subject the game to even the most cursory testing beforehand? I kind of doubt it. It’s pretty obvious he didn’t use a beta-tester, or that he didn’t bother to listen to their comments if he did.

Puzzles/Game Play:
I didn’t finish the game (then again, I seem to remember someone saying it wasn’t possible to finish due to errors), although I think I came pretty close. Guess-the-verb hits hard in some places, but the puzzles themselves were so easy it was a wonder why the game had any at all. Most times, the puzzles are so straightforward that I expected there to be some kind of subtle twist in them that I was missing, but no. It seems they really are that easy.

Someone later confirmed to that the ADRIFT version of the game (which is what I'm playing) can’t
be finished. The Inform version (ported by someone else) can be finished, but as I've no real desire to struggle through another version of the game, I'll just have to live in ignorance of how it ends.

Sex:

Not too bad actually. While nothing particularly special, at least it seems to be free from the type of guess-the-verb problems that afflict the rest of the game. On the down side, the sex is almost comical in how over the top it is, and the excruciatingly bad dialogue that peppers it is more laughable than stimulating. There's also the problem that the majority of the sex is forced on Rachel, or is in rather unpleasant circumstances (masturbating while a tramp looks on or being forced to suck someone's semen from your fingers), and the portrayal of the main character as an empty-headed bimbo doesn't help.

Certain elements of the game deal with the darker side of the AIF scene. While trying to get money for a taxi, Rachel can have a dog lick her (where she gets licked I’ll leave to your imagination but as this is an AIF game you can probably guess) and she can slap and spit on another woman in a hardcore video. Later, in order to get something she needs at the airport, she even has sex with an underage boy – at his father’s instigation. I've written a few games with edgy adult scenes in them myself but I found myself wincing a little at some of the stuff that can happen here; it’s as if the author decided to put Rachel through one unpleasant experience after another, and to heck with whether it made any sense. Incidentally, it didn’t make a blind bit of sense at all.

Technical:

Technically the game’s a mess. I haven't got the space here to list all of the game’s problems (not without stretching this review to ten times its current size), but the worst contenders are:

* Guess-the-verb: obvious commands are seldom covered, non-obvious ones are. RIDE BIKE won’t work but HOP ON BIKE will. GET CLOTHES isn't covered; DRESS is. MOVE DUSTBIN doesn’t work but PUSH DUSTBIN does. Ouch. You could almost be forgiven for thinking that the author is deliberately going out of his way to make his game frustrating to play.

* The game is told from the viewpoint of the main character, but the majority of the default commands haven't been altered to reflect this. So quite often you'll see RACHEL TAKE THE MOBILE PHONE and RACHEL OPEN THE BEDSIDE CABINET. Surely the author noticed this? But why oh why didn’t he do something about it?

* Rachel comes across as a sex-starved nutcase. Seriously. She gets turned on by riding a bike, for crying out loud! She also has the frequent habit of talking out loud to herself, often saying ridiculous things. Is she an escapee from the local lunatic asylum? Or does the author just have such a poor understanding of the female half of the species that he thinks this is how they really are?

* The game crashes after a certain point if you try to save it. Funnily enough, this error was even mentioned by the author before the game was released, yet rather than try and fix it he just went ahead and released it anyway. Later on the error seems to fix itself.

* To say the game is a adult one, it’s amazing how even the most basic adult commands aren't covered for the most part. KISS [NAME] produces ADRIFT’s default of [HE/SHE] WOULDN’T APPRECIATE THAT, while F**K [NAME] tells the player off for swearing.

* At one point, you're told that you aren't going to have sex with someone but if you try a different command then you have sex with them anyway.

* You speak to the various characters in the game in the format of TALK TO PHIL or TALK TO ERIC yet when you first meet them, you don’t know their names. Phil will be described as ‘the security guard’ yet trying to TALK TO SECURITY GUARD hits you with an error message and advises you to ASK PHIL ABOUT [SUBJECT].

The sheer number of bugs in the game pretty much overwhelm everything good about it. And there *are* a few good things about it. The writing is certainly better than I was expecting. The sex scenes? Not sure. They're so ridiculously over the top as to come across as more comical than arousing. Rachel seems to see a sexual element to just about everything and I can well imagine that if someone shot her, she’d probably climax just thinking about the bullet entering her. All in all, she's probably the poorest main character in a game I've ever come across.

Intangibles:
The characters in the game are wildly over the top. Everyone Rachel meets seems to want to have sex with her, despite the fact that at the start of the game it’s stated that she's rather plain. As for the dialogue? To say it was appalling would be an overstatement. Here’s Rachel’s boss:

"You've got lovely tits, Rachel," he sighs, "I love watching them bounce under your clothes. Let me scoop this one out and feel your nipple. Do you know how they stick out when you come inside after cycling to work? It's firm and rubbery now."

Firm and rubbery? Oh yes, the writer sure has got a knack for stimulating dialogue…

Or Lionel on the way to the airport:

"My, my, Rachel, your pussy is soft and moist. Are you sure you're not a tart after all? I can hear you begin to pant as I slide my fingers in and out of your slutty pussy. Open your legs a little more for me..."

At times, the dialogue is so bad it’s painful to read.

**Final thoughts:**

If the author ever decides to heed some of the advice he’s been given in the past and make a genuine effort with his next game, as well as get someone to test it thoroughly beforehand, and listen to what they say, he might be capable of producing something pretty decent. There's the makings of a good game buried somewhere here, but there's such a godawful mess of guess-the-verb and outright errors, not to mention some terrible characterisation and fifth rate dialogue, that anything good about *Rachel Has a Bad Day* is just lost amidst the dross.

Rating: D+

---

**Consequences, a review by Grimm Sharlak**

**Game Info:** *Consequences*, released 12/01/05  
**Author:** David Whyld  
**Platform:** ADRIFT 4.0  
**Size:** 530KB  
**Content:** m/f, f/f, torture  
**Type:** CYOA  
**Length:** Variable  
**Reviewed:** November 2005  
**Extras:** None

**Basic Plot:**

This, the next game in David Whyld’s ever-expanding series of adult choose-your-own-adventure series that began with *Choices* and continued with *Options* and *Decisions*, sees you reprising the role of Melissa Shelton. Our favourite vigilante lesbian has had some harrowing experiences over the course of the three previous games, but just when she thought all was resolved, she receives a letter indicating that someone knows of the lengths she’s had to go to preserve her and her girlfriend’s safety. And they want revenge.

**Overall Thoughts:**

Sequels always deserve special mention here in AIF, as outside of *Crossworlds* and *Sam Shooter*, we don’t really have a recurring theme/character setting. This is the fourth game in this series, so the first question we must ask is – is it an improvement over the previous titles? Does it offer anything new?

To be perfectly frank, I approached the game with some trepidation. In each game so far the object of your affections, Susan Harris, has had some part of her dark past come back to haunt her and you’ve had to save her arse, usually at the expense of your own. Reading the introduction to the game had me rolling my eyes at yet another similar setup. Gladly, the plot does deviate from previous efforts later, so it stands up in that respect.

So, on the other hand, does the game offer anything new, gameplay-wise? This becomes especially important in these CYOA games, as the mechanics are going to be exactly the same every time.
With your average text adventure, you can have different types of puzzles and situations, whereas with this type of game it’s always going to be selecting from a list and seeing what happens. This means that if you’ve played the first three games in this series then this one is more of the same old, same old. And as each game has gotten bigger, replayability has suffered due to having to play through sections you’ve already seen just to make that one different choice. I’m not kidding when I had over twenty separate save files on hand when reviewing this game, and prodigious use of the undo command was also required. If you’re after a game where you get to see everything in one go, then steer clear.

**Puzzles/Gameplay:**

Again, this is a choose your own adventure game. Read some text, look at the choices and make one. In some cases there are many choices, in some only one. This means there are no traditional AIF puzzles to speak of, but you have to think about where your decisions might take you, and of course, undo’s are going to be prevalent and frequent saves recommended.

All this leads to quick, easy gameplay, but the game can become frustrating in certain areas where your decisions have no obvious effect. However, such issues have been a problem even in CYOA books, so it’s more a case that if you like this genre you’re going to put up with these things.

**Sex:**

Sex again is pretty sparse, and sometimes even used as a punishment rather than a reward. Melissa can get raped if you go down the wrong route, but in other cases you can have sweet little scenes if you do things right. As with the rest of the series, my complaint with the sex scenes is that while they are longer this time around, they are still rather short. There is more interactivity than in previous versions, however this only extends to the choice to ending the scene or continuing (which in some cases is a very important decision).

**Technical:**

Another seeming problem with the growing size of these games is the growing number problems you encounter. For one, at a handful of points the game referred to choices I’d made; but indicated the wrong choices. For example, at one point I could storm out, or punch one person or another in rage. I chose to leave, but barely two paragraphs later I was being chastised for how I’d punched someone out. At another point I was with one character, but then I left the area via a decision and it says I was accompanied by a different character – one I hadn’t even met.

I also came across one game-killing bug in my playthrough. At the previously mentioned scene, you meet up with a recurring character from the other games in the series and after your conversation with him, you leave. And the game doesn’t end, it simply prints out a paragraph with no following decisions and no input outside of system commands are accepted. While I understand that games of this nature are complex and hard to test, such things make a) the game unfinishable in some cases, and b) make the player feel like the main gameplay crutch, the choices you make, irrelevant.

**Intangibles:**

Considering the various terrible situations she’s been in previously, the game begins with a simple choice; are you still the happy go lucky girl from *Choices*, or have things changed you? It’s a nice start, and does affect some of the text in the game, which I thought was a good feature.

**Final Thoughts:**

*Consequences* apparently ends the *Choices* series, and while I enjoyed the games, they are becoming too similar and the play style is becoming a bit long in the tooth, so I welcome the end of the series. Things wrap up rather well with the various endings, so there’s no complaints there. However, if you play AIW just for the sex, or didn’t enjoy the gameplay offered in the earlier games of the series, this isn’t the game for you.

**Rating:** C+
AIF Wants You

If you can write game reviews, articles, opinion pieces, humorous essays, or endless blather, we want you. Contact the Editor for suggested content or just write what you want and send it to us.

Staff

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 in 2004.

Darc Nite is a newcomer to the AIF scene. He is an avid gamer who heard the call for help with the AIF Newsletter.

A Bomire is the author of several TADS AIF games, including Dexter Dixon: In Search of the Prussian Pussy, Tomorrow Never Comes 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.