Sextra Curricular Activities

This Month in AIF by BBBen	Volume 1 Issue 2 28-FEB-05

The Erin Awards, also known as the Adult Interactive Fiction Awards, are coming back. In this issue of the newsletter we have the nominees for the awards listed, and you can (and *must*) vote. The Erins are for October 2003 to October 2004, so this session will be a little late, but not too late. We will conduct the next awards (Oct 2004 - Oct 2005) in a more timely fashion now that the Erins are under new management in association with this publication. Get your ballot at http://erins.aifcommunity.org so you can vote.

We really need the community to get behind the awards and we have a number of ways that we feel we can improve them, so vote! Since the community is smallish, your vote actually does count. You don't have to have played every single game; you just have to have an idea of what *you* liked last year. You have to enter your vote to the2004erins@yahoo.com by the 20th of

The Zen of Testing by A. Bomire

Part II - Desperately Seeking Testers

This is the second part of a three-part series on testing your game. In the first part, "The Art of Alpha Testing", I discussed you testing your own game during the writing process, or alpha testing. In the next two parts, I will discuss moving to the next stage - beta testing. This stage involves having others test your game for you. This part will outline some techniques on when to beta test and how to find good testers. The next, and last part, will be on how to effectively utilize the results you get from your beta testers.

What is beta testing? Well, it is having others look at your game

Lucilla Frost: The Chick of AIF by Markaedw

Newsletter Spotlights

This issue we have more from A. Bomire's *The Zen of Testing*. A Ninny sent in his *Beta Testing Games.* I talked with Lucilla Frost about her games and women in AIF. We have the AIFA nominations, and some art sent in by Joe Slash, best known for his work creating box art for Christopher Cole's games. Last of all, you should be able to use all of the links in this issue.

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This month I was looking on Alt.Games.Xtrek, I noted a post about the lack of women and women-oriented games, which got me thinking "Why aren't there more games by /for women?" So I requested an interview from the only woman AIF author I could think of, Lucilla Frost creator of the popular "British Fox and the Celebrity Auctions." No, I did not ask her about the hidden character.

Markaedw: Can you tell us a little about yourself?

Lucilla: No.
After a short pause in which the interviewer wonders if this is going to be one of those awkward interviews with a mono-syllabic egotist, she continues.
Lucilla Frost is a persona, not a person. Therefore any information provided would be entirely fictional, even the true bits.

Markaedw: What caused you to be interested in writing AIF?

Lucilla: This a moderately complex story. Several years ago I happened across the "Adult Games

and XXX Software Archive" at http://www.dirtymind.com and was intrigued by the catalogue. However, it wasn't possible to use any kind of on-line payment unless you were a US resident and when I sent US dollars cash after a holiday they were returned to me. Not to be deterred I somehow managed to hack the site (which is quite an achievement for a largely computer-illiterate luddite) and found myself quite disappointed with the actual content. However, it did include A Night with Troi and a version of Moist. I'm old enough to remember Colossal Caverns for the mainframe (and a few years later a copy for the BBC by Level 9 Computing) and was hooked by Moist such that I sought out more such games, discovering Baf's Guide to the IF Archive (http://www.wurb.com/if). Jaded in my old age I was only interested in the AIF and found that aside from Moist, Farmers Daughter and Dr Who and the Vortex of Lust they were rubbish. (I also rediscovered that I was rubbish at accomplishing the problems and needed the walk-throughs wherever possible). *Lucilla kicks the interviewer to wake him up.* Pay attention! However, I sought further and discovered the AIF Portal and while my initial assessment that most these games were rubbish still holds true I also discovered Adam Hendine (the master) and A Bomire (my guru). I also realized that I could probably do as well as many of the authors and discovered that ADRIFT had a free demo. I used the ADRIFT demo to write a short game based on The Perverted Adventures of GOT Gal(http://www.superheroinecentral.com/mrx) which seemed to work and contacted DanO (designer of the SHC website) to ask if he'd be interested in posting full length games set in the Butterscotch Fox universe. He was interested enough to prompt me to buy the full ADRIFT 4.0 and start work on British Fox, although nothing ever actually came of the 'post at SHC' idea. With British Fox beta finished and no ongoing interest from DanO, I sought out another forum for play testing and finally happened across the Yahoo! Groups and made the irrevocable decision to go public.

Markaedw: With as many woman players as we have, why do you think there aren't more woman writers?

Lucilla: No idea. But that won't stop me guessing. Most people who feel comfortable programming are men which cuts down the 'pool' quite dramatically. Then the tasks/events/sequences model lends itself much better to men's porn than women's porn. And, probably, most women have better things to with their lives than spend six months staring at a computer screen trying to make "verDoScrewwith" work properly.

Markaedw: We're pretty inclusive , do you think there is anything that we can do to encourage/ mentor women writers?

Lucilla: Not really. The community for some reason lacks the 'up its own ass/flame war/techno-obsession' that blights many news groups/forums. I was (pleasantly) surprised to find that people were interested in my idea, a number of people provided constructive feedback (both pre- and post- release) and then when I dipped my toe into TADS my questions were answered without any sense of people trying to inflate their own ego or demonstrate that they knew more than me. I suspect women are more likely to say "well, if you're going to be like that, fuck off" so basically, keep not doing all the things you're not doing and keep doing the things you are.

Markaedw: The subject of the lack of "women-oriented games" has come up every so often; can you help us by defining the concept?

Lucilla: That's a hard one. *Lucilla stares hard into the future.* I'll combine the answer to this with the answer to your next question

Markaedw: What do you think women are looking for in an AIF game?

Lucilla: I think that there is generally a big difference in what men and women are after in pornography/erotica. As a general rule men find the biological descriptions of which object of who goes into which orifice of other-who the primary source of arousal. Women are more likely to be turned on by the situation and growing development of sexual tension such that once the clothes come off and the shagging actually starts the 'best bit' is over. I think (generally speaking) women are more interested in what the characters are thinking/feeling while men are more interested in what they are doing. This means that in general women will be looking for descriptions of emotional environments (how does the character feel in such-and-such a situation) rather than purely physical ones (what does it look like). Women are liable to find a clear plot more important than men are, so for example I would not expect "A night with Worf" to work well for most women if written in the same fashion as "A night with Troi" no matter how much the woman in question fancied Michael Dorn with his Klingon costume on, on the other hand if the

game could be written as an ongoing seduction of (or by) the player leading to a single well written sex-scene then I think it would work well. I suspect it would work well even if at the end there was a 'fade-to-black' rather than a detailed biological exchange of bodily fluids. I think women probably will be more comfortable with a third person perspective than a second person one because it allows the author greater justification to describe the emotional environment (she feels rather than you feel - which is quite presumptuous). I would not describe British Fox as 'woman oriented', it was written with the predominantly male audience of SHC in mind and while I hope it has plot and emotional environment (however unlikely...) it's geared towards the 'who does what to whom with what'. On the other hand I think "Tim's Mom" is an example of something which leans quite strongly towards what women are likely to be seeking in that there is the situation of the young man parading before the neighbor who (one imagines) gets more and more intensely attracted to him. In order to actually 'be' woman oriented I think this game would have to be written from inside Tim's Mom's head as she has much the more complex seeming emotions (although it's been months since I played it so I may be doing Chris a disservice). This is not to say that women oriented needs a female main character although I think in general it would work better. Can I say though that I don't think 'women oriented' actually means much, a good game will work equally well for men and women as things like plot, emotional environment, gradually building tension are going to improve the game regardless. I think there are games which are clearly not women oriented i.e. those which are a series of scenes with partners who become compliant on being presented with the item of hotness (e.g. blow job drifter, gamma gals) - whereas men will enjoy these games if the sex is well enough written.

Markaedw: Would it be possible for you to generate guidelines for writers who want to write games that would be interesting to women?

Lucilla: Firstly, write a good game. This is stating the blindingly obvious but a weak game that meets all the criteria remains a weak game. So make sure you yourself like it and it interests you, if you include kinks use ones that you can enjoy writing about as otherwise they won't be very evocative. Secondly, NewKid's discussion of fitting the sex into the plot in his interview goes double. In general women won't sleep with someone just because they fancy them, there needs to be a bit more. So "we're both characters in an AIF so we're going to have a scene" doesn't work as well for women. Thirdly (and getting a bit more speculative) when writing the 'adult' bit I would suggest moving away from purely physical descriptions (e.g. "He forcefully spread her legs and drove into her with the speed and power of a steam-piston.") towards ones which describe the feelings engendered (e.g. "She shivered despite the heat of his touch as he parted her thighs.") This is not to say 'avoid hard-core', read some women's erotica (e.g. Black Lace) which can be just as graphic as the blokes equivalent. Fourthly, write a good game. Oh, I said that
didn't I. Well, worth repeating. Women are no more homogeneous than Americans and if I'd been asked to suggest guidelines for writing a game for Americans I'd probably start with "use small words and short sentences". Which I am aware is a gross over generalization. But a good game is a good game, even if you don't understand all the words.

Markaedw: You once mentioned that you were working on a TADS version of "British Fox", how is that coming along?

Lucilla: It's done. Many thanks to A Bomire. I've sent it out to a few people who've made a few comments, but I'm going to post it in the next few weeks. It's probably a little better than the original (there's at least one extra puzzle, a few little extra things you can do, and it's a bit 'tidier'), partly because of the change of engine but probably more to do with the extra six months I spent writing it.

Markaedw: Will you expand on the "British Fox" theme?

Lucilla: Possibly. I would like to do a series of games as I became very fond of a number of the characters and have a number of ideas for plots. However, inertia has set in and I may prove to be a one hit wonder, other things in my life are taking priority. I have finally started the mini-game I promised Xavier (starring Magpie) though so I might get back into it. On the other hand, I have other ideas which don't involve superheroes at all.

Lucilla Frost's games:

"British Fox and the Celebrity Auctions"

and test it. Let's answer the first question you probably have: Why go through this, especially if I have faithfully followed all of the tenets about alpha testing. After all, I know my
game is bug-free, right? Wrong! It may indeed be free of program, spelling and grammar
errors, but it certainly isn't bug free. You may have horrible "guess-the-verb" problems
in that you've implemented some wonderful command that only some member of the "Psychic Friends Connection" can divine. Or there may be plot holes in your game large enough to drive a truck through. Or many other problems that you just didn't think of when
writing the game. It always helps to have others look at your game from a fresh perspective to give fresh insight into your game.

When it comes to beta testing, there are basically two schools of thought: 1) Do it while the game writing is still in progress, and 2) Wait until the game is completed. I'll discuss each concept and what is good and bad about them.

1) Do it while the game writing is still in progress
   This school of thought believes that having someone test your game before it is completed
   leaves room for making design changes that may affect your game outcome. For example, you
   have a plot problem that just doesn't make sense. Your beta testers can discover this and point it
   out before you write the climactic scene involving that faulty premise. This is good in that you
   can catch really big problems early, and resolve them without huge rewrites late in the game.
   This is bad in that you still have large parts of your game that aren't tested and will need to be
   tested later. Testing a game over and over can become really tedious and dull. Your beta testers
   can become bored with your game, and miss things later on.

2) Wait until the game is completed
   This school of thought believes that it is better to wait until you have finished the game, and are
   done all of your alpha testing. This is good in that it presents your game as a whole to your beta
   testers, who can test the entire game at once. You don't have the problem of them being pre-
   sented the same game over and over for testing, and thereby minimizes them becoming bored
   with it. However, if you do have huge plot holes, it becomes a major process to go back and
   correct them. For example, a major part of your plot is to have the hero retrieve a magic sword
   with which to slay the villain. But, your testers correctly point out that a magic sword really
   doesn't belong in a science fiction story. Now you have a huge re-write to do over something
   that could have been caught earlier.

Which do I recommend? Well, they both have good points. It is probably up to author
preference as to which process to use. Personally, I prefer the "wait until the game
is completed" process, but that is just the way I like to work.

Once you've decided on how you are going to go about beta testing, now you need to find
some beta testers. I've received a few e-mails from potential authors on this. It is probably the
most important aspect of beta testing. There are four ways of finding beta testers:

1) Post a message online
   You often see these messages in the forums and online message groups. "I've just finished my
   game and am looking for beta testers." is the way they are often worded. You'll find plenty of
   testers this way, probably way more than you need. You'll also find a lot of people who are just
   looking for a sneak peek at your game and have absolutely no intention of responding back to
   you. How do you tell the difference? You can't. You're basically taking pot luck in this method.
   I'm not saying you won't find some really good testers; I'm warning you that this is the least
   reliable method.

2) Check well-written games for a list of testers
   Most authors (at least, those with a conscience) will include a list of those wonderful people
   who tested their games. If you find a game that seems bug-free and well-written, it more than
   likely means the author used some great beta testers. If their contact information is included, try
   contacting those testers to see if they will be willing
   to test your game.

3) Ask some authors
   Again, most authors have a list of beta testers that they have used, even if they don't include
   they even if they don't include them in a "credits" list in their game. Or, the author may list his/

her testers by name, but not their contact information. Try contacting the author and see if he/she is willing to share his/her list. If so, you can then contact the testers to see if they are willing to test your game.

4) Check a published list
   This applies more to main-stream IF than AIF, but there are published lists of people who are willing to beta test games. If you can find one, these are great resources for finding testers. We attempted to create such a list here in the AIF community several years ago, and the list still exists somewhere, but it is severely outdated. We are attempting another such list for this e-zine.

How do I find my testers? Well, I use a combination of the above techniques. After having written several games, I already have a list of people who have tested my games. I know from that list who is a good tester, and who may or may not be willing to test more games in the future. I've also communicated with other authors and exchanged information with them about beta testers. Some of those authors have offered to test my games, and vice-versa. However, for my first game I posted an online message asking for testers. I got around 20 replies and sent my game out to all 20 of them. I only heard back from about 3 of them. See what I mean about this method being unreliable? Those three did a good job in testing, but that was a very inefficient method.

For my most recent games, I have been fortunate enough to experience a "Field of Dreams" effect (for those of you unfamiliar with that movie, the leading man often hears a voice in his head whispering "If you build it, they will come"). I have my own website, and I post updates to that site about the progress of my works-in-progress. When I near completion of a game, I start getting e-mails from people offering to beta-test it. This may not work for all authors, and like I said I count my self very fortunate that it works for me.

Okay, now that you've found your beta testers, just what do you do with them? Just give them a copy of your game and hope for the best? Well, that is one technique. For a more in-depth discussion of the best use of beta testers, stay tuned for the third and final part of this series: "Part III - Making the Most of a Good Thing".

Oldies But Goodies-games that you may not be playing, but should

This month I was thinking about a fun little game called WUZ. You start off the game deciding your gender, and the game changes the elements accordingly, which gets interesting.

Like all games of it's age, the commands are simple and not as varied as we are used to, and the maze does get difficult to navigate, but once you find the Elaborate Mirror you can really start to play. You go to a bar pick up someone, get probed by aliens, get gang raped, meet a satyr and finish off by teaching royalty about sex.

It is rater unique, but a nice way to waste few minutes. As far as replay value; you have to play it 4 times, twice as a man and twice as woman, to experience everything, the sex scenes are a bit silly but kind of sexy. The varied nature of the game does show the initiative that pioneered modern AIF games.

Ignore the request for a donation.

Beta Testing Games: A Primer by A Ninny

By no means is this the first article written aimed at budding IF beta-testers. There are several excellent articles on the Web, and you'll find URLs to them at the end of this article. I will cover some of the same general material they do, but mostly focus on the unique challenges that the adult aspects of AIF present to testers. In the process, I'll touch on all the aspects of testing, including contacting the author, playing the game, compiling a report, and what happens after the game is released.

Volunteering Your Services

This is probably a pretty common occurrence: you, an AIF consumer, are reading over the posts at the Yahoo! AIF Archive message board or maybe at AGX, and notice a plea for beta testers

being put out by an author. You think 'I can do that!' and whip off an e-mail to the author. Some time later, the author responds, usually by sending you a copy the in-progress game with some effusive thanks for the assistance. For some reason, here is the point where the process starts to break down. Many people who volunteer to beta-test fail to ever respond after receiving the game. This puts beta-testers as a group in a very bad light. It is OK to change your mind about beta-testing, but common decency would require that you a) contact the author informing him that you are not able to test, and b) delete the beta version from your hard drive. The bugs in a beta version make it an unworthy sneak-peek – you're simply better off waiting for the game's final release.

Testing the Game

Luckily for the author, this time you've decided to be a helpful person, and you begin playing through the game. As you do, here are some things to keep in mind:

Read every word. If you are in the habit of issuing sex commands just looking to rack up all the necessary points, but only scanning the text, you'll have to break that habit. When reading, note any misspellings, punctuation errors, odd sentence structure, misused words and the like. In an SSS (steamy sex scene), it isn't unusual for an author to get so wrapped up in describing what different body parts are doing that the description gets more complex than a reader can visualize. It is okay to say: "I can't quite picture how Amy does what you say she is doing with her legs here. Can you be more concise?"

Really read every word. Compare what you are reading midway through the game to what you read at the beginning. Is the story and are the characters internally consistent? Do the characters say things and show up in locations that make sense with the game's current state or are they talking about stuff that you haven't encountered yet? Is there a premise that doesn't make sense with the way things work in the real world? Can you think of a way for the game or the writing to be improved that the author might use?

Try to examine every object the room descriptions mention, and then try to examine every additional object mentioned in those object descriptions. They should all be there. Conversely, if an object exists in the room, it should be mentioned somewhere in the room's or another object's descriptive text.

Try out as many verbs and nouns as you can think of with every object in every room. If you can 'move' an object, what happens if you also try to 'push' it or 'turn' it? The game's vocabulary should allow maximum flexibility for the player, but shouldn't cause any illogical results.

Open and close all doors, drawers and cabinets; put things on top of and inside other things. If you walk through a door, close it behind you, then make sure the other side of the door behaves the way you expect (every property that applies to one side of any door usually has to be implemented for the other side of the door as well).

If you encounter a puzzle and happen to solve it easily, go back and try to see what would happen if you had approached it differently. You may notice that while the verb/noun combination that you used works, some other combinations may not. If you think the puzzle is too easy (or too hard), suggest ideas on how it can be made more (or less) challenging.

If you come upon a puzzle that you cannot solve, try to figure out why you couldn't crack it. Does it appear to be a guess-the-verb problem or is it missing a piece of code that gives access to the solution? Before you write the author for help, try to pry it open on your own. I sometimes find that I begin composing a letter to the author asking about a puzzle, and even as I click 'send' the solution occurs to me.

Clothing is probably the biggest source of AIF-specific bugs. Authors who attempt to implement layered clothing for NPCs take on an additional layer of complexity that leads to easily overlooked 'wardrobe malfunctions'. Testers should at the very least attempt to:
  touch NPCs' clothing and their clothed and unclothed body parts
  remove the clothing from NPCs and have NPCs remove their own clothing
  tell NPCs to put their clothing back on (in the right and wrong order) and to wear the PC's clothing
  tell each NPC to remove your clothing wherever you happen to be
  remove your own clothing wherever you happen to be
  wear your clothing into situations where, logically, you would not, like Jacuzzis or oceans (i.e. you can wear your tuxedo into the Jacuzzi in "Prom Night").
The tester should do all this with every NPC whether or not the game situation is a SSS.

Sex is the next biggest source of AIF-specific bugs. Work your way backwards and forwards through all the sex scenes. Are sex commands repeatable when you think they should be? Do you get multiple descriptions of the same actions? Are there actions that NPCs can take

that are different from those that you take – for instance: 'NPC fuck me' vs 'fuck NPC'. If there is more than one NPC in the scene, make sure all the commands you can think of are implemented between all the characters in the SSS. Check to make sure any implemented arousal system works properly and that at no point are you required to guess the next allow-able sex command. If game score is incremented by performing sex acts, make sure that repeating the act doesn't also repeat the score increment.

Torture all NPCs: Issue them as many commands to them as you can think of. Even if the NPC is not involved in an SSS at some point in the game, give him/her sex commands. If the game uses an ask/tell formula for interaction, ask and tell him/her about as many things as you can think of, including his/her body parts and the body parts of other NPC's. Try to give the NPC things and take things from the NPC. If the NPC has any daemons (timed actions) attached to him/her, make sure they only print messages when the NPC is actually visible, and they cannot be triggered more times than makes sense for the game.

Make sure objects that have limited uses actually do, and that they behave logically. A few ex-amples: is that lube only good for a few turns? Make sure the object that has been lubricated becomes un-lubricated when the text says it has. Does the vibrator's battery run down when the game says it has? Does that burning newspaper burn out no matter where you put it, and if you're not holding it does it still burn your fingers? If you have a drink, can you drink it up or is it 'bottomless'?

In a subsequent round of testing, always check against your previous reports to make sure the author's bug fixes didn't inadvertently introduce new bugs (this is very common).

Keeping Transcripts

Always keep transcripts of every session as you test. Most authors will request you send them transcripts of your testing sessions. I like to create a new file every time I begin testing (thereby ensuring I don't accidentally overwrite an existing transcript) and then compile them into one master transcript when I submit my report. In TADS and Inform, type SCRIPT and the game will ask you what you want to name your transcript. In ADRIFT, click Adventure à Start Tran-script.   In addition to being helpful to the author (to see where you had to fumble around for ages to find the solution to a puzzle), the transcript is invaluable to you as you prepare your re-port.

Reporting What You Find

Your ability to report your observations is critical to whether the author is going to get anything out of all the time you spent testing his game. Even before you begin testing, you should decide on a format for your report. Some authors find it useful to have issues divided up by overall topic (grammar, bugs, suggestions, etc), or by location, while testers usually find it easier to re-port items in the order encountered, and some simply insert their comments into the transcript. My style is to group items in my reports by location/object, generally in sequence with how the locations/objects appear in the game. If I go back and revisit an area of the game, I will append additional items to the group of related issues. If you're unsure as to how to organize your re-port, you can ask for the author's preference. In any case, a little planning in advance makes your job a lot easier.

As to the content of the report, I always give the author a heads-up with each issue (tell him/her what object, actor or location is being addressed), and preface my comments by saying what the issue is about (spelling, bugs, grammar, suggestions, etc), then I'll cut and paste an applicable slice of transcript, highlighting the errors. I then make my own comments or suggestions, but differentiate them from game text by placing them in brackets so the author can differentiate them.

You should always be specific as possible. If you find a bug, describe it in detail and tell the author exactly how to recreate it. If you encounter a guess-the-verb problem, suggest verb/noun combinations that the author could implement. If you find a misspelled word, provide the sug-gested correction. If you have an idea for how a portion of the game could be improved, by all means provide it, but remember that it is the author's final decision whether or not to incorporate your suggestions.

Keep in mind that the beta test is supposed to help the author finish the game, so you'll want to make the process as quick and painless as you can. You can do this by sending reports in chunks (especially if testing is taking a long time). In addition, you should try to provide some encour-aging feedback, and tell the author what you liked about the game. If you want, you can provide

some constructive criticism as well, but again, keep it specific, and if the author wants to do something about it, it is his/her decision.

The beta-testing process is rarely a one-way street. Authors will frequently write you after receiving your report, either to provide you with feedback or to ask questions or to simply bounce ideas off you (that may or not pertain to suggestions you provided). Again, be as helpful and reply as promptly as possible.

Post-release

Seeing a game you've tested released is a rush, but remember, again, that it is still the author's game. You are in the author's confidence – he or she invited you to take part in the game writing process, which can be very personal. Keep in mind that beta-tester ethics rule out commenting (in public and private) on the beta aspects of the game or on bugs you've found, whether or not those bugs have been corrected. You should refrain from posting reviews of the game, since you are too close to it to give a fair review. Finally, and this should go without saying: never distribute a beta version of a game to anyone.

So what should you do? Play the game! You'll definitely want to see how all the corrections came out, and it is only natural that you will look to see that you've been credited.

A good beta-tester can make completing and releasing a game a pleasure for the author, and beta-testing can be its own reward. The most important thing to remember is to enjoy the process, and it can be a positive experience for everyone.

References:

"Oh no! Beta! Tips and Techniques for Beta-Testing Games in Progress" by C. E. Foreman:
        http://www.xyzzynews.com/xyzzy.8f.html

"Beta Testers I have Loved" by Neil DeMause
        http://www.xyzzynews.com/xyzzy.8g.html

"Beta-testing For Fun and Profit" by Stephen Granade
        http://tinyurl.com/4b4ao

"The IF Beta Site Info Page"
        http://www.plover.net/~textfire/beta.html

"Some Suggestions on Beta Testing" by Emily Short
        http://emshort.home.mindspring.com/Testing.html

The BetaComp 2004 Web site. The BetaComp is a competition to see who can write the best beta report for a game. The site has the game, the competition results and all the entries – I recommend testers look at them to get a feel for different test report styles.
        http://www.strangebreezes.com/if/comps/beta2004/default.htm

March (plenty of time), and the results of the awards will be announced in the next issue of this newsletter.

Matrix Mole meanwhile has set up a new domain name, http://aifcommuntiy.org, for his archive. This archive is another great central resource, and he hosts my own website which can now be found at http://bbben.aifcommunity.org – an address which I think is really cool. The http://aifcommunity.org server also hosts the erins at http://erins.aifcommunity.org and this newsletter at http://newsletter.aifcommunity.org – the site is still under development but it is looking good.

The AIF Portal might be coming back too, also under new management. The AIF Portal was such a great site in its day that it would be fantastic to have it back. It still has a high ranking on Google searches for "adult interactive fiction" so it will be a good way to bring new people into the community. Back in my days as a lurker I generally just visited the portal, and seeing my first game on there was a real buzz. Find the AIF Portal at http://aif.emsai.net and keep an eye on it for updates.

And I suppose I should get onto the subject of new games at some point in this article. The month

started with the release of A. Bomire's impressive new Bond-themed game, *Tomorrow Never Comes*. A full list of game releases for the month is at the bottom of the article. Unlike last month there was no real controversy with any games, and of course there were fewer games, but last month saw a real bumper week (17th to the 24th, check last issue for details) that meant the inaugural issue of the newsletter was released in one of AIF's busiest months of all time in terms of game releases (not counting mini-comp months).

With so many games being released these days including a few real gems; with the revival of the Erins and the AIF Portal; and with some great new initiatives like Matrix Mole's site and of course this newsletter, the community is positively hopping and hopefully it will keep getting stronger.

So get involved in the community by casting your vote for the 2004 Erins.

New games for February 2005:

Tomorrow Never Comes by A. Bomire, 4th Feb – Set in the James Bond world, you are a member of Q division who is eager to become a field agent, and you might just get your chance.

Oakwood School by rav_p89, 10th Feb – A sex-starved science teacher looks for some satisfaction.

Crossworlds Part 1 – Normville, Gold Edition by BBBen, 22nd Feb – Re-release of the 2004 game with much tweaking and some new content.

Erin Nominations Announced - Call for Votes by The2004Erins

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. Now in its third installment, the AIFAs are bigger and better than ever, with over fifty games eligible for Erin consideration.

This year, the Erin winners will be determined by a 'people's choice' vote. Everyone who has ever played or written an AIF game (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 March, 2005. Details of the awards ceremony will be announced soon on the Erins web site and on the two main AIF message boards.

To assist you in narrowing down the choices, the 2004 AIFA committee has been busy nominating games for awards in a vast array of categories.

Without further ado, the nominations for 2004 Adult Interactive Fiction Awards are:

For best male player-character, the nominees are:
Caradoc (Hell in Highwater)
Unnamed PC (Mount Voluptuous)
Bones (Parlour)
Sam Shooter (Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned)
Wendell (Santa's Little Helper)

For best female player-character, the nominees are:
British Fox (British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions)
Samantha (Dear Diary 2 – Prom Night)
Janey (Janey's Diary)
Laurie (Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned)
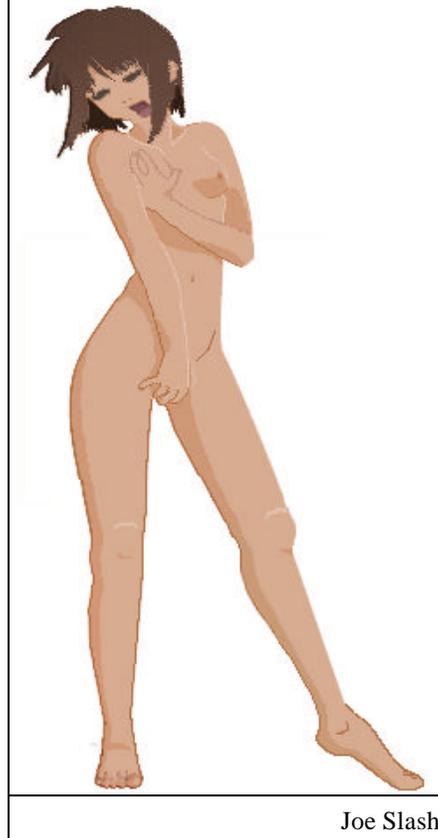
Joe Slash

For best male non-player character, the nominees are:
Eugene (British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions)
Vrix (Hell in Highwater)
Incubus (Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned)
Dongle (Santa's Little Helper)

For best female non-player character, the nominees are:
Grace (British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions)
Debbie (Crossworlds 1 & 2)
Jenna (Escape Pod)
Lynne (Santa Baby)
Mrs. Claus (Santa's Little Helper)

For best male/female sex scene, the nominees are:
PC with Fairy (The Backlot)
PC with Yulia (Mount Voluptuous)
PC with Samantha (Normville High)
Bones with Ruby (Parlour)
PC with Nila (Unlikely Harem Girl)

For best lesbian sex scene, the nominees are:
British Fox with Grace (British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions)
Debbie and Tabitha (Crossworlds Part 2 – The Flower Opens)
Samantha with Erin (Dear Diary 2 – Prom Night)
Laurie with Eve (Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned)
PC with Nila (Unlikely Harem Girl)

For best sex scene with three or more participants of any gender or species, the nominees are:
British Fox with Grace and Eugene (British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions)
PC with Bettie, Chloe and Nadine (Mount Voluptuous)
PC with Lynn and Stacy (Santa Baby)
Wendell with Mrs. Claus and Sara (Santa's Little Helper)
PC with Lin, Janey and Debbie (Sleepover)

For best sex overall, the nominees are:
The Backlot
British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions
Crossworlds Part 2 – The Flower Opens
Mount Voluptuous
Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned

For best story in an Adult Interactive Fiction, the nominees are:
The Backlot
British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions
Ghost Story and Ghost Justice
Hell in Highwater
Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned

For best atmosphere, the nominees are:
The Backlot
British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions
Crossworlds Part 2 – The Flower Opens
Hell in Highwater
Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned

For best use of multimedia, the nominees are:
Birthday
Mount Voluptuous
Santa's Little Helper
Sexbot

For best technical implementation and use of medium, the nominees are:
The Backlot
British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions

Parlour
Hell in Highwater
Santa's Little Helper

For best puzzles, the nominees are:
The Backlot
Breakout
Hell in Highwater
Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned
Santa's Little Helper

For best humor, the nominees are:
The Backlot
British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions
Crossworlds 1 and Crossworlds 2
Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned
Santa's Little Helper

For best One Night Stand/ "A Night With" game, the nominees are:
Escape Pod
Normville High
The Oval Office
Parlour
Stowaway

For best game of the year, the nominees are:
The Backlot
British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions
Hell in Highwater
Mount Voluptuous
Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned

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 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.

"The Backlot" by A. Bomire, TADS 2
"Birthday" by Johnny Reb, ADRIFT 4.0
"British Fox and the Celebrity Abductions" by Lucilla Frost, ADRIFT 4.0
"Crossworlds Part 1 – Normville" by BBBen, ADRIFT 3.9
"Crossworlds Part 2 – The Flower Opens" by BBBen, ADRIFT 3.9
"Dear Diary 2 – Prom Night" by Wotan-Anubis, ADRIFT 3.9
"Escape Pod" by LoveLettersToLove, ADRIFT 3.9
"Ghost Story" by Purple Dragon, ADRIFT 4.0
"Ghost Justice" by Purple Dragon, ADRIFT 4.0
"Hell in Highwater" by J. Arthur, TADS 2
"Janey's Diary" by BBBen, ADRIFT 3.9
"Mount Voluptuous" by Christopher Cole, ADRIFT 3.9
"Normville High" by BBBen, ADRIFT 3.9
"The Oval Office" by Faraday, ADRIFT 4.0
"Parlour" by A. Ninny, TADS 2
"Sam Shooter IV: Children of the Damned" by One-Eyed Jack, TADS 2
"Santa Baby" by Christopher Cole, ADRIFT 3.9
"Santa's Little Helper" by A. Bomire, TADS 2
"Sexbot" by Cauldron, HUGO
"Sleepover" by BBBen, ADRIFT 3.9
"Stowaway" by Johnny Freebase, ADRIFT 4.0

Mini-reviews of This Month's Games

Three new games released in February:

Tomorrow Never Comes by A. Bomire

You get to play a 00 wannabe that is stuck in the Q Branch, your first field assignment is to deliver a case to 005, which seems simple enough, when you arrive unfortunately (for him) he is dead. Fortunately (for you) you can fulfill his assignment.

This game has a great story, practically mainstream, with sex thrown in just to keep it interesting. You know you always wanted to see what James did in the fades to black.

It is fun to play and worth a few tries to make sure that you did not miss anything. The only thing is that I found it to have too many puzzles and not enough sex.

Overall Score: B+ (not quite enough sex)

Next we have *Oakwood School* by rav_p89

This is another one of those games that was supposed to be longer but the author just couldn't pull off this time, and because of that and the author did not do any re-writes the game is much harder than it need to.

You're a horny school teacher getting ready to discipline 3 students (yum), unfortunately they are not in the game (problem # 1), then you wander around until you end up in the English classroom with a laptop, which is described as something you hate, (problem # 2) but you need it, and it can't be opened (problem # 3), now I don't know what kind of laptop rav_p89 has, but mine has the on switch inside, once you figure that out, then the English teacher shows up, the only woman in the game. The sex scene was great, but the writing was not, there are numerous issues that a bete-tester brought up (I asked) and the author simply did not care to fix. He only posted it on alt.xtrek.games so not very many people talked about it, don't worry you did not miss much.

Overall score C-

Last but not least *Crossworlds Part 1 – Normville, Gold Edition* by BBBen

This was a re-write of the original game and just as good. It is the start of the *Crossworlds* series, and you are in for an interesting day. You meet up with Jessica and her daughter from *Sleepover*. Explore the town to meet all the girls.

Each game in the Crossworlds series stands alone in and of itself but it are much more fun when you play them in order.

As usual BBBen's experience make for a smooth playing game and this one has a map that makes the physical navigation that much easier.

Overall score: A- (too much walking around)

Now that we have finished this month (and what a month), it's time to look forward to what we have next month.

First of all part III of A Bomire's *The Zen of Beta Testing*. We will be announcing Erin awards will in the next issue, be sure to get you vote in by 20-March. I have a couple leads on articles but nothing concrete.

I've been busy, unfortunately not with the newsletter, I don't even know who I am going to interview, I guess we'll all be surprised. With the release of *Tomorrow Never Comes*, I was reminded of another spy based game, I'll tell you all about it next month.

Make sure you check out our website http://newsletter.aifcommunity.org/

Until then,
The Staff

AIF Wants You

We are looking for few good artists. I have only the one picture to work with, and I would like more. So if you are good with a pencil and can draw mangaish style girls, send me some of your work, and I will include it in upcoming issues.

Can you draw a cartoon panel? I would really like to see our Erin is some funny situations, are you up to a challenge?

I need a girl for an upcoming award I am planning. If you can you do a commission, send me an email and I will give you the details.

Meet The Staff

Editor	Markaedw has beta tested one game "Hell in Highwater". He also wrote walk-thoughs for "Ginger's Island" and "Hell in Highwater".
Web Master	Darc Nite is a newcomer to the AIF scene. 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.
	A Ninny is an AIF player, author and frequent beta-tester. His one released game, "Parlour" was included in the second AIF Mini-Comp. A few of his numerous AIF testing credits include "Pool Party" by A. Bomire & Christopher Cole, "Tomorrow Never Comes" by A. Bomire, "Crossworlds Part 3 - The Final Far Far Away Frontier" by BBBen.
	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.

Where to send your stuff in

Please direct all comments articles, reviews, discussion and art to the Editor Markaedw, at markaedw_01@hotmail.com RE: AIF newsletter.