



Letter from the Editor

Green Summer, whose first real installment is published this month in its entirety (despite its length), is proving to be an interesting experiment. I'm grateful to the interest and energy of my player for July, Sir Calmar, who not only played the game but was willing to provide some insight into how it looked from the player's perspective. I have already chosen next month's player, so if you're interested in playing *Green Summer*, you'll have another chance in September.

As author and parser, probably the most interesting thing learned is that despite what planning I did in figuring out how the story would go, what the player actually did sometimes had little resemblance to what I expected him to do. This was okay, in this case, because I was able to accommodate every command and just make up the story as I went along. I did have some ideas for improving, or at least changing, this thing if I repeat it. One idea is to have every participant spend one month as player and then the next month as parser, before then handing the game off to his own player to become author and parser. That way, each player would stay involved for an additional month and also have a lot more ownership of the game as a whole. It would be very unpredictable as to what

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Interview with Sir Gareth by A. Bomire

Our interview subject this month is Sir Gareth; a person more known for his work behind the scenes than for any games (although he did write a very well received game as well). I'd like to thank Sir Gareth for taking the time to answer my questions.

AB: What can you tell us about yourself?

SG: I'm a guy in my mid-thirties who enjoys playing and writing Interactive Fiction. I've been a fan of regular IF since playing the Infocom games back in the '80s, and of AIF since stumbling across Mycophile's old site a few years ago. I'm not a programmer by trade. In fact, my only formal training with computers was a class in BASIC back in high school. So most of what I know about programming is what I've picked up through writing IF.

AB: Most of the AIF community probably knows you best as the author of *Prom Night* (with Chris Cole), but we authors know you more for the SEX.T libraries you created for writing games in TADS. What prompted you to create the SEX.T libraries?

SG: As I mentioned, I discovered AIF when I stumbled on Mycophile's old site, where I found some of the classics like *Moist* and *Ideal High School*. Mycophile also had a copy of the *Moist* source code and a couple of libraries (MMX and Rogue

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Mission Statement

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

1. To encourage the production of more quality AIF games by providing advice from game developers, and by offering constructive criticism that is specifically relevant to AIF.
2. To encourage activity and growth in the AIF community. We aim to generate a constant level of activity so that there aren't long periods in which people can lose interest in AIF.
3. To help document and organize the AIF community. This is done through reporting on games and events, as well as by helping to organize community-wide activities such as competitions and the yearly Erin Awards.

Redux) that had been written in TADS. I was inspired to learn TADS and try my hand at writing a game.

I soon discovered there were a number of things I wanted to do that weren't provided for in the existing libraries. For example, they assumed that the lead character would be male, and also that the NPCs wouldn't be taking initiative to do things on their own. So I decided to write my own libraries as I made my game, adding functionality and generally making NPC creation a little more flexible. I'm also a very slow writer, so I added lots of default responses to take care of things that I might not have time to fill in full responses for. I actually hadn't planned to release the libraries to the public, but I started following the discussions on alt.games.xtrek and saw that there was a lot of potential interest among authors. So I cleaned them up a little, added some documentation, and sent them out. I was very pleased to see talented writers (Adam Hendine was among the first) pick them up and use them to make some great games.

AB: I've read some posts online from you about trying out the new Inform 7. What are your thoughts on this new system?

SG: Generally I like it a lot. It can do just about everything that TADS can and is a bit more user friendly. The source code for a game, for example, looks like written English and is very easy to read. The error messages you get when compiling a game are also much more helpful than TADS. I think the ease of use will appeal to new authors. Inform 7 also has some useful new capabilities that are great for AIF. For example, to give every woman in the game a body part called a "breast," all you'd need to write is:

A breast is a kind of thing. A breast is part of every woman.

which is kind of neat. You can also define relationships among objects. For example, you could define a "loving" relationship and then specify which characters love other characters, e.g. "The player loves Betty." On the downside, some of the apparent simplicity is misleading. As I think you mentioned in your review, Inform 7 is still very much a programming language, and can be finicky about syntax. It takes a fair amount of trial and error (or searching of the manual) to figure out how to say things in a way the compiler can understand. It's also a bit less object oriented than TADS, which can take some getting used to if you're used to writing in TADS.

As a bottom line, I'd encourage new authors to give Inform 7 a try, especially if they're intimidated by all the squiggly brackets and other "programming language" elements of TADS.

AB: It may be too soon to ask, but is there a plan to translate SEX.T to an Inform 7 extension?

SG: Yes, there is. I've been working with Inform 7 a bit recently and am writing a small game for it. I have some working libraries which are in the process of being tested. Right now they're a bit simpler than SEX.T and don't have all of the same functionality, but I'm hoping to add features if I have time.

AB: In writing a sample game in Inform 7, I've discovered just how much work is actually involved in doing something like writing a library. It seems like I spend most of my time duplicating stuff that I know already exists in your (and other) libraries. How long did it take you to create the SEX.T libs, and did you have any help?

SG: Well, I did have help in the form of some preexisting resources for TADS authors. As I mentioned, two sets of libraries--MMX and Rogue Redux--had already been written. They didn't include all of the functionality of SEX.T, but they implemented an arousal system and body parts like the ones from *Moist*, and I was able to build on that foundation. I also had the source code from *Moist* itself.

I've always found that the easiest way to learn a new programming language is by looking at lots of examples. One challenge in learning Inform 7 has been that there aren't many examples of source code to look at. The folks at rec.arts.int-fiction are very knowledgeable though, so that's a good place to go for help.

AB: Getting back to *Prom Night*, what can you tell us about the game creation experience - how do you write games? Are you someone who sits down and plans out every last detail before setting fingers to keyboard, or do you start with a general idea and let the ideas flow

as you write?

SG: The first thing obviously was to come up with an overall idea. For a large AIF game you need an environment featuring lots of attractive single women. I thought a high school setting would work well, especially since Newkid's *Ideal High School* was always one of my favorite games. And a prom setting opened up lots of interesting scenarios for SSSs (Steamy Sex Scenes).

When it comes to writing, I'm very much a planner. I remember coming up with a list of NPCs and a mini-scenario for each one. I also laid out pretty much the entire map before I started to write. Writing the rooms and objects was easy and didn't take that long, but writing the girls and SSSs took forever (plus I'm a slow writer to begin with). I realized belatedly that the project might be too ambitious for one person, so I advertised for some assistance and was fortunate enough to have Chris Cole sign on as co-author.

AB: I thoroughly enjoyed *Prom Night* by the way, although I found Mrs. Johnson (the teacher/chaperone) to be very frustrating. I kept thinking that if I just found the right word or object that I could 'unlock' her. Was this the intention of including her character?

SG: You're not the only one! :) Actually, the truth is we just ran out of time. The plan was initially to have a scene with Mrs. Johnson (and I'd even considered including one with Betty the receptionist), but it turned out that was just too many NPCs to write. So we decided at the last minute to cut Mrs. Johnson. Unfortunately we didn't give the player any cues that indicated that, so I think just about everyone tried to seduce her.

AB: Anything on the horizon for you? Any games or projects you are working on?

SG: Right now I'm trying out Inform 7, and I hope to write a small game for it soon. I think another full-length game is unlikely given how limited my AIF time is these days, but you never know.

Thank you again, Sir Gareth. Sir Gareth is the author of the well-known SEX.T libraries, as well as the well-received game *Prom Night*, which he co-wrote with Chris Cole. Additional information can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/sirgareth99>

Prom Night was nominated for several 2003 AIF Awards ("Erins"), and won for **Best Orgy**.

Letter from the Editor (Continued)

directions the story would take, but that could be a strength. Plus, it would cause more people to spend time e-mailing and getting to know one another, which can only help strengthen the community. Sir Calmar also liked the added flexibility of knowing that a human parser could understand his intent and bypass several unnecessary turns. For example, when Phil is sitting in a chair in the Living Room, Sir Calmar typed 'up' (clarifying in the e-mail that he wanted to follow Nicole upstairs), and was able to bypass several unneeded navigation steps that a real AIF would have forced him to take.

On the weakness side, Sir Calmar and I agreed that by limiting the number of turns the players can participate, they tend to bypass things that they'd ordinarily try (or ordinarily examine/search/open/look under), so they can move the story along and hopefully get to the 'good stuff' before their turns run out. Also, players might try to molest NPC's, knowing it would be possible to 'undo' bad reactions. I did give Sir Calmar the option to 'undo' with the caveat that the replacement commands counted toward the upper turn limit. As I was facilitator in addition to author and parser, I decided to insert a couple of 'x *object*' commands on my own and not penalize Sir Calmar any turns for them, simply so the game would look in the newsletter more like a real player playing a real AIF.

On to the rest of this newsletter. Despite not having a new games in July, this isn't as pathetic an edition as last month's. I even the new got "O Erin!" early this month!

Editor's note:

We are re-publishing Johnny Freebase's excellent AIF 101 tutorials that were originally posted on alt.games.xtrek. It's our feeling that there are enough new community members who may not be aware of the existence of this guide. The tutorial was originally posted as a series of articles and we will maintain that construct here. This is the third installment.

* * *

Even though my projects tend to be story driven, it is the characters that can make or break an AIF game. Detailed and creative characterization can enhance every aspect of a player's interaction with an NPC, from sex to dialogue.

Player Objectivity/Subjectivity:

Before anything else, special mention must be given to the player's character. There are basically two schools of thought in IF regarding the persona adopted by the player. One proposes that generic characters are best to play, letting the player decide who he is and how he reacts to things. Attempts are made to avoid putting words in the player character's mouth. The other school of thought is that players enjoy stepping into a well developed role, and that the persona the player adopts is important to define.

In my eyes its really a question of subjectivity versus objectivity. If the player's character is set by the author, than everything presented to the player must take the character's prejudices in mind. Every room description, object description, and action result should be crafted with an eye towards how the individual character would interpret such an event... is the glass half full or half empty? On the other hand, with an objective generic character an author must be very careful to avoid ever telling the player how he feels about anything. State what is, and let the player decide how to feel about it.

AIF deals very heavily with sex, a very intimate activity. When describing someone's involvement with sex, it is very difficult to do so in an objective manner and still have it be 'hot' (or at least entertaining.) In this I recommend that, especially in AIF, the player's character be as thought out and developed as any of the NPCs.

Secondary Characters:

If you've been following along with me thus far, you should have a list of characters. Among them should be listed a Protagonist (usually the PC) and an antagonist. There are some other archetypical literary roles we can fill out. As we do, if you have an established character that would fit the role, use them, otherwise don't be afraid to create new NPCs for them. Not all of the following roles are strictly required, but they can add much to a game.

Sidekick:

The sidekick is a character who accompanies the character, and can act as the author's "voice" when need be. There is a strong tradition of "followers" in Interactive Fiction, from Floyd the Robot and beyond. The sidekick can offer advice, hope, and comic relief. The girls in BBBen's *Crossworlds* series and One Eyed Jack's *Sam Shooter II* count as sidekicks.

Foil:

The foil, who may also be the sidekick, is a character in the same position as the protagonist who chooses differently. He usually chooses wrong, and serves as both an example to the PC and to provide mood.

Romantic Interest:

Who, throughout the course of the rest of the action, the protagonist is pursuing romantically. This is, in lots of AIF, the "Main Girl".

The more characters you include, the more coding you have to do. Keep that in mind.

There is a large branch in the plot of the game we've been developing. The player comes to a crisis point... he can help the Princess escape, or decide to bring her back to the Prince. Because of this, our antagonist can change mid game.

- Protagonist: Knight.
- Antagonist: Dragon at first, may become Prince.
- Romantic Interest: None set initially, may become Princess.

- Sidekick: Another knight sent by the Prince. Lets say a younger knight. An idealistic younger female knight, perhaps. If the player chooses to side with the Prince, she may become the Foil, trying to help the Dragon.
- Foil: Lets add another companion... perhaps a bounty hunter. He can act as Foil if the player decides to side with the Princess, and is sent to get the player as well.

Other Characters: The King, The Queen

Character Design:

Character design is important. You can be as sparse or as detailed with this as you like, depending on how important the character is to the game. There are a few general things to decide about the characters you design.

Appearance:

AIF is a text based medium, so knowing what different characters look like is important. Here's a list of things to consider:

- Gender
- Age
- Height/Build
- Skin tone
- Eye Color
- Hair Color/Style/Length
- Piercing/Scars/Tattoos/make up
- Clothing style
- For male characters, you may also wish to consider facial hair, genitalia size, etc.
- For female characters, you may wish to consider breast size, pubic hair (trimmed? Shaved? Natural), etc.

Also, characters may have a certain accent/way of speaking, or a distinctive body language.

Personality:

This is of importance as well, for it is a guide to how they react to the player. Here are some things to consider:

- Intelligence
- Sensitivity
- Creativity/Openness
- Discipline
- Introversion/Extroversion
- Friendliness
- Emotional Stability

Sex:

Knowing a character's idea of sex is very helpful in AIF. Not all attractive characters have to be nymphomaniacs, but its up to you.

- Sexual Orientation.
- Strength of Sex Drive
- Sexual Experience
- Sexual Habits (Spit or Swallow, etc)
- Kinks
- Turn-ons
- Turn-offs

And, basically, anything else you need to come up with for game purposes: backstory, names, hobbies, likes, and dislikes. Try to come up with at least 5 personality quirks.

Here are some examples:

THE KNIGHT

Sir Jordan is an aging but still virile knight. He's of average height with a muscular build, a well crafted physique maintained despite his age. He has dark green eyes, and his short black hair has

long since gone to grey. A lifetime of battle has left numerous scars across his body, including a prominent one running through his left eye.

As the player's character, Sir Jordan's exact personality and sexual habits are not too terribly defined, but in general he is an honorable and disciplined soldier... if a little weary.

Jordan was the eldest child of a powerful knight. He took to a life of military service to the king, performing great deeds and garnering much renown, eventually earning the title of King's Champion. Now in his autumn years, he feels his reflexes slow as his body begins to fail despite his discipline. He privately wonders how much longer he can remain active "in the field", serving a king who can no longer even recognize him most days.

THE DRAGON

Kaosuan is a powerful young monk skilled in both the martial and the magical arts. He is tall and somewhat lanky, with a powerful build. His brown eyes turn briefly red when he uses his magic, and his black hair hangs long. His body is covered with mystical tattoos which he uses to focus his magical energies.

Kaosuan is devoted to the concept of honor, and to his sister. He does not go out of his way to kill his opponents, but can be ruthless when he needs to be and is not afraid of death. He hates the player's home kingdom for what they have done to his homeland, and has developed a mildly racist dislike of all Westerners because of it. Even if the player helps them escape, he will remain cold, distant, and suspicious for some time.

Kaosuan is a member of a reclusive order of monks. He has trained since he was a little child in arts both martial and magical. He is feared by the populace of his homeland, and only his sister has ever shown him any kindness. Upon hearing she had been brought against her will to your Kingdom, he set out to rescue her. His goal is to rescue his sister.

THE PRINCESS

Kanetsu Keiyama-hime is the eldest daughter of a respected daimyo in her homeland. She is a lithe and slender young woman with pale skin and brown eyes. She wears her hip-length black hair tied back into a pony tail. She wears little makeup, and always manages to carry herself with elegance and style.

She is very bright, but also rather shy. She is kind, but slow in opening up to new people. Artistically talented, she loves to paint. She has no sexual experience, and would tend to be a little submissive in bed.

Keiyama-hime was more or less kidnapped at behest of the Prince, who saw here both as a trophy bride and as a way to symbolically show his dominance over her country. Her goal is to return home.

SIDEKICK

Lady Elva is a young knight, tall and athletic. Her skin is freckled, and she has hazel eyes. Her shoulder length blonde hair is wavy, and she wears it with long bangs. She has a tattoo of a musical quarter-note on her right shoulder blade. She tends to dress flashily, in bright colors.

Elva is an enthusiastic young knight, but a tad gullible. She has a very idealistic take on the tenets of chivalry, and tends to romanticize her position as a knight. She sees the player as the pinnacle of knightly virtue, and has been obsessed with him since she was a little girl. Sexually, she has fooled around a little bit, but remains a technical virgin. She has slight masochistic tendencies. Her goal is to learn from you what it is to be a knight.

THE PRINCE

Prince Duncan is the heir to the throne. He is tall and muscular, fond of the hunt and trained in personal combat by some of the greatest warrior's of the kingdom, including yourself when he was younger. He keeps his blonde hair cut short, and has icy blue eyes.

Prince Duncan is a cold and ruthless man, unsympathetic to the plight of the peasantry and the wellbeing of others. He is viscous and aggressive, ordering severe punishments for the slightest of offences and constantly pushing his father to conquer. His goal is to replace his father and forge his kingdom into an empire.

He doesn't really care about Keiyama-hime, but he needs a bride to claim the throne from his mother before his father dies. He's not quite ruthless enough to murder the old man. In addition, his pride has been stung by the abduction, and he wants what he has rightfully stolen back.

THE FOIL

Sir Burton is the Prince's personal retainer. He is built like a linebacker. He shaves his head, and has cruel blue eyes.

Sir Burton covets your position as King's Champion. He has never had any respect for you, or for the code of chivalry. He is cruel and sadistic, and has murdered to advance his and the Prince's goals. His goal is to replace you as King's Champion through any means necessary.

THE KING

King Theodore is the aging monarch. Now old and frail, his hair has gone snow white and his once steely eyes are cloudy. He often has a far away look in his eyes, age having subdued his once great mind.

He is a very friendly, if somewhat befuddled old man. On his more lucid days he can summon up some of his old kingly presence, but in general he wanders about aimlessly holding conversations with the portraits of his ancestors.

THE QUEEN

Queen Penelope is much younger than her husband, in her mid 40s, and has aged fairly well. She has taken over much of the administration of the kingdom from her husband, ruling in all but name, and is the only real opposition to her son's ambitions.

Having sexual desires that her husband can no longer fulfill, Penelope has set her eyes on Sir Jordan. She sees him as powerful and virile as he was the day they met.

You get the point, more or less. More characters will probably be added as you continue making your game, but these are your primaries.

AIF Scuttlebutt by A. Ninny

Hey kids! It's time once again for me to delve into the shadowy world of who in the AIF world is working on what new projects.

Many-Erin-winning **A. Bomire** informs me that he has set aside his "Superfriends"- themed game and is now working on an Inform 7 game he's tentatively titled *Bob's Garage*. He believes the game will be ready for testing this month. So far, no Inform 7 AIF have been released, which isn't really surprising considering that a) I7 is still new and in a beta state and b) it takes most of us months and months to write a game in any system. We're hoping that the initial burst of excitement surrounding I7 will transform into a flood of new AIF sometime soon. I'll keep my ear to the ground and see what I can report on next time.

BBBen also reports on making significant progress on *Pervert Action Crisis*, but doesn't have a release schedule in mind - though he says he'd like to release it in time to compete for the 2006 Erin awards.

Faraday, author of *The Oval Office* is working on a game based on the CBS television show "JAG". The game is currently between rounds of beta-testing but the author hopes to finish it this month.

A Harry Potter-themed game by new author **Captain Layton** is reportedly in the middle of beta-testing.

I have been minimally involved in testing a new game for **GoblinBoy**, author of *Gifts of Phallius 1: The Baron's Plot*. His new game is not a sequel to *Baron*. I believe the probability of a release this month is quite high.

This author also would like to boast of having a great July of AIF-writing of my own. I made far more progress than I expected and now am a bit more optimistic of being able to release this autumn. I still prefer to be mostly close-lipped about the content of the project, so most of you will have to wait and find out what it is.

OK, finally, saving the best bit for last. I recently had the distinct pleasure of previewing what is probably the most promising AIF - ever. It is a massive roller coaster of a game by a new author named **Bitterfrost**. The game tentatively titled *How I Got Syphilix*. Bitterfrost is writing it in

ADRIFT 3.9 and he estimates that it will weigh - get this - 3 megabytes and contain *no images*. The preview I received already weighs close to 900KB. Yikes. Does that sound a bit crazy to you? Yeah, me too. But the parts I got to preview are extremely well-written and the only real crazy is how crazy fun it is. Bitterfrost believes he'll actually be able to finish this monster early in 2007. Good luck, you maniac!

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

Green Summer: Live AIF by A. Ninny

Note: Green Summer is an adult interactive fiction game that will be played out over the next few months in the pages of this newsletter. The 'player' in this episode is Sir Calmar—many thanks to him for participating. Please refer to the procedures at the end of this episode to learn how you may become the next player. To see what happened before this, see the July edition.

* * *

>ring doorbell

You press the doorbell and from behind the door you hear 'bing bong'. You wait, and after about fifteen seconds elapse, you hear a muted female voice call, "coming!"

You stare at the door peephole, see the little point of light in it vanish momentarily, then the door opens about 10 inches and a woman's face peers through it. She looks at you, gives you the once-over, and apparently decides not to close the door. Not yet, at any rate.

"Yes?" she asks, "Can I help you?"

>x woman

At the moment, most of her body is hidden behind her front door, but you can certainly see her head and neck. She appears to be in her early-mid 30's, with fair clear skin and short straight brown hair. She has dark eyes, a straight nose and wears a slightly suspicious frown on her full lips. You think she's probably about 5'-3" and slender, but you'll have to see the rest of her in order to be sure. She's wearing a white t-shirt, but at the moment you can't really see what else she has on.

You feel cool, conditioned air streaming out of the door, which makes you remember how freaking hot it is outside. A bead of sweat collects on the tip of your nose. The woman's eyes fix on it, and you reflexively wipe it away with your hand.

Upon seeing this, the woman's suspicious expression softens a bit, but she doesn't move to open the door or invite you in.

>greet woman

In your imagination you sigh deeply, then launch into your spiel.

"Hello, my name is Phil Woods, and I'm with Environmentalists International. Have you heard of us?"

You wait for the inevitable negative response, then continue.

"Well, Environmentalists International is a not-for-profit organization with the goal of reducing industrial pollution in the air and water, fighting global warming and protecting our communities from the illnesses caused by the toxins that are so casually released into the air and water every day. In fact, just two miles down Route 59 is a tire manufacturer who, in violation of federal and state clean air laws, has..."

"Wait, stop," the woman interrupts. I'm interested in hearing this, really, but we're letting the air conditioning out, and," she looks again at a bead of sweat forming on you, "you look like you need a cool drink of water. Come inside and close the door behind you. My name's Nicole, by the way."

She moves away from the door and opens it wider, inviting you inside. You follow her in and shut the door.

You are standing in the foyer of a suburban townhouse. To your right, let's call it east, is a comfortably furnished great room (with both living and dining furniture), beyond which you can see the kitchen. Carpeted stairs lead up from here to a second floor and a narrow corridor with several doors in it leads north.

The air inside the townhouse is conditioned beyond what you consider reasonable (the environmentalist in you imagines some overworked power plant spewing massive amounts of coal smoke into the air). The sweat on your body hits the cool air and starts to evaporate, sending a chill through you that causes goose bumps to appear on your exposed arms and neck. Nicole's eyes seem to fasten to you for a moment, but then she moves off toward the living area, indicating a couch for you to sit on.

From somewhere upstairs, you hear the cries of an infant start up. Nicole glances up there, but waits for you at the boundary of the living room.

>x Nicole

Nicole is an attractive woman in her early-mid 30's. She has fair clear skin and short straight brown hair. She has dark eyes, a straight nose and wears a touch of red lipstick on her full lips. She's about 5'-3" with medium-sized breasts on a slender build. She's wearing a white t-shirt and dark red shorts. Her legs are shapely and smooth.

>ask Nicole about baby

You glance up the stairs at the sound of the crying baby, then look back to Nicole. "Do you need to take care of your baby?" you ask her. "I can wait."
"No," Nicole responds, "Carly - that's my au pair from South Africa - is with her. After you take off your shoes, come in the living room and I'll get you that ice water. Then you can tell me about scrap tires or whatever it was you were talking about."

From upstairs you hear the sound of a woman's voice singing a soft, soothing song and the baby's cries soften to a low whimper.

>east

(After leaving your shoes in the foyer)

Living Room

This is a comfortably furnished living room. It has a couch and chair set and a coffee table, as well as an entertainment center containing the television and DVD player. The room continues north through a dining area (furnished with table, chairs and buffet) to the kitchen. The kitchen is separated from the dining room by a door, but it is also partially open to the dining room at a high counter.

Nicole walks through the door into the kitchen. You are able to watch her fill two glasses with ice and water. She returns and hands one to you, then guides you to sit on the couch. You thank her and take a deep drink of the cold water. She sits across from you in the chair and sips her own water.

> spiel Nicole

You lean forward toward Nicole and launch, once again, into your spiel. You tell her again about the mission of EI and about how they research, whistle-blow and sue to protect the environment. You try to inject some drama in your speech, and it appears to be working, because Nicole leans forward, toward you, in her chair. This causes her t-shirt to fall away from her chest, giving you a pleasing cleavage view. Distracted, you trip over your words and break your train of thought. Nicole smiles at you. Did she do that on purpose? You close your eyes and regroup, and prepare for your least favorite part - your appeal for money.

From upstairs you can still barely hear the sound of a woman's voice singing a soft, soothing song, but the baby's whimpers continue.

> ask nicole about donation

"Now for the part everyone hates," you continue. "In order to do all this great work, E.I. needs to

raise money from people like you who are concerned about our children and whether the planet will sustain them - or whether its health will continue to degrade. We do that by sending out individuals like me to explain the problem and how we propose to solve it, and by getting people to join us through memberships. A basic membership is only \$..."

A call from upstairs interrupts your speech. It's made by a sexy female voice with a rich, exotic accent. "Nicole! Can you come up here a moment, please?"

"I'm sorry," Nicole says, "wait here and I'll be back. If you want more water, the kitchen is right though there." With that, she stands and walks up the stairs and out of sight.

>up

You hear a bit of a commotion (shrill female voices, baby's cries) upstairs, so you decide to venture up there to see if you can be of assistance

Top of the Stairs

You're standing at the top of a flight of stairs in a small carpeted corridor. Four open doors lead off this corridor. Directly in front of you (north) is a bathroom, east is the nursery, to your left (opening into the south wall of the corridor) is what appears to be the master bedroom, and west is a third bedroom that has been set up as a den, and also seems to be the au pair's bedroom. The commotion is in the nursery.

>east

Nursery

This bedroom has been outlandishly decorated to house a female child. PINK! screams at you from all corners. The walls are pink with pink borders, all the furniture is trimmed with pink fabric, and the window curtains and lampshades and, well, everything is pink. Furniture includes a crib, changing table / dresser and rocking chair. The door to the corridor (decorated with pink teddy bears) is west.

Nicole is here, wiping very un-pink baby vomit from her t-shirt with a wet pink cloth.

Your eyes fall on the other woman in the room - this must be Carly the au pair - and stay there. Oh.. my.. God.

Whatever you had expected to see when you heard 'South African au pair', it wasn't this. Carly is a tall young white-skinned woman with long brown hair. She is amazingly shapely, with perfect, high breasts, a narrow waist and wide hips. Her long, perfect legs appear from the bottom of her short black and white striped skirt. Her face is captivating. High cheekbones give her a delicate look that is offset by a slightly rounded nose and big, entrancingly dark eyes. In addition to the skirt, she's wearing a cut-off black t-shirt that reveals her pierced navel.

Carly is holding the frantically crying infant and trying to calm her by bouncing her and talking to her.

>calm baby

"May I help?" you interject, speaking over the baby's wails.

Nicole looks up at you. "Oh, uh, Carly this is Paul..."

"Phil..." you correct her.

"Phil -- he's a bell-ringer for an environmental thingy. Apparently he knows about babies, too."

You detect a note of sarcasm.

"Hi, Phil," Carly smiles at you and, apparently having an irony deficiency, takes Nicole at face value. "Hold her for a minute if you don't mind, so I can help Nicole clean up. Here. This is Samantha."

You take Samantha from Carly, your hands (somewhat) inadvertently brushing up against Carly's chest as you take her. Sparks fly in your brain as you feel the soft flesh give under your knuckles. Carly's eyes dart to meet yours for just a moment, before she returns her attention to Nicole.

Carly starts wiping spit-up off Nicole. You rock Samantha and talk to her, and amazingly, she slowly begins to calm.

>watch women

Carly takes a pink wet cloth and wipes icky baby goop off the front of Nicole's white t-shirt. The t-shirt becomes damp and clings a bit to Nicole's skin, describing the gradual swell of her breasts. It's more like they're fussing than doing anything remotely sexual, but you still get a bit of a charge out of watching them, especially given how fucking hot Carly is.

You shift the increasingly calm Samantha, lifting her to your chest so her face is over your shoulder. She cuddles against you. So cute.

From the infant you hear what sounds like a hiccup and then you feel warm and wet cascading down over the front of your shirt. Tag you're it, Phil, you think.

>tell women about spitup

"Is she okay?" You ask Nicole and Carly. "She just spat up on me kind of a lot."

"This is actually pretty normal for her," responds Nicole. "She's a very spitty-uppy baby these days. I'm sorry about your t-shirt. You've gotten more than you bargained for at this house, I'm afraid. Why don't you go with Carly to my room - you can see if any of my husband's t-shirts fit you and we'll toss yours in the wash."

Nicole takes Samantha back from you.

Carly glances at you, then leaves the room.

>west

You follow Carly out of the nursery, turning your head back in time to see Nicole peel off her moist, icky shirt. You get a quick look at the way her shapely breasts fill her bra, but then, a bit embarrassed, you turn away. Carly is waiting for you and you walk with her into Nicole's bedroom.

Master Bedroom

This is the bedroom of Nicole and her husband. It's tastefully furnished and decorated with a large bed, two dressers, two nightstands and a media cabinet. There are two doors in the east wall. One leads to a bathroom and another, which is closed, probably to a walk-in closet.

Carly is here.

>remove my shirt

Your shirt reeks of icky baby stuff, so you quickly pull it off. Carly, who isn't afraid of icky baby stuff, graciously takes it from you and drops it into the sink in the bathroom and starts running water over it.

Meanwhile, a bad odor reaches you and you realize that the icky baby stuff soaked through your shirt to your skin. Now that you've noticed the smell, you can't stop smelling it. You have to do something about it! Now!

Deciding that's as good an excuse as any to be near Carly, you follow her into the bathroom. You nudge playfully up next to her at the sink.

Bathroom

The master bath has a glass-enclosed shower, a big whirlpool bath, a toilet and solid surface (that's the generic name for Corian™) vanity counter with a single integral lavatory. In the sink is your t-shirt and running over your shirt is some water.

Carly is here.

"Ew, Phil, Sammi really gave it to you good," she says. Her nose is crinkled sexily, and she has a complicit grin on her face.

Carly glances down at your bare chest and turns full-on to face you, and you can see some heat building in her eyes. Meanwhile, another intolerable wave of icky baby stuff hits you in the nose.

>turn on shower

You reach into the shower stall and turn on the water. You adjust it to a nice, warm temperature.

Carly grins. "Good idea. No other way to get rid of that level of toxic ooze."

>splash Carly

You reach into the open shower and whack several large handfuls of water onto Carly. She squeals in surprise and dances away. You see that her black t-shirt is soaked. Then a smile lights up her face. She dashes back to the sink and sends a dazzling spray of water right at you.

YIKES!! The water she's using is freezing cold!! "YOW! No fair!" you shout. "That's cold!"

"What's no fair?" she laughs, "look at me! At least you're already half undressed."

She considers her wet t-shirt for a moment, then peels it off, revealing her breathtaking breasts in her sexy black bra.

> kiss Carly

You pull the ubersexy Carly into your arms and kiss her. She responds, kissing you back, standing on her tiptoes and wrapping her arms around your neck. You feel a searing jolt of desire fly through your body. She breaks the kiss, and still on tiptoes and staring straight into your eyes she says, "You stink like puke, Phil."

Then, taking you by surprise, she abruptly pushes you into the shower.

"Hey!" you shout as warm water careens down your body, "I still have my shorts on!"

"That's okay," she grins, "I'm still wearing my skirt, too."

And with that, she steps into the shower with you and closes the glass door behind her.

In the Shower with Carly

You and Carly are standing together in the glass shower stall. Warm water pours over you both. She's still wearing her black bra and her black and white striped skirt, which hangs wetly against her lean thighs. You're still wearing your shorts.

> grab Carly's ass

* * *

Procedures for Live AIF:

To be the next player, please send an e-mail to aifsummer@gmail.com. I will select one player at random from all those who write in. The deadline for volunteering is the 5th day of each month. I will notify the selected player and invite them to begin playing. All others who volunteer will not receive a reply, simply because it would take too long to write to everyone. If the selected player does not respond in three days after I send the invitation, I will select someone else.

The selected player will play until I decide that enough turns have lapsed. After all, the game transcript has to fit in the newsletter. The number of turns may be an on-the-fly decision and will be fine-tuned as the game goes on.

A quick note for this upcoming installment: the August player has already been selected (see posts made at the Yahoo! AIFArchive and AIFGames.com). You will have another opportunity in September.

I'm interested in hearing what you think about this as the game progresses. If you have suggestions for how to make this a better feature, please write to me at the above address or at aifsubmissions@gmail.com.

Impressions of Interactive Fan Fiction by Grimm Sharlak

It's been an interesting time recently for the recent IF community, and by extension, the AIF community. Firstly Inform 7 was released, exciting many an author, but we have yet to see any Inform 7 AIF. However, a scant few days ago, Roy Riggs debuted his Interactive Fan Fiction Player, along with an adult version of his first game, based on Dawn Summers from "Buffy the Vampire Slayer."

Now, this article isn't about that game in particular (although it is the only game, in adult and non-adult versions, available for the player thus far), nor about writing for this particular platform. Instead, this piece is simply about the impressions this player gave me, its potential and how it stacks up to the two most popular AIF engines, TADS and ADRIFT.

The first impression of this player wasn't a good one, however, as the adult version of *Dawn Summers (DS)* had a bug from the get-go. However, renaming a certain file in the "brains" directory of the player solved the problem, but raised another. Looking in that "brains" directory is like seeing the source code of the game, each file referring to a group of commands that the player can use. This makes playing the games quite easy, as it's almost ticking off a checklist of commands rather than trial and error with what you can and can't do.

The next thing that struck me is that graphics make up a large part of this player. Upon loading up *DS* I was greeted with a portrait of Dawn that took up nearly a quarter of my screen and moved slightly (a slight smile passes across her face) as I went along. This is movable, but seemingly un-resizable and un-closable, which may bother some players. It is an interesting method of interface, as instead of relying on some unseen points counter (in fact, there's a visible "horniness" counter, but we'll get to that) you see Dawn's reactions to your various actions directly. For example, trying the old AIF staple of kissing a girl and then rubbing her tits resulted in her calling me a bastard and looking quite angry.

The other interesting interface features are the status window and "Say" and "Quit" buttons in addition to the familiar message window and text entry area. These areas present a couple of minor quibbles for seasoned players. The most noticeable would be the need to press the "Say" button at the end of typing a command, instead of simply pressing enter. Considering that to build Dawn's "horniness" you need to do a lot of repetitive actions, and each time you have to type out the command again and click the button. That's right, there's no "repeat" or "again" function that I could find.

The status window is interesting as well. At the top of it is the aforementioned "horniness meter" displayed as a value out of 10. Mess up, and it crashes back to 0. Below that, we have another picture of our target, and below that a general message window, separate from the main text window. This window seems to be unnecessary, as what it does display are what command group you just used (so you don't even have to look in the brains directory!) and error messages. Perhaps this was more of a debugging tool? Either way, it seemed superfluous when all the player needed to know was in the meter and the main message window.

Playing the game, outside of the earlier gripe, was fairly straightforward. One thing that seemed to be lacking was area and action descriptions. If this were a game in ADRIFT or TADS, it would be called "sparse". Most of the time the message window is full of just dialogue from Dawn. Your messages do not appear in the window, just the responses from the girl.

Sound is used liberally in this game, and one would assume it's easy to implement, much as it is in ADRIFT. For example, going to the Bronze greets the ears with a nice little dance club number. And finally scoring with Dawn greets the player with, uh, the sweet strains of a bed rocking, which certainly got a chuckle from me.

Speaking of the sex, it would again be considered "sparse" and minimally interactive. For example, once you have Dawn in the mood, rather than going through the old classic rubbing, licking, etc and then getting down to business, you instead say "fuck Dawn" and boom, she's ready to roll. But then, nothing happens except her response. So, thinking like an AIF player, you say "fuck Dawn" again, hoping for that to get the next stage of the scene. Nope, the same response repeats. Enlightenment comes a moment later when an automatic message comes up giving you a short description of you and Dawn's current actions. These repeat after a short while, and are randomised, but much like a game where you input "fuck character" and get a large body of text, it feels as if some of the control has been lost by the player.

There is a "forget" function, but rather than undoing the previous turn, it just resets the NPC to

their original state (handy if you piss her off). So, let's see how this stacks up against the big two, eh?

Firstly, the stuff IFF can do that others can't is somewhat thin on the ground. The face of the NPC is certainly innovative, if a little unwieldy. The other features that the others don't have, the status window and "Say" and "Quit" buttons actually seem to hinder as much as help at times. Sure, it incorporates sound and pictures easily, but both ADRIFT and TADS do the same.

It's the lack of features that frustrates me about IFF. No undo function, no way to see what you just typed, and having to use the mouse to enter a command rather than the good old keyboard. There were no elaborate puzzles to put TADS to shame, nor better and more interactive objects and locations. There was just you, the NPC, a handful of locations and asking and doing the right thing.

It's a shame that the first game seems so sparse, but hopefully as more games get released for this platform we'll see the complexity of these games increase. At the moment, however, the traditional text adventure engines seem to be just as good as the IFF Player.

Game Reviews

HoeDown in Ho-Town, a review by Grimm Sharlak

Name:	<i>HoeDown in Ho-Town</i> , released 26 th September 2004
Author:	S. Welland
Platform:	ADRIFT 4.0
Size:	38KB
Content:	m/f
Game Type:	Sex romp
Length:	Medium
Reviewed:	August 2006
Extras:	Walkthrough

Basic Plot:

You play the classic wandering cowboy in the old west, just blowing into town for a whiskey and a whore. Upon entering town, you meet Linda, the blacksmith's daughter, and the goal of the game is to climb up to the hayloft with her.

Overall Thoughts:

"A door leads north to the bedroom and one west to the restaurant. You can move south and west."

This little line pretty much sums up my feelings for *Ho-Town*, rushed and sloppy. A similar problem occurs in one of the first areas of the game, where after you have your horse stabled, you see the same scene every time you enter the area or look, despite the fact that neither your horse nor the character depicted are there.

Not to say that *Ho-Town* isn't enjoyable. The sex scenes are okay to good, but the game lacks padding. Finishing, even. Nellie the banker pretty much wants to fuck you straight off the bat, for no reason. You have no reason to get the small key off of Paula the whore, except this is a game and it's an item. Short area descriptions and such are prevalent throughout.

Puzzles/Gameplay:

I've said it before and I'll say it again; while it's nice of an author to include a walkthrough, it also sets off warning bells every time I unzip a game and there's already a walkthrough. It either means the author felt the game was too hard, or in this case, nowhere near intuitive.

The lack of polish in the game hurts it here, as well. Aside from getting with the blacksmith's daughter, there's no motivation to do anything. Not to mention the various tasks you can complete don't have anything to do with anything, they're just puzzles for the sake of puzzles.

The puzzles themselves are somewhat poorly implemented as well. Poor syntax abounds, and I found one seemingly unsolvable puzzle. To score with one Harriet, you need to climb a hill at the

end of town. The only place this hill is visible from is from the town cemetery, but the road up to the hill is barred by a large gate and lock. Your character assumes that there must be another way around. Can you examine the gate? No. The lock? Sorry buddy. And according to the map, there is no other way around. And the walkthrough doesn't give you a maximum points path, so bad luck.

Sex:

The sex is reasonable for what's there. If you just go for Linda, the sex is really sparse, as most encounters outside of hers are just "fuck character". The one inventive thing I did find was fucking one of the whores in the saloon resulted in her hopping in a basket on a rope, twisting it up and using it to act like a whirlybird on your cock. That's pretty funky.

Technical:

The problems mentioned earlier abound, but other technical difficulties raise their head as you play on. Various characters, when asked about others, have no response and you instead receive "character isn't here!" messages. In two cases, you can obtain similar items (three whore tokens and two bills) and the author hasn't programmed them properly. Try to give a whore the two-dollar bill by saying "give bill" and then "two-dollar" results in her refusing it. "give two-dollar bill to ..." works, however. If you're not prepared to deal with ambiguous objects, don't use them.

Intangibles:

At one point you can fuck a corpse, and you get locked up for being a dirty corpse-fucker. It's a nice touch, but in general this game fails to capture any wild west feel, and could instead be set anywhere in the world with cheap whores and a stable.

Final Thoughts:

Hoedown in Ho-Town clearly suffers from a lack of testing, and a lack of polish. The age of the game is no excuse, in fact it damns it further, as the author asks for any errors to be emailed to him in the readme and in two years there have been no new versions supplied.

Download it and use the walkthrough for a simple little sex romp, but otherwise I wouldn't recommend it.

Rating: D



This is "O Erin!" #20

All previous strips can be viewed on the AIF Newsletter web site and on -3-'s new site: <http://comics.aifcommunity.org>. Don't miss them!

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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

Editor A Ninny is an AIF player, author of two AIF games and frequent beta-tester. His *Parlour* received an Erin for Best "One Night Stand" game in 2004.

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Christopher Cole has written many popular ADRIFT AIF games, including *Camp Windy Lake*, *Gamma Gals*, and *Mount Voluptuous*. He is the 2005 winner of AIF's Badman Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award.

Submitting your work to "Inside Erin"

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

