



Letter from the Editor

This has been a bit of an insane month for me, which is why I'm keeping this editorial brief. My work deadline is next week, and I'm tearing my hair out at the moment, but after that I should have been able to devote my normal level of attention to AIF.

BBBen was good enough to cover the Erin award rundown and A. Bomire took care of the "Erin Street" interviews, so for me to reflect on the Erins will be somewhat redundant. Suffice it for me to congratulate GoblinBoy on his near-sweep of the awards. Great job, GB. I'd also like to offer hearty gratitude to BBBen for taking over the Erins this year. He did a great job. I don't know how he managed to get 51 people to vote,

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This Month in AIF by BBBen

Most of this month's community activity concerned the Erin awards, which are dealt with elsewhere in this newsletter. I personally have had a very busy AIF month, what with organising the awards and also finishing and beta testing my latest game (it will be out early next month). We did actually get a new game at the beginning of the month, but it was reported in the last newsletter, since that edition came out a few days after the new year (that's why I haven't done a "new games" section for this month's article).

The awaited write up in "SPAG" about AIF turned up this month (here's the link if you want to read it - <http://sparkynet.com/spag/backissues/spag47.html>). Jimmy Maher expressed the opinion that, while not personally to his taste, AIF is of a better standard than many in the IF community present it to be (though not totally mind-blowing). From my own perspective this is pretty much what I anticipated, after all, it's hard to claim that there's *nothing* of quality in the AIF community, even if you aren't a fan. The write up was far from a ringing endorsement, but was probably the best that could be expected, considering the difficulties of reconciling the AIF and IF communities. Maher's review did not, of course, address the amount of effort that goes into making the sex work in an AIF game (in fact, he found it tedious). Indeed, the appeal of an AIF game to its audience is largely decided on the quality, originality, quantity and variety of sex scenes in the game, and these are the single hardest part of an AIF game to write. Therefore, reviewing an AIF game as an IF game is never going to be entirely accurate, even if the game is quite remarkable within the field of AIF.

In my opinion, the AIF and IF communities will never get along *really* smoothly – there will always be a certain amount of undeserved scorn from the IF community toward AIF – not because of a misconception about the quality of product but just because of the stigma that surrounds pornography. I don't

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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:

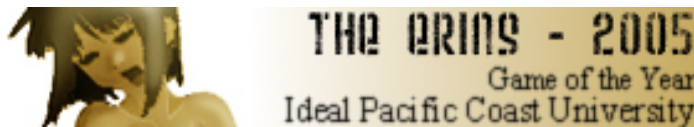
1. To encourage the production of more quality AIF games by providing advice from game developers, and by offering constructive criticism that is specifically relevant to AIF.
2. To encourage activity and growth in the AIF community. We aim to generate a constant level of activity so that there aren't 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.



The 2006 Erin Awards have come and gone, and the results are in. The vote was the largest we have yet seen (51 votes in all) and it was a resounding win for GoblinBoy, and particularly his game *The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity*. GoblinBoy won all the awards except for “best humour”, “best short game”, “best beta-tester” and the Badman Lifetime Achievement award, thus claiming the biggest sweep yet achieved by an AIF author in one year (an especially impressive achievement since he was a new author for this year). Also of particular significance this year was the awarding of the Badman Lifetime Achievement award jointly to two of the most deserving winners so far: Scarlet Herring (author of the seminal game *Moist*) and A. Bomire (author or co-author of eight games, all of which are considered classics in the AIF community, and one of the most significant contributors to and shapers of AIF).

I would attribute the higher vote not to any greater dedication on my part (everything was well established by A. Ninny over the past couple of years, and I simply had to continue his work) but rather to my ability, as a moderator of the AIF Archive, to send out “special notices” to the group. These messages tend to get through to more people’s email addresses, and as such call more attention to the awards. I try not to abuse this function (so that people don’t get tired of me spamming them and switch the “special notices” function off) but I will probably send out a special notice or two about the mini-comp this year as well, to make sure the information gets out there.

The awards ceremony went well, with almost all the winners able to turn up and collect their awards personally (of course, almost all the winners were GoblinBoy). You’ll be able to view the transcript of the ceremony on the Erin Awards website soon (<http://erins.aifcommunity.org/>), I just have to edit it and post it, which I will do within the next week or so. We (myself, A. Bomire and A. Ninny) will also endeavour to write up a little bit of patter about each of the winners and why they won as we normally do, and this will also be made available on the website. I have yet to finalise and distribute the award graphics for this year, but I will get to that soon as well, and they will most likely be based on last year’s graphics. Here is an example of last year’s award:



Anyway, without further ado, here is the list of the results of the 2006 Erin Awards (candidates are listed in order of placement, with no. 1 being the winner):

Best Female PC

1. Dania (*The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. Magpie (*To Cage a Magpie*, TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)
3. Jessica (*Crossworlds Part 0: The Girl Next Door*, ADRIFT 3.9, by BBBen)
4. Melissa (*Consequences*, ADRIFT 4, by David Whyld)
5. Clair (*Shamelessly Slutty: Teacher*, ADRIFT 3.9, by Rip_CPU)

Best Male PC

1. Captain (*The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. PC (*The Camping Trip*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
3. PC (*Malaise*, TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
4. Ron (*Ron Weasley and the Quest for Hermione*, ADRIFT 3.9, by captaine22)
5. PC (*Paradise Hotel*, ADRIFT 4, by Blue Meanie)

Best Female NPC

1. Kalia (*The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. Becky (*The Camping Trip*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
3. Melissa (*The Camping Trip*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
4. Morghana (*Malaise*, TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
5. Lady Windsor (*To Cage a Magpie*, TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)

Best Male NPC

1. Mike (*The Camping Trip*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. Mildew (*The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
3. Smythe (*To Cage a Magpie*, TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)
4. Morchek (*The Gifts of Phallius 1: The Baron's Plot*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
5. Vince (*WWE: Raw's New GM*, TADS 2, by A. Bomire)

Best M/F Sex Scene

1. Captain/Kalia (*The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. Captain/Dania (*The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
3. PC/Kim (*Malaise*, TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
4. PC/Melissa (*The Camping Trip*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
5. PC/Morghana (*Malaise*, TADS 2, by A. Ninny)

Best Lesbian Sex Scene

1. Dania/Yulia (*The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. Jessica/Susan (*Crossworlds Part 0: The Girl Next Door*, ADRIFT 3.9, by BBBen)
3. Magpie/Windsor (*To Cage a Magpie*, TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)
4. Dania/Kalia (*The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
5. Melissa/Susan (*Consequences*, ADRIFT 4, by David Whyld)

Best Threesome/Orgy

1. PC/Mike/Becky/Melissa (*The Camping Trip*, TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. PC/Morghana/Kim (*Malaise*, TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
3. Ron/Parvati/Padma (*Ron Weasley and the Quest for Hermione*, ADRIFT 3.9, by captaine22)
4. PC/Morghana/Fanny (*Malaise*, TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
5. PC/Morghana/Ilsa (*Malaise*, TADS 2, by A. Ninny)

Best Overall Sex

1. *The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. *The Camping Trip* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
3. *Malaise* (TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
4. *Paradise Hotel* (ADRIFT 4, by Blue Meanie)
5. *To Cage a Magpie* (TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)

Best Writing

1. *The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. *To Cage a Magpie* (TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)
3. *Malaise* (TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
4. *Crossworlds Part 0: The Girl Next Door* (ADRIFT 3.9, by BBBen)
5. *Falcon: Mean Streets* (TADS 2, by Girion Voeros)

Best Technical Implementation

1. *The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. *Malaise* (TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
3. *The Camping Trip* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
4. *Crossworlds Part 0: The Girl Next Door* (ADRIFT 3.9, by BBBen)
5. *To Cage a Magpie* (TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)

Most Innovative

1. *The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. *WWE: Raw's New GM* (TADS 2, by A. Bomire)
3. *The Camping Trip* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
4. *To Cage a Magpie* (TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)
5. *Bob's Garage* (Inform 7, by A. Bomire)

Best Use of Multimedia

1. *The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. *WWE: Raw's New GM* (TADS 2, by A. Bomire)
3. *The Camping Trip* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
4. *Notice Me* (ADRIFT 3.9, by Wotan-Anubis)
5. *Falcon: Mean Streets* (TADS 2, by Girion Voeros)
6. *The Village of Love and Lust* (ADRIFT 3.9, by Deckmaster)
7. *The New Superstud* (ADRIFT 3.9, by Deckmaster)

Best Gameplay/Puzzles

1. *The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. *Malaise* (TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
3. *To Cage a Magpie* (TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)
4. *WWE: Raw's New GM* (TADS 2, by A. Bomire)
5. *Falcon: Mean Streets* (TADS 2, by Girion Voeros)

Best Humour

1. *To Cage a Magpie* (TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)
2. *The Gifts of Phallius 1: The Baron's Plot* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
3. *The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
4. *Paradise Hotel* (ADRIFT 4, by Blue Meanie)
5. *The Clairvoyant* (ADRIFT 3.9, by Priapus Rex)

Best New Author

1. GoblinBoy
2. Girion Voeros
3. Priapus Rex (tied)
3. Inkybus (tied)
3. Deckmaster (tied)

Best Short Game

1. *Bob's Garage* (Inform 7, by A. Bomire)
2. *A Dream Come True* (ADRIFT 3.9, by Purple Dragon)
3. *Detention* (TADS 2, by Inkybus)
4. *WWE: Raw's New GM* (TADS 2, by A. Bomire)
5. *The Clairvoyant* (ADRIFT 3.9, by Priapus Rex)

Best Game of the Year

1. *The Gifts of Phallius 2: Key to Eternity* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
2. *Malaise* (TADS 2, by A. Ninny)
3. *The Camping Trip* (TADS 2, by GoblinBoy)
4. *To Cage a Magpie* (TADS 2, by Lucilla Frost)
5. *Paradise Hotel* (ADRIFT 4, by Blue Meanie)

Best Beta-Tester

1. A. Ninny
2. Richard Gillingham

Also nominated: Thelonis Porksword, Purple Dragon, GoblinBoy, Sean O (Iyingbastard), Lumin, Makoto Kino, Xcaliberium, TEW, Kalen Miyan, A. Bomire, Scott Carlisle, Ehlanna Forrest, and joey joey.

Badman Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award

A. Bomire and Scarlet Herring

Letter from the Editor (Continued)

though. If you paid for votes, I didn't get my check (that's cheque to you, right?) yet, BBB.

One thing I would like to do is to react to the AIF review in "SPAG" that was written by Jimmy Maher. First of all, I realize that I invited the review, which was being written by an admitted porn non-fan, and so was expecting a harsh response from him. But Jimmy promised a fair response and I feel we put our best foot forward, so I was then not too surprised when he was reasonably positive about the AIF he played.

I found one of his reactions odd, however. He stated, "Actually, the sex is the strangest thing about these games, in that none of them are, ostensibly at least, really ABOUT seduction." I was puzzled by this because I'm not really sure where he got the idea that AIF is about seduction, any more than porn is about seduction. Creating an AIF that is about seduction would be an interesting challenge, but by and large, none are – especially not those that I suggested to Jimmy that he play.

The overall result, I think, is another argument for AIF to not attempt too forcefully to integrate with IF. The NPC interaction which he dismissed as 'rather painful' is, in all three games, essentially AIF-standard. We're not looking to change that – in fact, most discussion recently has been in looking for ways to delve even deeper into the physical minutia of sex, and the amount of work involved in doing that will more likely than not diminish the personality (and the psychology) of the NPC's.

I'd like to thank Jimmy once again for his even-handedness and for giving us a shot.

Have a great month!

This Month in AIF (Continued)

know how many people actually say they don't like porn and are genuinely telling the truth (I just can't picture such a bizarre state of mind), but such people will always tend to rail against it and that's part of the reason we actually have separate communities in the first place. Perhaps if we can get a few prominent people in IF to a point where they are willing to acknowledge that AIF is of reasonable quality, even if it is pornography, then it will make things a little more cordial and allow a few more people to take an interest in AIF. If so, then that is all for the best, although as I say, I think most IFers probably won't be inclined to publicly admit an interest in AIF even if they are into it (after all, even AIF writers tend to use pseudonyms).

At the end of the month was a discussion about the next newsletter-hosted AIF mini-comp. It was debated whether the rules that applied to the 2003, 2004 and 2006 mini-comps (those were the three years in which this format of comp has been held) should be altered or kept as they are. The previous mini-comps have been quite successful in terms of the number and quality of entries, and in fact the mini-comps have been one of the highest points of active community involvement AIF has ever had. The fact that we received 9, 13 and 8 entries in each respective mini-comp is testament to how effective they actually are in generating interest from authors. Granted, all three were won by already established authors, but they also encouraged a good deal of interest from first time authors, some of whom went on to write more games. I'll leave the specifics up to A. Ninny to discuss and report on, since he's the coordinator of the *Inside Erin* mini-comps, and finalisation of the rules will only come when the mini-comp is officially announced. It is interesting, however, that this topic generated a lot of discussion; I think this demonstrates that the mini-comps are a clear highlight of the AIF year, and I'm personally hoping that we can put together a "mini-comp convention" meeting at the ifMUD, similar to the Erin Awards ceremony.

This month's "Erin Street Interview" comes from members of our community who voted in the Erin Awards balloting process. On the ballot was a check box asking for volunteers to be interviewed. The following represents the responses from some of these volunteers. I'd like thank all of them for taking part in this.

AB: Can you tell me what sorts of criteria you used in selecting a best game? What, to you, makes a "best game" best?

Grimm Sharlak: Well, there's a lot of criteria in selecting a best game, especially in so rich a field as we had this year. Basically, the most important thing for me is fun - was the game fun to play, or was it a complete pain? Of course, the actual written content is very important as well; not just the sexual scenes either. I enjoy a game with fleshed out characters with good motivations, and a good plot to drive along the action. I need more than "bag the next girl" as motivation to move on to the next part of the game.

Weivrepo: Hm. I suppose for the best game category I took the following things into consideration, maybe in this order mostly but not necessarily...

- a. Did the game turn me on?
- b. Was it interesting and challenging (as opposed to so straightforward as to be boring or requiring the use of a command never before used in this game or any other game I've played to get past a certain point early in the game) with little repetition of scenes?
- c. Are there in-game hints available or at least a link in the readme file to a place where I can find a walkthrough?
- d. Are the female characters presented as realistic moral agents in their own rights or are they solely mechanical orgasm machines there for the pleasure of the male PC's and NPC's? (just for clarification, smart women = better game, imo.)

Vitreous Humor: Honestly this is a tricky question, but I believe the quality of best game comes not from necessarily having the best writing, or technical implementation, or even the most titillating sexuality. Instead it is a rather a synergistic combination of the three, a "secret sauce" (mmm, like ketchup and mayo) if you will, that makes the player keep coming back to the game EVEN AFTER you have played it through and gotten all the points and secrets etc. Indeed, the game I chose happened to be a seemingly simple one that practically had been done before, but was still the funnest, hottest game of this year's admittedly incredibly impressive lineup.

Tiggle Winkle: Well, that category is bit open ended. I didn't make up any particular criteria, I just rated them based on how I felt about them in a general sense. That was actually probably one of the easiest categories, even though I did in fact enjoy all 5 of those games. One thing I realize on looking back at the list - those are all games that I played through more than once.

DivineMarquis: The main reason for my selection was my personal experience of playing the game, how much fun I had, how much of a turn-on I found it and so on. My personal favorite was, objectively speaking, not the most well-written game of the nominees, nor was it the best game in technical programming terms. To paraphrase the original Divine Marquis, de Sade, "The only true measure of morality is my erection", and so I let my moral compass guide me ;).

mg: The thing I look for most is how much I enjoyed playing through the game. This is generally due to the ability of the author to successfully immerse the gamer into his story. If they spend enough time on the game where (almost) every action is thought out and compensated for, that really enhances my opinion of the game. Basically, most of the time you can tell how much effort has been put into the games. Overall, if they manage to make the whole scenario seem more realistic in my imagination, almost like watching it, that's a good game to me.

Purple Dragon: I believe that for a game to have a chance at best game of the year it needs to put on a good showing in most of the other categories that are judged. I don't think it is an accident that the game that wins "best game" also ends up winning several of the others. This is not to say that it MUST win most or even any of the other categories but if it is not even in contention for several then I wouldn't have thought of it as that good a game.

To be a bit more specific on my personal opinion there are three things that a game must have to make me consider it the best. First and foremost is the writing and story (I realize that is sort of two but go with me). If it does not have a good idea at the base and if the author cannot bring that idea along in an interesting way then there is little hope of it being a truly great game.

The second thing is the technical aspect of the game. I'm sure that most people have started a game that sounded like a cool only to find it nearly unplayable because of bugs, guess-the-whatever problems, massive grammar errors, etc. I am certainly not the nazi that some are when it come to pointing these out but too many turns an enjoyable diversion into a chore and if I wanted a chore I'd be cleaning out the damn gutters like my wife keeps asking me to.

And finally in my list of three I would put sex. Yeah, I know, this is A-if so why wasn't that first? Well, to be honest, if the game doesn't have the first two, then I sometimes simply don't make it to this one. On the other hand, if the game does not have good sex scenes then it really can't be considered the best AIF game. This can be one particularly well implemented sex scene in the case of a shorter game. However, what I really look for here is diversity between the different scenes where every encounter has something that marks it as unique. Speaking as an author this is very hard to do but it is so satisfying to play when someone pulls it off.

glenja: I like games that have a good story line, are well written, and have a bit of humor in them. The puzzles should be challenging, but also make sense within the context of the game. I also like games where the descriptions of scenes and characters change to reflect what is happening within the game.

AB: How well did you feel the nomination committee did in selecting games for this year's awards? Were there any games, characters or authors you didn't see nominated that you expected to see?

Grimm Sharlak: I think the nomination committee did well for what they had to choose from, but there seemed to be a lack of variety in the top votes. I guess the best are the best.

Weivrevo: I was introduced to several great games by seeing what was nominated - I think the committee did just fine.

Vitreous Humor: The selection committee did an amazing job this year, having to choose from a crop of games almost unrivaled in AIF history (not the individual games, but the quantity of quality games). If I have any niggling problem, I would have liked to have seen *Consequences* by David Whyld in perhaps Best Writing. Just because it was the conclusion of a remarkably unusual, interesting, and well written storyline, and had truly dramatic plot branching throughout. Difficult to play, difficult to understand, but most definitely an amazing feat of writing.

Tiggle Winkle: Not in particular, but I only really got into AIF within the last year - so I don't really know what came out this year and what is older.

DivineMarquis: I was surprised not to see *Gift of Phallius I* nominated for best game. While I am guessing that the committee felt that *Key to Eternity* was representative of both games, I still think it should have been included. It has a very different feel compared to its sequel. Also, what about *Consequences*? It was a brilliant game, and also representative of a whole different approach to AIF than what you usually see. I do think that it would have been interesting to see how it fared against the other games.

mg: Nah, they did a good job. I felt like the best games were represented well.

Purple Dragon: I was also on the committee so I'll pass on this one.

glenja: This year was my first to be involved with voting on games. I haven't played all the games nominated, but some that I have played, and enjoyed, were listed, so it seems to be a fair representation of the year's games.

AB: The games nominated this year run the gamut from short sex romps to long involved puzzle-fests. Do you have a particular style of game that is your favorite?

Grimm Sharlak: I prefer puzzle-fests over sex romps, but definitely not long ones. I find if an AIF game is too long, it becomes more of a chore and while there may be different characters to interact with, you're still only one character.

Weivrevo: No particular style of game, depending on my mood I can like either though I tend to like the longer, more involved ones rather than the straightforward sex romps.

Vitreous Humor: I like the happy medium in between. Relatively long, but with fewer "puzzle

quests" and more well written (possibly sexy, but not necessarily so) story. I also seem to like games closer to "reality" than out-there fantastic games, not sure why, but I do.

Tiggle Winkle: Long sex romps! I kid. Sort of. Well, I suck at IF puzzles. I am in fact getting a little better - I've gone back to games that I got completely stuck on before, and now I can actually get through some of them. I do like when a game requires some investment to get to the sex - some time to flesh out the NPC's. But I can't say that I really like finding the silver key under the couch cushion to unlock the desk drawer so that I can get the muskrat mating call whistle that I use to lure the muskrat into an alley to divert the... you know. For me AIF really is mostly about the sex and how the rest of the game feeds into it. Random puzzles do not build up characterization or interest, they just provide a barrier.

DivineMarquis: Both in IF and AIF, I am no fan of puzzlefests. In the gamist, narrativist, and simulationist trichotomy, I am lying somewhere in the no-man's land between narrativism and simulationism. To me IF is more about telling stories than pulling levers and unlocking doors. That said, some people, like Goblinboy and Lucilla Frost, manage to make their puzzles not only funny, but capable of driving narrative.

mg: Well, it depends on the mood I'm in. I tend to like more the straight-forward sex romps more, because it's more fun to play multiple times. However, the first time through the in-depth puzzle games really draw me in. I'll spend hours trying to figure out those puzzles and trying to beat the game, often to the detriment of whatever I was doing at the time. I remember doing that with Hell in Highwater, for one. I guess I'm kind of an obsessive individual.

Purple Dragon: Not really, I guess it just depends on my mood. Sometimes I like a game that I can bang out (was that a pun?) in a half-hour or so, and sometimes one that brings me along slowly. As long as it is well written, both can be great.

glenja: I prefer the longer games, where there is greater PC development. I enjoy the games where there is more of a goal than just having the PC engage in sex with the NPC's.

AB: Do you plan on attending the Erin's awards ceremony this year? If not, can you say why?

Grimm Sharlak: Well, I've attended the past two years and never had a chance of winning anything, so why not attend again this year? The only issue is when the ceremony takes place.

Weivrevo: I won't attend the awards due to time and money constraints.

Vitreous Humor: I might try, but there are quite a few real-world commitments in the way, and I honestly am too lazy and paranoid to sign up for yet another online service.

Tiggle Winkle: I guess that depends when it is, and whether or not I remember. (I'm very forgetful and somewhat distracted by school and such at the moment)

DivineMarquis: To be honest, I am not sure, I would probably have preferred them to [be] held in an IRC channel for ease of access. I am working hard at the moment so I may not have time. I hope to make it though.

mg: Uh honestly, I'm not sure how the whole 'Erins Awards Ceremony' thing goes. I always hear about these things but I don't know anything about it. I probably won't attend, both because it doesn't sound like that fascinating a ceremony. I'm not one for awards shows. They make me roll my eyes.

Purple Dragon: Yes, I plan on being there. I found it quite fun last year (the first time I had attended). It was kind of neat to get together with everyone. Since it seems extremely unlikely that any number of us will ever meet face to face, this is the next best thing.

glenja: I will try to attend, but not sure if I will be able. I use a screen reading program on my computer, and most chat rooms are difficult to navigate within, so may just wait to read the results later.

AB: What sort of game would you like to see made in the next year? (Note: In the questionnaire I sent out, I suggested an example of Swedish nuns spanking German men in a cow shed, which is referenced by a couple of responses.)

Grimm Sharlak: I'd like to see the two games I'm working on finished next year! But as for sort of game, I've seen a couple of office-type settings attempted (like in *Rachel's Bad Day*, for example) but most of them... uh, weren't very good. A game set in a hospital wouldn't be a bad idea either, sexy nurses and doctors, eh?

Weivrevo: Games from a woman's point of view are always interesting.

Vitreous Humor: I am eagerly awaiting GoblinBoy's (who I feel will likely be considered one of the great masters if/when he stops making games *knock on wood*) sequel to *The Camping Trip* and *The Gifts of Phallius*. I also am hoping for a new Sam Shooter game, but I know that probably isn't going to arrive any time soon. Oh! Also BBBen's penultimate (or was it ultimate) *Crossworlds* epic. Swedish nuns and goat sheds sounds good too though!

Tiggle Winkle: Hmm. Heh. My personal preferences (in terms of what I like best) are narrow and somewhat difficult to explain. And maybe I'm a bit shy of getting into particulars. More games like the ones in the "Best Game" category would be a good start though.

DivineMarquis: Swedish nuns, spanking and german men all sound good to me. I would like to see games that go beyond the 'have sex with x random, gorgeous looking girls' plot. After all, this is fiction, and there is no SFX budget. I would like to see games that are kinky, that explore different sides of human, transhuman, post-human and alien sexuality. To be specific, I would love a Lovecraftian AIF game written from the perspective of a Great Old One, what sort of wet dreams does Cthulhu have when he is sleeping in his house in R'lyeh? But I am willing to settle for tentacle porn. Also, I would love to see games like Sly Dog's games, only without as many bizarre bugs.

mg: Well I've been hearing about a bunch of games that seem interesting. I'm really looking forward to GoblinBoy's projects coming up, and also looking forward to the established authors' next batch of games. Frankly, I'm looking forward to any well-made AIF game. I find a lot of the games to be enjoyable, regardless of specific subject matter. I especially enjoy any game with extremely varied and interactive sex scenes that provide nontraditional actions (choosing positions, being able to interact with non-AIF (or whatever) body parts, etc.). Seriously... I love all AIF authors (yes, even Vachon and Sly Dog. It's the thought that counts guys. Sometimes.) I appreciate the fact that you guys all allow us to experience your sick, sick little fantasies (kidding...kidding...) for essentially no reward. I appreciate your efforts as an AIF lurker who's trying to become (slightly) more involved. My apologies. I ramble.

Purple Dragon: Well, now that you ask, I think we are long past due for a game about a plane full of jockeys that crash land in the middle of the Amazonian rain forest and are taken captive by a group of 8 foot tall albino women who find them too small to satisfy their carnal needs but find a culinary way to enjoy the men before turning to their horses for comfort. Ah, did I say that out loud?

Seriously though, I tend to enjoy most of the games that come out as long as they are reasonably well done. There are a couple of sequels that I would like to see. Wasn't *Gamma Galls II* supposed to be in the works? I would also love to see a sequel to *Tomorrow Never Comes*.

glenja: I like real characters, as from tv or movies, so would like to see games with these as PCs or NPCs.

AIF Author's Log by Bitterfrost

Welcome back, my friends, to the show that never ends. We're so glad you could attend. Come inside! Come inside!

Hello, reader! Bitterfrost here! The all-time Sisyphus of AIF authors. Welcome to another month of stone rolling.

Unfortunately, this month saw little progress. Work has been nuts, projects and deadlines leaping out at me left and right like ornery ninjas. My traditionally small pocket of free time shrank in the wash this month. I could barely squeeze a penny in there... and I spent that on other diversions.

Yeah, I know--if I don't make every sliver of free time count I'll never get this game done. This thing is, when you're dizzy from deadlines and strung out from the breakneck pace of that pesky real world, AIF looks a lot like work. Stir in the fact that I'm a fundamentally lazy bastard, and you've got a cockeyed cocktail that leaves me going in every direction but forward.

In my own defense (since I'm never short for an excuse), I did get a few things done on the old game, so the month wasn't a complete wash. Some progress was made. I definitely felt this glacier shift an inch or two.

My verbose-then-brief revisions worked a treat at the beginning of the month. I feel good about the setting of this game now. It's finally showing the amount of depth I was after when I first struck out on this mad crusade.

Yeah, I'm self-conscious and neurotic about these things, but you have to understand that this game is my one-and-only. My first and last. There won't be another. It's all or nothing. Kitchen sink or bust. Everything must go! We're closing our doors and slashing our prices!

I'm also happy to say that I've expanded several of the puzzles such that they now have more than one solution. I've been worried about sticking players with too narrow of a corridor, so this is a nice way to loosen things up a bit.

Instead of making the consequences of a puzzle task-dependant (such as <"put cherry on sundae" must be completed>), I've reengineered a few to flag a variable. Once one of the optional solutions is made, the variable gets set to 1 or 2 depending on which one is completed. By giving both tasks a <FLAG must not be equal to> restriction, they'll be closed off after one of them is successful. The game will progress then because FLAG is greater than zero, not caring which task was successful. Then I'm using the FLAG variable in ALR to display text appropriate to the solution. Like so:

[FLAG=0]Bright sunlight streams through the window.

[FLAG=1]The window is covered in black spray paint that blots out the sunlight.

[FLAG=2]A large towel hangs over the window as a makeshift curtain.

It sounds odd and convoluted, but it's surprisingly simple and effective. Yesss! Something worked!

Now I'm at a crossroads.

There's a healthy chunk of the game left to create. If I'm going to get it done this year, I've got to drop my Zen ways and streamline the process. Instead of trying to do everything at once, I've got to pick one avenue and run like hell.

So it comes down to this: structure or narrative? Do I lay down the rest of the framework in ADRIFT with placeholder text so that the game could be test-navigated from beginning to end and then fill in the blanks later? Or do I focus on the writing and let it define the tasks I'll need to add to ADRIFT?

For ages now, I've been trying to do both at the time, moving with the stately confidence of a snail. I'm tempted to test the tensile strength of ADRIFT by adding the bulk of the remaining tasks. I'd have a better idea of what I need to fill in text wise if I went that route. Make up your mind, Bitter.

Sure, that all sounds good, but let's get to what I really spent my free January seconds doing.

Whenever I had a moment to spare, I got into my time machine for a little nostalgia and navel gazing. I'm a firm believer in plundering the past to shape the future. You've got to go backward to go forward and all that. Uh-huh. Two words: lazy bastard.

For some reason, I'm drawn to the year 1984. I think it's because I never got over being fourteen. I squandered a good chunk of my AIF free time playing around with an emulation of my dear old Atari 800. I was quite the computer jockey and perv back then. What am I saying?! Like anything has changed!

With the odd minute here and there, I played through several of my old favorites including Alternate Reality: The Dungeon and The Return of Heracles. I've got to say that after all these years there's still something infinitely satisfying about a stick figure Achilles whomping a stick figure Hector.

With the "graphic" games out of the way, I zeroed in on some Infocom games to really return to my text adventure roots. The Atari 800 emulator brought back the glory of yesteryear's blocky, white type on a sky-blue background. I swear the text didn't look that chunky back then.

Anyway, it took me back to the reedy teen who blew nights tussling with Planetfall and Enchanter. Yeah, I know. Those were simple times, old man. I'll soon be reminiscing about my hair and teeth with similar fondness, I'm sure.

It's important, though, because that's when I really got into writing. It's also when I first got the bug to create AIF.

That reminds me... in an attic somewhere there are some incriminating five-and-a-quarter inch floppy disks packed with naive but enthusiastic erotica I wrote with Atariwriter back in the day. All kinds of lovely nonsense involving classmates and supermodels.

I also wrote some AIF in Basic that was pretty good considering I was going mostly from imagination at that point. In hindsight, I got most of it right. ;) Those games didn't really have a parser per se... just a bunch of IF-THENS, but I did my best.

I even went so far as to create a "graphic" adventure using a long-forgotten program that let you draw pictures that would be displayed at key points in your text adventure. You can probably imagine the kinds of things I drew, pixel by giant pixel. I'd hate to see those blocky Rorschachs now, but I'm sure the spirit was there.

As is usually the case with nostalgia, it was quickly over. My mind wandered back to the present. I uninstalled the Atari 800 emulator and closed the door on my old room with its teenage "innocence" and its plethora of Paulina Porizkova posters.

While that bit o' retrospection might have squandered my AIF time, I've got to say it boosted my overall enthusiasm for this project. I feel like I played a really good 22-year-old joke on myself. I'm back where I started. A smartass wannabe AIFer. Oh well. Some good things never change.

I'll finish this game someday. I really will. It's just taking a few years longer than I'd planned. I just need to hide from the world for about three months so I can get it done. I wonder if I can apply for a grant...

Seven Seas of Thēah - Episode 12 by Christopher Cole

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

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

Magnus looked around the ship. Fires had started here and there, blood washed along the deck with the sea water, cries of fighting and death numbed the senses, and bodies lay strewn about. He leapt half-way up the stairs, away from his attackers to get closer to where Violetta fell into the water. He chanced a glimpse overboard, but saw no sign of her. Taking one last look back at the fighting, he sheathed his sword and dove over the wall of the ship, into the frothing, stormy sea below.

Sounds became muffled as he entered the warm waters. He lost his equilibrium momentarily and then dove further down into the sea as wayward shots zipped past him through the water. The sea water was relatively clear, but was so churned up from the battle, that he had a hard time seeing much until he was deep enough in the water to be free of the ships' influence.

When the water settled a little in the deep, there was no sign of Violetta. A pirate body floated dead in the water in front of him, and he pushed it aside, looking for any sign of his companion.

Magnus was fast running out of breath, and decided he needed to head back to the surface before resuming his search. He began to swim up and outwards slightly so that he would not come up between the two warring ships. As he returned to the churning water close to the surface, he again was unable to see too far ahead of himself.

As his lungs began to burn, a dark object loomed out of the frothing water on the surface ahead of him. He tried to change direction, but was hit by the beam of wood. Part of a mast had fallen off one of the ships and was now dragging him back down into the depths. He moved out from underneath the beam and began again to head to the surface when he noticed his foot had caught up in some of the rigging that was still attached to the beam.

He expelled what air he had left as he frantically tried to free his leg. In the meantime he was being dragged deeper and deeper into the sea. Even if he was able to free himself now, he doubted if he'd be able to make it back to the surface before he drowned. He began to see black spots before his eyes, and his hands and fingers were going numb. He was unable to free himself, but still he tried. He clung precariously to consciousness, but was losing the battle.

Just before he gave in to the darkness, he saw shadowy shapes in the deep. They moved closer to him and though he tried to concentrate and clear his vision, he was unable to do so. He felt soft hands on his body and felt himself being freed from the rigging. Then all went black.

Magnus awoke an indeterminate time later. He coughed and sat up with a start, blinking water out of his eyes. It took him a moment to focus, but when he did he found himself in a small cave. Water dribbled down the walls of the cool cavern, and seaweed lined the floor. He was lying on a rock floor, beside a pool of dark water. The pool was roughly circular and perhaps five yards in diameter. There was some motion in the pool, but the water was too dark to see what it was.

He suddenly heard a light singing; beautiful female voices singing in an unknown tongue. He reached for his sword, but found that his belongings were missing. He wore his breeches but was bare-chested and without his boots. He looked around again but did not see any way into or out of the cave except for the natural pool of water beside him.

WHAT SHOULD MAGNUS DO?

- 1) Get some more rest?**
- 2) Search the cave?**
- 3) Examine the pool?**
- 4) Jump in the pool?**
- 5) Listen to the singing?**

O Erin!

O Erin! is on hiatus. Look for its return in a future edition. All previous comic strips can be viewed on the Newsletter web site.

AIF Wants You

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

Staff

Editor A Ninny is an AIF player, author of three AIF games and frequent beta-tester. His *Parlour* received an Erin for Best “One Night Stand” game in 2004. His most recent game is *Malaise*.

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

Staff Writers A Bomire is the author of several TADS AIF games, including *Dexter Dixon: In Search of the Prussian Pussy*, *Tomorrow Never Comes* and *The Backlot*. His games have won numerous awards and Erin nominations.

BBBen is an AIF author. His games have received two Erin awards, numerous nominations and first place in A. Bomire's 2004 mini-comp.

Grimm Sharlak is the author of two AIF games: *Breakout* and *Of Masters and Mistresses: Abduction*.

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.

Bitterfrost is a longtime IF/AIF player working on his first (and last) game, *How I Got Syphilis*.

Submitting your work to “Inside Erin”

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

