

DRIFTERS MONTHLY

- Edited by Woodfish (yimcpee@hotmail.com)
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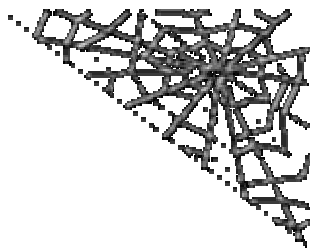
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Editorial



Come closer... that' s it... let me see you... I have a treat for you my pretty, come inside... I want to show you something... don' t be afraid... It wont hurt... much.. Hahahahaha.....

Hello there, to the second issue of Drifters Monthly. After the success of the first one amongst the ADRIFT community, we have decided to continue this publication.

Since last issue, I' ve had lots of things going on, such as school, holidays, a new computer, and generally lots of things to sort out. This has meant a bit of a delay, and somewhat contradicted this newsletter' s title, but here it is, and hopefully they will be out monthly from now.

I would like to remind everyone that this newsletter consists entirely of contributions, and I' m looking for new content all the time. If you feel you can send something in (a review, notice of a new game you are working on, article, letter, or anything else on your mind which you want to contribute) then PLEASE DO SO! The email address is driftersmonthly@hotmail.com and everything received will be appreciated.

The Drifters Monthly site is now up and running, as well! Andrew Nicholas, known as NickyDude amongst the ADRIFT community, is the webmaster, and the site looks great! Here you can find all the issues revamped, with a new layout, and it looks truly great. Plain text versions can be found at www.driftersmonthly.8m.com.

Now. To more important business. Halloween is upon us, and no doubt all the ghosts and witches and little kids dressed up in sheets are out to play. I have never really got into the whole trick-or-treat thing, myself. I tend to hang out with my friends upstairs and drop eggs onto the unsuspecting ghoulish customers. Come to think of it, there isn' t much going on in the ADRIFT Community halloween-wise, either. The main festive event of the year is christmas, with KF' s Winter Comp, and the Christmas party game in development by Mystery.

This is an important month for ADRIFT, what with the IF Competition, and three extremely good games have been submitted, which will hopefully show everyone what ADRIFT is really capable of. As this newsletter goes out, the games are being judged, and we have had three, extremely good games sent in. Have a look at New Releases to see what they are.

News

It has finally been announced that there is an **ADRIFT Chat Room**. It is a good place to get to know your fellow Drifters and talk about various aspects of ADRIFT. You can find a link in the Announcements section of the ADRIFT FORUM, or follow this link....

Next on the agenda is **Character Modules**. Mystery is working on a project and is requesting all Drifters download the Master Character Module Creator from the demos page of the main ADRIFT site. They are due in by November 1st. Full instructions are included.

Mystery is also requesting a personal photo from everyone for a separate project. It cant be stated what the project is, but we know that it is something special.

The Annual IF Comp voting period has began, see New Releases section for more on the games. Also, Release 36 of ADRIFT is now out, with some big improvements. There have been a ton of bugs fixed from the last few releases, as well as some major new features, such as the new Edit Mode (being able to take text from the Runner), the use of variables in the ALR, and much more.

New releases

The Adventures page has been fairly deserted recently, perhaps because of the 8th Annual Interactive Competition run by Stephen Granade. The entries have been rounded up, and there are three made with ADRIFT, by DuoDave, ToddWat, and Hanadorobou (hah! Spelt it!) Now, we are not strictly allowed to discuss the games during the voting period, so expect full reviews and coverage next issue, but I'd of thought it would be okay to just give you a run down.

A Party To Murder by DuoDave.

This is his fourth game released and is quite the opposite to his other games, showing a darker side to his story telling. Expect an interview next issue.

Unravelling God by ToddWat

This is his first completed game. It is a short, but moving piece of IF, which is focused heavily upon story and characters.

The PK Girl by Hanadorobou

My personal favourite, is also a first game for Hanadorobou. NPCs and events around you are a main part of this game, and it is recommended. So see next issue for more on these games, and find out how they did in the Competition!

Other releases

However, there were two games uploaded since last issue. GOLDILOCKS IS A FOX by Jason Guest was put up (see KF's Competition for more), and also: THE DOOR TO UTOPIA by davidw This was apparently made in two days, and if that's true, then davidw has a game to be proud of. I, Woodfish, have posted a review of it up on the main site, and gave it 6 out of 10.

Mut Muses

Usually when a program like ADRIFT has such a small community, any new games are considered welcome additions. After all, who even pays attention to a program if it doesn't have something of a following? It seems, though, that this does not always hold true, as is the case with a certain writer named Christopher Cole.

Known for such controversial games as "Camp Windy Lake" and "The Gamma Gals," Cole has become something of a celebrity in the world of ADRIFT. But

why is it that people find his work so objectional? Is it because of the pornographic focus of the games, because I really can't see any other reason. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe that there are many X-rated movies (professional and amateur) and books (so-called "romance novels"), so why not games? Is there anything really wrong with them? I mean sure, there are some religions and cultures where sex is considered a terrible thing (such as the Shakers, and just look what happened to them), but does this mean that it should be denied to all?

Some people may argue that the fact that so long as Mr. Cole's games are labeled as a part of ADRIFT, they may become available to the younger users. Well, these people have obviously never used the internet, because it's almost impossible NOT to stumble upon some XXX site or advertisement while leisurely cruising around. It's like the net's been turned into one big red light district. Another oft-argued point is that his games include taboo situations such as underage sex and incest. Well, no-one said you had to like them, just that you should accept them. If something seems obscene or objectional, then just deal with it! After all, what you find disgusting, others might find erotic.

So is it just because people find the subject-matter tasteless that Mr. Cole is thought so lowly of? Because behind all the sex and, well, sex, there are actually some fairly good games. If everyone could just learn to accept this genre of interactive fiction, find a little bit of tolerance for it, I'm sure we'd all be better people. Okay, maybe that's stretching it a bit, but at least we wouldn't be so damned close-minded.



Mut -

Mad Monk's Sanitorium

Hello, all fourteen of you reading this article. Yeah, yeah, I know--you read this and you think, "Hey, his article didn't have much last month! Just a bunch of quotes!" Well, you're right again. Except! Except now, you will be treated to my semi-witty observations of the quotes and a few illegible lines of "humor"! Isn't life great?

"There are ghosts in my sinuses." -George Carlin, in his book "Brain Droppings"
Reading this quote, I thought, "How does he know? Does he hear little voices late at night, or did he blow his nose and see George Washington's brother waving from the hanky?"

"' Dagnabbit' will never get you anywhere with the Booker Prize people. Lose it." -Steve Martin, in his book "Pure Drivel"

Wayall, dagnabbit, "dagnabbit" is the dagnabbed greatest dagnabbed word to ever be written on a dagnabbed sheet of dagnabbin' paper!

"You know
your onions
lettuce suppose
this beets 'em all
don' t turnip your nose
Burma-Shave" -random series of Burma-Shave signs

What does a gaggle of vegetables have to do with automatically-shaving shaving cream? Was this slogan written by a vigilante vegetarian? Or a beefy-buffed beef eater? Vote now, or be a small fragile twig!

"Arthur realized as he fell, giddily and sickeningly, that if he was going to hang around in the sky believing everything that the Italians had to say about physics when they couldn' t even keep a simple tower straight, that they were in dead trouble, and he damn well did fall faster than Fenchurch." -Douglas Adams, in his book "So Long, And Thanks For All The Fish"

I admire this kind of total disrespect for nature. Also, I admire this kind of total disrespect for other cultures. It' s something we need to see more of nowadays. Damn political correctness!



Mad Monk -

Jokes of the month

We all know kids can say some of the most funniest things, they can get away with things that adults wouldn' t even dream of! So why not brighten your day with some hilarious things kids have said on their test papers at school and yes, these are real test answers!

- o "When you breath, you inspire. When you do not breath, you expire."
- o "H3O is hot water, and CO3 is cold water"
- o "To collect fumes of sulphur, hold a deacon over a flame in a test tube"
- o "When you smell an oderless gas, it is probably carbon monoxide"
- o "Nitrogen is not found in Ireland because it is not found in a free state"
- o "Three kinds of blood vessels are arteries, vanes and caterpillars."
- o "Blood flows down one leg and up the other."
- o "Respiration is composed of two acts, first inspiration, and then expectoration."

- "The moon is a planet just like the earth, only it is even deader."
- "Artificial insemination is when the farmer does it to the cow instead of the bull."
- "Dew is formed on leaves when the sun shines down on them and makes them perspire."
- "A super-saturated solution is one that holds more than it can hold."
- "Mushrooms always grow in damp places and so they look like umbrellas."
- "The body consists of three parts -- the brainium, the borax and the abominable cavity. The brainium contains the brain, the borax contains the heart and lungs, and the abominable cavity contains the bowls, of which there are five -- a, e, i, o, and u."
- "The pistol of a flower is its only protection against insects."
- "The alimentary canal is located in the northern part of Indiana."
- "The skeleton is what is left after the insides have been taken out and the outsides have been taken off. The purpose of the skeleton is something to hitch meat to."
- "A permanent set of teeth consists of eight canines, eight cuspids, two molars, and eight cuspidors."
- "The tides are a fight between the Earth and moon. All water tends towards the moon, because there is no water in the moon, and nature abhors a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in his fight."
- "A fossil is an extinct animal. The older it is, the more extinct it is."
- "Many women believe that an alcoholic binge will have no ill effects on the unborn fetus, but that is a large misconception."
- "Equator: A managerie lion running around the Earth through Africa."
- "Germinate: To become a naturalized German."
- "Litter: A nest of young puppies."
- "Magnet: Something you find crawling all over a dead cat."
- "Momentum: What you give a person when they are going away."
- "Planet: A body of Earth surrounded by sky."
- "Rhubarb: A kind of celery gone bloodshot."
- "Vacuum: A large, empty space where the pope lives."
- "Before giving a blood transfusion, find out if the blood is affirmative or negative."
- "To remove dust from the eye, pull the eye down over the nose."
- "For a nosebleed: Put the nose much lower than the body until the heart stops."
- "For drowning: Climb on top of the person and move up and down to make artificial perspiration."
- "For fainting: Rub the person's chest or, if a lady, rub her arm above the hand instead or put the head between the knees of the nearest medical doctor."
- "For dog bite: put the dog away for several days. If he has not recovered, then kill it."
- "For asphyxiation: Apply artificial respiration until the patient is dead."
- "To prevent contraception: wear a condominium."
- "For head cold: use an agonizer to spray the nose until it drops in your throat."
- "To keep milk from turning sour: Keep it in the cow."

Kids eh... don' t ya just love ' em

Interview: Campbell Wild

Campbell Wild, the author of ADRIFT, lives in Edinburgh. Here' s what he has to say about himself, ADRIFT, and IF in general.

>Campbell Wild, thank you for this interview. First, who are you, and what do you do for a living?

I'm just an average 26 year old, living in Scotland. I'm currently a Systems Developer working for a finance company in Edinburgh.

>How did you first get interested in Interactive Fiction?

I played my first interactive fiction game at school when I was about 12. It was Jacaranda Jim, by Graham Cluley. I played this for quite a few lunchtimes, getting further than most people, but nowhere near the end. I later came across Humbug, a more advanced adventure also by GC.

>What gave you the idea of creating an IF authoring tool?

I started writing a few games, each time from scratch. I found that each time I did it I was writing the same bits of code again and again, and it was very monotonous. I realised that to write Interactive Fiction, it wasn't really necessary to know most of what goes on in the background. I also wanted my sister to write me a game as I kept on bugging her to play mine. She never did.

>ADRIFT has advanced a lot over the years. What aspect of ADRIFT are you most proud of?

Umm, I'd have to say the automapper, autotext feature (both unique and original to ADRIFT), and also the Drifters who use it and constantly give me support

>Why did you decide to make ADRIFT shareware, since the release of v4?

It was really something to force myself to continue developing it. I was (and still am) constantly being sent hundreds of emails asking me to add this, change that, and it takes a long time to maintain. I have other things (and people) that need my time and attention and I need some kind of justification to spend so much time developing the software.

>Do you think ADRIFT has a chance of competing against TADS or Inform (both freeware) when authors have to pay to use ADRIFT?

I think ADRIFT is completely different to the afore-mentioned systems. It is a development tool, rather than a language. You can't stop someone from writing something in Inform or TADS if they have a text editor. ADRIFT allows you to do this much quicker, much easier, and I believe with a lot more enjoyment. I think that's one of the more important points. As ADRIFT gets more reliable and more powerful, I believe it can stand up to the others.

>What is your ultimate goal for ADRIFT?

I would like to see ADRIFT respected in the same way that the "Big Three" are. I think it already has as many (if not more) adventures written for it currently as the

other systems, so once it has a history of quality games and libraries, I believe it will.

>So what are your favourite ADRIFT games at the moment?

To be quite honest, I don't really get much opportunity to play other games any more - the only time I see them is when I'm debugging them. One I really like at the moment, and have gone a fair way through is Hanadorobou's 'The PK Girl'.

>Do you have any new games planned for release?

I've been working for several months on reproducing 'Humbug', to be released shortly. I'd love to be able to create my own game, but I'm not sure when I'll have the time or imagination to do that.

>Can we expect any major additions to ADRIFT in the near future?

In the current version, the major enhancements ahead are the Command Builder and the Developers Pack. The Command Builder should allow you to create task commands simply from selecting from a graphical tree structure of commands. The Developers Pack should allow people with Visual Basic to create their own 'add ons' to ADRIFT Runner, by communicating directly with the application.

>What do you see for the future of IF? Where do you think the interactive fiction medium is heading?

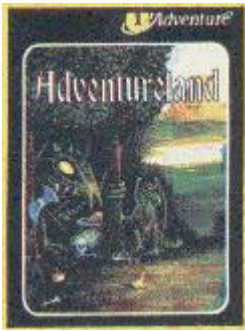
Hmm, difficult question. The chances are it will continue as it is, with a strong following within a small community. It is, however, surprising that so many people rediscover IF having played it years earlier. I think one of the main problems is letting the world know it exists. If that happens, who knows where IF will go?

>Thanks for your time, Campbell

History of IF – In the beginning

In 1972 a computer programmer working at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology called Bill Crowther wrote a game based on his passion for caving to entertain his young daughters. He called it Adventure and a new genre of gaming was born.

Crowther had written his game on a DEC PDP-10 mainframe and based his computerised world on the actual layout of Kentucky's Bedquilt Caves. The game was distributed over the ARPAnet (American Advanced Research Project Agency network - the forerunner of the Internet) and many players began to modify the code - most famously Don Woods of Stanford University, California, whose version was the first of countless mutations to appear.



In 1978, an avid Adventure player called Scott Adams released the first ever commercial adventure: Adventureland. It was the start of a long association with the genre for Adams that would transform him into a major industry figure. Back at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology a group of students had developed yet another version of Adventure called Zork. ("Zork" was originally just a name that was given to any unfinished project around MIT. When the implementors gave Zork an official name for the first time, they called it "Dungeon", but for some reason people kept on calling it

"Zork" anyway so that name stuck!) Such was its popularity that they decided to set up their own company - Infocom.

The 1970s also saw the rise of a fantasy role-playing game called Dungeons and Dragons. For many, the new computer medium offered a perfect way of taking the imaginary world of elves and wizardry a step further, without the need for manuals, dice and lead figurines - the computer could be your Dungeon Master. Most early adventures offered the player a text description of a location without any graphical representation. Movement and actions were undertaken by typing simple verb/noun combinations into the keyboard, such as "GO EAST" or "KILL GOBLIN". As time passed, however, graphics began to appear and more complex sentences could be understood, including conversations with other characters within the game. Not that those adventures with graphics were necessarily superior to text-only versions; sometimes programmers used images as an alternative to vivid descriptions and sacrificed atmosphere as a result.



Compared to the modern point-and-click adventures such as the fabulous Monkey Island series, the old method of typing in commands seems archaic. Back in the early 80' s though, graphics were still relatively primitive and many gamers were searching for something more immersive than the solitary existence of blasting aliens. The two-way nature of the adventure proved to be a surprisingly intimate and involving experience and one that most graphics-reliant games struggled to compete with. The method of typing instructions into the computer had its problems. The player would have to type in the precise command that the programmer had specified, so the more limited the alternative phrasings, the less playable the game.

For example, you might type "**STAND ON CHAIR**" or "**GET ON CHAIR**", when the game is only programmed to accept "**CLIMB ON CHAIR**". Worse still, it might even require you to "**GET CHAIR**" before you can climb on it. It's no surprise really that this fussy interface died off with the demise of the 8-bit computers. Due to their simplicity, adventures were a natural choice for the first home computers and they were amongst the earliest games to appear in any number for the Spectrum. Companies like Melbourne House, Artic, Quicksilva and Incentive produced some high quality text adventures between 1982 and 1984, but the first major revolution in the genre came with Lords of Midnight, which in many regards became the first 'epic' game for the Spectrum. It offered dazzling graphics for each location, strategy-style game play, multiple characters, a vast playing area and a control system based on single key presses rather than text input. By the mid-1980's, the genre was becoming a minority interest. Magazines were dedicating less space to reviews and software companies who had made their names in adventures were moving into the more popularist realm of arcade games. The adventure seemed to be standing still in a medium where the next best thing is all that matters. Ironically, the word games of the adventure have lasted the test of time better than most arcade games, because they never relied on computing power for their appeal.



NickyDude [[WebMaster](#)]-

Overriding system responses

ADRIFT, like all IF-authoring systems, has a library of commands that the system understands, for which it executes set actions, and outputs set responses. Without you, the author, doing anything, your ADRIFT game will have something of relevance to tell the player whenever he tries to "LISTEN", "LIE DOWN", "EAT [object]", "PUNCH [character]", and so on, no matter the circumstances. While it's necessary and proper that this structure exists, your game needs not settle for every action and response the system is prepared to dish out to the player.

All can be overridden. Your game will require you to override commands and responses as called for by the story, but you ought also to override wherever and whenever possible, even when not strictly necessary. Why? Because the less you let your audience see the same stock responses that they've seen in every other ADRIFT game out there, the more interesting gameplay for them will be. Or, to state it another way, the more you take matters into your own hands where commands-responses are concerned, the more unique your game becomes.

In the ADRIFT Generator it is possible to override a command along with its actions and response, or to override the response only. Overriding the command together with its actions and response is accomplished through the creation of

tasks, and every ADRIFT author knows how to do it. Overriding just the response can also be accomplished with tasks, but is a job better left to your ALR file. Consider the following example:

You push the button but nothing happens.|You push the button on the plaid shirt, but nothing happens. And come to think of it, no button attached to an article of clothing ever did anything when you pushed it.

Using the ALR file to replace system responses with your own ('replace' may be a better word than 'override' in this context) saves you the trouble of worrying about parsing, ambiguity handling, restrictions, actions, etc. The system handles all that for you; all you worry about is what the player sees on the screen. It is also more efficient in terms of performance. Of course, you won't be able to use the ALR file to replace responses for all commands. For instance, if you need an event to start upon completion of the command, or a room description to display, you have no choice but to create a task for it. Nor will the ALR file service replacements for responses that aren't specific enough. For instance, you can't work with "That smells normal" when you want a response based on what object or character is being smelled.

So which commands/responses should be left to the system and which should be overridden? No author can possibly override every mundane thing players will try to do. Though a response like "You reach for the coffee pot, nearly spilling it over, but somehow manage to steady it in your clumsy hands" is more interesting than "You pick up the coffee pot", most of the time the latter will have to do. It all depends on how much labor you are willing to devote to your project. I would like to suggest some commands that you may want to consider overriding to fit your game, along with example ALR entries. Normally, you would give attention to all this once your game is essentially complete. A game ought to be playable without all this fuss, but extra effort can transform a good game into a great one.

EAT [object]

You can't eat the blanket.|You chew on the blanket like you did when you were a child.

OPEN [object]

You can't open the textbook!|You could flip open the textbook, but do you really intend to read this boring stuff?

BREAK [object]

You might need the stained glass window.|Oh, the trouble you'd get in for that!

TAKE [static object]

You can't take the microwave oven.|You try to lift the microwave oven but it is just too heavy for your frail self.

ATTACK [character]

The bounty hunter avoids your feeble attempts. The bounty hunter pulls out a thermal detonator from somewhere on his person and thrusts it in front of you. You desist.

GIVE [dynamic object] TO [character]

The ogre doesn't seem interested in the broom. You give the broom to the ogre. He uses it to pick some old goblin flesh from his teeth, then returns the broom to you with a flash of his sparkling whites.

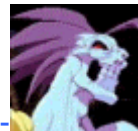
(Of course, when you want the object to actually change possession, you have to create a task instead)

N, S, E, W, etc

When movement is prevented in that direction. You can't use the ALR for this since the system response says nothing of what room the player is in. It must be done with tasks. It is labor-intensive, but worth doing. A player likes to be given a reason for why he can't walk off in a given direction.

Some others: PUSH, PULL, MOVE, TURN, SHAKE, KISS, PUNCH, KILL, JUMP, SLEEP, SCREAM.

The Appendix of the ADRIFT manual lists all the commands that ADRIFT understands. (They aren't listed, but ADRIFT also understands XYZZY, CAMPBELL, and several cuss-words) I recommend going through the list and trying all these out in an empty game to see what responses you get. If you don't like a response, write your own. Alternatively you can use the ALR file included with Butcher Basic Pro. Butcher Basic Pro can be found in the v3.90 section of the ADRIFT downloads page.



Hanadorobou -

"What exactly do people want in a game?"

Here is the result of a thread on The Forum: "What exactly do people want in a game?"

- Don't be vague in your descriptions. Nobody likes playing a game with BORING descriptions like- "A wood chair." You can spice it up much better than that.
- If you mention something in a description, then you should make it accountable. Make an object for everything you describe, from a puffy cloud in the sky, shaped like an elephant, to the small pebble on the ground that looks like a dead rock star. Account for EVERYTHING!
- HAVE IT BETA TESTED! All the little stuff you miss, beta-testers might catch! So have you game beta tested and you will get to see how different players play your game and are then able to account for things you have missed.....don't believe me? Ask people that have had their games beta-tested.

- o Describe your game properly on the downloads page, i.e. none of the "this is my game. Enjoy it." If you can't be bothered to write a decent description of it, don't expect people to bother playing it.
- o Cut down on guess-the-verb; i.e. don't have a task "fracture window" when "break" or "smash" will work far better.
- o If you have unusual commands in your game, make sure you tell the player about them.
- o If you have characters in your game, make sure you have a default response for them. Don't leave it at "[character] doesn't reply to that."
- o Don't make excuses for your game; i.e. "this is my first game. Please say nice things about it." To me that reads: "this game is c*** but please don't say bad things about it because you might hurt my feelings."
- o I can't stress the importance of spelling and grammar. If your game is lacking in errors, it gives it a professional sheen that helps your image as an author, and makes it that much more enjoyable to play.
- o Don't skip on your plot. Half of fiction is the story (the other half being the writing), and half of Interactive Fiction is fiction. Remember, the player has to have a reason to be doing what he/she is doing.
- o Don't make a game where you're supposed to save a princess, but to complete the game you must flush a live hermaphrodite turkey down a greased toilet for no apparent reason. Don't laugh at that, I bet it's happened.
- o Play every piece of IF you can get your hands on--it doesn't matter if it is ADRIFT or not. You know the rule about writing, don't you? "To write books, you must read them." The same applies to IF. I myself have 73MB full of ADRIFT games!

Competition overview: ADRIFT Summer Minicomp 2003

There's a summer over. There's been laughter there's been tears, but rather disappointingly, there's only two entries. But they were very good entries. And here's how the results went: In second (and consequently last) place was 'Goldilocks Is A Fox!', the debut game by JJ Guest. So, in first place was... dubadubadum - 'Professor Von Witt's Fabulous Flying Machine' by Mystery!

Reviews of these two games can be found in the Reviews Section.

This lucky reporter was able to speak exclusively to KF, competition administrator, forum moderator, webmaster of www.kfadrift.org.uk, and all round forum contributor. Here's what he had to say on the comp:

"This was the fourth minicomp I organised and one of the more enjoyable, although two entries and two judges aren't exactly a ringing endorsement. Both the entries, from Mystery and The Amazing Poodle Boy, were fairly strong works, and the judges comments were passed to the entrants allowing the release of updated versions.

I am now looking forward to seeing what entries I get for the End of Year 2002 competition which takes place around Christmas and the New Year."

Reviews

Goldilocks is a Fox by J.J. Guest **Reviewed by Davidw**

From the title you might get the impression that this is a rather silly game. You'd be right too, 'Goldilocks is a Fox' is a strange mishmash of fairy tales: the Goldilocks of the title, a big bad wolf, three bears, a fairy godmother, Sleeping Beauty, Prince Charming, etc. And references to the three pigs also pop up from time to time.

The story is pretty much nonsense from the word go but it's handled in such an amusing manner that you find yourself not minding how ridiculous and farfetched it all is. In fact, part of the game's charm is that it's written strictly tongue-in-cheek and isn't afraid to let it show.

As the game begins, you, as the eponymous Goldilocks, have just returned from a crazy art party and have decided, as you do, to walk through a dark wood on the way home (well, I did say it was nonsense). The wood is pretty much just a way to get from the start of the game to the three bears' cottage but it has a few interesting pieces that add to the humour of the game: Goldilocks' "ooh, I'm so scared" in the location description, the big bad wolf popping up and mistaking you for Little Red Riding Hood (who is, alas, missing from the game). In fact, the wood is an interesting enough set of locations in its own right.

The game properly opens up when you reach the three bears' cottage and have to figure out just how to get inside and what to do once you're there. One interesting thing I found about the cottage was how much larger on the inside it is than on the outside!

Unlike so many comedy games, 'Goldilocks is a Fox' doesn't just go for the quick humour and forgets about the game side of things. Take away the comedy and the general silliness and there is a very well put together game here. There are some quite intricate puzzles (the one with the large chair in particular being a favourite of mine) and while not every puzzle is logical or straightforward, they don't require too much thought on the part of the player to solve. That said, this isn't a game that you're likely to solve in the space of a single sitting; which is probably just as well as there are a fair number of good ideas here that would be ruined if you played the game through too fast.

Bugs: 10 (out of 10)

I didn't find any bugs in the game and, believe me, I looked and looked.

Story: 08 (out of 10)

Even though the source material - Goldilocks, the three bears, etc, etc, - is hardly original, 'Goldilocks is a Fox' has had enough work expended on it that it comes across as a whole new experience.

Characters: 08 (out of 10)

The big bad wolf was the best of the bunch although the peddler was interesting enough in his own way.

Writing: 08 (out of 10)

Way above average and with some interesting location descriptions and dialogue with the characters in the game.

Game: 07 (out of 10)

A close tie with 'Wonder Wombat' and 'Troll!' for best comedy ADRIFT game.

Overall: 41 (out of 50)

Professor Von Witt's Fabulous Flying Machine by Mystery
Reviewed by Davidw

In this game you play the Professor Von Witt of the title and follow his attempts to become a respected member of the Inventors of Contraptions Committee, something he attends to do by means of inventing a flying machine. Inventions come quite easy to Von Witt (as is evidenced by the mishmash of them lying around in his laboratory) but good inventions seem to be what he really struggles for.

Venture around the town where the game is set and you'll meet quite a wide variety of characters. As with previous games by Mystery, these are amusingly rendered and often quite over the top in their mannerisms (particularly Burton who threatens to stone you to death just for speaking to him!) Trying to kiss some of the characters gives a comical response about getting your lips stuck and having to wait several hours for a lip lock expert to come and give you a hand. You're then hit with a bill for \$300 although, fortunately, you don't have to pay this.

Professor Von Witt is actually quite a small game but due to the amount of detail crammed into each location it gives the impression of being quite a bit bigger than it really is. There are only around ten locations in the entire game yet these are used well. Thankfully there are no "filler" locations (i.e. those put there to make the game seem larger without really serving any purpose).

Interaction with characters is interesting and handled in a similar manner to Mystery's earlier game, Selma's Will. Unfortunately that's not the only similarity. As the majority of puzzles in Selma's Will involved finding an item and then finding the right person to give it to, so do a large number of the puzzles in Professor Von Witt. While there's nothing actually wrong with this as such, it draws quite a few comparisons with Selma's Will which, overall, was a stronger game.

Overall this is a good game with well above average writing and some interesting puzzles but instead of being a step forward from Selma's Will it seems like a step back.

Bugs: 10 (out of 10)

None, fortunately.

Story: 07 (out of 10)

Quite an interesting one and Von Witt's inventions which include, amongst others - an extra hand and a leg to stand on, add some humour to the game.

Characters: 08 (out of 10)

Most locations contain at least one and they are quite an amusing bunch on the whole.

Writing: 07 (out of 10)

As with Selma's Will, pretty impressive.

Game: 06 (out of 10)

Above average

Overall: 38 (out of 50)

Invasion of the second hand shirts by DuoDave

Reviewed by Davidw

By far the silliest game on the downloads page, 'Invasion of the Second-Hand Shirts' is DuoDave's attempt at a "deliberately bad" game but, credit to the writer (or maybe not as the case may be), it actually turned out to be quite a bit better

than most of the games released around the same time. What the title refers to I've no idea. It certainly has nothing to do with the game.

As far as nonsense games go, this game just about has every other one in the field licked: it starts with a detailed introduction which, the final paragraph explains, has nothing to do with the rest of the game whatsoever. Indeed, you start the game actually 'inside' a tree with no inkling as to why you're even there. Think the game sounds a little nuts so far? Boy, it hasn't even started.

Escape from the tree and you find yourself at a brook in which swims the Goddess of Love, Aphrodite. At the side of the brook is a leech playing the guitar (how well is never stated).

The lunacy continues right to the end of the game - although perhaps 'end' is the wrong word as the game 'finishes' without ever reaching any kind of proper conclusion. Then again, it's supposed to be deliberately bad and what better way to end a deliberately bad game than to not end it at all?

I imagine you'll either love or hate 'Invasion of the SecondHand Shirts' depending on your sense of humour. I'm kind of in the middle when deciding whether I liked it or not. On the one hand, it's got the most lame ass descriptions you could imagine, no storyline and puzzles which are notoriously poorly thought out; on the other it's got such tacky humour that you find yourself laughing all the same.

For a game that sets out to be deliberately bad, 'Invasion of the SecondHand Shirts' fails quite miserably. It's actually quite amusing in a pathetic kind of way. Play it and judge for yourself. It's certainly not the sort of game you'll forget in a hurry.

Bugs: 08 (out of 10)

Where to start? Bugs as such, no. But exits seem to appear pretty much at random, tasks have little or no relevance and the whole nonsense side of the game means that bugs, if the game was riddled with them, would have fit right in.

Story: 01 (out of 10)

Story? What story?

Characters: 03 (out of 10)

A leech and the Goddess of Love, neither are very well described (probably just as well in the case of the leech though the game was clearly crying out for a little more description when you meet Aphrodite).

Writing: 05 (out of 10)

Downright tacky but amusing in its own way.

Game: 06 (out of 10)

Deliberately bad? No, not really.

Overall: 23 (out of 50)

Previews

Coming soon?

Coming soon, to a Runner near you:

Hatyl: Wizards Need Help Too - Lancer Sykera - December
(Currently going through beta testing)

Oh No Not Another Fantasy Adventure - David Whyld - November
(Read Preview - [Oh No, Oh No Not Another Fantasy Adventure](#))

Green Gulch, Oklahoma - The Mad Monk - Winter Comp Entry
(Comedy western, first person view. Skip town after learning of the incredibly long list of crimes the sheriff has on you!)

Gorilla Suit - JJ Guest - TBC
(You wake up one morning in the gorilla enclosure of your local zoo. You can't remember how you got there, nor how you came to be wearing an ultra-realistic gorilla suit with a stuck zipper. One thing's sŕ certain, if you can't convince the zoo-keeper that you're human, and soon, mating with that large and amorous female is going to be the next thing on your agenda...)

How The West Was... Once - MileOut - 2003
(Comedy western)

The Forum - MileOut - December
(Gothic adventure)

Cowboy Blues - Davidw - December
(The town of Stonetomb is a town in peril: Mad Jake and his gang of notorious outlaws have shown up and promised more mayhem than you can shake a stick at. The residents of Stonetomb are powerless against them (powerless = too damned scared to do anything) and so the task of saving Stonetomb falls to its last remaining cowboy: YOU! Now, all you need to do is get some time off from your day job at the bank and you'll have all the time in the world foreshadowing the town...)

Starfall - Davidw - December
(The alien civilisation of Vangamma faces destruction from an ancient evil which has been awakened upon one of its moons. All attempts to combat the evil have failed and now nothing can stand in its way. Except, that is, for YOU... A serious game which is played from the perspective of several different characters.)

Mind Shadows - Davidw - December
(A writer of horror novels slowly begins to lose his mind... An interactive fiction novel in text format [see the thread about it elsewhere in the forum].)

Oh No Not Another Fantasy Adventure, by davidw

Oh No Not Another Fantasy Adventure, by davidw, is the sequel to Yet Another Damn Fantasy Adventure, the hilarious quest that received a lot of praise amongst the ADRIFT community. Here is a look at what his new game is all about.

-Storyline-

Now no longer a mere farm boy but a powerful lord of the land of Harrenden, you have been given charge of the haunted fortress of Castle Stroppenheim for your own. Once the vermin (i.e. goblins, orcs and a few ogres amongst others) have been cleared out, you expect to lead a long and peaceful life full of eating, drinking and doing as little work as possible...

Until a dragon shows up in the castle courtyard demanding a certain dragon egg you flushed down the privy a while ago. You've managed to keep the fact of what you did from the dragon but it's only a matter of time before he realises the truth of the situation and he's not really the sort of fifty-foot fire-breathing fiend you can reason with. So away with your life of eating, drinking and doing as little work as possible - a quest looms instead. You have to retrieve the dragon egg from wherever it ended up and give it back to its rightful owner before he reduces you and your castle to a pile of rubble...

-Features-

A wide variety of characters who you can talk to, ask questions of, trade items with and, if you're of the bloodthirsty variety, mercilessly slaughter.

A reputation score based on how well you conduct yourself throughout the course of the adventure. Though your reputation doesn't play an essential part in completing the game, things happen differently depending on whether you're currently well liked (a high reputation) or disliked (a low reputation). Needless to say, good deeds raise your reputation and bad deeds lower it.

A couple hundred dynamic items. I toyed with this idea before for YADFA but in the end decided against it. However, I decided to use it here to illustrate the fact that, in real life, everyone you meet will be carrying an item or two around with them. The same applies to the game world. The majority of items may not do anything and are there to add depth but there are a good few that are needed to complete the game. You just have to figure out which are which.

-Problems-

The only problem I've encountered was with the items. In theory, when you kill another character all their items should fall to the ground and allow you to pick them up. But I've been unable to figure out a way to do this, particularly in light of

the fact that items can be traded so there' s no way of knowing which items a certain character will be carrying at any one time.

-Size-

I' d estimate around 150160 KB by the time of completion.

Drifter's Quiz

Ok folks, here' s a little general knowledge quiz, just to dust those cobwebs from your brain.

1. What was the first release of ADRIFT v4 that was non-beta?
2. What was the first game released by MileOut?
3. What do the initials of Davidw' s game YADFA stand for?
4. Which was the highest ranking ADRIFT entry of last years Annual IF Comp?
5. What is the highest number of users on the Forum at any one time?
6. What was the first form of ADRIFT called?
7. Where does ADRIFT creator, Campbell Wild live?
8. Who runs ADRIFT site, KFADRIFT.org.uk?
9. Which author wrote Selma' s Will?
10. On which date did the Forum move to its current location?

Send in your answers to driftersmonthly@hotmail.com and the Drifters Hall Of Fame will feature in the next issue.

Links brought to you by Lancer Sykera.

<http://www.homestarrunner.com/>
Homestar Runner! Wahoo!

<http://www.homestarrunner.com/sbemail.html>
Strong Bad' s email. Updated every Monday, very funny. Addicting. Requires Flash or Shockwave, one of them.

<http://www.columbia.edu/~ejt39/reminder.html>

In case you have forgotten... (Don' t throw things at me!)
BEWARE - this downloads and plays a large MP3 - "It' s Raining Men" and that' s it! This site has been moved.

<http://groups.msn.com/adriftgroup/chat.msnw>

Some of you need to get there more often...

<http://www.judsonian.com/oekaki>

Nice.... Peoples drawings / sketches and people commenting on them.

Contact Us

If you have any suggestions or questions about the newsletter contents or if you find any errors or anything wrong with the newsletter contents, please send an email to yimcphee@hotmail.com.

If you have any queries regarding the Drifter' s Monthly website itself, then please email the site designer at andy@madladdesigns.co.uk



My Nothing by DS490

I' ve been here for a day.

In two minutes, I will have been sitting at the computer for 24 hours straight, minus a bathroom break. Why? Unfinished business.

It all started twenty-three or so hours ago, when I was playing a certain interactive fiction work. I was going good, I had two of the five sacred stones. Next thing I know, I hit one of those blocks. You know, when you get to one point and just can't get any further?

The chalice.

Once I have the chalice, I can beat the game... But the sacred item has avoided me for nearly a day. I've searched the caves, the forest, the fortress...but I just can't find it.

Paper litters my computer desk. Some of it is notes on my search for the chalice; some is much, much older. I'm guessing the paper at the bottom of the pile has got to be nearly a year old, if not older.

Yes, this is my home. The darkened, messy room in which my computer; my life; resides. I don't care for my room because...it doesn't matter to me.

I remember the plate- a single dish which has been lying here for a month. I say to myself every day that I will take it and wash it, but it somehow never gets done. Its buried somewhere in the piles of clothes and CDs.

My senses are numb after a prolonged period of exposure to the darkness, the stench of myself and my environment. But, again, none of this matters- not until I beat this game.

A simple, linear interactive fiction game has trapped me here, a mere object holding me back from finishing this game. I wonder what will come after the game. After I beat it. I'll take the plate to the kitchen and wash it. I'll wash my clothes. Maybe I'll go to school.

Time passes quickly; my search becomes boring and repetitive. I begin to doubt finding the chalice. I decide to go and get a glass of water. I hesitate...I don't know why. No, I need to keep my concentration on the game. If I falter, I may never find the chalice.

My head is light, hunger gnawing at my stomach, fatigue tugging at my sleeve, beckoning me into sweet sleep. But I stay awake and I don't eat, for I must devote every last ounce of my being to finding the chalice.

My search takes me to the caves again; I try everything I can to find a new item, a new room- anything to help me get the chalice.

Nothing.

Suddenly, in the midst of another attempt at finding the chalice, a thought enters my head. I could give up; I could leave this game and do something meaningful. It is just a game, right? As if without any thought at all, I stand.

The plate.

Ignoring the stiffness in the legs on top of the hunger and fatigue, I walk to the pile of junk and clothing by my bed. I begin digging, searching for the plate, tossing items every which way. Eventually I reach the bottom of the pile, coming in contact with my grey carpet for the first time in quite a while. I go to another pile in a corner, and begin digging there.

A sudden surge of pain drowns out my stomach's moans and constrictions as my finger is sliced by something very sharp.

Examine finger.

A stream of blood runs down my hand. The wound is deep, going to the bone, I fear. I look down again, to find the cause of my injury: the chartered remnants of a plain white porcelain plate.

I frown, my eyes wandering between my shaking finger and the pieces of the plate.

What is this?

The result of ignorance, irresponsibility, carelessness; my fault.

I realize something.

I have become an emotionless, anti-social, unloving being because I lost sight of what I cared about, what I valued. That's what keeps one from leading a pitifully meaningless existence- caring.

All I care about is games and whimsical things, both of which are, in the grand scheme of things, nothing. I've ignored what matters, whatever that may be.


I valued nothing, and that nothing has destroyed me.

I fall backwards, unconscious before I hit the ground.

I have damaged myself, but I take comfort in the knowledge that I can fix it.

I'm going to be okay.

I care now.

By Ds490 - 

Endnote

We hope you enjoyed reading Drifters Monthly! Thanks go to: Mystery, Ds490, NickyDude, Davidw, KFAdrift, Mut, Campbell Wild, Lancer Sykera, Hanado... Hana, The Mad Monk, MileOut, and everyone who helped with the newsletter in any way, consciously or otherwise.

Also, thanks to Davidw who tried to hold back release of ONNAFA, so the preview would be relevant. However due to um... technical... stuff... the release date was moved back, which made it really awkward for him. Thanks anyway, davidw!

Remember this relies entirely on contributions, so please send in anything (especially letters and reviews!) Anything you think is worthy, send it in! See you next month (hopefully)!