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www.kipcug.org

KIPCUG

Next meeting
Games Meeting
IU Southeast, Ogle Cntr
Tuesday, December 2, 6:30 p.m.
Now is the time to start planning for Spring Comdex. The event is held in Chicago this year (and for the next ten, I think). This is close enough for a driving trip - which should only be about 5 hours from Louisville.

Only three of KIPCUG’s officers were able to make it to Las Vegas for Fall Comdex of 1997. And I’m not one of them. I am sooooo envious. However, I’m getting ready for the Spring and you should be too!

Windows 98 will probably be the big story of the Spring show. It’s due for release about this time and with a little bit of luck, Microsoft will choose the show for the release date. I remember that Windows 3.1 was unveiled in Chicago in 1992. That was quite exciting.

DVD CD-Roms will probably be going strong about this time also. The AGP video standard from Intel should be shown by all of the video card companies. I am also looking forward to seeing all sorts of USB devices like monitors, keyboards and joysticks. It’s time for this technology, and Infrared also, to start making a strong showing. And you can be sure that the Internet offerings will be overflowing.

The show will start on Sunday and will run through Thursday. Plus, the Consumer Electronic Show is supposed to be combined with it. We will probably see all sorts of tie-ins between computers and video devices. GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) devices should also be widespread.

I can hardly wait. You know, User Group Officers use this time to join with other User Groups throughout the country to network and share information. Get involved now with our Board of Directors to join in with us this Spring.

Contributing staff writers

Judy Lococo, Fred Soward, Sharon Kinney-Romeo
Winnie Miller, David Brooks, Dave Yanish
Bonnie Zepka, Dave Zepka, Bob Wilkinson
Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail

by David Brooks of KIPCUG

Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail is everything you might expect from the zany English men and women - and more. Its intended audience is clearly those who admired the original full-length movie well enough to rent the video repeatedly, strut around saying “Ni,” and hurl insults (and worse) in the general direction of both friends and enemies.

Scenes from virtually the entire movie are on the game’s CD-ROM. This provides the opportunity for you to relive and even participate in your favorite bits from the movie. Each scene begins with dialogue and story line from the movie. You can then click on various items on the screen to uncover hidden jokes, advance the story line, and learn clues useful in helping King Arthur, Lancelot the Brave, Galahad the Pure, Bedevere the Wise, and Robin the Not-Quite-So-Brave-Or-Pure-Or-Wise-As-The-Others, in their quest. At the end of most scenes, one or more swallows carrying coconuts fly around the screen until you blast them out of the sky with your mouse or joystick set to “Disintegrate.”

And all of your favorite scenes are here. You can battle the Black Knight until all of his limbs have been hacked off and he’s finally willing to “call it a draw.”

The guard at Castle Lombard mocks King Arthur and his Knights in one of this game’s hilarious scenes.
The manual accompanying the game is small but full of valuable information. For example, the installation instructions explain how to install the software on both Windows 3.1 and Windows 95. It also contains the following sage advice:

**IMPORTANT: DO NOT START THIS PROGRAM WITHOUT A COMPUTER!** STARTING THIS PROGRAM WITHOUT A COMPUTER COULD RESULT IN SERIOUS INJURY! SEE THIS SENTENCE IN THE INSTRUCTIONS MANUAL FOR FURTHER REFERENCES TO THIS WARNING!

How much clearer could this be?

The music and dialogue are superb. The video combines some live action with the cut-and-paste action animation which was a regular part of the Monty Python television series. The true pleasure lies in the language in the game, whether in the narrative, the dialogue, or the written material shown on-screen. For example, in the Black Knight’s diary he reveals that he is a lonely depressed soul who is able to deal with his situation only by hacking others to death.

If you really enjoy adventure and role-playing games, Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail may not be your cup of tea. It is very funny. It does contain the best scenes from the movie. It will keep you entertained. But it probably will not engage you like Myst or most adventure games where the real challenge is solving puzzles and deciphering the world and creatures around you.

Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail requires a 486 33-Mhz or better PC, 8 MB RAM, 256-color display, mouse or joystick, CD-ROM drive, sound card and speakers, and Windows 3.1 or 95.

A copy of Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail will be one of the door prizes at the December meeting. Be the lucky winning member, and you too can spank a virgin.

**Don’t Forget**

At our meetings, some lucky attendees will usually end up with software - but you must attend to win. A raffle will take place at our December meeting. $1 tickets go a long way. Come join us.

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(502) 893-9147 Fax: (502) 893-9196
by Bob Wilkinson of KIPCUG

The program “Door to Door” was developed for use with Windows 95 or Windows 3.1. I think it is a very fine program. It comes on two CD ROMS in the same jewel case. Disk 1 is the installation disk and needs to be used just for installation. The disk 2 must be used each time that you run the program and may be left in the drive, if you wish.

As the name implies this program actually will prepare a route from your house to any other location in the United States. It is very straightforward in operation, just click on the Icon on your desktop and the starting program is presented. You will be presented with a blank screen in four blocks. The first blank is your start city or where you wish to start your journey. Fill in your city, you will be presented with a screen with all the cities that have the same name as yours. Select yours and then select the proper zip code that applies. Press enter and your selection will be green in color. Press enter again and your cursor position will flash in the blank on the right. Type in your address and strike enter again. The program will then locate this address. Press enter again and your address is presented in green color. Click on the RUN icon on lower bar, the program will then calculate the exact route details and lay out a map from Door to Door. You may then print out the travel information only or, if wanted, the map. This map will print color if your printer has the capability.

This program will allow you to select various other landmarks in any city even though you do not have the address. You may select a ballpark, football field, concert hall, amusement park, zoo, train station, airport, hospital or any other such place. If you are preparing several trips you may take a short cut.

Click on TRIP on upper title bar on the Door to Door screen, select “Edit Trip”, you will then have a full screen of your last trip. Go to the lower left block and add new city, choose details as before, then change the street address for your new destination. After printing this information, you may repeat the above procedure as many times as desired. When you press the Map Zoom Bar in the lower left corner of your screen, you will get an enlarged view of your destination neighborhood. Pressing the mouse pointer on the Plus or minus icons in the title bar, you may enlarge or shrink the maps. When you move your PLUS (+) cursor on the enlarged map it will identify the place when you move the mouse pointer.

You may also add as many as fifteen different stopovers on your trip. Choose Trip, then Start-End from the trip menu and place name of Stopover. Repeat as many times as desired.

You have the option of changing your average road speeds, just click on the options tab. Enter your average by typing or using your up and down arrows for each setting.

You also have the choice of route type, Quickest, Shortest, preferred. You may also add new places by way of the edit the database command.

The writer was well pleased with the program, I recommend it as a must have program for anyone who travels, it is also very useful right in your own city.

Bob is a long time member who often contributes to this magazine.

Get in touch with him if you want to find out more about this product.
What's new in PC Hardware?

by Michael Romeo of KIPCUG

I've got to admit that the pre-built systems coming from NEC, SONY, IBM, Hewlett-Packard and Compaq are starting to look pretty neat. The designs are taking on the look of home stereo equipment instead of metal file cabinets in an office. And finally, they are starting to put features into them that I've been wanting for years.

What are these features? Well, they amount to more buttons, knobs and switches on the monitor and keyboard that make a lot of things much more convenient.

The first major improvement that I notice is that the sound volume control is now a round knob or slider control. This is much more convenient than using mouse clicks to find an icon and then dragging the slider control. Plus, it usually comes with a nice feature that gives you visual feedback of the volume level. It pops up a level indicator onto your monitor display that goes away 5 seconds after you stop moving the knob. It works just like the current television models.

The control of the telephone answering machine aspects are now buttons on the keyboard or monitor. Yea! Now - just like normal folks - you can see a flashing light on your keyboard to inform you of phone messages that have been recorded while you were out. All of the buttons that you are used to seeing on your answering machine are now coming with your PC.

Most PCs are coming with TV capabilities these days. I like this feature. Just plug in your cable-tv wire and you can now watch any channel inside a small window (some can even display a channel in one of those tiny icons) Of course you can view the picture on the whole screen. Some of them even let you route the picture to your larger screen TV monitor. There is some pretty neat software that lets you control all sorts of things. Soon, we will be seeing CD-Roms that are filled with television content that can be controlled by these PCs also.

You are now getting a Remote Control with these PCs. This looks very nice although I think that I would like most controls to be on the keyboard and/or monitor.

One thing that I have been waiting a long time for is AM/FM Radio. I don't see it yet on most of these models but it should be coming to all of them soon.

Sounds pretty neat, eh? It sure has taken a long time to reach this point. It seems to me that unless you have these sorts of capabilities, you are not going to make huge inroads into the home market.

But they still have a ways to go. Here are some of the things that are certain to be coming in the near future.

1. TV cameras that are built into the monitor. The $99 external device that sits on top is just too klunky. This should be controlled with an external button also. Touch a single button and you are now capturing the video display. There should be some indicators showing if the camera is recording - maybe showing how long it's been recording. Another nice feature would be to touch a button to get a snapshot that can be saved onto disk.

2. Most PCs should come with pager capabilities. There is a lot that can be done with this - including managing all of the tag-along services (stock quotes, news stories) that are now being offered with pagers these days.

3. AM/FM radio, of course.

4. Most of the newer PCs can handle a lot of telephony items but I would like to see a phone jack on the side of the monitor so that I could hang a telephone handset onto it. I do not like to use “speakerphones” when I make my calls. Plus I do not like having to go around to the back of the box to plug the cord into the modem card.

5. Modem status lights should be on the keyboard or monitor. The main reason that I buy external modems is for these indicator lights. I would prefer to have an internal modem - but I need these status lights.

6. I want to plug my keyboard and mouse into the front or side of the monitor. It's way too much of a hassle to reach around the back of the box to plug these items in.

7. Headsets should not plug into the back of the box either (into the sound card). It also makes no sense that I have to reach the box to plug the headset into the CD-Rom drive so that I can listen to music CDs. It would be nice if the headset would plug into the keyboard or monitor.

8. How about touching a button to record my voice? It should be as easy to use as a portable tape cassette recorder. I would like to conveniently use a cassette to place my recordings onto it.

continued on page 14
The C-J Newspaper’s Tech Page
A Promising Beginning

by David Brooks of KIPCUG

In the last month or two, the Courier-Journal has revamped its Monday Savvy section to give it a sharper focus. Whereas the earlier Savvy provided tips on everything from shopping to fashion to investments, the new section has a dual thrust - Your Money and the Tech Page.

Your Money looks at investments, shopping, budgeting, and other important, though often neglected, needs that affect every individual and family. Gone are the decorating and fashion tips and Lemme Doit. These features have been moved to other editions of the newspaper to give the Monday Your Money section more punch.

The back half of the section, the Tech Page, will appeal to most KIPCUG members since it is dedicated to new and emerging technologies, especially personal computing. In my opinion, the Courier-Journal has hit the mark in these first weeks and has a potential winner here (just as the Scene has been a perennial best seller).

The November 10, 1997, issue of the Tech Page featured an article by Richard des Ruisseaux on upgrading older computers. I have been in three or four discussions on this very topic lately, and des Ruisseaux managed to include in his one article most of the issues spread loosely in my various conversations. He offered clear and useful tips for determining when a computer is too old or too proprietary to upgrade. He also mentioned some local vendors who could help with the process.

Andrew Melnykovych writes a weekly column, which is called “Technophobe,” intended to help new users come to terms with concepts and issues, much like KIPCUG’s New Users SIG.

A sidebar called “What’s New,” offers snippets of information on recent products and services that readers may want to find out more about.

I think the Tech Page is a welcome addition to our local newspaper, but it also represents a challenge to KIPCUG since it performs a function similar to our monthly meetings and SIG groups. While the world of personal computing is large enough for both of us, KIPCUG should nonetheless be mindful of new ways to serve its current and potential members. The Tech Page represents a change to address new needs, and we should also try to evolve KIPCUG so that it stays ahead of the curve.

Come to the next board meeting and share your ideas.

David was once the President of this organization.

He was also the editor of this publication at one time.

Now he contributes by writing articles and by managing our web-site.

How does he find the time? Ask him and see if he will share his secrets. I’ll bet he will.

SSC GoldMine ad not supplied in electronic format
by Winnie Miller of KIPCUG

With Kid’s World - Younger children have a place to go, older children a place to grow!

The Great Reading Adventure begins with what most children like: a colorful cartoon. Basic curriculum from across the United States with a five year span has been augmented to include ways to enhance your child’s learning with fun experiences.

Lil’ Howie and his cohorts, Stinky and Alphabot lead you through six educational games for children ages six to nine. The more the children play the games, the more they learn and achieve in school. The cartoon characters are funny, have many varieties of voices, excellent art and lead you through the different kinds of games with out too much difficulty.

When you sign in, the program offers you a choice of age and a choice of numerous nicknames. The age choice controls the difficulty of the games the first time you play. After the initial age choice the success of your answers controls the difficulty and Howie keeps your scores. You are called by your nickname of your choice during the games. After signing in at eight years old I thought better of it and started again at three to control the difficulty.

With the opening screen in the Library, you make a choice to visit one of the following: the Maze, the Mushroom Underworld, the Pipe Organ, the Alphabet Soup, the Fishing Game or the Morning Stink. Yep, that is right, The Morning Stink. I’ll bet that piques your interest!

The Library is full of books but it is also where you start your adventures. You learn quickly to hit NOT to go on to Freeplay where you can explore on your own. In The Maze the Alphabot gives you instructions on alphabetical order and how to do it before you can continue. When you are finished with a game and want to return to the Maze again, press ESC twice. Here is where it pays to read directions before venturing off on your own.

Mushroom Underworld gives one a chance to hit targets. Sometimes you shoot words that begin with the same letter and end up soaking the characters holding the targets - if your answer is correct. If you fail, you get to choose again. Remember, your skill controls the difficulty. The Pipe Organ lets you choose words that sound like the beginning or the ending of a word that Alphabot displays. Lil’ Howie plays the organ and the words appear on the pipes. If you are correct you are rewarded with a song. I liked Alphabet Soup as it was the first game I had them all right!

Howie helps Stinky the Skunk and you pick specific vowel sounds or letters of the alphabet to target with a vacuum cleaner. You have to listen carefully to get the directions. If you do not have the correct exit key the program will wait for you...and wait and wait. I suggest you really read the directions or your fate will be awakening after a hundred year sleep.

The Fishing Game lets you catch fish with letters on them. If your bait...
starts with an “H” and you catch an “ook” fish and complete a word. If you are incorrect in your choice the fish spits out the bait. Snapping turtles and sharks get your bait if you aren’t quick.

The Morning Stink involves putting out a newspaper and your advice is asked on what words to use to make headlines. Available words are given at the top of the printing press and you choose the word that best fits the sentence. The Howie-Rama tests your reading comprehension ability. They say the test is painless but I had a twinge or two.

The on-going scoring of the games let you collect points for correct answers. These scores may be saved for future games. You have the opportunity to print a diploma that shows your improvement. A Blue Ribbon Reader must score 88% in level 5. When you are in the enviable position of getting a diploma you may print it or select a screen saver. I panicked when Lil’ Howie appeared on my main screen as a screen saver. Thought I had him as a partner for life.

Please learn the shortcut keys in the manual, it may save you Blood, Sweat and Tears.

The Reading Library is one of the strongest points of this software. The classifications are Mother Goose, Poems, Children’s Classics, Aesop Fables, Fairy Tales and Songs. Within each selection many choices may be made. Some of your old favorites are there ready to print or read. The Fairy Tales are complete stories and I enjoyed rereading old tales. In the Children’s Classics a chapter from a book is given and it is enough to interest a child in wanting the book from the library. A chapter from “White Fang” is an example. All these selections may be printed and my selection from Poems was “The Night Before Christmas”.

Now for a fun part I haven’t seen in other children’s programs as yet. You may visit the KID’S WORLD site at www.kidsworld.com Of course, they advertise their wares, however I also found a compound word game, a fill-in-the-word puzzle and a math game. I had the impression that this site is updated frequently. Try it for fun with your child. Another plus of the program is an Activity Book of puzzles, plays with finger puppets, sign language and color pages. They are in black and white and could be duplicated for a class or scout project. Think you wouldn’t regret spending the $19.95? Kid’s World also made Tuneland that may have come as a CD in your computer package. Enjoy this software with your child, especially the first time! First times are usually important and memorable.

Be wise! Find a new member for Kipcug!

Editor’s Note: This is probably Winnie’s 4th or 5th contribution to the magazine this year. I have come to look forward to her outlook on the software that she reviews.

Lately, I hear she has been a regular at the New User SIG (Special Interest Group).
by Dave Yanish of KIPCUG

The other day I was watching some computer show on TV, (Cnet Central, I think) when I heard about how a group of people have been putting some effort into getting the great arcade games of the past 10-20 years to run on your PC.

Well, I couldn't pass up a chance to check that out so I jumped onto the web-site and started browsing. I'm not sure about when it started or what the exact story is but as far as I can gather, the group has been getting help from some of the original game creators themselves.

So how are they doing it? Were these games written to run on a Pentium or 486? No they were not. Some were made for the Z80 chip, some for the Motorola 6809 and 68000, some for others... What these guys have done is write an emulator program that handles the job of acting like the chip that the game was supposed to work with.

The games were written to run on earlier computer chips so it seems that the more powerful Pentium can do an adequate job of handling the video demands, in addition to the emulation. So, now that they have the emulator written (MAME - see the above graphic), they are able to use the ROM code that describes the game. Not bad.

The one thing that I'm not sure of is how they are able to legally use this code. Maybe the copyright period is over. There are some documents on the site that seem to say that if you own one of these video games, then you have the right to the code. Some also say that you have the right to evaluate any game for 24 hours. Anyway, I did not read a whole lot of it as I was anxious to check the games out. I will read more next month.

The next thing to find out is what games are available. And here is another amazing point. Almost any game you can think of from the past is on the list. Look at this small sample:

1. Asteroids
2. Battle Zone
3. Burger Time
4. Centipede
5. Defender (Williams)
6. Donkey Kong
7. Galaxian
8. Joust
9. Mario Brothers
10. Missle Command
11. MS. Pacman
12. Pacman
13. Qbert
14. Sea Wolf
15. Space Invaders
16. Stargate
17. Star Wars
18. Tempest
19. Tron
20. Warlords

I encourage you gamers to check this web-site.

This article is a reprint from October. It seems appropriate for our Games Issue. I checked with Dave and he is still very impressed with the software. In fact, he tells me that the emulater has been released in a newer version and that his SideWinder GamePad works great with these games.
Getting to IUS from Louisville

Take I-65 north to I-265

Turn west on I-265 (after passing under the overpass)
Take the Grant Line Road exit from I-265.

Turn right at the intersection onto Grant Line Road.

IUS is a half mile from I-265 on the left.
The Ogle Center is at the back right of the campus.
Park behind the building.
Calendar Woes

Editor’s Note:

I can’t believe that I’ve run into this printing problem again.

Well…. no time to solve it now.

Short List of Events:

The General Meeting is on Dec 2.
The Board of Directors Meeting is on Dec 9.

The SIG meetings can be found on page 14.
Directory of KIPCUG Leaders

KIPCUG Supporters

Please support them with your business

The vendors listed below have contributed hardware or software to KIPCUG to assist in production of the organization’s monthly newsletter. We encourage you to support these vendors who are helping to support our organization.

Lexmark
4029 Laser printer with accelerator

Netware 4.1

Adobe
Photoshop 3.0
Illustrator 4.0

Intuit
Quicken 5.0

The Fifth Dimension

Official Bulletin Board of KIPCUG

The Fifth Dimension is available 24 hours a day at (502) 231-0053. Data transmission standards are: 1,200-28,800 bps, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit, no parity, v.42, v.42bis., v.32, v.32bis. Operating with three nodes.

I/O Submissions

Articles submitted to I/O should be in ASCII text format and submitted one month in advance. If graphics are included, they should be submitted in TIF file format whenever possible.

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Send all advertising materials to:

Nancy Lorey, I/O Ad Manager, 5314 Hidden Lakes Blvd., Jeffersonville, IN 47130. For more information, call (812) 280-0468 evenings.
The SIG Scene

DELPHI
Meets 6:30 pm. on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the New Horizons Learning Center, at 10200 Linn Station Road in Suite 110 of the Triad E. Bldg near Chi-Chi’s. Contact Jeff Blackwell at 256-4201 for details.

INVESTING
Meets 6:30 pm. on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Louisville Aero Club, Bowman Field. Contact Doc Viele at 452-6878 for details. Please note, we DO NOT discuss the relative merits of mutual funds.

NEW USERS
Meets 6:30 pm. on the 2nd Monday of the month at the New Horizons Learning Center, at 10200 Linn Station Road in Suite 110 of the Triad E. Bldg near Chi-Chi’s. Contact Fred Soward at 426-1829 for details.

OS/2
Meets 6:30 pm. on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 120 Webster in the Bakery Square Building, right next to the Butchertown Pub. Contact Alan McCutcheon at 366-4092 for details.

VISUAL BASIC
Meets 7 pm. on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the New Horizons Learning Center, at 10200 Linn Station Road in Suite 110 of the Triad E. Bldg near Chi-Chi’s. Call Martin Campion at 637-9878 for details.

WEBMASTER
Meets 6 pm. on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 330-F, Distillery Commons. Contact Don Fowler at 589-6800 for details.

WINDOWS, WORD & EXCEL
Meets 6:30 pm. on the 4th Monday of the month at 102 Daventry Lane, Suites 7-8. Call Jim Travelstead, 852-4761 (W) or 375-4796 (H). Take Hurstbourne Ln. north towards Shelbyville Rd., turn right on Shelbyville Rd., turn at the Pizza Hut about 1 block on the left. Go past the Pizza Hut to brick building on the left.

New SIG Locations
The New Horizons Learning Center has moved and since three of our SIGS are held there, you’d better be aware of the change. They haven’t moved far.... just a bit down the same Linn Station Road. Now, they are nearer Chi-Chi’s on the other side of the street.

Alan announced at the last General Meeting that the OS/2 SIG will now be meeting at 120 Webster in the Bakery Square building - right next to the Butchertown Pub.

Hardware continued......

Building Your Own
This is what I end up doing. Although I like where the retail units are heading, I still want to have the flexibility of mixing and matching the components. I want to choose the motherboard, CPU, video card, monitor, disk drive, cd-rom drive and sound card myself. Invariably, one or more of these components in the retail units is unacceptable to me.

This doesn’t always mean that what I want is less expensive. Usually the retail units have components that are cheaper than the better components that I want.

I have been buying motherboards from M-Tech lately and they seem to be satisfactory so far. I feel fine in recommending them.

The TX PCI chipset seems to be the reasonable way to go these days. In general, I like to stick with the Intel PCI chipsets as opposed to the Apollo or SiS PCI chipsets.

There are a lot of details to consider when matching components and I recommend the web-site named “www.motherboards.org” as a starting place to search for information. The Intel and AMD web-sites are good sources also. Don’t forget to check out Western Digital.

I don’t like the faster cd-rom drives. They make too much noise when they are spinning. So lately, I’ve been sticking with the 8x speed models.

Speaking of noise, CPU fans are now a necessity and lately I’ve been getting the musical alarm variety. These make music if the fan stops spinning or if the temperature gets too high. In addition to the CPU fan, I now get additional case fans to blow over the CPU.

I have yet to be able to tell if Ultra DMA 2 is faster than PIO mode 4 disk drives. Has anyone got a measurement scheme they can share with me?

More to come next month....
HeliCOPS
Another Great Game from 7th Level

by Dave Zepka and Nick Doran

HeliCOPS is the latest addition to 7th Level’s line of futuristic combat simulations that also includes Dominion and G-NOME. If you would like to be the last line of defense against myriad hostile outlaws for 21st century NeoTokyo’s out-gunned police force, then this is the game for you!

After the devastating quake of ’98 destroyed Tokyo, it was rebuilt as the space-age capitol of commerce and technology. The only small problem was that Maxwell Giger decided to attempt to make NeoTokyo the space-age capitol of his international crime syndicate - Nemesys. Giger assassinated Governor Koyo and unleashed his wolfpack of sinister allies to wreak havoc and terror among the cowering populace. In a last ditch effort to save the city from the forces of evil, a secret airborne strike force known as HeliCOPS was formed. This is where you come in. Choose your pilot from a cast of five heroes, pick out your chopper from the hanger, and you’re ready to start enforcing the law!

Each pilot has unique skills to help complete your missions. Choose from an electronics expert, a secret agent, a martial artist, a mercenary weapons expert, and a jack-of-all-trades. The wide range of helicopters allows you to utilize the perfect vehicle for every mission. The pesky Ninja is wimpy but agile. The Spectre is fast and carries good shields. The Ronin presents a nice balance of maneuvering and firepower while still being able to take some damage. The Triton packs a punch and handles well too.

Bristling with weapons, the Brutus will make all of your enemies quiver with fear.

In addition to Giger, Nemesys also is a haven for such savory characters as a renegade general leading a formidable private army, a digital cyber-demon that controls the world’s computers, and the DedBoyz - a ruthless gang of criminals and racketeers. There is also a militant cult that distributes the deadly drug known as Shatter. Viktor Shrek is an immensely wealthy yet twisted Russian munitions trader who desires NeoTokyo as the center of his capitalist empire. These evil forces have amassed quite an arsenal of deadly vehicles with which to conquer the besieged city. Hover Jets, Patrol Helicopters, Battle Tanks, Combat Trains, Weapons Barges and Megajets to name just a few of the enemy units.

Gameplay is fast and furious. No time to think or blink in this game. Full throttle. Guns blazin’. There is a fairly steep learning curve, so expect to die quickly until you get a feel for the controls. I recommend a high-performance joystick for this demanding simulation. The missions are varied and exciting with a plot thrown in for good measure. Zoom throughout NeoTokyo rescuing hostages, thwarting terrorists, repelling invasions, destroying SkyBases, intercepting nuclear missiles, and avoiding volcanic eruptions! Best of all you get to obliterate thirty-two different types of enemy units. Vaporize them with Buzz Rockets, Devastators, Annihilators, or just ram them (not recommended but still quite fun). There are three levels of difficulty - Easy, Medium, and Hard - and Hard lives up to its name. Good luck and good shooting!

HeliCOPS requires at least a 100 MHz Pentium, 8 MB of RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, Windows 95, mouse, a good joystick, and 40 MB of hard disk space. For a full hard disk install you’ll need 454 MB hard disk space. Wow! If you have an ultra-modern computer with all the new toys and whiz-bang gadgets, then you can turn up all the graphical detail and pump up the sound effects for a raging good time that’s better than actually being there.
The Universe According to Virgil Reality

by Bonnie Zepka of KIPCUG

Recently, the Courier Journal reported the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a battery of widely respected exams. Educational officials said that the results of these tests show that many students are not grasping even basic concepts in science, and they also suggest that the schools are not teaching science in an appealing way. Virgil Reality, an entertaining and educational multimedia software about science, helps to solve this problem. If you have young children or grandchildren then you will want to get this program and help them gain the knowledge they need.

Don’t let the cute and whimsical cartoon characters deceive you, Virgil Reality, by 7th Level, takes complex ideas and presents them in simple, captivating, and easy to understand terms. Virgil knows everything there is to know about science. He talks and sings about science in exciting ways that make you want to explore. The program illustrates and explains topics with photographs, film clips and additional information and also contains an encyclopedia of science topics.

The starting point of your visit to Virgil’s universe begins in the Library. Professor Virgil Realty hosts your visits to his university with the help of his friends Cube, Bitz, and Factoid. He greets you there, tells you what to expect on your tour and leads you into the Lab, if it is a return visit, he welcomes you back. Throughout the tour, you can use Factoid’s icons (or the shortcut keys) to jump to any location. Follow Virgil, Cube, Bitz and Factoid though many rooms and scenes to learn, and have fun with science. Explore each of the parts of Virgil’s universe: Encyclopedia, Lab, Theater, Activity Center, Print shop. Each one offers you a wealth of things to see and do.

The Lab is a multilevel treasure chest of information with interesting icons scattered about. Click on an icon, and hear fascinating facts about it. After you’ve heard about a topic, a new related icon appears in its place. If you want to move to another topic, you can halt the explanation by pressing the Spacebar.

During the explanation, Cube shows you photos, video clips, and diagrams on a screen or in the center window of the lab. To leave the Lab and enter other scenes, select one of the Factoid’s icons.

A thousand topics are just a mouse click away. Select the Columbia Encyclopedia, Fifth Edition, 1993, Columbia University Press by clicking on Cube or Factoid’s Encyclopedia icon and the Encyclopedia will open to the topic under discussion in the scene. For example, if a dinosaur is selected the Encyclopedia will instantly open to the entry “dinosaur.” Scrolling text explains the topic in detail.

The Junk Drawer or activity Center is full of “hands-on” scientific experiments that you can perform on-screen using the mouse or you
can print it and build it by hand. When you enter the room, Factoids’s menu shows a list of activities, games and experiments. You can choose to print a variety of games, experiments and activities such as cards, 3-D earth dioramas, body-systems games, flying machines, and much more.

Join Virgil in the Theater and see films, photographs, and cartoons of famous scientists, inventors and wacky inventions. The star-sprinkled Space scene is full of many man-made objects orbiting around the screen: space stations, Apollo 11, astronauts, the space shuttle, and various satellites. Select any of these objects for an explanation of it and in many cases, actual video footage provided by NASA.

You can see a Brachiosaur and many other dinosaurs in two periods from earth’s prehistory; the Jurassic and the Cretaceous. You reach the first of the periods, the Jurassic by clicking on Factoids Earth icon. Although the landscape appears empty, as your cursor passes over certain areas, animals will appear and you will hear their sounds. Click on the animal to hear interesting facts about it and to see it move. Which dinosaur was the largest? Which was the smallest? Which was the hungriest? You’ll find out in the Jurassic and Cretaceous. To reach the Cretaceous Period, just choose the Earth icon that Factoid holds up for you. Virgil will introduce the period, and you can once more select various elements of the scene.

When you select the Microscope icon you are given two choices - compound or electron. Choosing the compound icon lets you see the parts of a compound microscope and how the pieces fit together to work. When it’s complete, you can you can view slides of numerous plants, animals, bacteria, protozoa, fiber or common objects. You can view the slides at three different magnifications - 100x, 400x, and 100x. Selecting Factoid’s special Electron Microscope icon displays the Electron Microscope, which works much as the compound microscope and also offers slides for viewing. You can choose to view objects at over 1000x magnification.

This is a fun and stimulating game good for the young school age child. You can also, check out the website at http://www.7thlevel.com. for the “Kids’ World” online network. Minimum system requirements: 486 IBM PC, 8MB of RAM, 256 color display, mouse and CD-ROM drive, MPC compatible sound card with speakers, DOS 3.1, Windows 95 or later.

Bonnie Zepka manages the software reviews. Call her if you care to participate.

FAME AND FORTUNE

For a mere 700 - 1000 word review, you can get a fortune in free software and fame as an I/O reviewer.

As new software comes in I will post a listing on The Fifth Dimension BBS (TFD) and the 1st one to leave me a message gets the program. Watch for new updates.

In addition, if you know of some neat software you want to see reviewed, let me know. Or if you have some cool program and want to share it with the rest of us, write a review and send it in for publication.

See you on the Bulletin Board.

Bonnie Zepka
**COMDEX Info**

President Judy Lococo announced that she was in a flurry of activity before racing out of town to attend Fall COMDEX in Las Vegas. This is a huge show and her time will be packed with APCUG (Association of PC User Groups) activities combining contact with other User Group officers and national vendors’ User Group Representatives. Judy, Publicity Director Fred Soward and Program Director Steve Goldberg will be representing KIPCUG and trying to work some good deals for some great programs next year. Be sure to ask them how it went next month!

**User-to-User with Dave Puckett & Jack Stearns**

In this segment of our meeting, Dave and Jack read questions that are penned onto index cards before the meeting by those in attendance. The answers come from the audience and we all learn more than we knew before.

**Question:** I have Norton Utilities 2.0 and when I try to use Norton’s System Doctor, it automatically dials up AT&T. This has happened since I downloaded an update for the Norton Utilities. How can I correct the problem?

**Response:** Run Norton AntiVirus. Also, if anything is set to monitor the WEB it will automatically dial your Internet Service Provider (ISP). Disable any monitoring programs in System Monitor.

**Question:** Can you get Usenet News articles off the Web? If so, what are some of the URLs?

**Response:** Try the following URL - www.dejanews.com

**Question:** My Win95 Startup disk (made during my update to Win95) only boots to DOS. Is this correct?

**Response:** Yes this is normal.

**Question:** I want to play files from the computer on my piano. How do I do this?

**Response:** Use midi-out (transmit) from the sequencer to the piano (receive).

**Question:** I need a CD Driver for DOS for a Dell Latitude. The ones I’ve received are for later models.

**Response:** Dave took an email address and will try to help.

**Question:** Please recommend a good undelete program for Win95. I used PC-Tools with Win 3.1 and it was excellent and also had good zip & unzip programs. Have not seen PC Tools for Win95.

**Response:** Try reinstalling the software. Other ideas: It could be in the processor. Try the calculator and make sure it works. If not, you might need to replace the coprocessor. Might be a memory problem.

**Back to Basics with Fred Soward**

Publicity Director Fred Soward was on hand to give us a look at Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0. The requirements for IE 4.0 are a 486 DX/66, Win95 or NT 4.0, 8Meg RAM (16Meg if you use the Windows Desktop update) and a whopping 66 Meg of disk must be available for the install. From 50 Meg to 99 Meg may be required after the install. An install with Outlook Express is 51 Meg. If you add Netshow and NetMeeting you’ll need 64 Meg.

Fred showed highlights of the product including a moveable toolbar, Internet channels and site history by week and day tabs. Several channels are part of IE, including Warner Brothers. You can set up their channel in 1 of 3 ways. 1) Update the channel info when you want to. 2) The computer will pull information from Warner’s site on your schedule and will notify you when it’s done. 3) Warner’s site sends you a message that updates are available and you can go get them.

Accessibility features include a lot of control over colors and fonts, etc.
You can set up zones with different security levels and then move various Internet sites to the zones you’ve established. Content advisor lets you establish a supervisor password. Then you set acceptable ratings levels for site access without a password. This could help parents prevent access to those sites that supply ratings.

Fred showed us Outlook Express, the mail system incorporated in IE 4.0 and said he really, really likes it a lot. It’s worth upgrading to 4.0 all by itself! Nested folders are supported.

Somewhere along the way in this presentation Fred suggested trying a search engine I’ve not tried before www.dogpile.com, I think. If not, do a search on dogpile. I know I got that part right. Anyway, he said it’s worth checking out. I know I will!

**MIDI & Digital Audio with Sean Kibilosky**

One of our November presenters, Walt Gill, was unable to attend due to illness. Hope he’s feeling strong again by now.

Sean Kibilosky expanded on his original program and gave a great presentation on MIDI and digital audio technologies. We had a very interested crowd with a lot of questions during and after the program.

If you want to use MIDI technology, you need to start with a sound card that has an on-board synthesizer chip. Usually the card has 2 or 3 round, 5-pin ports labeled In, Out and Thru. Be sure when you’re connecting devices that you are connecting Out to In and In to Out.

You want a MIDI device that’s multitimbral. This means that you can get multiple instrument sounds at one time. The polyphony of the instrument is on the order of 16, 32, 64 or 128 and indicates how many notes the synthesizer can play at once.

General MIDI is standardized. The same instrument will be used for the same patches on two different MIDI devices. This doesn’t necessarily mean that they will sound exactly the same. The sound card has a lot of bearing on that. A Soundblaster card may not provide very good sounds.

If you choose a keyboard MIDI instrument (piano-style keyboard), you will choose between full-size weighted keys and nonweighted keys. Each type has it’s advantages. The weighted keys feel more like playing a piano. For drums the non-weighted keys might be better.

You can get a controller keyboard for about $200. This keyboard would not have any sounds in it. It has controls to access patches, channels and different instruments easily. The controller is good for learning about MIDI because it is simpler than a lot of MIDI keyboards.

For about $200 you can get a pretty good sequencing program. Sequencers record the notes, duration and type of device. Notation programs transcribe music as you play it. Instructional programs are also available to help you learn to play the keyboard.

Digital Audio Recording stores sounds on the PC in digital format as a .wav file. There is some integration of digital audio with MIDI.

Sean showed us several programs to give us a taste of what’s available. Visual Arranger by Yamaha has lots of canned sounds in different styles that you can arrange into a composition. You can give it chord progressions to customize the canned sounds or you can record your own sounds and incorporate them into an arrangement.

MidiSoft offers instructional software to help you learn to play the piano.

Classic Rock Guitar helps you learn to play guitar and improve if you already know how to play it.

Fred Soward gave us a short look at the latest version of Internet Explorer - but a more detailed view was given in the New User SIG earlier in the month.

Take some time to attend some SIGs that are held throughout the month. You can get quite a bit of real-world information from them.
shows tablature, finger movements, chording and picking. It also shows riff transition. We saw the program in action on the introduction to Sweet Home Alabama (Lynard Skynard) and it looked like a great program.

Next Sean showed a couple of sequencing programs. Cakewalk Pro Audio 6.0 is an industry standard for MIDI. You can name different tracks, select your instrument and indicate which of 16 channels to use for the instrument. Sean said it’s helpful to leave channel 1 open for performance. You can use the other channels to record backup and know that channel 1 is available to you. Sean said that channel 10 is usually reserved for percussion.

Sean played a pattern for a few bars. He could then copy this pattern a few times on the same track to make it longer. There’s a metronome to help with your timing. Sometimes the metronome was hindrance more than a help. He could copy the track to another channel and use a different instrument sound. He added a rhythm track next.

He showed us a piano roll view that shows the piano keys at the left of the screen from top (lower registers) to bottom (higher registers). Freestyle is a competing product designed by musicians. It’s a “trackless sequencer” and offers an interface that’s a bit more natural.

Freestyle is a competing product. It’s known as a trackless sequencer.

Ensemble Rock was the third product that we were shown.

Cakewalk Pro Audio 6 is an industry standard for MIDI.

Ensemble Rock - has a collection of instruments. You can choose a drum sequence to use as a metronome. Much better than playing music to a metronome and then laying down the drum track you want. It’s easy to change the tempo. If you need to start over, you can pick a point in the roll bar to begin playing instead of starting over from the beginning.

While the music is playing, you see it in sections, not tracks. You can change the selected instrument without having to stop and start over. This helps you get the sound you want more easily.

You can loop and add until you’re satisfied with the sound. You can copy a section and remove selected instruments if you want. For instance, you might want to get rid of the brass section for a repeated sequence. Files can be imported and exported to and from both of these products.

After you’ve achieved the sound you want, you need to be aware that the MIDI file you send to a friend or that is downloaded from your Web site may end up sounding quite different than you think. This is a result of the sound card used for replaying the file. Some musicians take MIDI files and turn them into audio .wav files so they can control the sound at the user end.

We took a look at Session Software. This software produces only .wav files, recorded digitally. You can view sound in wave form and move fade-ins and fade-outs by adjusting the sound line up and down.

Cool Edit Pro is a plug-in for Cakewalk. It allows you to bring in digital audio, adjust to remove noise and add effects.

Sean is the managing editor of The Computer Times and can be heard on the Computer Times radio program at 680 AM on Saturdays at 1:30 pm.

Many thanks to Sean for his time, expertise and a great program! He stayed around for quite awhile after the program to answer all sorts of questions from the audience. Many people remarked about how well it went and we probably will have some more MIDI meetings in the near future.

Next month is GAMES!! Be sure to come and enjoy our last meeting of the year.
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The Neverhood

by Bonnie Zepka of KIPCUG

The Neverhood is an action game for people who enjoy puzzles. The game tells the story of Klayman, a duck-like creature, who explores a strange new world. The plot — Long ago the king of this world was betrayed by his trusted assistant. You must save the Neverhood by navigating Klayman, the main character through different rooms, solving different puzzles as he goes through each one to defeat the nasty foe.

Strange looking, animated clay figures that are cartoon type characters inhabit The Neverhood. Klayman, the good guy, is the hero of the story. You lead him on his adventures through The Neverhood, solving puzzles and getting out of tough scrapes. Klogg, the bad guy, will stop at nothing to keep you from completing your request.

Hoborg is the creator of the Neverhood and also gave life to Klayman and the evil Klogg. Willie Trombone is Klayman’s dimwitted friend and informer throughout the game; while, Robot Bil is Willie’s pal. He is humongous and metal. The Weasel is a big green scary creature that will try to get you. The great thing about this game is that Klayman can never die. He does a lot of funny things, though, and there are some funny, short videos. One that I came across when I solved a puzzle involving a crab-like monster was a short, entertaining video showing how Klayman gets rid of the monster. There is a slide puzzle that opens passages. The music is a jazzy/blues mix that is fun to listen to.

The Neverhood, a DreamWorks production started in 1988 as a collection of art works, by Douglas TenNapel depicting a whimsical Clay town. Douglas and his team pitched their ideas to Steven Spielberg and his gang. Spielberg liked it and the rest is history or so the story goes. The Neverhood began as a grouping of rough storyboards, then the crew designed and built huge sets that are first made out of wood and then covered in clay. Then they make puppets that are also covered in clay. Over three tons of clay was used to create The Neverhood. The detailed graphics were created by stop-motion photography where the crew painstakingly posed the puppets, moved the camera then shot a “billion, zillion frames” of animation, one frame at a time. They then put the finished animation sequence into the computer environment and made it into a game.

You too can get in on the fun! Draw your own clay figures and share them with the world. Visit the web site and go to the Klay Doodle tablet, just draw your figure with your mouse on the klay tablet and when you are done, click the “all done” button to submit your entry. Clicking the all done button will send your drawing to the DreamWorks Interactive site. Search the klay wall after two days for your drawing or pictures by your friends.

System requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 75 Mz, 8MB minim, 4x CD ROM drive, SVGA monitor, 8-bit sound card and speakers. The program uses 10MB of hard disk space. Recommended for ages 17 and over. Dreamworks can be reached at http://www.dreamworks-game.com/games/neverhood.
The following KIPCUG members have volunteered to provide assistance to any current KIPCUG member on these topics:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Email Addresses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Bulleit</td>
<td>AskSam, ASAP, Excel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Dbulleit@iusmail.ius.indiana.edu">Dbulleit@iusmail.ius.indiana.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny Lee Catron</td>
<td>WordPerfect ver 6 and earlier</td>
<td><a href="mailto:DCMRFIX@aol.com">DCMRFIX@aol.com</a> OR (502) 495-1874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.Lee Harris</td>
<td>Pagemaker</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tlee@aye.net">tlee@aye.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Goldberg</td>
<td>Paradox, Quattro Pro</td>
<td>(<a href="mailto:Stevehgold@aol.com">Stevehgold@aol.com</a> OR <a href="mailto:steve.goldberg@tfd.org">steve.goldberg@tfd.org</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marvin Livingood</td>
<td>HTML and WebPage Design</td>
<td>(459-8888 OR <a href="mailto:marvin.livingood@tfd.org">marvin.livingood@tfd.org</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Shaikun</td>
<td>HTML and WebPage Design</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mike@aye.net">mike@aye.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Streever</td>
<td>Pagemaker, FoxPro</td>
<td>(895-4180 - Eve, 459-2151 - Day OR <a href="mailto:bob.streever@tfd.org">bob.streever@tfd.org</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Murphy</td>
<td>Dos, Unix, C, C++, Informix 4gl, SQL Programming, ProComm Aspect Script Lang., Borland Paradox for Windows</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ochn@aol.com">ochn@aol.com</a> or (812-923-0788)</td>
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You can reach Mike Murphy at ochn@aol.com or (812-923-0788) if you are interested in helping out your fellow KIPCUG members as a mentor.

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