

# Inside The Industry

## Mediagenic Lands 16-bit Nintendo Development

On July 2, 1990, **Mediagenic, Inc.** (NASDAQ: MGNC) announced that it had become the first United States software firm to be selected as a developer for **Nintendo's Super Famicom** video game system. The company's first three products on the new platform are expected to be: a *Battle-Tech* simulation, an air combat simulator and a sports game. Given the expected superiority of the new machine's screen handling techniques and excellent scaling capability, it is significant that, at least, two of the three announced products use three-dimensional polygon-filled graphics.

Sources close to Japanese production of the Super Famicom indicate that the machine has considerably more addressability than the **Sega Genesis** machine and sound capability which is much easier to program than the current video game formats. Bruce Davis, Mediagenic Chairman of the Board, was so impressed with the Super Famicom that he announced, "The capabilities of this next-generation video game system are extraordinary. With it, we have finally reached the point where the depth and quality of video games will clearly surpass that of computer entertainment".

The announcement of a U.S. developer for the Super Famicom sends an important signal to U.S. consumers. U.S. cartridge development insures that there will be products for the domestic market *whenever* Nintendo decides to place the 16-bit in the North American sales channel. With the Super Famicom scheduled for late 1990 release in Japan, CGW's best bet is that Nintendo is putting production in place for a formal unveiling of the U.S. version at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in 1991 and full product roll-out prior to Christmas of 1991.

## California Legislature Nears Endorsement of Censorship

The Senate Judiciary Committee of the State of California approved an amended version of A. B. 3280 on June 26, 1990. Assembly Bill 3280 is the Tanner bill that would forbid the depiction of any alcohol or tobacco package or container in any *video game* intended primarily for use by minors. As defined, the bill did not differentiate between video games, coin-op entertainments or computer games. It also did not delineate how enforcement agencies were to determine whether a game was intended primarily for minors or not.

As amended, the bill proscribes only *paid* advertising in video, computer or

coin-op games "intended primarily for minors."

## SubLogic Facing Double Suits

**Microsoft** is currently working on future *Flight Simulator* projects with Bruce Artwick's **Bruce Artwick Organization** in a separate agreement from the original relationship with **SubLogic**. Currently, SubLogic faces lawsuits from both Microsoft and Artwick. These are separate and distinctive suits. Microsoft's suit has to do with licensing rights/marketing rights over technology associated with *Flight Simulator III*, while Artwick's suit has to do with the code itself.

## \$20 Million Libel Suit Filed Against Cinemaware

Citing trade libel, unfair competition and violation of a Federal racketeering statute, **Beyond Software, Inc.** (a small San Francisco area firm contracted to develop *TV Sports: Baseball* for **Cinemaware**) filed a \$20 million dollar lawsuit against **Cinemaware** over a letter sent from Phyllis Jacob, president of **Cinemaware**, to prospective publishers of a computer baseball program developed by **Beyond Software**. Originally intended to be part of the *TV Sports* line as *TV Sports: Baseball*, **Cinemaware** canceled the project on May 15,

1990. When the developer began to try to market the program elsewhere, they were told that Cinemaware was claiming that they owned all the rights and Beyond would not be able to sell it. Cinemaware's letter claimed full ownership of the program citing one paragraph of the contract, while Beyond claims that Cinemaware's cancellation of the contract brought another paragraph into play in which all rights reverted to Beyond.

Of course, the bottom line for computer baseball fans is that the future of the game originally entitled *TV Sports: Baseball* is, in the worst case, in doubt, and in the best case, further delayed by legal considerations.

## Television Discovers Computer Games

Both **Broderbund Software** and **Lucasfilm Games** have entered into agreements for production of television series related to computer game products. Broderbund has entered into agreement with animation house, **DIC** (*Inspector Gadget* and *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* among others), to produce a *Carmen Sandiego* cartoon series. **Lucasfilm Games** is cooperating with a production company in development of a live action comedy based on *Maniac Mansion*. *Maniac Mansion* will air on the **Family Network**.