



Tactical Analysis Complete: The Final Fantasy Is Here

By **DAN ZACHER**
Assistant editor

The smell of winter is in the air and the only thing on some people's minds is the up-and-coming holiday season. These people already have their shopping completed, but others, such as myself, have not started. For those not quite done their shopping, I offer this sage advice: Square's Masterpiece Final Fantasy Tactics: The Zodiac Brave Story. It's one of the best video games, re-released this year for the PlayStation Game console. For the first time in four years Final Fantasy Tactics has been available for sale, now as a part of Sony's Greatest Hits Collection. Final Fantasy Tactics starts with Alazlam, a historian, who has stumbled

upon scriptures, known as the Duray Report, which proves history wrong. History states that a commoner known as Delita Hryle had climbed among the aristocracy and uncovered a mischievous plot and ended the Lion War single handily. What Alazlam has discovered is that a heretic known Ramza Beoulve was the actual hero of the war and saved the entire world from utter destruction. Throughout Final Fantasy Tactics you control Ramza in an attempt not only save your sister, Alma, but also to uncover the true history by finding all 13 Zodiac Stones. Yes that's right 13 Zodiac Stones.

Final Fantasy Tactics only has a mere 70 levels, but uses high artificial intelligence that a player may lose in the first battle of the game

or lose in the last few battles just the same. There are millions of combinations of characters because of the game's Character Jobs. Some of these characters are unique characters including Ramza, Delita, and Final Fantasy 7's Cloud Strife. Because of this, every time through the game is a different adventure. Though my experiences with the game I have reached the overall conclusion that the game is even smart enough to cheat (it hates to lose).

This game is worth the \$19.99 price tag and is the reason that I bought a PlayStation One in the first place. Because of its intense plot, difficulty, and a different adventure every time, I rate Final Fantasy Tactics with five out of five stars and a must play for any RPG fan.

'Tis the Season

Help us give the gift of a happy holiday to less fortunate families.

Donate food, paper products, personal hygiene products and clothing to the Lion's Eye second annual food drive.

Donations are being accepted now through Dec. 14. Red boxes have been set up in every building to collect donations. Or, you can drop off items in the Lion's Eye office in the Lion's Den.

And please, don't forget the Toys for Tots drive. Help brighten a child's holiday by donating a new unwrapped toy. Toys can be dropped off in the SGA office in the Lion's Den.

Computer gift ideas from our resident computer guy

By **JONATHAN LEONHARD**
Staff writer

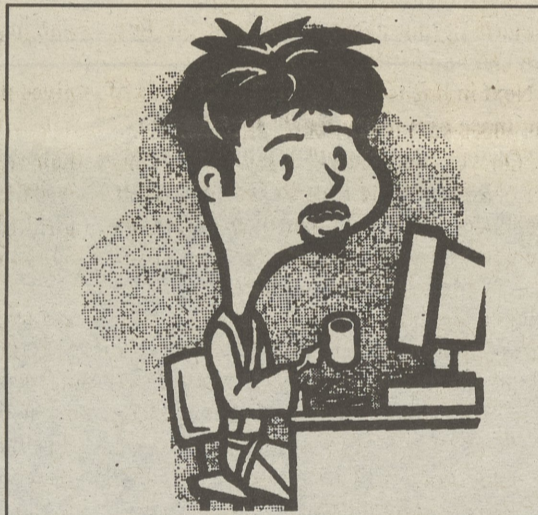
This issue of the Computer Corner is dedicated to the holidays. May it bring you happiness and good cheer...and an empty bank account. In the spirit of the holidays, I have decided to give the readers a buying guide for geeks, techies, or people that just like cool stuff.

PDA / PIM (Personal Digital Assistant / Personal Information Manager)

One word: Palm Pilot. The Palm Pilot was the father of the modern PDA, and may be on the top of your techie's wish list. They have become somewhat of a phenomenon over the last few years, and it all started with the Apple Newton (now almost extinct). It has since then progressed to the Palm OS and Windows CE. The Palm OS runs on PDA's such as Palm Inc's Palm V, Palm VII, or Palm m305, and Handspring's Visor and Edge. Windows CE runs on PDA's such as Compaq's Ipaq. The only difference between the two is style. You can liken it to using a PC or a Mac...both get the job done, just in different ways. The device itself (the hardware, or the solid thing you hold) is a different story. Handspring PDA's have a Springboard slot for expansion hardware such as digital cameras, MP3 players, and GPS devices. Palm Inc. PDA's have eBooks (m305) and pluggable wireless modems. On the other hand, you have the option of buying a Microsoft CE based PDA such as the Ipaq. The Ipaq has support for Microdrives (very small hard drives), plays MP3's, and even supports PCMCIA devices (those that also work in a laptop) through an adapter sleeve. All models come with or without color, but just keep in mind that functionality has a direct relationship to price, and an inverse relationship to bank account.

MP3 Players

There are two types: Solid State and CD-RW. Solid state means that there are no moving parts. There are many manufacturers of solid state MP3 players (Rio, Nike, etc.) and they range in price and amount of music they can store. Keep in mind that 32 MB of memory can store about 1 hour of music, and most players can be upgraded with the addition of additional Flash Memory. Most connect to your PC through USB, so make sure your PC has a USB port (small almost flat rectangle plug with NO little pins). The new Apple MP3 player is an exception to the rule. Apple's product is actually a small hard drive that inter-



faces with the PC through firewire. The plus to that is you can store files and other stuff on the drive instead of just MP3's. The alternative is a MP3 CD player. This device uses regular CD-R's and has the advantage of storing up to 720MB of music (many hours), but the disadvantage of having moving parts. For those of you who don't need

a high-impact device, the MP3 CD player may be the best choice. And even for light bumps, most have a 30-60 second memory for the occasional pot-hole or speed bump. I own a solid state MP3 player because I can run and exercise without skipping in my music.

UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply)

This is a lesser asked for item, but still a good choice for a techie that doesn't have one. Basically, it's a big battery. The UPS plugs into the wall (for a normal power source and to charge the battery), and your PC and monitor plug into the UPS (for power in case of an outage).

This provides power to your computer and monitor for about 5 minutes during a power outage so the computer can save the stuff you're working on and shut down properly. APC is a well know manufacturer of UPS's, and you can usually find deals for \$40-\$100 depending on the amount of back-up time they provide (rated in VA's). Just ask the store rep for help in choosing the right one for you. Keep in mind that most home use UPS's are 300 VA's.

Well, whatever you choose for your techie, make it a good one...and have a happy holiday! See you on January 7th...

THE LION'S EYE

Vol. XXXIII, No. 4

Penn State University Delaware County

December 6, 2001

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The Lion's Eye is published monthly during the academic year by the students of the Delaware County Campus.

Submissions are welcome from all students, faculty and staff.

Material must be typed, double spaced, and submitted in the LION'S EYE mailbox on the first floor of the Main building.

The Lion's Eye is funded by the SGA and Student Activity Fee.

