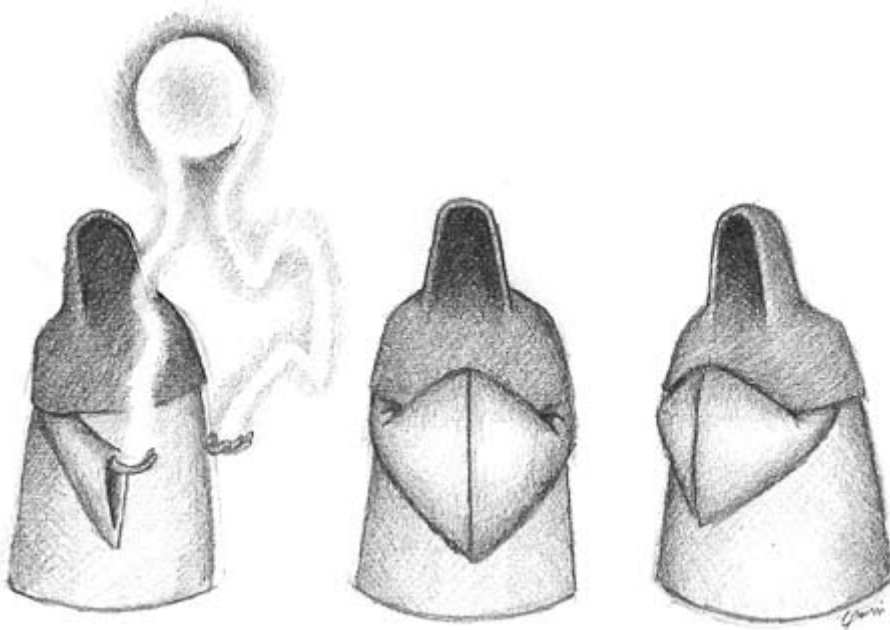


LBA Prequel Newsletter

Saturday, January 20th, 2007



"The Monks of Sendell," by Luke Farookhi. © Copyright 2007 LBA Prequel Team.

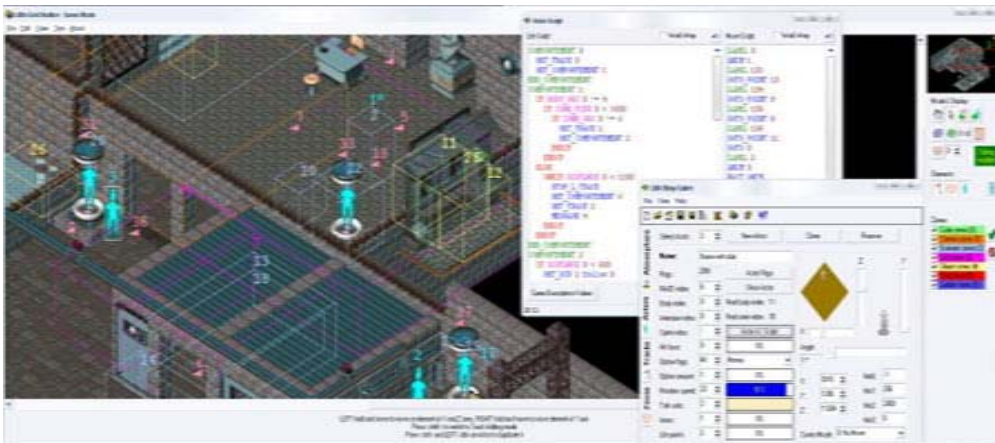
Welcome to the first-ever official *LBA* Prequel Newsletter!

In this edition, we've got details on the amazing modification programs that Alexfont and Zink have been working on, some exclusive concept art from Luke, updates on the musical score from Neko, and a developer interview with Double-J!

We sincerely hope that you enjoy this newsletter. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions to make this feature better, please let us know by dropping us a line at LBAPrequel@gmail.com. If this newsletter doesn't load properly, please download a fresh copy at our [Newsletter Archive](#). **Note:** This newsletter may not load properly in HTML mail, such as Gmail or AIM. If this is the case, download a copy above, or use a third-party email program (i.e. Mozilla Thunderbird, Microsoft Outlook, etc.)

Alexfont and Zink Break New Barriers In *LBA* Modification Development

It's taken much time and effort for the *LBA* modifications world to catch up with the demands of the several projects going on in the fan base. However, Alexandre Fontoura ('Alexfont') and Kazimierz Krol ('Zink'), always hard at work developing new and exciting tools for the *LBA* Prequel, have come together to creating a working amalgamation of their two separate tools, *LBA Architect* and *LBA Scene Coder*.



***LBA Architect* and *LBA Story Coder*, working together and breaking down the barriers of *LBA* modification development. With these programs, it is possible to design new characters and elements for the *LBA* Prequel, and implement our unique and original storyline. © Copyright 2007 *LBA* Prequel Team.**

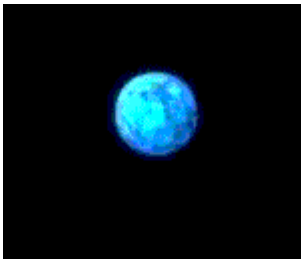
One of the major hurdles in creating the Prequel was to be able to both design our own models, and then, be able to implement them into the game. Even more importantly, how were we going to take the storyline we've designed for the game, and then make it work with the original game engine? Much time and effort has gone into both of these programs, but now that Alexfont and Zink have created this unstoppable team, the results are clearly evident and the *LBA* fanbase can reap the rewards.

If you'd like to download these powerful tools, please visit Architect/Story Coder section at the Prequel [website](#). For more information, visit Alexfont's website, [The Sacred Carrot](#), and Zink's site, [Emerald Moon Base](#).

Remember, if you'd like to contact one of the Prequel members about their programs, or have a question about the Prequel, send an email to LBAPrequel@gmail.com.

Lewi-G's Interpretation: Origins of the Magic Ball

One of the most unique things about the *LBA* series is the main weapon used by the hero: the Magic Ball. Early on in development, the Prequel Team decided that the origins of the Magic Ball would be depicted in the game. Because it isn't simply a gun or sword or some other traditional weapon, we thought that the ball deserved its own story. While we can't reveal everything yet (you'll have to wait until we release the game...don't worry, its coming sooner than you think!), here is a little taste to whet your appetite. Lewis Guarniere ('Lewi-G'), core team member and 3D modeler, has done a render of the birth of the Magic Ball. Keep in mind that this is early in development, and will change and improve by the time of the final release, but nonetheless, it is a cool little tidbit that hopefully will bring a little personality to this cool feature of the *LBA* series.



For a prettier, more eye-catching version, Lewi-G has been kind enough to upload his full render to YouTube. You can watch the entire video [here](#).

Musical Score Update

As you may or may not have noticed, there are currently two songs from the Prequel soundtrack available for listening on our site (you can download them [here](#)). We're happy to announce that Jesse Gorter ('Neko') has totally re-recorded and remastered one of these tunes ("The Conversion"), and changed it to fit better with the *LBA* atmosphere. The other tune ("Butterfly Nights") is soon to be re-recorded. This is all a result of hard work and Jesse's determination to continue to modify and mold our musical score to really fit with the

Prequel atmosphere. In the future, we'll post all versions of these songs, for your listening enjoyment. Keep in mind however that the final versions in the game may differ from what you find on our website. We can't spoil all of the surprises for you, can we?

We've also worked on two brand new songs for specific scenes, and an *LBA* remix that should be the best we've heard yet (*Editor's Note: These are not available for download at the time of this newsletter's release). Jesse has been developing these new and exciting songs for some time, and should both reflect the original compositions by Phillippe Vachey as well as also show the talent, creativity, and inspiration that our musicians bring to the table. *LBA's* music is a true piece of art, and it's not easy to create a totally new and original score; not any music piece will do. All of our songs (with the natural exceptions of the remix) are original creations, by both Jesse and Michael Dobeson ('Dopey'). In future newsletters, we hope Jesse himself can describe the composing process, and give us some insight about how he creates these wonderful songs!

Developer's Corner: Interviews by Jesse Gorter ('Neko')

A feature we hope to bring you with every update of the newsletter, the "Developer's Corner" will include not only interviews with team members, but also insight on current issues and progress with modification tools, script progression (and later, excerpts and sneak previews from the script itself!), and other information that helps bring the human side of game development to each and every one of you. In this edition of the newsletter, Neko has interviewed JJ Kohler ('Double-J'), who is the main script-writer and story designer for the Prequel, as well as one of the numerous voice actors. In addition, he is in charge of finding and evaluating the voice talent for the project.

1.) Hi Double-J, would you care to reveal your full name for our readers?

Haha, if you want to know my name, check the team page. Though I've seriously considered legally changing my name to "Double-J," it's so much shorter for official forms and such.

**Wow... I didn't notice it was there on the main page....
wouldn't that be fun; "Double-J" sounds catchy enough.**

2.) We've read about the Prequel... but what makes this project different from others that have come before it? We haven't seen many successful *LBA* fan-games...

I think that this Prequel is different largely because we have watched so many projects start off strong and then fail to get past the early stages and then carom off into limbo. These projects tend to get too big, too fast, with lofty aspirations that are often unrealistic. There is quite a bit of excitement and promise and talent, but not enough thought and organization to see it through to the end.

And luckily, we've been blessed with a solid core team of people that work well together and realize that while being methodical and steady isn't as exciting as releasing twenty-thousand demos or screenshots, it is what gets projects done. The keys to our project are keeping the core team small; those who have direct input and creative control over the administrative, day-to-day operations are very few. It is intimate enough so that we can all work together and support each other, but small and specialized enough so that each person has their own job, their own task, so that they don't have to worry about trying to do too many things at once.

As many have noticed, we are also a bit secretive about this project, at least more so than others around the community. Part of the reason for this is because unlike many *LBA* fan projects, this isn't simply a rehash or reinterpretation of the old games, but an entirely new, full-length adventure based upon the original game engine. If we give away all of the secrets now, then everyone will say, "oh, and here I should expect two guards to come out..." or "this is where I have to move the character here and I'll be ready to do this..." and it won't be exciting. We want this game to be fresh and new, the same way the original *LBA*'s were when you first played them.

How do you keep your visions or aspirations realistic?

Basically, I keep going back to the original games, to "reset" my perspective, if that makes sense. I mean, I try to put myself in the shoes of Mr. Raynal and Mr. Chanfray and the rest of the original *LBA* team, creating something that makes sense and fits the atmosphere of

the *LBA* universe. But at the same time, I think that it's important that this script be original and different as well. I wanted to tell my story, our story, one that might not be official but should fit nicely into the universe. It will be independent, yet a part of the series, if you know what I mean.

To complement that, most people who know me (both online and in real-life) know that I love video games; they are a big part of my life. I've been privileged to play some really great games, where I fell in love with the characters and their stories which made me feel emotionally attached to them. I've also had the unlucky task of playing quite a few terrible games (*ET* and *Superman 64* come to mind...). With that experience, I think it gives me an intuition with what will work, and what will not in-game, and in the story in general.

With regards to the technical aspects of the game, and keeping it within limits, I'm lucky enough to work with great people who help me every step of the way, who have basically said, "write the story, we will make it work," and if something won't work, they take the time to explain why, and what we can use as an alternative. Our alternatives, our solutions are oftentimes better than the original idea. It's the teamwork, the camaraderie that make this project so awesome!

How do you guys manage to keep the work-flow at 100%? How do you break the habit of so many fan projects, particularly in our community, where they start off very active, and then end up dying out within a matter of months?

I think 100% is a relative term. As aforementioned, I split my time between Uni, my normal real-life responsibilities, and then my spare time (when I can work on this project). It's hard to stay on-task, because on one hand, sitting down to write a script isn't always the most exciting or glamorous thing to do; I'd much rather be out with my friends or maybe go to the club or even read a good book. I figure it's probably the same for the other guys in the team "we've all got lives outside of this project.

But then I think about how cool this game is going to be, and it motivates me to work harder on the project. Plus, when one of the other guys comes out with something new (like the model editors/designers from Alexfont and Obrasilo), it makes you to get to work because it is really exciting. Also, I like to write down things I hear in real life and in my experiences, and try to implement them into my script(s). The story for the Prequel, the story of Hegesippe, will

have a very human feel, in an environment that seems lived in, you know, "real."

Other than that, I think the core team plays off each other very well, we all know our strengths and weaknesses, and help out whenever possible. We keep each other motivated largely because we are working on such a cool project, to which we're all dedicated.

How are the different tasks being distributed? Do you get requests from the team members to write a specific scene?

I've actually been allowed quite a bit of creative freedom for this project. Early on in development, we sat down and had chats and discussions about the basics of the storyline, about what we wanted to include, and what was going to happen. However, much of that was rudimentary, and only "A --> B --> C --> End," and it needed to be shaped and fleshed out if the game was to be exciting and full. That's where I come in. We've got some awesome ideas proposed by just about every team member that I'm trying to adapt and flesh out into a cohesive story. By that same token, much of this script is a blank page, so I've had to come up with quite a few ideas on my own. As the process continues, the other members have come with ideas that they recommend to me. It's not really a process where they say, "okay, let's make this part about Hegesippe walking to this place, now write in the rest," it's more, "Hegesippe needs to accomplish this task... how can we make this fit into the story?"

The rest of the team should all get storywriting credits as far as I'm concerned, because even if I can crank out the majority of the script by myself, they are my editors, my reviewers, they give me ideas, and they help me fix what is wrong. This project is a group effort, where no one member is more important than any other, and we all work together, each of us cogs in the big Prequel machine.

3.) So you're doing the story script....how far is the story and how did the writing process go?

The story is coming along nicely, but it does take time and energy. Those close to me know I'm working on a book at my University, which takes up a tremendous amount of my time, coupled with other commitments and responsibilities; it's a long process. That's no different than anyone else on the team - we've all got jobs and lives

outside of the *MBN* (*Editor's Note: the #1 *LBA* fan community, the "Magicball Network") and the Project, but we're all dedicated to getting this done, and so far, its coming along very well, at least in my opinion.

The writing process is actually very fun for me, since I haven't really worked with fiction or creative writing in some time. As a history person, most of my writing is either analysis or interpretation. But now for the Prequel, I get a chance to go back and say, "Well, I don't like how this happened... let's change this, and we'll have something cool interrelated happen down the line..." because, you have that power, you know? The power to change the way things work. And it's awesome. I kind of think of the game like a movie, that's how I write the script - with cutscenes and dialogs and such. This is where other members like Kit Owen ('Ricochet') and Whitney Hills ('Atalanta') come in, as they'll be working on constructing the NPC dialogue, all the stuff that isn't necessarily said by Hegesippe or the other main characters (*Editor's Note: Ido Beerl, better known as 'Chaosfish,' will also be working on this portion of the project). Kit in particular has been extremely helpful with the script, and he's had a number of great ideas that have helped me out when I've had a bit of writers block, or trying to make something work that has been frustrating me all day.

I think its also important to understand that Hegesippe is such an intriguing character to write about because his story is unknown; all we've got are two little quips mentioned in *LBA 1*, and he's never heard about again. We thought, "well, Twinsen has been done to death in fan projects. We want something new." Hegesippe as the main character allows us to come up with a totally new story that won't clash with the real *LBA* universe - and that was very important, especially since Fred said that if a project was good enough it would be canonical - that this would fit smoothly into the *LBA* story that we know from Twinsen and make sense. People can play this story, and then play the other *LBA* games and say, "Oh, wow! I get it now!" That's the kind of reaction we want to have.

By that same token, we also needed new allies and enemies to go along with this new hero, as well as new environments. The other members know my affinity for *Star Wars*, and I think its a good analogy. Pretend to be George Lucas, and imagine *Episodes 1-3* in the past from *4-6*, and what would it look like? That's kind of what we had to do here... we've had to picture how Twinsun would look generations before Twinsen's generation would exist. Would the people be the same? Would technology be different? It wouldn't make sense if

people from the past were thought to have used flying cars just because some time in the future we'll have them...you have to change your perspective.

For the main villain, we also wanted to come up with something both emotionally evocative and someone who is fresh, exciting, and different. Funrock too has seen his treads get worn out by fan projects. This is an area where we wanted something fresh...this game is going to feature quite a few exciting plot twists, which I think largely benefits from it being like a movie script...you almost think about it if you were seeing it in person, how you want it to come out.

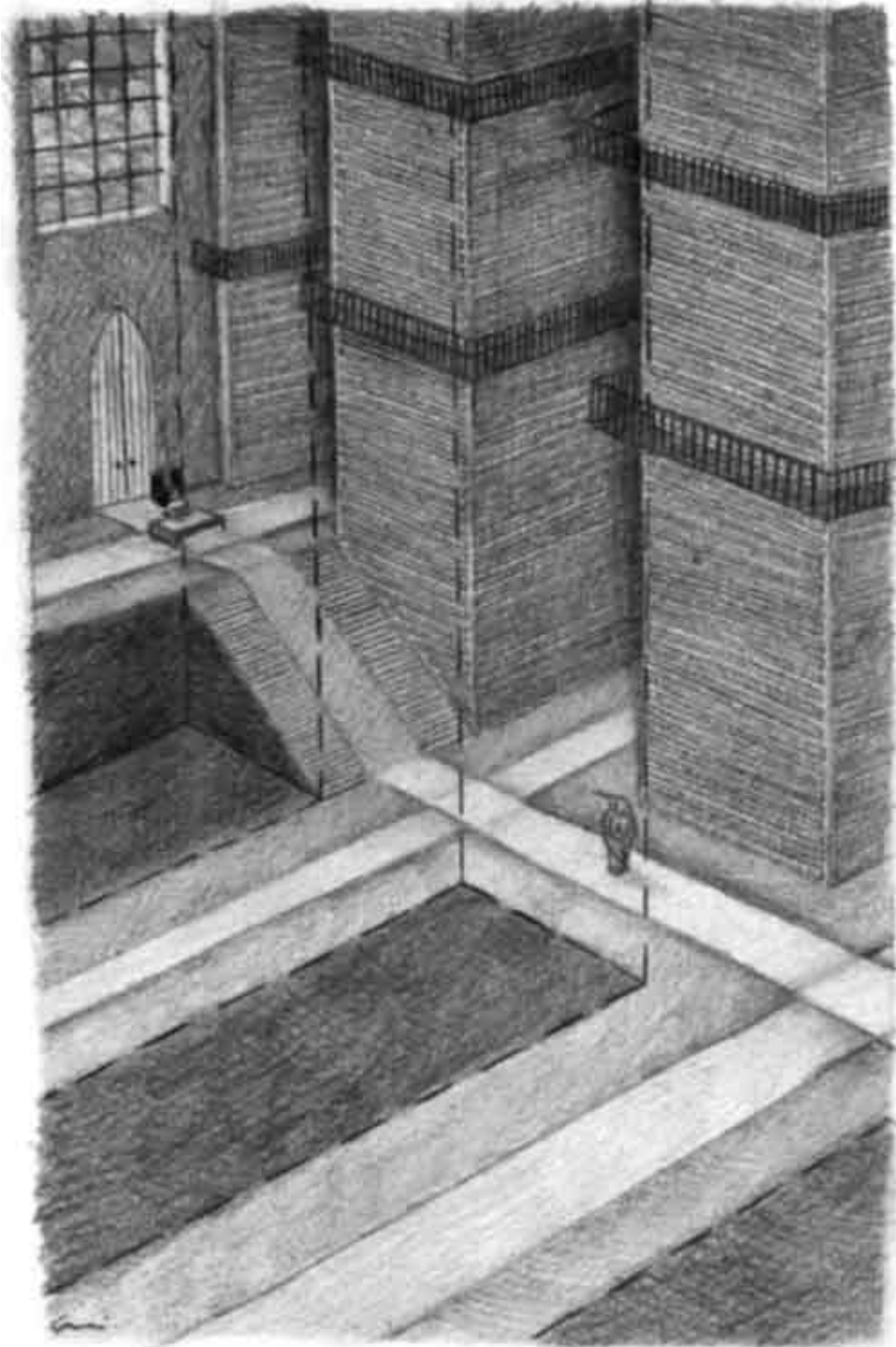
4.) What excites you about this project?

Everything, haha! In all honesty, what excites me the most is that I'm working with a team of people who are so skilled... I mean, superior people who really have great talent. Each one of them, in their own area(s), has so much to give to this project...its amazing to think that we've been able to overcome the hurdles that so many other fangames haven't - inner rivalries, creative disputes, inactivity, etc. We've been blessed in that all of us really want to see this project through until the end, and we're all constantly plugging away at it until it is done.

Probably the most exciting thing(s) for me personally are the programs by Obras and Alexfont that are going to allow us to import new models into the game...this basically makes my job (as script writer) infinitely easier, because I'm not bound by the constraints of trying to rehash old *LBA 1* models to fit a new script...now, we can create anything we want, with new animations and designs, to really make this game special. Zink and Alexfont working together on their Architect and Story Coder problem has also knocked down another huge wall that will speed this project up immensely. Jesse's music is also an inspiration - I just keep listening to it over and over when I'm writing the script. Again, the Prequel is the definition of group effort, and I couldn't do my part without my teammates.

5.) How's the game planned? Will all of Twinsun be involved?

Twinsun is going to be a fun task to finish because, as I've said, this story takes place generations before Twinsen's adventures in *LBA's 1+2*. We've sat down and said, "Has Twinsun really been totally explored? Or are there new islands and areas that we haven't seen?" I think that, without revealing too much, we're going to see more Twinsun in this game than we ever have before. I kind of think of it as *Legend of Zelda: Wind Waker*, where Twinsun is a vast planet that takes a long time to get around. Maybe Hegecipe doesn't have motorbikes or other vehicles to take him around, so how will he get to where he needs to go? Will the Dino-Fly's exist? I think that you're all going to be pleasantly surprised with regards to the size, depth, and richness of Twinsun, because we've got some really fabulous things planned. Who knows...maybe we'll even go beyond Twinsun?



How will Twinsun look in the Prequel? This early concept shows that some things may be much richer and have more depth than they were before. It is an example of the tyranny unleashed by Funrock in the later games. As this concept art shows, the Library is clearly an archive of immense proportions.
© Copyright 2007 LBA Prequel Team.

6.) What exactly can you do with these mod tools? Can we expect any other weapons, new inventory items, etc.?

I think, for the most part, the basics will stay the same for Hegesippe as they were for Twinsen - the four behavior modes will be there, as will the magic ball, the mechanics should remain the same. But we also have taken strides to come up with some really new innovations that should make things interesting. Now that we can edit and change animations, we've discussed adding some new fighting capabilities for Twinsen besides just the automatic/manual punch-punch-kick...who wouldn't like to see Hegesippe perform a drop-kick or two? As far as other weapons go, there have been quite a few discussions on this as well, and while you're (naturally) going to see some similar things in the inventory from the original games, there is going to be plenty of new weapons, items, puzzles, and all sorts of goodies for Hegesippe to use on his quest. You're also going to see enemies use items like they never have before...

With regards to what I can do personally, technically I'm the script writer, but I'll be working on voice acting as well, and I help with graphics and teasers whenever I can, even with my limited skill, haha!

7.) Will this game be done in 1-and-a-half years, or is that just a guess?

One and a half years is a guess, a good one, but just a guess. (**Editor's note - this interview was conducted a few months ago, so the estimate is already off...we're well on our way to finishing this game before the end of 2007*) I think if I had to, I could sit down for about a week and if I did nothing else besides the Prequel, I could finish the script entirely. It wouldn't be very good, but it could be done. Instead though, I'm working slowly and conferring with the rest of the team on ideas to build the plot and then, after its written, we all go over it, talk about the good and the bad, and then revise it.

As far as the technical aspects go, that's a better question for Alexfont or Zink. Our team has made tremendous progress on this project with new tools and methods to utilize the *LBA 1* engine and make it basically new and fresh, and I'm always amazed at how fast they can work. Now with the release of the *Architect+Story Coder* updates, the

only real hurdle left is how we'll convert our 3D cutscenes into the *LBA* file format.

The same goes for our modelers and artists - they too pump designs and concepts out like its water! I feel guilty when after requesting something, they get things done within a few days, because I fear that they're shirking their real life duties! And likewise with our musicians, and this is something really special, Jesse and the gang have constructed some fabulous new tunes and compositions that have knocked my socks off, this game is, if nothing else, going to sound amazing.

So, is the current time frame an estimate?

Sure. But the way we're making progress, I wouldn't bet against us finishing sooner. The more progress we make, it seems like things always happen faster than we ever thought. All of these programs have been going well, we've had a ton of voice auditions, and I've had some free time to crank out more chapters of the script than I expected. This project should be done before many people probably expect, at least I'd think so. I'd put money on it.

8.) Will there be a music score/artwork book released on CD, DVD, or on Internet?

You know, I think that may be up to our musicians and artists. Certainly we're going to release concept arts and music clips and such to the public as the project moves along (**Editor's note - you can see some of them in this newsletter!*), but as far as some sort of notebook or music score, I think that would depend upon the composers and artists themselves, and whether they'd like to do something like that...in fact, we've already got some music clips and artwork at the Prequel website, in the downloads section and in the gallery.

But I like the idea, I'd like to see some sort of compilation book that provides overviews, artwork, music, etc. from this project, to chronicle the hard work that's been done.

9.) Are there any other plans to release official artwork?

As aforementioned, yes, there will be official artwork and teasers, we've already got some in the gallery. These will include renders, hand-drawings, computer drawings, etc. I'd like to also release official box art as well, which you could print out and slide into a blank jewel CD/DVD case to personalize your copy of the *LBA Prequel*, and maybe even a CD-label which you could bring and attach onto the CD/DVD.

10.) I saw the *LBA-Remake* done by Jasiiek awhile ago with updated graphics compared to the original *LBA 1* engine...what's the reason you want to work with the old engine?

I can't go into the technical aspects much, that's more of Alexfont, Zink, and Obrasilo's forte. However, when it comes down to it, the original engine works, and it can be modified relatively easily for our project, which makes it a perfect fit. We discussed using another engine, like *LBA X* (another fan project I'm involved in)will, which would make it easier to import new models than our current engine, but it is also much harder to write our own engine and get it to function as the original *LBA 1* engine does without bugs and such. That's a problem with custom engines, they often have bugs and physics aren't worked out (something we were concerned about with magic balls and such) whereas we already know how the environment(s) work in the *LBA 1* engine. Any concerns about new coding or model importation has been done away with when Alex and Zink came out with their *Architect+Coder*, and Obras and Alex worked on their model editors. Both of these have made our job infinitely easier. Plus, with *LBAWin*, we know that anyone should be able to play it regardless of their computer capabilities.

11.) Did you guys consider using the *LBA 2* engine, and will it be used at some point, or any other engine (such as *Twin-E*)?

With regards to why we chose *LBA 1* over the *LBA 2* engine, it was basically because the *LBA 2* engine is much more complicated and difficult to program for at this point, while *LBA 1* has been manipulated and disassembled, making it far easier to code and program for that engine. However, in the future, if it were feasible, I'd like to think we could develop a game using the *LBA 2* engine, since I prefer the game play from *LBA 2* myself. Who knows? We may even be able to import

LBA 2 models into the *LBA 1* engine...there are quite a few variable that are not set in stone. *Twin-E* also isn't finished yet, and we didn't want to be tied down to an incomplete engine; we know we can work with and modify the original engine to suit our needs, so the decision really wasn't that difficult.

We've even joked about making another fan game...if the Prequel does well, and people like it (especially outside the community), we've been talking about making one based on the *LBA 2* engine, called the "*LBA Sequel*," haha.

12.) What do you want to say to the readers?

Bona fortuna! I want to tell everyone to get involved! We are looking for people to help out in all sorts of ways, so please check the website often. But I want - and I can't stress this enough - to have as many *MBN* members to contribute voices as possible, because as aforementioned, we want to fill up the *LBA* universe with as many unique and original personalities as we've got here! Please, even if you don't think you are good, or are too shy, or embarrassed, don't be...go to the Prequel website, record some samples, and send it to our email address...we need voices!

When it comes down to it, I just want people to enjoy our game as much as they enjoyed the original ones. I realize we're not a substitute for an *LBA 3*, but with the potential of an official sequel in limbo, I hope we can fill the void and put out a professional-quality project made by the fans who love the series so much.

13.) I wonder; will the snowboard part of the *LBA 1* game be involved again in a new entire challenging scene? (how about a chase?)

Hmm...I don't know. I suppose you'll just have to wait and see...though I will say this - you're going to see a variety of environments, and all new sorts of cool and unique ways to get Hegesippe from one place to another or to help him defeat the bad guys...we've got some neat things planned!

Newsletter Bonus: Exclusive Wallpaper

Below you'll find a link to the first official *LBA* Prequel desktop wallpaper! Depicted in this month's newsletter is the ruthless Captain Lucius (who's profile you can find on the [Characters](#) page), leader of the Twinsunian pirates who have been terrorizing the land and scouring the world for treasure! This wallpaper comes from an original concept art drawing by Luke Farookhi, and is © Copyright 2007 LBA Prequel Team.



[Wallpaper #1: Captain Lucius](#)

We sincerely hope you've enjoyed reading the first edition of the *LBA* Prequel Newsletter. If this doesn't display properly, there will be an archived version available on our website. Look for another edition of the Prequel newsletter heading towards your inbox in the very near future!



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