WIZARD'S CROWN: Fantasy at War

There's only one reason to buy this game: to conduct war game-style battles with spellcasters and sword-swingers instead of tanks, half-tracks and infantry units. The graphics are dim, the animation is crude and the sound effects are straight out of a box of Kellog's Rice Crispies.

However, *Wizard's Crown* does offer unprecedented freedom in developing your characters by "spending" experience points to improve the traits you want to concentrate on, and some role-players may be intrigued with this facet of the system. (You can spend money at the training grounds for the same purpose.) It also delivers an enormous range of traits -- 30 of them -- for your characters, though I get the impression someone spent a few nights poring over a D & D manual.

The goal -- don't tell me you've already guessed it -- is to find a wizard's crown, once worn by the head of the Fellowship of Wizards who ruled this fantasy land. Then you've got to return it to Kaitar the wizard in the city of Arghan. The quest begins in Arghan's Crossed Swords Inn, where a crew of up to eight new characters can be created. You can save time by using the pre-rolled party on the disk. Any character can be renamed and outfitted with one of 23 icons.

TWO CLASSES IN ONE

Qualification for the classes -- fighter, thief, priest, sorcerer and ranger -- is determined by intelligence, and a smart character can hold down two jobs. With intelligence of 10, a new recruit could become a priest-ranger or a sorcerer-fighter, for example. Two drawbacks to character creation: you can only save eight characters and will need them all for a party, so you can't have reserves. And new characters start without any money, eliminating the popular "dummy" scam for generating a lot of money without slaying a single orc.

Skill abilities vary according to class. That's why the manual says half the people in your party should have two professions. In a game with such emphasis on class types, I was confounded to find that nowhere does it display the class of your characters. To keep track of which one is the priest and which is the thief, you must give them related names. The icons are helpful, but are only displayed in the dungeons or during certain types of combat sequences.

In the town, you'll see uninspired visuals shown from an aerial view; a two-character icon depicts the party. In most shops and markets you just get a menu or text description, no fresh graphics. And the graphics you do get look pretty lo-res from *this* side of the screen. Outside the city gates you'll discover ruins and grasslands. Dungeons and the lengthy combat scenes are shown with an overhead view of the room's layout and a horizontal view of characters, monsters and scenic elements such as trees or tables.

SSI has grafted the command interface from its war games onto this one: to move in one of eight directions, you hit a key from 1-8. On the surface, your main commands are to (S)earch the area, (C)heck a character or (M)ake camp. In camp, priests can pray for healing, rangers can use first aid, money may be pooled or transfered, the game saved, and other housekeeping chores attended to. Simple menus facilitate all actions.

There are three bizarre war game elements that seem out of place in a fantasy, even one with tactical aspects: ratings for morale and visibility -- and the fact that one of your gang must be a point man who walks ahead of the group to scout for ambushes. A point man? After seeing this, I grew concerned that one of my fighters might break down with a case of Vietnam syndrome and start shooting the others.

THE BLACK CAULDRON

Based on the Disney film, *Cauldron* begins outside a hut in the land of Prydain, with you directing the actions of a young boy named Taran. Through Hen Wen, a psychic chicken, you learn the Horned King is after the Black Cauldron, intent on using its magic power for evil ends. The enchanter Dallben, Taran's foster father, tells you to hide Hen Wen so the Horned King can't use her powers to locate the Cauldron.

Of course, the minute you get on the road a winged fiend called a Gwythaint snatches you both, drops you in a distant place and disappears with Hen Wen. You've got to find the chicken, keep her from the villain, and locate the Cauldron before he does. The cast includes fairies, a princess, a wandering musician with a magic harp, a trio of witches and a furry creature, the Gurgi.

Disney's computer software team collaborated with Sierra on the game, which displays the same bright, detailed graphics and subtle pastels seen in Sierra's other 128K adventures. Stored on both sides of three disks, there are 73 3-D locations to explore, and access time isn't bad considering the complexity of the graphics being retrieved.

It uses the animated, joystick-controlled system from the *King's Quest* series. Taran can walk behind trees, swim streams, and move around much more entertainingly than the animated figures in *Rings of Zilfin*. Sometimes an entire scene is animated, and it seems like you're watching a slick cartoon. This happens when the Gwythaint snatches you and the chicken, for example. Six animated arcade sequences are included. You'll hear eight melodies; other sound effects are limited on the Apple. Of course, the graphics look crisper and more colorful on the IBM.

Because it is aimed at a young audience, the game has no parser. Jab a button on the joystick and a small window appears and offers three selections: look, use, and do. These are selected by highlighting one, then hitting another button. (Keyboard control is also available for these functions as well as for guiding Taran about.) Similar menus facilitate saving and loading games, checking inventory, and other common actions. To "do" something, Taran must be standing next to the appropriate item, such as a door. Brief text at the bottom of the screen tells you what's just happened.

The problems aren't overpowering, but after solving the game you can go back and try to complete it another way -- multiple solutions make this adventure more replayable than most. And it's tricky enough that some adults in the crowd will enjoy the game. Various random events occur throughout the story, so you'll really have to pay attention to score all 230 points. A general map of Prydain, showing the Horned King's castle, the hut, and other landmarks, may help you get your bearings.

Cauldron is a perfect outing for young adventurers, a satisfying one for older gamers who want to lean back in the chair instead of hunching over the keyboard.

Computer: Apple (128K), IBM PC & jr
Planned Conversions: Amiga, ST
Skill Level: Novice
Price: $39.95

Bard's Tale II

Better hurry and finish off Mangar -- *Bard's Tale II* is around the corner. *The Arch Mage's Tale* (a tentative title) will be easier in the early stages, because so many people complained that the first part of the original game was too tough. It will be released simultaneously for Apple and Commodore machines this fall. *BT* is expected to go "gold" with 100,000 sales. A pair of ACS author Stuart Smith's classics, *Ali Baba* and *Return of Heracles*, are being spruced up for release on the same disk under the name *Age of Adventure* (Apple and C-64/128). Look for this in September. EA is also doing a summertime graphic adventure. And *Amnesia*, their premier all-text adventure, should be out by July at the latest. Apple first, then Commodore.

Double Hi-Res Graphics

Oo-topos is Penguin's first Comprehend adventure to boast double hi-res graphics, and they look superb. Future releases of *Crimson Crown* and *Transylvania* will feature similar graphics. *Oo-topos* is out now for the Apple. Any day: Mac, ST, Amiga, C-64, IBM & Quest-alikes. Thanks to routines from Commodore, Penguin's C-64 versions now have faster disk access than their counterparts on the Apple.

More from Mindscape

If you liked *Deja Vu*, look for Mindscape's *Uninvited*, which was also done by Icon Simulations. (Macintosh, ST, Amiga) For the same machines, their animated adventure, *Braccas*, looks like Mindscape's best game so far. The company's latest all-text games, *High Stakes* and *Goldfinger*, were set for a May release.

Alternate Reality Club

Datasoft, now known as IntelliCreations, has formed an *Alternate Reality* club and is sending a free, bi-monthly newsletter to registered owners. The first issue reveals the initial game, *The City*, has no goal other than mapping the town and developing a strong character, which was not mentioned on the packaging. It's also impossible to join a guild in most versions of the game, nor can you cast spells in *any* version. The company is working on a "text-graphic adventure" (whatever that means) based on the film *The Neverending Story*. They've also got a Sherlock Holmes game on the way. That makes 47 so far, or is it 48?

Sequels II

Phantasie II looks like a loser. We'll have a full report in the next issue. *Ultima IV, Part 2* won't happen, which means we should see *Ultima V* a lot sooner, maybe by next summer. (Origin's latest is *Ogre*, a tactical war game based on the Steve Jackson board game.) *Questron II* is a reality, but SSI says they're not sure the authors will give it to them.

Infocom's Next Game

Trinity will be the first Infocom story to recreate historical events in authentic locations: atomic bomb tests in Siberia, New Mexico, a South Pacific island, and even outer space. You play a tourist vacationing in London on the eve of nuclear war. After escaping into a world of magic, you must travel through time to visit all the test sites in an effort to change history and stop the bomb. Brian Moriarty, who wrote *Wishbringer*, says "magical things can happen anywhere in the game." It's the first puzzle-oriented game in Infocom's Interactive Fiction Plus series (128K, 512K on Macintosh), and should be out by June. Infocom has also released *Fooblitzky* for the Apple, IBM PC (but not jr), and Atari XL and XE. It's their first non-adventure game, a board-style strategy game -- with graphics! -- for two-four players.

Adventurer's Pub Busted

The Scarlet Bard, a popular tavern in downtown Skara Brae, was padlocked last week after the bartender was arrested for serving ale to minors -- a pair of teenage orcs from the hinterlands who were celebrating spring break.

Planned Conversions

Macintosh: *Phantasie*, (*Questron* is on indefinite hold), *King's Quest I and II*, *Ultima IV*
Atari ST: *Phantasie I and II*, *Wizard's Crown*, *Mindwheel*, *Dragonworld*, *Ultima IV*, *Coveted Mirror*, *Sundog*
Atari 800: *Phantasie I*
Amiga: *Phantasie I*, *Wizard's Crown*, *Adventure Construction Set*, *Ultima IV*
IBM: *Rings of Zilfin*, *Ultima IV*
Commodore: *Rings of Zilfin*, *Phantasie II*, *Wizard's Crown*, *Gateway*, *AutoDuel*, *Moebius*

Miscellaneous Stuff

Many new subscribers have asked about back issues, which go for $2 each. For a list of the games reviewed in each issue, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Due to space considerations, free ads in *Duffy* are now limited to those seeking or offering *free* help. And speaking of free, the winner of our ongoing contest is Michael Gathers of Houston, Texas, who won a copy of Penguin's *Oo-topos*. As usual, next month's winner will be chosen randomly from the sub list.

WIZARD'S CROWN

Characters with the proper skills can arm themselves with an arsenal of swords, crossbows and 23 other weapons. Each sorcerer knows all 22 spells from the start, but won't have enough power to cast the strongest ones early in the game. Priests can count on six prayers for healing and other functions; they have no combat prayers.

When you run into a pack of monsters, a text screen announces "thief" or "thugs" and asks if you want to use the quick combat system. Do so and an all-text screen shows the party's status and amount of damage each member has suffered; you can always pause to study it. Hit and spell points are not shown. (Wounds are of two types, injury and bleeding; these may be normal or serious in nature.) If allowed to use magic, you can't decide which spells are cast. And you can't change weapons to fit the situation. The screen flickers a few times, numbers change in the damage report, then you get to loot the bodies. (Talk about logical inconsistencies: After killing a pack of wolves, I was amazed to find the animals had been carrying a key, crowbar and some bandages!) Quick combat is really useless, since you shouldn't bother with *Crown* unless you want to play out the 15-45 minute-long tactical combat scenes.

In these the program first builds a map of the terrain. Then you enter the placement phase, moving each character's icon into a tactically sound position. Characters take greater damage if hit from an unshielded side, as in most war games. The enemy icons dash for your team's throats, with some animated sword-swinging and spellcasting. You direct your team members individually. Here's a sample combat menu:

Fast Eddy

Injury: 0 Bleeding: 0 Life: 30
Type order (<-,->), 6, 7, 8, A, D, F, G, H, I, K, Q, R, S, T, V, W, Z, ? = Help

You can choose an action (A to attack, K

QuestBusters™

HEART OF AFRICA 🌴

A well-animated one-player expedition across 19th Century Africa, this game is clearly superior to *Seven Cities of Gold*, though it uses much the same interface and presentation style. A center-screen window shows the location. By highlighting one of four icons on the left, you can pick up and drop objects, consult your map, and do other things. (Everything is joystick-controlled.) Below, a single text line names your location and offers more information.

The goal is more clearly defined than in *Gold*. Here you must find the tomb of the Egyptian Pharoah, Ahnk Ahnk, which is filled with treasure. Do so and you'll also inherit the valuable estate of Hiram Primm, who died while searching for the tomb. (This background is fully detailed in letters that make up the documentation.) You start near Cairo, with $250 in your hand and all of Africa -- which, if copied on paper the same size it appears on-screen, would cover a wall 10 by 20 feet! -- at your feet.

Only the immediate vicinity is displayed as your character, a small animated stick-man, roams the continent. Consult your map icon and you'll see a bigger map with less detail, but which shows where you've been and pinpoints your location. Wearing a pith helmet, he is depicted with more detail and several times larger upon entering a town; the natives he meets there are also animated. In towns he can buy equipment, or gifts to trade with the natives.

To succeed you'll *have* to give them gifts to convince them to help you find the tomb. (This is done by bumping into a native while holding something in your hand.) That's because clues to its location are found in the legends of the various tribes. This gets tricky, for some natives will go wild over a copper bracelet, giving you a map of otherwise elusive locations, or maybe some advice; offer the same piece of copper to another tribe, however, and they might feed you to the hippos. So there's an element of puzzle-solving involved, as well as managing resources such as food and other gear. Numerous clues are offered in the manual, and you get a big map of Africa that shows the port cities and some of the key terrain features.

There are other things to do besides trading with the locals. You can search for jewels and minerals, which can be sold in Timbuktu and another inland town (or traded to the natives). You can also make money by discovering new mountain ranges, lakes, or the source of rivers such as the Nile and reporting them to Primm's lawyers, who will be found in the six port cities.

The graphics are sharp, animation is effective, sound effects and quick tunes are fun, and you don't have to copy a scenario disk before playing. When your explorer gets sick or starves, the effects are shown via animation. He'll slow down to a crawl, swim around in circles, repeatedly fall on his face, or become delirious and turn left when you yank the joystick to the right. You can always check his health and general location with one of the icons.

In addition to the time-saving auto-mapping feature, *Africa* automatically records notes of everything that happens. A window in your "diary" opens, and you see a pen scribbling down the event. To review the diary, you select the proper icon and mash the button to turn the pages. (This would have been handy in *Ultima IV* !).

Each time you start a new game the tomb is hidden in a different location, so there's extra replay value. Dan and Bill Bunten did a much better job on this game, mainly by making it easier to interact with the natives. (In *Gold*, I could never figure out what was going on. Then a fight would break out, and if I was lucky enough to escape, I would always return to the ocean and find my crew had sailed away with the boat.)

You might be cautious if using an old 1541 disk drive: the reason this game wasn't reviewed months ago is that it would not load on the drives of the first two reviewers it was sent to -- but it worked fine on the one in the office. With this in mind, it is highly recommended for anyone who has ever dreamed of being Indiana Jones.

Computer: C-64/128
Skill Level: Intermediate
Saves: 10
Price: $34.95
Manufacturer: Electronic Arts

Island of Kesmai

CompuServe's latest on-line RPG, *Island of Kesmai* is a sequel that embellishes greatly on the presentation style of the original. Seen from an overhead view, the walls of city's buildings and the dungeons are represented with alphanumeric characters. You need a terminal program that offers cursor control, so you can move the ^ that stands for your character in the maze. A parser lets you talk to shopkeepers and conduct most activities; it accepts multiple commands and understands the pronoun "it."

The goal is to explore the dungeons, kill monsters and amass a fortune, so you can play forever. It's main attraction is that up to 50 people can play at once. If you see someone else's character, his name is displayed. This means you can post messages on the Multi-Player game board to form parties to enter Kesmai at the same time and explore as a group. Players can communicate with each other, and if you get tired of hacking away at creatures you can attack another player's character.

HELP! MR. WIZARD!

Stuck *again*? Not a pretty sight, is it? If it's a Penguin game you can call them at 312-232-1984 for help, or send SASE for a help sheet. American Software will send a similar sheet to registered owners. If *Bard's Tale* has you babbling to yourself in the dark, you can get an official clue book with maps from Electronic Arts, Bard's Tale Clue Book, POB 7530, San Mateo, CA 94043. It goes for $9.99. "The Way of the Avatar," an official *Ultima IV* hint book, is available from EA for $12.95. Either book may be also ordered with MasterCard or Visa: 800-245-4525, 800-562-1112 in California. Origin says people are "always welcome to call" for help at 603-644-3360.

Apple adventurers can get interactive help from the AdventureTip disks. The first six disks give menu-accessible walkthroughs to dozens of games, while # 7 doles out hints to the *Ultimas*, *Zork*, *Planetfall* and more. They've also got Adventure Map disks. They're $10 each, but mention QB for a discount if you buy several: AdventureDisk, POB 216, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

BOOK OF ADVENTURE II

Kim Schuette's *Book of Adventure II* ($19.95 from HABA/Arrays) offers maps and walkthroughs for 46 recent games spanning the era from Infocom's *Cutthroats* to *A Mind Forever Voyaging*. It also covers the 550-point version of *Adventure, Amazon, Buckaroo Banzai, Crimson Crown, Critical Mass, Dallas Quest, Dragonworld, Earthly Delights, Fahrenheit 451, Forbidden Quest, Gateway, Hitchhiker's Guide, Hulk, Institute, King's Quest, Kukulkan, Lucifer's Realm, Masquerade, Mind Shadow, Mindwheel, Questron, Rendezvous with Rama, Ring Quest, Robots of Dawn, Seastalker, Spider-Man, Sundog, Suspect, Tracer Sanction, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Wizard of Oz* and *Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle*. Plus 10 obscure games that will be of interest mainly to Apple owners, an enlightening lesson on how to solve adventures, and a clear tutorial on mapping mazes.

The only "bug" I found in *Book II* is the incomplete solution and map to *Crimson Crown*. Arrays admits Schuette played an "illegally obtained copy" of the game before it was finished, so he never found the second half of the game. Otherwise, it's an real value, especially for Apple owners. *Book I* comprehensively covered all the previous Infocom and other classic graphic and text adventures, plus a few RPGs such as the *Ultima* and *Wizardry* series. It's 100 pages longer than *Book II*.

STAR TREK

NASA must have had a hand in the design and testing of this all-text adventure -- it's riddled with flaws big enough to fly a solid fuel booster through. But before the panel reports its findings, here's the plot:

You are Admiral Kirk, taking the Starfleet Academy's final exam. The test is a computer simulation called the "Kobayashi Alternative." Your goal is to find Sulu, who disappeared on the *USS Heinlein* somewhere in the Trianguli area. (As an Admiral, you're only taking this new test in order to evaluate its effectiveness for the cadets.) From the manual you learn there are 10 star systems you can warp to in search of Sulu. That leads to more than 50 planets, many circled by moons, with a variety of alien life forms to meet. The crew consists of Spock, Scotty, McCoy, Uhura, Chehov and Renner. Each converses in the familiar and characteristic dialogue of the TV show.

The presentation veers from the usual course of all-text games. You type commands into a thin, one-line window just below center-screen. Above it a large one displays "scan" reports on planets and data obtained from the ship's computers, while smaller windows intermittently overlay this with conversation from individual crewmembers, or inventory and other reports. Below, a horizontal window shows current position and heading of the Enterprise and the state of phasers, torpedoes, shields and engines.

Your commands are assumed to be orders to a crewmember: "system scan" or "warp 8" or "set course for planet 3." The typical adventure commands -- inventory, get, examine and six others -- are executed with function keys or a shift-#. If this involves taking or using an object, a menu lists the choices and you press a number to choose one. Moving from place to place can be done by leaning on the cursor keys instead of typing "n" or "s" -- a feature far more practical than using function keys for commands. In the turbolift, you may say "transporter" or the name of any section you want to visit and then zoom to the deck it's located on (there are 23 in all).

There are lots of little snafus in the program, but what bothered me most is a design flaw that makes it impossible to figure out when you've done something right: you don't get points for successfully solving problems, and the score is never revealed until the test is over. (Top score is 2001.) No multiple commands are allowed by the parser, and it does not tell you what's wrong if it can't understand you. All you get is "Alert, you must use Starfleet Protocol." Another weak point is the sparse amount of text. You'll walk for miles across most planets, stalk the halls of the ship from stem to stern, but rarely read more than the name of the location.

Bugs abound, however. After beaming down to a planet, I read the report "you dropped something" each time I moved. Every step of the way I had to hit shift-4 to take something, then select "1 - tricorder" from the menu. Could Kirk really be so clumsy? (If it is not a bug, if a logical reason exists for this, it isn't made clear in the game or manual.) And if you forget to bring the tricorder, no one will beam it down to you. Why not? Other people can beam down. Why can't Spock bring it? Or Scotty? Did the crew unionize since the TV show, do they draw the line at stoop labor?

With a one-drive system, I had to do a lot of disk-flipping at certain stages. This always happens after you orbit a planet and after you scan it. Since these actions are logically performed in sequence, you'd think the programmers would have put this data on the same side of the disk. You can restore a saved game at any time, but cannot restart without rebooting the program. The manual, a hard-bound book with lots of color, looks good but omits information: a list of the ten function keys (you have to view the on-screen help list), the need to copy one of disk's sides if using two drives, that the warp engines will stop dead if you touch a key.

There are logical inconsistencies and continuity problems as well as design and coding defects. What really didn't make sense is that you can say "set course for earth" and find that "charts show no such location." Is that logical, when earth is clearly shown in the manual's map of the universe? (A limited vocabulary is the likeliest culprit in this case.) The manual calls Kirk an Admiral, but everyone in the game addresses you as Captain. Was he promoted by the book's copywriter, or demoted by the programmer?

After a few hours, the "little things" piled up into an avalanche of exasperation that stopped me cold. I just couldn't get into the fantasy of being Kirk when the program's deficiencies kept snapping me back to reality at warp 12. This could have been an excellent adaptation of the TV show, but it takes more than flashy windows and a well-known name to make a good adventure. As it stands, Broderbund's *Essex*, which parodies the series and its characters, is more entertaining and true to the spirit of *Star Trek*. For a "phasers and photon torpedoes" approach to the same theme, consider *Star Fleet I*. Either one can fly circles around this major malfunction of a space adventure.

Computer: Apple (64K), IBM PC & jr, C-64/128
Planned Conversions: None
Skill Level: Intermediate
Price: $39.95
Manufacturer: Simon & Schuster

Star Fleet One
by Ken St. André

Alright, Space Cadets! Suck in those stomachs, straighten out those tentacles and report to Captain Baldwin aboard the *Republic* for another training voyage to the far corners of the universe! Combat begins on Stardate 17.00. Dismissed!

While working my way up through the ranks of Starfleet for the past month or so, I've been fighting Klingons and Romulans (I mean Krellans and Zaldrons) in an effort to make space safe for humanity. So far I have reached the rank of Commander, qualified for missions of difficulty level five, lost two ships and won two medals. I figure that if I complete one mission a week, I should make Admiral some time in 1990.

Star Fleet One may be the finest *Star Trek* simulation currently available. There is nothing radically new or innovative about this program -- just of lot of old techniques done right. The program designer is T. Sorenen. It looks as if he might have written it all in BASIC; if so, it shows just how good a BASIC program can be.

The game opens with a fade-in of the manufacturer's logo, a beautiful hi-res picture of outer space accompanied by a musical fanfare. Then it changes to a hi-res scene of starships in battle, with music from the 1812 Overture (I think -- classical music is not my forté!). The text says simply, "The war begins." This screen gives you an idea of what your ship and those of the enemy look like from the outside. (It's amazing how closely the Star Fleet ships resemble the *Enterprise*.) From this point on you're in a pseudo-military situation, a world of orders and missions in which you must achieve a certain score in order to be promoted. In the fourth screen, you log on with your name and personal password.

The 100-page manual provides lots of local color, telling all about the history and traditions of Star Fleet and its continuing war with the Krellans and Zaldrons. It makes fun reading, but you don't need it to enjoy the game, which is menu-driven and self-explanatory. This manual must be the copy-protection scheme, as it contains the authentication codes needed to play on the higher levels, which are much more fun than the unprotected lower levels.

From the main menu you can start a new mission or resume an old one, view your record and scores on all previous missions, check how well you're doing on the current mission and score you need to attain a promotion, examine the status of other characters saved on disk, or listen to some mood-setting music. The latter, called the "Theme of Universe Creation," is the theme for 2001 played in four-voice harmony (on the Atari). Da Da Da Dat-daaaaaa! You can also do "maintenance of data files," but I don't know what this does -- so far I'm not

authorized to use this function.

After your first five to eight training missions (in which you'll fly the *Republic* and fight nothing but Krellans who hang motionless in space) you get to choose from 36 individually named Invicible Class Heavy Cruisers. As far as I can tell these are identical to the training ship. And they are definitely the toughest thing in space. If not, how could you be expected to take out an average of 50 enemy ships per mission?

Now that you're a Star Fleet officer, the program starts making things more difficult. The Krellans may move when you don't expect them to, or they may get better at deflecting your photon torpedoes. On level three, the Zaldrons appear. They aren't too tough, but are invisible to your sensors. On level four you face all the above, plus intruders who beam aboard your ship during combat to sabotage things. As you gain levels of expertise, the program grows correspondingly more difficult. This is elementary game design, but exceptionally well-done in this case. The boost in difficulty is reasonable -- not exponential as in Lucasfilm's *Eidolon*. When I finished out level four, I was able to score an amazing 124% and win a medal. On the first mission at level5 , I had to use all my cunning to eke out an 80% score. (75% is passing, but as you can see I had a much tougher time of it.)

GRIDS IN SPACE

In combat you must capture or destroy 42 enemy ships in 51.3 days. The ships are scattered randomly throughout a sector of Federation space consisting of 80 subsectors on an 8 x 10 grid. Each subsector has 100 points within it in a 10 x 10 grid. As you travel around, you build up a map of what is where. There will be more enemies than you need; there will be stars, which serve mainly as navigational obstacles; and there will be up to five starbases, your only friends. As powerful as your ship may be, you still have to resupply with torpedoes and energy several times in the course of a mission. On levels three and higher, your chief duty is to protect the starbases from attack.

The ship's computer keeps you informed of your current status and also handles things like interstellar navigation. You tell it where you want to go; it sets a course and takes you there. You lock phasers on an enemy ship; the computer maintains that lock even if the enemy moves before you can fire. Using the joystick you scroll through a menu of commands that appear in a window at bottom-screen, then pick one -- the computer does the rest. I like this because it's so logical: computer combat vehicles of the future will probably work this way.

The secret to success in combat is shield control. As long as all four shields are up and have energy, your ship cannot be harmed. Every time a shield is hit with phasers, it loses energy equivalent to the hit. When a shield loses all its energy, the next

Ultima IV on the Atari
by Ken St. André

I looked forward to this game for a long time and expect to spend a lot of time playing it. But it seems to me that someone at Origin made a bad decision, and we Atari users are being shortchanged. The program is great, but the Atari version doesn't have the music and variety of color seen in the Apple and Commodore versions. The lack of the first is most noticeable in the long introductory sequence in which you set up your character. The absence of the second is painfully obvious throughout actual gameplay.

For this review I was able to directly compare the C-64 version with the Atari

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enemy shot damages your ship and knocks out one of your 16 internal systems for an amount of time determined by the strength of the shot. If too many systems are knocked out, your ship is destroyed; you'll be lucky to survive in a life-pod. When you move into an enemy-held subsector, they get to shoot first. That means you may take up to six hits before you can strike back. So before doing anything else on a turn, allocate enough energy to your shields. If you forget, the ship's computer will automatically allocate as much as it can to each of the four shields. This can save you some time on the first round of battle, but once a fight is underway the computer won't change the shield settings unless you order it. The enemy has a knack for pounding away at your one weak shield until hits get through.

I enjoy *Star Fleet One* and hope to make Admiral someday, but I have one quibble, or warning, for you. It really isn't an adventure, and there is no role-playing. It's really an arcade game -- another variety of "shoot the space squids and get a high score." Your crew members remain nameless: no Mr. Spock or Bones are on-hand to inject a little personality or levity into the game. You have no attributes to improves, no puzzles to solve. Any improvement that happens is a result of the "real you" sitting at the keyboard learning better tactics and just what your ship can do. Although it is a kind of arcade game, it is a thinking game, not one of reflexes. My reflexes are just slightly sub-normal, anyway. I'll never get a great score at *Galaxian*, but I may become an Admiral in Star Fleet some day. I like that.

Conclusion: Highly recommended for fans of *Star Trek*, or for any other space war aficianado.

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Computer: Apple, IBM & jr, C-64, Atari, TI (256K, DOS2+)
Planned Conversions: Mac, ST
Skill Level: Advanced
Price: $49.95

version. In the first nine hi-res scenes, in which you meet the gypsy and make the transition into the world of *Ultima*, the C-64 pictures include these colors: white, black, dark and light blue, dark and light green, brown, violet, pink, yellow and two shades of gray. Plus black and white. This difference in colors is most noticeable in the gypsy's Tarot cards, which really stand out on the Commodore but seem quite drab on the Atari. Hi-res art in only four colors is characteristic of Atari graphics 7.5. The only apparent reason this important sequence wasn't done in Atari graphics 11 mode (which would have allowed the use of at least 16 colors) was so it would run on even 48K Ataris like the 400 and 800. This doesn't seem like a good reason to me, because those machines are almost all gone now, replaced by Atari XLs and XEs with 64 and 128K memory respectively.

Actual gameplay looks much like the earlier versions of *Ultima*. On-screen graphics and animation are done with a redefined character set representing characters and background. The illusion of movement is excellent, but no better than previous *Ultima*s. Atari owners have no gripe here. As far as I can tell, Lord British used exactly the same technique to provide the graphics as he did for the C-64 version. The only difference is that, once again, the C-64 uses more colors. On my Atari the forests of Britannia are brown -- on the C-64 they're a rich, verdant green.

In style of play the key difference is that the C-64 version plays the hauntingly beautiful *Ultima* themes (unless toggled off), while in the Atari game you wander around in complete silence except for the rather noisy crunching footsteps of your character. Earlier versions of the first three *Ultima* games had music. I can only assume that because of Britannia's larger size and all the conversations Garriott packed into this adventure, there simply wasn't enough memory in 48K to include the music. Too bad! I like the *Ultima* music. Atari still maintains one advantage over the C-64: disk access time is three times as fast, which speed ups the game considerably.

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Editor's Note: Origin System's Dave Albert says they opted for a 48K program because "we're trying to reach the widest market, and the vast majority of Ataris out there are still 48K. Sales of the RAM cards for the Atari 800 were never high, and the XE and 1200 didn't sell that well." About the colors: "The more colors you use, the less resolution is possible, and to get the resolution we needed you have to program in a two-color mode." So Origin feels that while the Atari owners with 64K may miss the music and some of the colors, at least the majority of Atari adventurers don't have to buy a new computer just to play *Ultima IV*.

LAW OF THE WEST

by Tim Snider

You adjust the brim of your ten-gallon hat as the light of the desert sun catches you in the eye. A lone tumbleweed blows silently across the dusty deserted street. Twenty paces in front of you is the hombré that intends to make your life a mighty short one. His hands sweeps his Colt out of its leather like he's done many times before. You twitch nervously as you make a desperate lunge for your own weapon before his lead can fly. It ain't easy being the sheriff of Gold Gulch!

Law of the West is a colorful new game that's not a true adventure. But there is a story of sorts, one that is presented in the style of graphic adventures and incorporates enough character interaction to make it worth a look -- especially if you like westerns, since few adventures are set in the Old West. As the lawman in the sleepy little town of Gold Gulch, you must try to survive until sundown (a reasonable goal, wouldn't you say?). To do so, you must interact with the other citizens. Befriending the town doctor is advisable, but being nice to the stranger who just arrived on the noon stage can lead to a hole in the chest! Can you get the Mexicali kid to drop his gun, or do you have hot lead do your talking?

The entire game is joystick-controlled. You pull back on the stick to choose one of four possible responses to the comments of the character currently facing you. Your replies range from "Get out of my town, Buffalo Breath. Now!" to "Oh, please! I don't want to fight!" You can play the hero, the sissy, the romantic or the bully. Push forward on the stick and you will draw your gun on whoever is threatening your existence. But be careful! Some people have an annoying tendency to reach for their guns in order to give them to you and surrender. Shooting them greatly reduces your score (but it sure feels good plugging that loudmouth!).

Graphics are the best I've ever seen on the Commodore, comparable with those of the Amiga or Macintosh. Full-screen pictures of the town's streets are seen over the shoulder of your on-screen persona, the sheriff. This unusual perspective produces a new kind of 3-D effect. The people walk out of saloons and alleys, or off an arriving train, with some of the finest animation I've seen. In the background, other people, carts and animals cross back and forth as an added visual touch. (Some even turn around and run off-screen for cover if your gun is drawn!) Each character you meet is accompanied by his own theme song: an ominous dirge for anyone in black, a vamping tune when the local saloon's barmaid comes out for a chat. I was extremely impressed with all the extra touches in these areas, which add a new dimension to the word "detail."

The game is scored on several levels. Your foremost goal is to discover who has information on a crime being committed elsewhere in town. The second goal is to weed out that information. Third and most vital, you must act on it to stop the renegades before they make off with the town's funds. You're also scored on how well you throw your weight around, how many bad guys you bring in alive, how well you've done romantically, and how many robberies you've managed to find out about and stop.

Your score is reduced for shooting innocent citizens, being wounded, and letting the bad guys have a field day in the town banks. I agree that all these factors should come into play when determining your score. This way, you can opt for different strategies to earn the maximum possible score in each category. Will being a homicidal bully get you the high score, or must you become a smooth-talking Casanova to win over the ladies for those elusive points? These additional challenges let the player decide which course of action to pursue.

Despite its originality, the games does have its drawbacks. Once you know the correct responses, you can discover the robberies without fail. Then the only action you need to worry about is whether or not you can outdraw your opponent. And this isn't difficult after you know how. The game is also rigidly linear, in that you can't choose where to go and who to meet.

It's still a sure-fire, must-have game for any true western fan, and I heartily recommend it. May your journeys be short and the sun at your back as you traverse the Old West in *Law of the West*. Happy trails!

Computer: Apple, C-64/128
Skill Level: Novice
Price: Apple, $34.95; C, $29.95
Manufacturer: Accolade

WIZARD'S CROWN

to kill, G to guard), then pick a target by hitting "n" for next, which highlights the next possible target, then "s" to select the one you want. Brief text reports describe the damage. It's a complex system and requires constant reference to the lucid, 27-page manual, but eventually you'll master the numerous commands. I actually enjoyed the tactical battles and had fun fighting in-depth battles with swords, flails, spears, and crossbows. Even so, I know I couldn't handle this through an entire game, supposed to last 50-100 hours.

The complex first aid and prayer system for healing the four degrees of wounds requires more thought than in games where you can cast a quick spell or pay someone at a temple. (Temples here are just good for replenishing a priest's karma so he can pray more.) One good point: if someone dies, the death isn't automatically written to disk, and you can simply reboot the program.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

The dungeons are presented like the tactical combat scenes, with one key difference. You select a character to be active, and the others follow as he moves around examining things, talking to people, opening doors, hopefully gathering clues, keys and so on. It's possible to shift the lead to someone else and to make any character stand still.

Assorted technical considerations: Disk access is infrequent and fast, and the Apple versions supports two drives; five difficulty settings determine the speed at which the enemy attacks; a dungeon's contents can be reset to its original state; to play you must copy both disks.

I like the focus on character development, since few games allow such freedom in this area. (Actually, few allow any freedom at all.) And I like the wide range of traits in the system. But there's no soul to the fantasy; in fact there *is* no fantasy, just a war game in wizard's robes.

So if you enjoy tactical war gaming, you might have fun with this one. Don't even look at it otherwise, for as a fantasy role-playing game it's inferior to almost everything I've seen in years. I get the feeling *Wizard's Crown* is more than a tactical game, that it's a tactic SSI dreamed up to lure their established audience of hardcore wargamers into the fantasy camp. Or maybe it's the first stage of a campaign to get fantasy gamers involved in war gaming. (Or maybe I'm just getting paranoid -- too many hours in a dungeon can do that to anyone.)

Computer: Apple, 48K
Planned Conversions: C-64/128
Skill Level: Advanced
Price: $39.95
**Manufacturer:** Strategic Simulations

KEYS TO THE KINGDOMS

RINGS OF ZILFIN

Early in the game, buy tobacco for $51 in Telboz. Go west and sell it for $130 in Perimon. Be sure you have enough purlets & parzins to defeat the K-plants you meet on the way, though. Go south from Telboz to buy heavy armor, spare bows and arrows. Then look for a castle to boost strength so you can carry more powerful weapons. THEN you're ready to look for the first wizard (west).

BARD'S TALE

[1] Hang on to dead characters and pay to have them revived instead of using back-ups. Then they get to keep all the experience points earned in the session in which they died. You can use two teams: if one gets killed, send out the second team to earn enough $ to revive the first one. [2] The name of the Mad God is found in the sewers. [3] C-64/128 players: you can speed up/slow down combat reports by pressing right/left cursor keys.

INCA

To find the Pauladium, go to the Condor's nest. You need Indio to guide you there. He is in the ⌐◻✗◦⌐⊢Ⱶ⌐Ⱶ~⅃◻◦◦ ⌐Ⱶⱥ but remains invisible until the ⌐◻✗◦⌐Ⱶ~⅃◻◦◦ leave. To get rid of them, ➤Ⱶ◦~ ⅀◻✗⅃◻◦ in the ➤⅃~⅃◦◦◻.

OO-TOPOS

The maze with the "strange floor " is really just six rooms, and it helps to map them immediately by dropping objects. Need light? Go to main gravtube room and head north. Now you want a space suit? How about the ◦✗◦➤✗⌐◻ ◻◦◦⅃◦✗⅀? ⅃Ⱶ⌐ ◦◻◦ till you get there, then ◦◻✗◦◦⌐ ◦✗◦➤✗⌐◻.

BALLYHOO
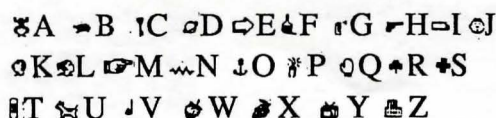
Can't get into the midway? Try looking at your ⅃◻⌐◦◻⅃ and following instructions, then put it in slot.

ROGUE

The Amulet first appears on level 26. If dropped or not picked up, it is lost forever. To identify items, copy a saved game onto another disk. Restore the saved one and use identify scroll on other scrolls, rings, weapons. It also works on most staffs. Identify armor by wearing it. Make notes on everything, quit, and copy the other saved game back to the master disk. Use call command to name everything you have identified. Drop useless items like cursed armor, save game and repeat process until all items are identified. [Some useless or marginal things to drop if you have too much: poison or confusion scrolls, create monster scrolls, staff of haste monster.] Then return to playing with copy of first saved game.

This month's help came from Ken St. André, K.C. Mulcahy, Ralph Kinney, Joe Humphrey, and Stephen King. If you have any clues, answers and strategies to new games, send them in. We are especially interested in publishing complete walkthroughs and clear maps to NEW games not yet covered in hint books and will give you your choice of any adventure or role-playing game if we use your walkthrough. Write first and tell us what you've got.

THE CODE

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Waiting for Duffy

Duffy's stuck in a gorilla suit, so send in a brief ad if you need help.

Bard's Tale: How do I speak to priest in Mad Dog's Temple? M. Amorin, 2955 N. 400 W., Aptl 2208, Layton, UT 84041.

Bard's Tale: Need lots of help. How do I get past the locked gates? Can help with any Ultima, Deja Vu, Questron, others. Tracie Hines, 104-40 Queens Blvd., Forest Hills, NY 11375.

Alice in Wonderland: Got Alice's brolly from boat, found way down rabbit hole, gave maramalade to mouse for a song & am now stuck in house with doors too small for me. Help! Frank Lee Linne, POB 45, La Vernia, TX 78121.

Need help with Sundog and Suspect. Can help with Infocom and others. Chris Muller, 514 SW 34th St., Apt 6., Gainesville, FL 32607.

Free help on all Infocom adventures, up to 330 points on Spellbreaker. Also Ultima 3 and Mindwheel. Some Ultima 4. Send SASE to Matt Friedman, 108 Lewis Lane, Oak Ridge TN 37830. If you have more than 330 points in Spellbreaker, please write. I need help.

Can help with Ultima 2, 3, 4 & Masquerade. Michael Gathers, 1419 Heathwood Dr., Houston, TX 77077.

Ultima 4: What is pure axiom and the word? Nine Princes in Amber: How can I win both Bleys & Gerard to my side, or meet Llewlla, Fiona, Caine or Brand? Perry Mason: need lots of help. Only person I scored with is Burns. Send SASE. Aaron Chou, 7032 Stratford Rd., Woodbury, MN 55125.

Need lots of help in Ultima 4 and Rama. Can help with 9 Princes and Enchanter. Chris A. Raudonis, 45 Pelham Rd., Hudson, NH 03051.

Spellbreaker: How do you get cube in giant bird's nest? Will gladly pay for hints. Have solved and can help anyone with Ultima 2, 3 and 4, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Zork 1,2,3, Hitchhiker's, Mask of Sun, Serpent's Star, Deadline, Suspect, Planetfall and some of Spellbreaker - free! Send SASE to M. Kim, 10425 NE 124th St., Kirkland, WA 98034.

The Mist: How do I start the truck? Questron: Mesron wants to see me; how do I find him in castle? Can help with Mindwheel, Tracer Sanction, Amazon, Mindshadow, Dragonworld. Call/write Karen Lee, 444 Bridgton Rd., Westbrook, ME 04092. (207) 797-7985.

Need clue on Ice Maze in New Adventure. David Aultfather, 13209 Dossau Rd., Austin, TX 78753.

Ripper: Have found clue under blood; had Holmes decipher both messages; identified all parties but dwarf; climbed ladder; tried to close closet door. Now what? Anyone know words so I can reach fireplace to find secret passage? J. Swienty, 7951 Saloma Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91402.

Fraktured Faebles: Said what the note said to say to bees but still can't remove them. Or kiss frog, get to tea party, or stick letter on sign. Can help with many game, including Spellbreaker. T. Walsh, 116 Homestead Cr., London, Ontario, Canada N6G 2E8.

Amazon: Need all the help I can get. Will pay for answers. Can help on Planetfall, Deadline, Seastalker, Cutthroats and Serpent's Star. J. Lema, 431 Alphabet St., Holbrook, NY 11741,

Can help with Asylum. Send SASE: Brian Smith, 3035 Montego, Plano, TX 75023

SWAP SHOP

Got a houseful of old adventures? Trade 'em off with a free ad.

APPLE

Wanted: 550-point version of Adventure. Write first. T. Walsh, 116 Homestead Cr., London, Ontario, Canada N6G 2E8

Our 1st talking adventure is "King Tut & the Egyptian Gods." We're looking for some good artists to illustrate it. Get a free copy of our game & Graphics Magician to draw them with. Send SASE for details. Chat Software, c/o Boudreau, 23977 Avenida Crescenta, Valencia, CA 91355.

To trade: all four Ultimas, Hitchhiker's Guide, Zorks, Transylvania, Deadline, Starcross & more. Looking for ACS, Questron, Crimson Crown, Sorcerer & others. Write 1st: Paul Berland, 4430 N. Francisco, Chicago, IL 60625.

Discs for sale. Write for free list. Frank Lee Linne, POB 45, La Vernia, TX 78121.

Will sell or trade King's Quest, Expedition Amazon, Star Trek, Gemstone Warrior and Quest of Space Beagle. Write Bob Reitz, 218 N. 4th St., Sunbury, PA 17801.

Will trade games and utilities. Send list of your programs. Also will sell solution to Zork I for $2.50. Jon Champlin, Moffat Rd., Nelsonville, NY 10516.

$20 each: Amazon, Deadline, Cutthroats, Hitchhiker's Guide, Rendezvous with Rama, Zork I and II. $18 each: Blade of Blackpoole, Gruds in Space, Murder by the Dozen. $15: Wizard and the Princess. All original with docs, packaging. Call or write Karen M. Lee, 444 Bridgton Rd., Westbrook, ME 04092. (207) 797-7985.

Ultima II original with box, maps, manuals for $25. Michael Gathers, 1419 Heathwood Dr., Houston, TX 77077.

Interested in trading all types of adventures and FRPs. Send list of what you have to trade and games you want. Ba Ha, 4111 Sunset Dr. # 24, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

Trade or sell: Rendezvous with Rama and Dragonworld with packaging and docs, $15 each. Want Moebius, Spellbreaker, Bard's Tale. Must be originals with docs and boxes. Aaron Chou, 7032 Stratford Rd., Woodbury, MN 55125.

To trade: Nine Princes in Amber, Perry Mason, Fahernheit 451, Rendezvous with Rama, Below the Root, Swiss Family Alic in Wonderland. Want King's Quest 1 or 2, Amazon, Dragonworld, Shadowkeep. Also interested in non-adventures. Send list of hardware and software you have to trade. Scott Huang, 14 Equestrian Ct., Huntington, NY 11743.

Will trade for Ultima III, Fahernheit 451, Ring Quest, Mindshadow, Witness, Transylvania, Wishbringer, Sherwood Forest. Write first. William Hall, 1110 44th St., Sacramento, CA 95819.

Planetfall, Deadline, Serpent's Star, Cutthroats and Seastalker. Will sell or trade, have hint books for all but last. Want any Infocom or Telarium, Mask of the Sun, Time Zone or Adventure. Write first. John Lema, 431 Alphabet St., Holbrook, NY 11741.

Will trade complete copies of Sorcerer or Gruds in Space for same of Fahernheit 451, Shadowkeep, Dragonworld, ACS, Robots of Dawn or Timeship. Mark Fujimoto, 1646 Komo Mai Dr., Pearl City, HI 96782.

Will trade first 12 Infocom games, all three Wizardrys, Ultima II and more. Send list of what you want and I'll try to fill order. Thomas Blake, 3002 Pendell Lane, Ft. Smith, Arkansas 72901.

Will trade or sell originals of Zork 1, Enchanter & Starcross w/docs, maps and hint books but no boxes. Interested in original adventures. Phil Christensen, BANFES Project, Dept. of State, USAID/Lesotho, Washington, DC 20520.

COMMODORE 64/128

New adventures available from Adventure Construction Set Club. Magic & The Caiston Quest, by Michael Shapiro $5 each. 1st club newsletter, $1. New "Wild West" construction set by Ted Mayes, $4. ACS Club will support new Atari version. For these & more details, write Ken St. André, ACS Club, 3421 E. Yale, Phoenix, AZ 85008.

For sale or trade: Deadline, Zork I, Hulk, Mask of the Sun, Amazon, Indiana Jones, Transylvania, Dragonworld. J. Wright, 2341 Charbonneau, Waco, TX 76710.

Want Serpent's Star, Infidel, Sorcerer, Blade of Blackpoole, Gruds in Space, Planetfall and Cutthroats. To sell or trade: Amazon, Dragonworld, Tracer Sanction, Starcross, Suspended, Deadline, Mask of Sun & all Zorks. T. Fox, 734 Strobel N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

35+ games for trade or sale. For free list send SASE to Andrew Bundschuh, 635 E. Comstock, Glendora, CA 91740.

Will trade or sell Planetfall, Enchanter, Sorcerer & Blade of Blackpoole. $15 each, with hint books & maps except Blade. Looking for Gemstone Warrior, Sword of Kadash, Shadowkeep or The Quest. Dale Angelotti, 600 Primrose St., Haverhill, MA 01830.

Want to buy Suspect, Suspended, Planetfall, Hitchhiker, Infidel, AMF Voyaging, Cutthroats, Fooblitzky, & hint books. H. Whitley, 4701 Anderson Rd. L, Houston, TX 77053.

Willing to trade off ALL software I have, including many adventures. Prefer not to, but will also sell. For list of 68+ titles, write: Greg Eden, 909 Cascade Ct., Coquitlam, B.C., Canada, V3J-6E7.

Numerous games to trade or sell. Send $2 & SASE for list. G.M. Shearer, 1500 Iceplant Rd., Suite 7F, North Versailles, PA 15137. Want to trade for NEW adventures. Need Seastalker, King's Quest 2, Perry Mason, etc. C. Raudonis, 45 Pelham Rd., Hudson, NH 03051.

IBM & Quest-Alikes
Will trade Ultima 2 & 3, with docs. Also Zork 1 & King's Quest. Want any good adventures. Write or call (not collect) before sending game.

Thane K. Sherrington, RR #2, Port Hood, N.S., Canada B0E 2W0. (902) 787-3387

To trade: 7 Cities of Gold, King's Quest 1 & 2, Transylvania, Ultima 2 & 3, Wizardry, By Fire & Sword, Gato, Zork 1, Archon, Mindshadow, Zinderneuf. R. Reid, 404 Shelley Pl., Goldsboro, NC 27530.

ATARI

To sell (for AT 800) Cosmic Balance 1 & 2 (these also run on Apple), Universe 1, all Infocom titles, many others. Chris Muller, 514 SW 34th St Apt. 6, Gainesville, FL 32607.

Want adventures for either 800 or 130XE. Write if you have games for sale. B. Smith, 3035 Montego, Plano, TX 75023.

Will trade Gruds in Space for any Infocom but Starcross, Zork 1 or Hitchhiker. Write 1st: John Kalstrom, 6237 Cumberland Dr., Goleta, CA 93117.

Will trade Ultima 1, Zork 3, Adventure Creator, or Questron for any Infocom title except Zork trilogy. Have 64K Atari. Brent Dollins, Rte. 2, Box 157, Powderly, TX 75473.