

QUESTBUSTERS™

The Adventurer's Newsletter
August, 1986

Vol. III, # 8

TRINITY: It Blowed Up Real Good!

That's the unsolicited opinion of SCTV's "Fishin' Musician," clear and right to the point. [If you already figured that out, congratulations, your score just went up ten points.] However, the point of this game is to *prevent* nuclear missiles from blowing up the world--and yourself. Though no *Spellbreaker* type spells are available, magic is a key ingredient in *Trinity's* solution. And though it kicks off in contemporary England on the eve of World War III, the story soon assumes a Zorkian atmosphere that will make even hard-core Zorkers feel right at home.

THE PUZZLES ARE BACK

For Brian Moriarty has opened a window into a world as fantastic as that of the Great Underground Empire, a world where logic and magic combine with fiction and history to provide some provoking exercises in mind-puzzling. [That's a new word I just invented. If you already figured that out, congratulations, your score just went up one point.] *Trinity* is the second game in the Interactive Fiction Plus series from Infocom, which means you'll need 128K or 512K. While the text is admirably crafted, this adventure's goal is not to achieve a breakthrough in interactive literature as *Mind Forever Voyaging* aimed to do. Puzzles, sparse in the latter game, are the key to this one's success, and though it is an excellent read and does deliver a message, *Trinity* is mainly a game.

First you must solve a couple of easy problems to acquire the objects needed to get out of the opening scene. This occurs in London, as you ignore news of a possible war with Russia and go sightseeing on the last day of your vacation. In order to get out of this region and into the main area of the game, you have to use several objects together, much the way the balloon was used in *Zork II*. It's a clever puzzle, with enough clues planted around to make it fair.

If you don't escape--by reaching a place called Long Water, where a magic door opens and transports you into another dimension--a nuclear missile obliterates London and you wind up on a slow boat across the River Styx. I'm imagining that

London was wiped out, since the game never says what really happens when the missile explodes, except the time it said I now knew "what it felt like to be vaporized." Frankly, I would have preferred a more graphic [and less tasteful] description of the immediate and long term effects--for example, the surviving English eating a new kind of food, fission chips.

NO 'SHROOM AT THE TOP

On the other side of the door, a bizarre landscape of towering mushrooms stretches as far as the eye can see. Most have doors, and you notice that the one that led you here is situated in the side of a tall 'shroom. Twin suns take turns illuminating the land, which never knows nightfall. Moriarty's prose grows evocative as he describes a "forest choked with pale domes" and a "brooding sun" that "fills distant valleys with a sad, dusty light

the color of antique brass."

Here in this hidden universe lies the key to preventing the nuclear war that you just escaped. Ultimately you must travel to the Trinity site in New Mexico, where the first atomic bomb was exploded in 1945, to change history. (Trinity was the code-name for the top secret test.) But first you'll zip through time and space to the sites of key A-bomb tests in Russia, the South Seas and outer space to collect a lemming, a lizard, and other exotic ingredients that are needed to cast a powerful magic spell. Finding them doesn't require magic, just logic, so you won't have to keep learning and casting spells as in the *Enchanter* series. The central puzzle--a huge sundial--reminded me of the dam problem in *Zork I*, for its solution opens access to a new set of locations.

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ULTIMATE WIZARD

Jumpman was my favorite ladder game, so I had a lot of fun with *Ultimate Wizard* because it's like *Jumpman* with magic spells, better animation and sound effects, and it throws in a construction set. The game was originally published as *Wizard* by Peripheral Products and Software. When Electronic Arts picked it up for distribution, they got Paul Reiche III [who co-designed *Archon* and *Mail Order Monsters*, among others] to design 20 additional playing fields, so you have 100 fields already on the disk.

Each field has a name, such as Playground or The Thief. You must proceed through them serially, that is from the easiest to most difficult in the difficulty range you select. After completing the fields in the beginner level, you can move up to intermediate and beyond to four higher and harder sets of playing fields. Daring adventurers, of course, can go straight for the advanced or mystery levels without wading through the easier ones.

Each screen represents a cross-section of a dungeon where you see the stairs and

ropes and ladders that connect several floors, each strewn with numerous hazards and treasures. The goal of each screen is to touch and thereby obtain a key, which must be taken to the lock. This opens the door to the next dungeon. You can collect glowing gems to garner points along the way and will get a bonus for completing each level. (The faster it's completed, the higher the bonus.)

DANGERS IN THE DUNGEON

Hazards include a knight-like "Shadow Lord," flaming fires, trick stairs, lava trolls, scorpions, giant rats, arrows and more. If killed, you start over in the current dungeon--unless you run out of lives. You begin with three wizards and can earn another for each 10,000 points. There are no logical puzzles to solve, other than figuring out a clever way to get from point a to point b, but ingenious spellcasting is often instrumental when it comes to traveling across the board.

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ADVENTURE HOTLINE

New Releases

Breakers, a science fiction story, is Broderbund's latest Electronic Novel. It takes place on the planet Borg, threatened with doom by an ancient prophecy. The press release says players will "try to break up a smuggling ring, free the gentle Lau people from slavery and restore order to the cosmos." In the Infocom space parody *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* [September] you're kidnapped by alien sex perverts and held hostage on a moon circling Mars.

Meanwhile back on planet earth, SSI's *Roadwar 2000* is a futuristic rpg. In a post-atomic war setting, you drive 19 modifiable vehicles and interact with mutants, road gangs, and other characters while conquering cities. After scoring well in this task, you'll go after the main quest of finding eight scientists whose work is crucial to the world's survival. SSI's multi-character *Shard of Spring* sounds more conventional: rescue the Shard of Spring from an evil enchantress and return it to its home and save the kingdom. Both games should be on the shelves by now for the Apple and Commodore.

Activision's *Tass Times in Tone Town* is supposed to be out this month. It's a graphic adventure designed by Brainwave, Inc., the development house run by Mike and Muffy Berlyn.

Electronic Arts says the name of the *Bard's Tale* sequel, formerly *The ArchMage's Tale*, has been changed to *The Destiny Knight*. Commodore version is scheduled for October, Apple a few months later.

Conversions Arrive

Recent released conversions include *Phantasie* for the Mac, *Wilderness* for the IBM PC and compatibles, and a Commodore version of *Rings of Zilfin*. Origin Systems will have Commodore versions of *AutoDuel* and *Moebius* ready in September. IBMers will get the next *Ultima IV* conversion, followed by Mac and Atari ST (and a new game called *Space Rogue* in October). Origin's Dave Albert says Amiga conversions are at the bottom of the list, if on it at all.

Novel, but No Game

CBS has something called *The Novel Approach: Lord of the Flies*, but it's not interactive fiction. Instead, this is an educational program used as a study aid. Future titles in the series: *Animal Farm*,

Tale of Two Cities, *Call of the Wild*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

When We're Wrong ...

Mark Pelczarski called to let us know that PolarWare's low, low prices are not as insane as we stated last month. Their Comprehend adventures are going for \$17.95, not \$11.95 [which it turns out is the wholesale price]. And that's no typo! And Brian Smith pointed out that, contrary to the review of *View to a Kill*, you can find the watch on 002's body quite easily by saying "examine body carefully."

And When We're Right

But we must be doing something right, because QuestBusters will expand to 12 pages beginning with the October issue. Instead of raising subscription prices to pay for the extra printing, we'll be selling ads. In case anyone is wondering, the newsletter now goes to adventurers in Hong Kong, Singapore, Argentina, Australia and a few other countries around the world, not to mention those here and in Canada. Next stop, Phobos and Sosaria!

Habitat from Lucas

Lucasfilm Games is still working on *Habitat*, an animated multi-player adventure-plus game that will be available only to Commodore 64/128 gamers who subscribe to the QuantumLink network. I visited their place in Virginia last week and got a preview. You use a joystick to guide your "avatar" around to collect objects and do most of the things you would in a regular adventure. The big difference is that hundreds of people can inhabit the same world, up to six in a room. When you type a sentence, it appears in a cartoon-like balloon that is displayed on the screen of every other player currently in the room, sort of like an animated CB channel. By checking with the Oracle [who runs the place], you can get a quest to solve and form a party of *real* people to go with you. There are all sorts of other activities, and *Habitat* has a lot of potential if enough imaginative people get involved. Q-Link hopes to take it on-line this fall, and we will report on future developments.

The Winner!

This month's random drawing from the subscription list awarded a copy of *Rings of Zilfin* to Sid Whiting of Vallejo, California.

Trinity

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That's one of the things that I enjoyed most about *Trinity*, the way the puzzles are structured so neatly and how it all dovetails together like a wooden Chinese puzzle. (My favorite text adventures are still those with extensive character interaction, and after the opening scene the only "person" I've met so far in this fantasy world is a magpie that repeats every word I say.) There's not much mapping to do, and I haven't found any mazes yet. If you wander into the "Klein bottle," be prepared to witness some bewildering effects to your carefully prepared map. Another interesting touch is a red herring from the first part of the game that shows up and proves useful in the second stage.

PARSING AS FAST AS I CAN

The Infocom parser keeps getting better, but it was already so good that the new improvements are so subtle you can barely find them. All I noticed here was the advanced use of the pronoun "it." Formerly "it" referred to the last noun or object you used, so after saying "get MX missile" you could say "examine it."

In this game you may say "it" to refer to something that just entered the room or did something. If the text says a lemming runs across your foot while you're exploring the Russian tundra, you may then say "kill it" and the program knows you want to eliminate the lemming. Don't count on it, though, for you won't get to kill much in this world. It's not too deadly a place for you, either, unless you hang around one of the atomic bomb test sites until it goes off.

Infocom's packaging, as expected, is ingenious and helpful: you get a cardboard sundial that represents the one in the game, a origami paper bird, a map of the Trinity atomic test site, and a comic book

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QuestBusters

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Contributing Editors: Ron Wartow, Ken St. André, DWP, Tim Snider

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The Neverending Story

Based on the recent motion picture, this illustrated story is presented in a unique fashion. A horizontal band across the top third of the screen always shows the same landscape, a brilliantly colored sky pierced by a tall white tower. When you enter a new location or encounter someone or something, its picture pops into view in a smaller window that opens on the left side of the band. The graphics are finely detailed illustrations, not cartoon-style.

In the first window you see a young boy named Bastian reading a book. It tells the story of Atreyu, a warrior struggling to save the land of Fantasia from extinction by The Nothing, the "empty cloud of human despair" that consumes the very fabric of the land. In the game you become Atreyu, who must find a way to make Bastian believe in Fantasia enough to enter the story and help save it from The Nothing. Don't worry about that right now, for your immediate concern is to rescue an ailing Empress from the Ivory Tower in the Great Forest.

AMULETS & INDIANS

Doing so entails rounding up lots of things, like Auryn, a magical amulet that enables you to call upon Falkor the luckdragon for help. Some of the other characters--gnomes, Indians, and generally weird creatures--may help or harm your efforts. You can get one person at a time to accompany you. Artax the Indian has a horse that is pictured when he's traveling along [though this doesn't really speed things up]. But no real character interaction is involved, since the two-word parser can't handle complex statements. [It won't even let you "look at" or "examine" objects; you have to take things at face value and work from there.] When you grab a crystal, rock or other item, it is depicted in its own little block on the right side of the screen, and after you've got the maximum five objects in your inventory little can be seen of the lovely landscape.

The game is divided into three phases. There are only four or five problems in the first phase, where you wander from the forest to the desert, through the mountains and swamps in search of nine objects found there and a way to enter the second phase. [Some items found in one part are used in a later phase of the game.] Once you get safely past a pair of flame-spitting Sphinxes, the second part takes you to Spook City. The game turns deadly here, as you draw nearer to the all-consuming force of the Nothing. Throughout the

game, the picture of Bastian is displayed intermittently, as he "reads" of your progress in the book.

A REAL-TIME ADVENTURE

The problems grow gradually more difficult but all are relatively easy and require only a little thought, no serious skullbusting. Your main problem will be rescuing the Empress before The Nothing consumes all of Fantasia. It's a real-time game: just sit there and stare at the screen, and the message "you wait" tells you time is passing. Wait too long and too often, and The Nothing will devour all of Fantasia. You can pause the action if you want to study a situation, and games are quickly saved and reloaded. It's easy to map, with a little over two dozen locations in the first phase. The manual tells how many objects are found in each phase, so you know whether or not you've got everything.

Commodore owners will be especially pleased to learn that each phase of the entire game--graphics included--loads into RAM, so response time is almost instantaneous. Disk access occurs only when you've finished one of the three parts of the story and you must wait a minute or so for the next part to load. The text is done in a special font that fits the story's fantastic nature, with your words displayed in red and the game's responses in blue. A haunting melody plays throughout, and can be switched off if you prefer. There are no sound effects.

Conclusions: This is an engaging tale that I enjoyed more than I had anticipated. I liked the story and presentation more than the puzzles, so keep this in mind when I say I recommend it. (If you must have a sophisticated parser, look for another game.) The puzzles are fair and logical, the clues subtle but sensible, so this is also a good learning game for first-timers and novices. But the problems will pose no problem for experienced adventurers, for whom the *Neverending Story* will end far too soon.

System: C-64/128, Atari XL/XE, AP 64K

Skill Level: Novice

Price: \$29.95

Company: Intellicreations [Datasoft]

QUEST FOR RENEWALS

Your sub's expiration date is on the mailing label. Renew three months early and get 13 issues. Buy a game and get three free issues, or a book and get one.

MSDOS AP SHAI

by Stephen King

Let me preface this review by saying that I am an *Apshai* fan. I have enjoyed the series since the oldest version written for the TRS-80. It's one of those games I have replayed many times, even though I knew it thoroughly. When I got an Atari 800, I purchased *Temple* and all the expansion modules. And even though I didn't expect much improvement, I bought the *Temple of Apshai Trilogy* when Epyx released it last year. I was very pleasantly surprised, for *Trilogy* was light years beyond the original in playability, graphics and sound. My only disappointment was the lack of the lead-in stories that were included in the originals.

Earlier this year I shifted my attention to the MSDOS software market and once again purchased the familiar *Apshai Trilogy*. Alas, this time Epyx fell far short of my expectations. I was instantaneously disappointed by the lack of music on the MSDOS version, not to mention its muddier graphics. But recognizing that the Atari lends itself to these things while most MSDOS machines don't, I chalked it up as one of life's little disappointments. From this point on, however, *Trilogy* turned into a travesty that Epyx should not be allowed to forget.

The main reason is that it is riddled with programming bugs and flaws. The monsters don't move independently, hence you can stand at a distance and shoot arrows at them without concern. You'd think this would make the game easier to play, but the arrows go right through your target without causing damage unless you shoot from above or below. In previous versions, Epyx set the standard that turning to the right or left would not penalize your fatigue counter. Not in this one. There were cases in which I went from 100% rested to 98% fatigued simply by turning to the right one time. [Granted, I was weighted down and wounded, but this should not have mattered.] There are also places where you can walk off the screen and damage the graphics of the statistics display, which never gets updated and therefore stays damaged. Perhaps the worst is that the random monsters always come in groups of at least three instead of one at a time as usual. Aside from making the game very tedious to play, this is devastating to your character--unless you're playing with Kal-El of Krypton.

The list of bugs goes on and on, but the most surprising thing of all is that when I

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Play by Mail Adventuring

Play-by-mail adventures enable you to participate in a role-playing environment in which from ten to as many as hundreds of other people are playing simultaneously. Some are science fiction games, others are fantasy, and a few have unique fictitious settings. They all work basically the same way.

You decide what your character will do on his next turn, then fill out a "turn sheet" with orders. A gamemaster, who supervises the action as in a D & D session, usually punches the orders into a computer program that keeps tracks of your character, space ship, or whatever. Then it prints a data sheet that describes the results of your move and provides other information, which is mailed back to you. If you encounter other players in the game, there's usually a way to contact them by mail or phone.

The novelty of pbm games is that you interact with other people, not computer-controlled characters, and must usually cooperate and compete in order to succeed. Some games have a definite goal and end after 20-30 turns. Others are ongoing universes that offer a range of activities. Most games costs from \$3-\$5 a turn, so it can get expensive.

LOST IN SPACE

I've been playing one of the ongoing games, *Beyond the Stellar Empire*, since this spring. Players start out by joining one of a dozen or so companies that have various goals: hauling cargo, defense, exploration and so on. It's cost about \$75 to build up a crew and a pair of ships that are capable of carrying out my goal of exploring a distant galaxy. I have more fun communicating with other players and planning my next move than I do in reading the actual data sheets.

You have to wait a week or two for each turn to be processed, so these games are not for impatient players. Some people find them boring, others are fascinated. For those who are interested, here are names and addresses of some pbm companies:

In business since 1970, Flying Buffalo is the biggest. Their main games are *StarWeb* and *Heroic Fantasy*. [Both may also be played via Compuserve and Source.] Ask for their free catalog. POB 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252. *Beyond the Stellar Empire* is from Adventures By Mail, POB 424, Cohoes, NY 12047. They charge \$5 for rules, but will send you free info on this and several other games:

It's A Crime, Crasimoff's World, and *Capitol*. Reality Simulations, POB 27576, Tempe, AZ 85258, does *Hyborian Age*, a fantasy game based on the Conan novels. DTL Designs, POB 98417, Lubbock, TX 79499, has a game called *Special Agent. Illuminati* is produced by Adventure Systems, POB 22305-X, Houston, TX 77227. There are plenty of others, and we'll report on them in future issues if enough people express interest.

CALLING ALL SUPERHEROES

QB Contributing Editor Ken St. André wrote recently to tell about a pbm he is organizing, one that sounds like a good introduction to the field. Here's what he said: "Once upon a time there was a game called *Amber*, in which some 30 players from all around the country took the parts of various characters from Roger Zelazny's *Amber* novels and created a secondary universe that lasted for almost two years. I masterminded it and ran it. Most of the Phoenix, Arizona, circle of *Tunnels & Trolls* celebrities had important parts in it. We produced a ton of art and press and had a wonderful time.

"Now I want to do something similar. I missed my Common Sense saving roll and made my Champions Intelligence roll, and the result is a wild new idea for a play-by-mail game--CROSSOVER EARTH! A giant new pbm game moderated by me, for superheroes and villains! Right now I'm in the planning stage. I want to find out how many people would be interested in such a game and which heroes and villains they want to play. So check the rules and premises below, and if the idea appeals to you, get in touch with me.

1. Each player will play one superhero and one supervillain. Each supervillain must choose some other player's superhero as his target and try to destroy that character.

2. A game like this costs money, just for postage, envelopes and the cost of printing the game newsletter. Right now I think I can make it work at a dollar per turn per player. When I find out what the costs are I may have to raise that rate.

3. I rather like the DC superheroes and villains, but why be restrictive? You can be your favorite hero or villain from any comics publisher or any superhero gaming system. (The only restrictions are: no gods are allowed, and the closer your character is to 1986 in his own time line, the better he will fit into the game.)

4. Players will be responsible for

writing their own press, which must be submitted in typing, preferably camera-ready. Most game printing will be done by high quality photocopy.

"If you can't live with these four basic ideas, this game isn't for you. If you want to know more about it, or have ideas, comments or suggestions to share, send me a list of your top five choices for hero and five for villain along with SASE for more details as they become available. Known superheros from DC, Marvel, First, and Pacific will be allocated on a first-asked, first-given basis. Batman is already taken.

"I've given this a lot of thought, and a basic playing system and time table have already been worked out. Now all I need is a sufficient number of players, preferably 10-50. I think it's going to be exciting." [Ken is creator of *Tunnels and Trolls*, one of the original role-playing games, and is currently developing a role-playing game in conjunction with Interplay Systems. He may be reached at CROSSOVER EARTH, Ken St. André, 3421 E. Yale, Phoenix, AZ 85008.]

UNINVITED

by Ronald Wartow

I highly recommend *Uninvited*, a puzzle-oriented adventure game with a humorous, gripping story in a "gothic horror" setting. Your car has mysteriously broken down in front of an eerie mansion 'taken over' by strange forces. Your little brother has apparently gone inside to seek help [Fat chance!], so you must try to rescue him from this haunted house to end all haunted houses and escape. The adventure is bolstered with detailed graphics, realistic digitized sounds and spirited animation.

A two-disk game that will run on a single drive, *Uninvited* continues the innovative "no muss--no fuss" mouse-only gaming concept introduced in *Deja Vu*. [See October 1985 issue]. The design team at ICOM Concepts has created a practically perfect adventure game environment. The screen contains a rectangular box comprised of the eight clickable commands, with other windows showing the location, inventory, exits, text, and "self" screens. This facilitates object manipulation and mouse-clicking to your heart's content. The best way to describe the system is with examples:

To examine an item, just double-click it. To examine ten items in one location, shift-click the items and single-click the "examine" box, which results in scrolling text for each item. Too much at one shot?

Just double-click the text bar and the text screen expands. Simply dump the screen, or paste to the scrapbook or notepad. Want to open a locked door? Just click a key, then hit the "operate" box and the door. Open a cauldron, ghou, or whatever by simply clicking it, then clicking the "open" box. What, no "get" command? Just mouse the object over to your inventory. Hungry? Angry? Just click the "consume" or "hit" box and any object.

Smash a window with an axe or your hand, and you can see, definitely hear, and practically feel the shards fly. Exploring a maze at 1:00 A.M., I almost had a heart attack when thunder exploded out of the Mac's speaker. Bats fly by, maniacal dogs bark in the distance, doors creak, and strange creatures appear and dissolve with sound effects reminiscent of the old horror films.

Go through a door with a simple double-click, and an intricate graphic of the eerie surroundings or possibly an animated "thing" appears. [Speaking of animation, be sure to choose the "About" command from the desktop menu, sit back, and enjoy the show.]

Graphics are supplemented with well-crafted text, a combination of Woody Allen and Edgar Allan Poe guaranteed to have you howling with laughter or "cringing" in fear. The many puzzles are fair and logical, but the game is definitely more difficult and larger than the novice-intermediate *Deja Vu*. To help, multiple saves are permitted and are limited only by disk space, and explicit clue sheets are available from Mindscape. You can even cast magic spells. [OK, so you have to type a few words once in awhile!]

The game clearly monitors your progress. And any lack of progress results in the current game being terminated. There is no discernable way to ascertain how close you are to this situation, except perhaps the occasional messages stating the continuing urgency of your situation. I advise frequent saves and perhaps a restart and quick no-detour runthrough up to a position following significant progress. This is easy to do because the play was lightning fast on a MacPlus, as the locations were loaded into memory after initial visits.

In a few places the game tends to be condescending and insulting to the player. This detracts, but only slightly, from its considerable merit. Also, you "die" a lot in this game. I'm tired of "dying" when I do something wrong in an adventure game. Of course, I didn't have to enter the house, and the documentation warned that "my other guests haven't eaten in a long while."

And, after all, I was *Uninvited*. [Fade to scary organ music.]

Conclusions: Highly recommended.

[Reprinted with permission of the Apple Pi Users Group]

System: 512K Macintosh

Planned Conversions: Amiga, ST

Skill Level: Intermediate

Price: \$49.95

Company: Mindscape

ENCHANTED SCEPTRES

This Mac-only graphic adventure commences within a castle in the land of Callion, which is under attack by a powerful army of Hurk soldiers. You are Saber, an apprentice to the wizard Elron. He informs you of the goal, to find four ancient sceptres he needs in order to cast a spell that will defeat the Hurks. The first scepter, he says, is hidden deep in the earth. [In the documentation you'll find clues about the location of the other three.] He gives you a freeze spell, the king donates a sword, and you're off to slay trolls and Black Knights, cyclops and machinegunning Hurk soldiers--each accompanied by digitized sound effects that dominate the adventure.

The problem is that the designers seem to have deliberately included anything for which they could devise a realistic and entertaining sound effect. This results in an illogical fantasy world in which the enemy troops outside the castle are armed with modern machineguns and a medieval battering ram. There's also a Mayan pyramid with a voodoo witch doctor living in a hut next door. Logical breakdowns like these make it impossible to accept the fantasy and get involved with the story.

The picture window occupies two-thirds of the screen. Most graphics are unimpressive, and those depicting people are crudely drawn. (At least they load into RAM so you never have to wait for disk access.) The pictures are also disorienting. Facing a cave entrance, I figured it was in front of me so I moved north--wrong, it was south. It's a minor but annoying situation that recurs throughout the game.

The text window, which has a scroll bar for reviewing previous text, fills the rest. Many commands can be executed with keyboard shortcuts instead of mousing up to the command menu. Another menu facilitates using weapons; new weapons and spells are added to this list, but the rest

of your inventory is described only in the text window. The parser is rigid, for you must state precisely what you want to do: "Get key ring," not "get key" or "get ring." It does not accept direct objects or prepositions, so you cannot examine objects or look under things. The verb "find" lets you search an entire location for any hidden objects. The parser won't permit multiple commands and is basically primitive. But so are most of the puzzles, so the parser suits the environment. And many actions can be executed by clicking on objects to operate or take them.

Fighting is as important as puzzle-solving, and you can type "aim right" or "aim head" or other directions before using a weapon. There's no score in the form of points awarded for puzzle-solving. You can say "status" to learn wealth, experience, how many more times each weapon and spell can be used, and your physical and spiritual strength. You will die if either of the latter falls too low. Mapping is required, as there are more than 100 locations. You can't get hard copy, but one convenient feature lets you revert to the last saved position with a single command.

The digitized sound effects are realistic, and if that's what you want then listen up for the ringing of steel on steel, swords whooshing through the air, for creaking drawbridges, warbling damsels and wailing, grunting trolls. I enjoyed them at first, but soon got bored. Sound effects should enhance a scene or situation, not occupy center stage and steal the show. Still, I have to give the designers credit for taking advantage of one of the Mac's strong points, sound.

Conclusions: What you hear is what you get. Recommended for those seeking easy puzzles, a wimpy parser, and digitized sound effects.

Computer: Macintosh

Skill Level: Novice

Saves: Unlimited

Price: \$34.95

Manufacturer: Silicon Beach Software

NEXT ISSUE

Breakers -- Broderbund's latest Electronic Novel

Shard of Spring -- a new fantasy RPG from SSI

The Mist -- monsters in Maine!

Tass Times in Tone Town -- a graphic adventure from Activision

Spellbreaker: The Solution

Plus more clues and reviews!

A Walk through BORROWED TIME

Sandy Walton became our first official QuestBuster of the Month for her solution to *Ballyhoo* in the July issue. This month's walkthrough is from QuestBuster of the Month Aaron Chou, who got a copy of *Adventure Construction Set*. [If you really need a map, send fifty cents to cover postage and xeroxing.] You can win the game of your choice if we publish your walkthrough, so let us know if you've solved a NEW adventure whose solution hasn't appeared in help books yet. Write and let us know what you've got before sending in a complete walkthrough.

[We've already got solutions for *Spellbreaker*, *View to a Kill* and *The Mist*, which will be published soon.]

Your office: Open desk. Answer phone. Get check. East. East. East

Hotel: Hide behind chair. North. Bolt door. Up. Break window. Get shard. East.

Ledge: Climb cable. Cut cable. Drop shard. East. Show gun. Show gun. West.

1st St., E. of Main: West. North. Listen to woman. West. North. Open door. Wait. Look at table.

Rita's Apt.: Get matches and candle. Light match and candle and twine. Drop matches and check and wallet. West.

Kitchen: Look at can. Move oven. Get receipt. East. South. South. West. South. South. East.

Front of Medical Office: North. Yes. Look at desk. Drop receipt. Take bandages. Bandage hands. Drop bandages. Take receipt.

Lafferty's Office: Listen. South. West. Look in trash. North. West. North. Break door.

Hovel: Get novel and tube. Look at novel. Get bookmark. Drop novel. Ungang Mavis. South. South

West end of 1st: East. North. West. West. North.

Stiles SafePark: Show gun. Wait. Wait. Wait. Show tube. Show receipt. Show stub. Show gloves. Show cans. South. East. East. East. North.

Rita's Door: Open door. Get check. West. Get key. East. South. South. West. West. West. West. West. North

Farnham's Study: Wait. South. East. North. Say Hiyo. North. Untie Wainwright. Talk to Wainwright.

Jim's House: Give check to Rita. Wait. Wait. East. East. East. South. South (to Pershing & W. 6th). Get bone. North. East.

Newstand: East. North. North (to Bruiser at door). Say Tinplayer. Lock door. Look in fireplace. Get paper. East.

Dining Room: Get candlestick. Wait. Hit Rocco with candlestick. East. East. Drop candlestick. South. East. East.

Safety Deposit: Open box 999. Drop key. Get poem. Read poem. West. West. South. South. South.

By shed: Turn dial to 6316. Get shovel. North. Dig under statue. Get suitcase.

Park: North. West. West. West. Hide in trash. Give bone to dog. East. East. East. East.

Police Station: Open suitcase. Get folder. Arrest Farnham. North.

In Farnham's Study: Show paper. Show report. Show suitcase. Show folder.

Ultimate Wizard

Continued from page 1

You've got eleven kinds of magic spells to fall back on, from fireballs that affect the monsters to invisibility spells that affect you. [All may not be available simultaneously, since spells are obtained when you retrieve a key.] Like everything else, spellcasting is conducted with the joystick. As to be expected in a ladder game, timing and agility are crucial if you hope to reach the top of the heap and have your name recorded on the vanity board that lists the ten highest scores. A separate board is saved to the game disk for each of the six difficulty levels.

Up to six people can play, alternating on the same joystick. A clear display always tells what kind of spells you possess and how many you've got left, as well as informing you of other useful statistics. The sound effects are fun, and the

construction set looks easy enough to master in a few sessions.

Conclusions: If you want to go dungeon delving in an arcade-style "ladders and magic" setting, try your hand as an *Ultimate Wizard*. For serious role-playing and logical puzzle-solving, however, you'll be better off waiting for something more substantial.

Computer: C-64/128

Skill Level: Variable

Price: \$29.95

Manufacturer: Electronic Arts

Apshai - MSDOS

Continued from page 3

called Epyx long after *Trilogy's* release, they seemed to be aware of the bugs and didn't plan to correct them. There was no planned revision, nor any patches scheduled to repair the MSDOS version. I can only assume that it's not selling well enough to justify the repairs.

Conclusions: This product should have been properly debugged or shelved indefinitely before it ever got to the stores. I think I can safely say this is one version of *Apshai* I won't be playing fondly in the years to come. I couldn't even sit still long enough to play it through one complete level.

System: MSDOS

Price: \$39.95

Skill Level: Intermediate

Company: Epyx:

Trinity

Continued from page 2

about the history of the atomic bomb (which serves as the manual]. Sorry, no thermonuclear warhead.

Conclusions: The puzzles are well-structured, the prose among the finest to grace the screen of a monitor. If you thrive on text adventures but passed on Moriarty's *Wishbringer* because it was an introductory level game, don't miss this one. [Unless you're interested solely in games with intensive character interaction.] Moriarty now has two homers in a row, and this one could easily wind up in the parking lot.

System: Apple (128K), Amiga, C-128, ST, IBM, Mac (512)

Skill Level: Intermediate

Price: \$39.95

Company: Infocom

Keys to the Kingdoms

Bard's Tale

The Mad God's name is Tarjan. Don't slay him until you've got the Silver Square, found on same level around 0N 1E. Commodore players can get a character enhancement "cheat program" for Bard and one for Ultima 4 from the public domain section of QuantumLink. Someone finally sent in clear maps of Bard, and as soon as data contributed by other readers is added, we'll publish maps of the hardest levels: the Castle, Kylarean's Tower and Mangar's Tower.

Crimson Crown

Once you've said the password in the right place and with the right inventory, keep pressing return until you're instructed to use side two of the disk. Someone does you a favor, and even if you can't call him, Sabrina can - once you wake her with a cold shower. Look at the floor and see where to put the beehive, and remember that branches float. Look around for familiar objects, and dig in the sand for anything the seagull may have dropped. If you've examined everything and talked to the Sage seven times, you will know how to handle the dragon, the centaur and the knight. If the troll takes the sceptre, wait for him in the room with the lever, trap him, scare him, then go to his lair. Once Eric is wearing the crown, his confidence is contagious. Touch him, then run to the seaside and wait.

SpellBreaker

In the outer vault, have everything put in the zipper so you have room to carry eight objects. Also, leave the treasure in the inner vault. You can now Jindak three times to find the right cube. Drop all other cubes in this room before Jindaking third time because you can only leave with one cube. Sand Room: Bring the burin, Magic Cube, book and zipper. Go down, learn blorple twice. Unlock cabinet and get blank scroll. Put book in cabinet, close and lock. Rezrov door and blorple to Sand Room. Go up, get sack then Girgol blank scroll. Put original scroll in zipper, close zipper and drop. Now blorple to Magic Room.

Essex

Flattery will get you everywhere. Particularly in retrieving an item stolen by a pretty kleptomaniac and obtaining the cooperation of a passenger small enough to get some spiked boots out of a miniature castle. The trampoline will get you across the chasm, but don't take it near the guard or the nosy explorer. Don't release the klanghorn until you have captured the Vollchon spy's weapon, otherwise the guards may arrest the spy the first time you hit him. Thou shalt not kill! The weapon is not deadly anyway unless you're sensitive to ultrasound, and the goo that kills the monster also pacifies him if you wave the branch instead of stabbing him with it.

Fraktured Faebles

To remove the bees from the hive, you must first remove the Bs from the magic word. Also, when the queen says there aren't enough goodies, don't give up if she won't let you give her the apple. Just drop it and look at her for the next hint.

Ultima IV

In the Abyss, you'll be asked a question before descending to next level. Answers are the virtue corresponding to that level: 1. Honesty 2. Compassion 3. Valor 4. Justice 5. Sacrifice 6. Honor 7. Spirituality 8. Humility. The principles for these are 1. Truth 2. Love 3. Courage 4. Truth/Love 5. Love/Courage 6. Truth/Courage 7. Truth/Love/Courage 8. Truth/Love/Courage. If you answer correctly, the altar will be replaced by a ladder down to next level. This is the only ladder that lets you proceed with the game. All the others are traps that go nowhere.

This month's help is from Timothy Walsh, Stephen King, Mike Bagnall, Andrew Bundschuh, and Aaron Chou. If you want to help other adventurers in distress, send in tips, strategies, clues and solutions to tough problems you have solved.

Waiting for Duffy

Duffy's stuck inside a mushroom with the Klein bottle blues. So if you're stuck, send in a brief ad.

Need help with Bard. It's my first game ever. Jeff Kidder, 2050 Scenic River Rd., Baxter, MN 56401.

Oo-tapos: How do I get navchip in radiation room? Get shield past robot in jungle? Get past force field at pyramid? Crimson Crown: After Eric gets & wears crown in last room, how do I survive vampire? Brian Smith, 3035 Montego, Plano, TX 75023.

Fantasic Four: How does Thing escape tar pit? King's Quest 2: How do I cross poison lake? Have 69 points, no keys. Can give graduated hints for Essex, Spellbreaker, Fraktured Faebles, Below the Root, Alice & Crimson Crown. T. Walsh, 116 Homestead Cr., London, Ont., Canaa N6G 2E8.

Ultima 4: What is pure axiom? Is this the answer to last question, "What does thou possess if everyone may relay on your every word?" Spellbreaker: What do you do in octogonal room? Can help with most Infocom games, Amazon and Ultima 2,3,4. A. Lucyshyn, 239 Stevenage Dr., Longwood, FL 32779.

Spellbreaker: How do I go east in Magic Room? Looking for maps of top 3 levels of Manger's Tower in Bard? Aaron Chou, 7032 Stratford Rd., Woodbury, MN 55125.

Bard: Can't find onyx key in Harkyn's Castle or entrance to Kylarean's Tower in sewers. Eric Muery, 1408 Forest Lane, Sulphur, LA 70663.

Zork 1: Can't find ancient parchment. Have all treasures. C. Jacobs, 12 Spring Ave., Wakefield, MA 01880.

Need help in Black Cauldron, Zork 3 & Hitchhiker. Send SASE for free help with Witness, King's Quest 1 & 2. Jennifer Shulman, 12 Ardmore Rd., Scarsdale, NY 10583.

Essex: Regenerated engine & got to computer shaft but can't get safely to ledge there. Can give graduated hints for many

games, including Spellbreaker, Fraktured Faebles, Below the Root & Alice. T. Walsh, 116 Homestead Cr., London, Ont., Canada N6G 2E8.

Can give serious help with Bard's Tale. Need help with Hitchhiker, Zork trilogy, Rama. Willing to trade information. Mike Bagnall, RD #1 Box 1025, New Freedom, PA 17349.

Can give serious help with Bard's Tale. Need help with Hitchhiker, Zork trilogy, Rendezvous with Rama. Willing to trade information. Mike Bagnall, RD #1 Box 1025, New Freedom, PA 17349.

Expedition Amazon: How do I solve the final one-person maze? Gayle Ann Stanford, 3281 Foxgate Dr., Memphis, TN 38115.

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

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

Need help with Perry Mason, Dragonworld, Mindshadow. Need someone to play Lords of Midnight & Dragonriders of Pern with. If you live on Long Island, write about playing. Can help with Phantase, Ultima 3, Bard & Questron.

Need help on Bard & Ultima 4. Can help with Ultima 3, Hacker, Zork 1 & Phantase. J. Trice, 6417 Oakbrook, Corpus Christi, TX 78413.

Zork 2 & The Quest - can you help me? I can help with Enchanter, Ultima 3 & 4, Questron, Hitchhiker, Infidel, Sorcerer. J. Reihl, 1005 Normandy Dr., Moose Jaw, Sask., Canada S6H 3G8.

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

Need maps for Bard's Tale dungeons. Can help with Zork 1 & 2, Phantase, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Hitchhiker, and many others. Ba Ha, 4111 Sunset Dr. #4, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

If you can give free help with specific games, let us know and we'll announce it here.



SWAP SHOP

Got a houseful of old adventures? Trade 'em off with a free ad. [Adventures only, no more than ten games per ad.]

APPLE

Sale: \$20 each, Zork 1, 2, Deadline, Amazon, Mask of Sun. \$18 each: Strange Odyssey, Voodoo Castle, Murder by Dozen, Mindshadow. All original with docs. Andy Lucyshyn, 239 Stevenage Dr., Longwood, FL 32779. (305) 869-6571 (not collect).

Macintosh: \$15 each, Ultima 3, Enchanted Sceptres, Legacy, Hitchhiker's Guide, Hacker. All originals w/docs. Call or write Mark L. Bowman, 190 North Ave., Frankfort, IL 60423. (815) 469-3936.

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

Have 2 unopened packages: Ultima 3 & Hitchhiker's. Will trade for AutoDuel & Bard's Tale (complete packages.) Write first to Ahmad Jassem Al-Nusif, POB 38305, Dahia, 72254, Kuwait, Arabian Gulf.

To trade: all four Ultimas, the Zorks, Moebius, Transylvania, Fahrenheit 451 & more. Looking for ACS, Questron, Sorcerer & others. Write first: 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 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.

\$15 each: Interactive Fiction, Sands of Egypt, Invasion Orion, Gemstone Warrior, Rings of Zilfin, & TG paddles. \$20 each: Mystery House, Cyborg, Empire of Overmind, Wizardry 3, Shadowkeep, 7 Cities of Gold, Suspended, Adventure Construction. \$25: Ultima 3. \$40: Time Zone. All are originals with docs. Will buy or trade for Questron, Timeship,

Sundog, Zork 3 & Prisoner 2. Write 1st to Gayle Ann Stanford, 3281 Foxgate Dr., Memphis, TN 38115.

Ultima II original with docs and maps for \$20. 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: Ballyhoo, Perry Mason, \$25 each. Will trade for Mindshadow, Essex, or Alter Ego. Must be originals with docs. A. Chou, 7032 Stratford Rd., Woodbury, MN 55125.

To trade (all originals): Enchanter, Nine Princes in Amber, Perry Mason, Fahrenheit 451, Rendezvous with Rama, Below the Root, Swiss Family Alice in Wonderland. Write for list of these & some strategy games like Rails West. Scott Huang, 14 Equestrian Ct., Huntington, NY 11743.

Will trade for Ultima III, Fahrenheit 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 Fahrenheit 451, Shadowkeep, Dragonworld, ACS, Robots of Dawn or Timeship. Mark Fujimoto, 1646 Komo Mai Dr., Pearl City, HI 96782.

COMMODORE 64/128 Sell/trade: Ultima 3, Questron, Shadowfire, Wizard's Crown. New condition. Write or call D. Clark. 1219 Ratzler Rd., Wayne, NJ 07470. (201) 633-0213.

Sale/trade: Suspended, Starcross, Deadline, all Zorks, Quest for Holy Grail, See-Ka of Assiah, Gates of Dawn, Hero of Golden Talisman, Give My Regards to Broad St. - \$15 each. Questron, Phantasie 1 & 2 - \$26.50 each. Many, many others, will trade

on most. Want Brimstone & Mindwheel. Write first: S. Bugaj, POB 1997, E. Hampton, NY 11937. Or call [not collect] at (516) 324-3329.

Will trade my adventures, hints & solutions for yours. C. Raudonis, 45 Pelham Rd., Hudson, NH 03051.

Send for my list of 157 games. Mike Bagnall, RD #1, Box 1025, New Freedom, PA 17349.

Want AdventureMaster, Borrowed Time, Alter Ego, Little Computer People, Countdown to Shutdown. Helen Whitley, 1644 Pine Colony, Elvin, TX 77551

Will buy original adventures with docs. Send list and prices to J. Muxlow, 8957 Burnside Rd., Brown City, MI 48416.

Games for sale or trade: Write for free list, new adventures, old adventures, anything! Kevin Kraus, 33 Fox Hill Rd., Shrewsbury, MA 01545.

Sell or trade: 64 boot (for C128), utilities disk. Want any Ultima (with docs), any Infocom but Hitch or Zorks. Mike Bagnall, RD #1, Box 95, New Freedom, PA 17349.

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 Blackpool, 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.

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

IBM & Quest-Alikes Trade or sell (\$25 each): Apshai Trilogy, Sherlock Holmes, King's Quest 1 & 2, Black Cauldron, Hitchhiker, Planetfall, Suspect, Enchanter all Zorks, Nine Princes in Amber, Rendezvous with Rama, The Mist. Will trade for The Quest, Ballyhoo, Transylvania, Amazon, Witness, Infidel & many more. Write to Byron Byrd, 5160 Verdun Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90043.

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 or sell Ultima 1 or 3, Zork 3, Adventure Creator, or Questron. All originals with docs. Please write first. Brent Dollins, Rte. 2, Box 157, Powderly, TX 75473.

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C = Commodore 64/128. AT = 48K Atari.
AT+ = 64K Atari. PC = IBM PC, jr, quest-alikes. M = 128K Mac.
M+ = 512K Mac. Enclose \$1.95 for shipping, handling and make check payable QuestBusters, Sorry, no Canadian or overseas orders. PA residents add 6% sales tax.