



QuestBusters™



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The Adventurers' Journal
April, 1990

\$2.50

Centauri Alliance: Bard's Tale author returns...

Capt. Xdd wiped cold sweat from the back of his neck, then lowered the Riot Helmet onto his head and scanned the purple-walled hall. After arriving on Omicron VII early in 2214 A. D., he'd checked

Type: Role-playing
Systems: Apple
(64K; supports
mouse & joystick,
strongly recommend-
ed by *QB*)
**Planned conver-
sions:** C64/128

into Alli-
ance HQ
for
orders.
Hesi-
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now be-
fore he
set out to
investi-
gate the
lower re-

gions of the planet, he checked his Plasma9 pistol and counted his crew's dwindling supply of Healing Tablets.

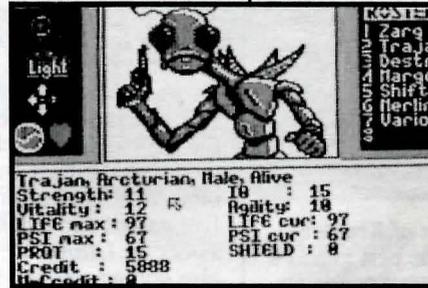
It wasn't the pack of Skarvaks or the Hydraen Lions lying in wait that had him wondering what he

was doing here. Shaking his head, he asked no alien in particular, "What am I doing in a fictionalized introduction to a game review? This is *QuestBusters!*"

Xdd may have suddenly found himself in the most unlikely situation imaginable, but instinctively he was doing at least one thing right: ensuring his crew was ready for the rigors of combat on the third level of Omicron VII, a world where Grey Thieves and Visuraeks unleashed a barrage of assaults every step of the way, where riddle-bearing robots grappled at his Combat Armor if he typed in the wrong

password, where no Adventurer had gone before—boldly or otherwise.

Tactical combat of a unique variety is the main element that distinguishes *Centauri Alliance* from *Bard's Tale*. Similarities between the two abound, which is no surprise, since Michael Cranford wrote *Centauri* as well as the first two *Bards*. (There is practi-



Best Quest of the Month!

cally no truth to rumors it was originally conceived as a *Keef the Thief* clone about a teenaged space pirate exploring space—in which case it would have been called *Centauri Allowance*.)

The plot concerns the Centauri Alliance, a group of humans and members of six alien civilizations bound together to defeat the Daynab confederation, headed up by a traitor with inside knowledge of Alliance operations. Up to eight party members, who may be part of the Alliance, Mechanoids, illusionary creatures and alien volunteers, can participate in the quest. Robots can be purchased at Armories and black market outlets; they're expedient in combat, selecting their own targets and attack modes.

It's easy to roll your own characters, or you can just change the names of the prerolled team members (but not their sex). Freshly rolled characters are saved to the Roster disk, and an entire team can be loaded with a batch command by typing the group's name, as was done in *Bard's Tale*.

Surprisingly, the package omits the fact that you can import characters from *Bard I-III*, *Might and Magic*, *Wizardry I-III* and *Ultima*. As usual, they will lose some of their capabilities, but many objects will work (the Fire Horn from *Bard* becomes a laser pistol, says the manual) and spellcasters' magic abilities are transformed into Psionic powers that function similarly.

Space travel is simple: choose one of three destinations from a menu, then sit

By Shay Addams

Ultima VI: The Official Update

"My sister just crashed it," Lord British spoke from his Austin home, where he was recuperating from the Attack of the Steel Plate Monster. His sister Linda, for whom a town is named in one of the early *Ultimas*, had been playing a beta version of *The False Prophet* in late February, just a few days after the accident.

When he had returned to the Origin offices the previous weekend, a five-pound steel plate slipped loose from the top of the front door and smacked Garratt right on top of the head. After he awoke in a pool of blood and was rushed to the hospital for X-rays, he spent the next few days at home rather than wrapping up the final bits and pieces of the next *Ultima* (Unfortunately Lord British had left his helm at home.)

But even with such a great excuse for falling behind on the project, he still man-

aged to finish by his self-imposed March 1 deadline. (*IV* and *V* were both more than six months late, as we all know all too well.) That meant he could finally shave off his beard—he had also vowed not to shave again until *Ultima VI* was complete.

Playtest and bug-fixing were in the final stages as we went to press, and most of the IBM version was already in duplication. (It should be on the shelves by now, and *QB* subscribers who order it from the journal will get up to three free issues added to their subscriptions.)

Amiga and C64/128 versions are scheduled for this fall. But it looks like Apple gamers will miss out completely, since the program has so far proven impossible to fit that machine. An ST version might happen, but there was no official word on this possibility.

Continued on page ten



Adventure Hotline



Letters
to the
Editor



New Quests

Federation is billed as a "strategic space trading and combat adventure" from England. It plays like a combination of *Elite* and *Starglider* and is for ST and Amiga. Access Software followed up on *Mean Streets* with *Crime Wave*, but it looks like it emphasizes arcade action far more than adventuring. *Dragonscape* from Free Spirit is an Amiga shoot-'em-up in a fantasy setting. Infocom says *Circuit's Edge*, a science fiction RPG, should be out for MSDOS by now. Same for Sierra's *Codename: Iceman* and *Conquests of Camelot*. *Bad Blood*, Origin's follow-up to *Times of Lore*, shipped for MSDOS in March, with C64 to follow.

Conversions of Doom

The 64K Apple *Champions of Krynn* is on the shelves (so far it's the best in SSI's AD & D series.) An Amiga version is on the way. SSI's action adventure *War of the Lance* is ready for C64 gamers. So is *Wizardry V*. The Amiga *Third Courier* showed up. Mindscape has still not come up with a version of *Star Trek V* that will run on XT and similar clones or Tandys.

Todd Mitchell: The Man, The Legend, The Running Retraction
Yes, we did it again. The March retraction that corrected the January issue story—which confused Chris Porter with the author of *Knights of Legend*—incorrectly stated KOL designer Todd Mitchell's name as Eric Todd Mitchell.

D. R. A. G. O. N. Force

This Interstel "strategic combat simulation" may be of interest to many RPG fans. No quests to solve here, but there are 12 missions in which your team of fourteen soldiers exercise and advance in assorted skills and attributes, much like Omnitrend's *Breach* series. It's out for Amigas with a full meg.

Renew Now Before Postal Rates Rocket through the Stratosphere!

If you've left your current fantasy world long enough to catch the news lately, you already know postal rates will be going up next year. Subscription rates will be adjusted accordingly, so resourceful adventurers such as yourself will naturally want to renew now and save a small fortune: current rates are still \$18 for third class delivery, \$24 for first class in an envelope (strongly recommended for APO/FPO) and Canadian (in US funds), and \$32 for overseas airmail (also US funds). Yes, you can renew for multiple years at

the same rate, but we can't accept credit cards or "bill me next millennium" orders. Special thanks and a tip of the *QB* helm to Michael Aurelius, who recently renewed for five years, saving enough to buy himself a 40-foot yacht and a new Corvette. And to Kevin Kwan, whose three-year renewal enabled him to finally take that trip to Bora Bora.

Ye Official-type Book of Ultima
The nightmare is over: the 73,000-word *Official Book of Ultima* will be out by June, maybe sooner. Written by QB editor Shay Addams and published by Compute Books, it will reveal the secrets of the *Ultima* saga (such as the true origin of the Silver Serpent and the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom), offer solutions to the first five games and extensive clues and answers for *Ultima VI*, and tell everything else you wanted to know about *Ultima* but were too lost in a maze to ask. *QB* subscribers who buy it from us will get two issues added to their third class sub, or one issue for first class, Canadian and overseas. (But advance order it by April 10 and get three issues for third class, two for others. See back cover for details.)

Industry Updates

Origin's Dallas Snell was just made VP of Product Development. He's been producing games there since 1985, after writing *The Quest* and *Ring Quest* for Penguin Software. And Greg Malone, who wrote *Moebius* and *Windwalker*, has commandeered Origin's Media Relations post and was last seen barricading his office door with sandbags and shouting "They'll never take me alive!"

Activision Bulletin Board

If Activision ever releases any more Infocom games, you'll be able to seek help from the Activision BBS by dialing 415 329-7684. It's also available on GENie, Delphi, CompuServe, Quantum Link, PC Link, America Online, Connect, and GUE-Net.

Dead in the Water

EA killed a number of adventures, which means they'll be going cheap if you can find them: *Adventure Construction Set*, *Bard I* (MSDOS combo) & *II* (Apple C+), *Deathlord*, *Mars Saga*, *Lancelot* (the Datasoft game), *Sorcerer Lord*, *Time & Magick* and *Phantasie III*. They cut prices on others: all *Bard II*s are now \$25, and similar bargains are available on the MSDOS *Future Magic* and *Starflight*. *Might & Magic I* and *Questron I & II* for Apple, MSDOS and C64 now costs \$25.

Dear QuestBusters:

In April you said you were updating a new system for selling computer games and would not be doing so for a "few" months. I've been waiting patiently for those "few" months to pass. It seems to me you may not do so simply because not enough of your subscribers have an interest in getting three free issues when buying a game! If your selling software again is dependent on a set response, you should have said so instead of saying you were setting up a new system. I hope you start selling software again and am more than happy to get the three free issues. I've been very happy with every issue, but would like to see walkthroughs and hints for older games. Some of us have gotten into adventures only recently, but usually on software that came with a used computer, like the early Infocom games.

Linda Gremillion

Our new system is finally in place and should enable us to provide much more timely service than previously. We're going to start off with a few new games from Origin, then add more titles each month, and soon publish a complete catalog of adventures for all systems. Subscribers who order a game from us will have three issues added to their sub (two for Canada and 1st Class, one for overseas) and a packet of the appropriate mapping paper. We plan to do solution for older games like Infocom's all-text adventures—and are currently working on a new system for developing these walkthroughs!

QuestBusters™

The Adventurers' Journal

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Quest for The Colonel's Bequest

The very nature of any sort of adventure game is to provide the player with lots of mystery. Some are lighthearted and some skirt the dark side of our inner selves, but all must have puzzles and mysterious circumstance in order to attract and hold the adventurer's interest. *The Colonel's Bequest* is unique among the Sierra offerings, for the entire game is a mystery from start to finish.

Certainly this idea has been tried before. Infocom did an original murder mystery, Marc Blank's *Deadline*, which spawned a pair of sequels. Many things separate *Colonel's Bequest* from such earlier offerings—not the least of which are its high-quality color graphics.

That Voo Drew That You Do

Much like the Mel Brooks film, *High Anxiety*, *Bequest* is a humorous tribute to the murder mystery. You take the part of Laura Bow, a Nancy Drewish type college journalism student. The use of stereotyped characters in this game makes it very reminiscent of the old Charlie Chan Mysteries; simultaneously, their names and personalities spoof the classic board game *Clue*. It all takes place in 1925 on a Louisiana plantation surrounded by swamp.

Type: Animated Mystery
Systems: MSDOS (512K required, 640 on PC jr and Tandy 1000; both disk formats in same box; Roland MT-32, Ad Lib, IBM, CSM, Casio MT-540/CT-460 & CSM-1, Yamaha FB-01 sound boards supported; hard drive and at least 8 MHz recommended)
Planned conversions: Amiga, ST, Mac

The central character is Henri Dijon, an honest to goodness southern colonel who was a hero of the Spanish-American War [his name is a prime example of the *Clue* connection, as it's a topical allu-

sion to Colonel Mustard]. The wheelchair-bound Henri has called his close friends and relatives together at the mansion to tell them that they are all beneficiaries in his will.

Upon his death, the estate is to be split equally among the people present at the dinner (except for Laura). If any of these

people should happen to expire, the remaining survivors will split the person's share. Therefore, the fewer people left, the more money the beneficiary will get—which gives everyone a solid motive for murder.

Twelve Little Indians!

And so, the fun begins! Stuck alone on an isolated island, you, as Laura, must find out why people keep dropping dead. At first you think they might be coincidental accident victims, but the dagger protruding from the chest of one of the victims makes you reconsider. Maybe, just maybe, mind you, you are stuck on the island with a murderer! This bears a striking resemblance to *Mystery House*, Roberta Williams' first adventure game, which was also started the whole subgenre of adventures illustrated with color graphics.

Your problem is to identify the murderer, which is tricky because nearly everyone seems to have a reasonable motive for killing everyone else, and there are plenty of suspects from which to choose. There is Ethel Prune, the colonel's younger sister, who has not been too far from a bottle since her husband died. Your friend Lillian, Ethel's daughter, is also suspicious, and it's somewhat disturbing to find that your close friend has spent time in an asylum!

We have the colonel's money-grubbing sister-in-law Gertrude and her two ne'er do well offspring, Rudolph, the oily looking professional gambler, and Gloria Swansong, an aspiring actress who spends most of her time on the casting couch.

Of course, we can't forget the colonel's shyster attorney, Clarence Sparrow, or his Doctor, Wilbur C. Feels. This dubious duo seems to have been scheming up a plan to embezzle the colonel's fortune. Clarence is the only one of the stereotypes I felt was out of character. He spoke a little too much like the earthy Sam Spade and not enough like an even marginally educated lawyer.

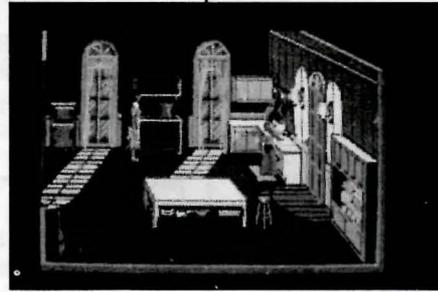
Last, and probably least of the suspects are the members of the mansion staff. Jeeves is a tall, stoic butler who be-

lieves that silence is golden. Fifi is the sexy French maid who can be seen dusting some of the objects in various rooms (some of which are attached to a few of the men). Finally, there is Celie the cook, who bears a striking resemblance to the friendly face of Aunt Jemima. Some say she dabbles in

voodoo!

A New Direction for Sierra

Bequest diverges sharply in style from many of the others in Sierra's 3-D adventure series. While there are still a few special items you must find, this



Looking for a Clue

game is not one of the object-gathering type. And though you are rated for your sleuthing prowess at the end of the game, no conventional points are awarded.

Instead, the game rewards you for observation and information collecting. It is up to you to scrutinize all of the inhabitants of the estate. They will not often speak freely with an outsider in the room, so you must use your latent detective skills to find ways to watch them while remaining unseen yourself.

In order to succeed, you will have to carefully examine all objects in the room with you. Is something missing? Where did that discarded cigar come from? Was

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By Stephen King

The Hound of Shadow

The streets of London are cold, foggy and twisting, even comparatively early in the evening. Gas streetlights cast little patches of yellow light in the misty air. I shudder inside my overcoat and wait for my friend, John Playford, to arrive. He's taking me to a seance conducted by the Adept Karmi, probably just another of the legion of occult cheats that infest this city, but perhaps I can get some information for my book.

The year is 1922. My name is Kenneth Saint André, and if you were describing me, you'd have to say that I am energetic, healthy, single-minded, dexterous, good-looking, of average height, intelligent and well educated. I am also a crack shot with a handgun and not a good person to pick a fight with. I am familiar with astrological theories as well as occult beliefs and practices. I can quickly and thoroughly research things (an appropriate skill for a librarian and author). I have a convincing manner, and can sometimes bargain for a better price. And I'm about to become embroiled with supernatural forces that may well cost me my life and my immortal soul!

Where are the Ghostbusters when you need them?

As computer games go, *The Hound of Shadow* is an interesting experiment revolving around Eldritch Games' "Timeline" role-playing system (characters created with *Hound* can be used in future games in the Timeline series, if they are imported from England). It seems to be a cross between an old-style Infocom text adventure and a role-playing game. You have your choice of three ready-to-go personas when the game starts, or you can make up your own character, as I did above when I tried to make a character as much like myself as possible. (Actually, I'm not that good with a pistol, but the rest is all true.)

The opening sequence in which you define your character is one of the most enjoyable parts of the whole game and really gives you the feeling that you are role-playing despite the all-text interface. Character creation concerns itself with professions and skills. As you can see above, the game creators are perfectly willing to concede that you are handsome, intelligent and healthy, so numeric

attributes are not needed.

First you choose a profession from among the following: aristocrat, freelance reporter, gentleman adventurer, novelist, private eye, psychic investigator, scholar, sleuth or socialite. (No matter which you choose, you will soon find yourself on the way to a seance with your friend.)

After choosing a suitable profession, you will want to choose some skills to go with it. *Hound* offers seven categories of skills containing 42 different possible skills. You allocate part of a "fund" of points by sliding an indicator along a rheostat beneath an icon representing the particular skill. (For example, your ability to brawl is pictured with a set of brass knuckles.)

When you are playing, the game automatically looks at your skill in certain areas and gives the appropriate message. I had no difficulty translating Latin inscriptions and curses in the game, though my real-life Latin is scant at best.

Gameplay proceeds like a text adventure. The writing is witty and polished, the work of Chris Elliott and Richard Edwards of England. They achieved a nice simulation of the prose style of H. P. Lovecraft, the Twenties American master of horror whose ideas inspired the game. The prose picks you up and carries you swiftly into the adventure, and I often found myself laughing at a well-chosen turn of phrase.

From time to time, the narration ceases and gives you a "What now?" prompt that lets you indicate your next activity. In the early stages, these prompts are largely unnecessary. No matter what I said, the game proceeded to the next block of narration. These game masters will not let you wander from the topic—certain things are going to happen, and you're going to be there to see them no matter what you say or do. Later on you'll have more freedom of action, but you will still be limited to things that either advance the story, or at least don't impede it.

The seance, which is clearly a fake, takes a nasty turn for the supernatural when the medium is possessed by a malevolent female spirit who chooses a victim for the Hound of Shadow. In a few days you will discover the horribly mutilated body of young Matthew Talbot, and the curse will switch over to you. The challenge is to discover what is happening and how to thwart the evil plans of a blood countess more than 300 years old. Your investigations will take you into oc-

cult bookstores, the reading room of the British Museum, the London underground and other places.

The Call of Thul Who?

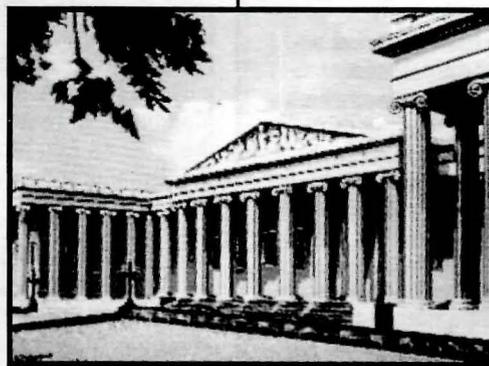
There is a popular impression that the works and ideas of H. P. Lovecraft are in the public domain and that anyone can do

whatever they want with them. I do not know if this is true. Both Arkham House (publishers of his novels) and Chaosium (who produced a paper and pencil role-playing based on Lovecraft's Cthulhu stories) might argue otherwise. However, the four men who created Eldritch Games and *Hound of Shadow* specifically deny that their game takes any of its rules or mechanics from the Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* game. [The accompanying press release calls it "an original contribution to the Cthulhu Mythos."]

For an Amiga game, it makes extremely modest use of the machine's capabilities [and we can safely presume this will be true for other versions]. There is no sound or animation at all. The occasional graphics are all in sepia tones and meant to look like old photographs. You'll get to see several rather boring parts of London before you are through. However, when Carl Cropley does get around to showing you character portraits of the NPCs in the game, more of the humor (I mean humour) and style of the game comes through.

The greatest flaw with *Hound of Shadow* is its extremely limited parsing system. Clearly the game is looking for only one response in most situations, and if it doesn't get it, you get one of seven or eight "you can't do that" messages. I am most frustrated by situations, such as in the British Museum, where you try and try to follow the instructions given, but the parser won't let you make progress.

Another frustrating thing is that the



Amiga version

Type: Parser-based
Role-playing
Systems: Amiga, ST
(both 512K)
Planned conversions: None
Version reviewed:
Amiga

By Ken St. André

program frequently stops and admonishes you to talk to the characters—sometimes even *when* you are talking to them, and they don't understand you because of the weak parser. You can push the Help key for help, but all it ever gets you is the admonishment to talk to the characters. That's not what I call help.

Hound of Shadow has no physical copy protection, and you are advised to copy both disks. You will also need to make your own user disk. From time to time you will have to look in the 22-page manual and locate a set of numbers printed at the tops and bottoms of certain pages (supposedly train arrival and departure times). If you can't supply the right numbers, the program will close down on you, but that is not as frustrating or harmful as some copy protection schemes.

Conclusions: *Hound of Shadow* gets a mixed review. The character creation and the story-telling elements of the game are excellent, but the parser and the graphic elements are weak. If you like interactive fiction, this may just be your cup of tea. If you prefer action and great special effects, you'll have to look elsewhere.

Skill Level: Intermediate
Protection: Key word
Price: \$39.95
Company: Eldritch Games/EA

Colonel's Bequest

Continued from page three

it dropped by Henri or Clarence?

Time Waits For One Man (or Woman)

The inherent key to success consists of being in the right place at the right time. But you won't worry about this, for time will often wait for you in this game. *Bequest* is designed like a play. In fact, all of the characters are introduced to you on a lighted stage in the opening scene. This effect is enhanced by the windows that materialize to describe a new room, person, or whatever. The windows are not a new idea, but unlike the cartoony look of the normal Sierra window, these look almost like old-style silent film titles.

There are eight distinct acts, each separated into fifteen-minute segments that are triggered when you witness an important event. Many times you may wander aimlessly, time standing still, until you come upon the correct scene that will advance you to the subsequent act. Don't get cocky though! Not every event will wait for you to happen along. Some of the items of lesser importance will be advanced along with the major scenes.

Another thing you must make yourself aware of is the changing nature of people and places in this game. It would probably be a good idea to devise a route for yourself, never skipping a room because you think you have seen it before. If you really get stuck, perhaps you can bribe a clue or two from Polly by providing a cracker...not the only Ritz thing you'll find on the Colonel's plantation.

F/X

As usual, this game is filled with wonderful 16-color graphics and clever spot animation. From Ethel's "drunkard's walk" to Laura's dainty little steps you are sure to be entertained. All graphic standards are supported from the monochrome Hercules to full-color Tandy and EGA. Separate CGA modes allow you to decide which of the two limited color combinations is less grating on your eyes. And of course, VGA boards are supported in the 16-color mode.

High-quality sound is once again a high point. Multi-channel custom music and sound effects are supported on just about every third-party board you can name. A few of the weaker standards, like a couple of the three-channel boards and all of the voice-only cards, will not gain you anything. But if you have an add-on board by any of the major players [see specs box] you will be treated to some very interesting and original music. Nicest of all are the creaking doors, hooting owls, woodpeckers, frogs and other denizens of the night that serenade you every time you step outside.

How Do I Control Thee?

Well, let me count the ways...first, there is the ever popular keyboard method. Using arrows, or the 1 through 9 key on the keypad, you can start Laura walking in any of the eight cardinal compass directions. She will continue to walk in that direction until you press the same key again to stop her, press a different key to change her direction, or until she encounters an obstacle or the end of the screen. Several function keys allow direct control of things like speed, game save, restore and so on, or you can call up a menu by pressing the ESCape key.

Then of course there is the more advanced technique of joystick control. As you'd expect, Laura will walk in any direction in which you push the stick, and the button brings up the menu. Finally, there is the mouse. Simply point at a spot on the screen, and Laura will take the most direct route. Once again, pressing the button will bring up the menu.

No matter which method you prefer, you might be pleasantly surprised by the

tight response. Because a lot of the game is done in a cut-away view, Laura tends to walk at an angle that follows the wall. This is a bit disconcerting at first, but you'll quickly get used to it.

The best thing is the nice way stairs are handled. *Kings' Quest III* veterans may remember that maneuvering Prince Alexander up and down all the stairs in that game was often a struggle. While Alex was not exactly a dummy, Laura is much smarter. She knows how to negotiate steps without requiring your direct control: just point her at them, and she takes care of all the fancy footwork.

On Again, Off Again

I can only assume that the disappearing/reappearing copy protection at Sierra reflects diminished sales in the games that don't have it. Well, it is back on *Bequest*—and in its nastiest form. Included in the package is a map of the Misty Acres Plantation. The back of the map is covered with a recurring pattern in red ink. Under the red ink are the fingerprints of each of the game's characters.

When you first start each game, a fingerprint and a list of names will be displayed onscreen. A magnifying glass with red film instead of a glass lens must be used to match the print under the red ink with the one onscreen. Part of me wants to shout "ENOUGH!!" at this, but I also have to admit the rest of me is more than a little amused by the clever way the copy protection is worked into the game's detective theme with the fingerprints and magnifying glass. And all the files can be safely transferred to a hard disk or backed up on floppies.

End Of The Line Schweetheart

The Colonel's Bequest spans a whopping ten big floppies and four smaller ones, all in the same box. It will run on a two disk floppy system at 4.77 megahertz, but a hard drive and minimum 8 MHz machine is recommended for speed and convenience.

Conclusions: I thought *Bequest* a refreshing change in concept, but actual play time could range from faster than you could follow to very slow. Because of the "play" format, it had a jerky quality at times, but often I found myself wandering back and forth from one side of the estate to the other waiting to come upon the situation that would get me to the next scene. Mystery buffs will most likely find this one a sure winner.

Skill Level: Intermediate
Protection: In packaging
Price: \$59.95
Company: Sierra

The Dark Heart of Uukrul

This quest takes an old, tried and true game format and introduces enough new methods and tricks to make playing it enjoyable. Your adventure begins when you enter the underground city of Criosthé—the City of the Ancients—with a party of four skilled aspirants: a Fighter, a Paladin, a Priest and a Magician. Only as a group of rookies can you enter the city and avoided being spotted by the archfiend Uukrul—once he discovers you're a potential threat to his evil reign, he'll stop at nothing to destroy you.

Type: Fantasy Role-playing
Systems: Apple (128K)
Planned conversions: MSDOS (May)

Heartbreak Hotel

Your task is to search the city for six petrified hearts that can be assembled into the key that unlocks the Mystic Chalice containing Uukrul's own pitch-black obsidian heart. Instead of seeking and slaying the Evil Wizard, the only way to rid the world of Uukrul's evil is to destroy this ebony ticker.

When starting the game, you may opt for the pre-rolled party, customizing them with the convenient name/sex change utility; for those of us who want more of our own personalities to be reflected in the party members, you can also create your own players by answering questions regarding your own ethics in much the same way as in *Ultima IV*.

Sanctuary? Why Not the Papal Embassy in Panama City?

DarkHeart's style sticks closely to the traditional format for fantasy role-playing games but does put its own stamp on the genre. The mazes are set up more like a cross-section of a mountain than a series of mazes going straight down into the the ground as in a *Wizardry*, for example. Between the maze levels are Sanctuaries where your characters gain experience levels, rest and recuperate, and are able to store certain items. Rather than finding a set of stairs that lead down or up to the next Sanctuary, as you would in a *Wizardry*, you might reach the Sanctuary by going west through a door on the current level. All Sanctuaries (and other areas as well) can be reached by teleporters. To use one, you've got to know the correct name. These are in the manual, but even if you

know the name you've got to reach a place by foot at least once before you can teleport there.

The graphics seen while moving around are very reminiscent of those found in *Bard's Tale*. Combat graphics employ both the first-person "portrait-style" seen in the original *Wizardry* and the tactical combat style used in *Wizard's Crown* and *Ultima IV*. In all cases, however, the illustrations are very clear and crisp. Sound effects are limited to footsteps, and no music is heard at all.

The World's Best Auto-mapping

The game's auto-map system does what we've all wished for—virtually eliminates any need for paper and pencil! Only in rare instances is it necessary to rummage around the stacks of documentation lying about to find your trusty pad of graph paper and mechanical pencil.

You can reposition the cursor on any square you've already explored and reorient the map so your cursor position is in the center of the screen. Placing the cursor on a stairway takes you up or down the stairs, and moving to a secret door will take you through the door. My only hope is that other game designers will take the hint from *Dark Heart*, because this is the way auto-mapping should be implemented.

If you find yourself wanting or needing to flee the battle, you may do so by exiting the room or hall through any visible door. The interesting part is that you can actually advance past an obstacle and continue on your merry way rather than blindly running away or, even worse, not being allowed to go anywhere at all.

The magic system sports some familiar and novel elements. Mages acquire spells in much the same way as other spellcasters in most games; there are five kinds of Mage spells, such as Fire and Frost spells. The spells a Mage can cast reflect his or her experience, but here this is not connected directly to the character's level. It is common in RPGs to advance in more than one of the Magic Arcanas before reaching the next experience level, which is true here. Priests, however, have

access to all their prayer-based spells from the outset of the game. But the more experience the Priest accumulates, the more likely the appropriate deity will grant the petitioner's request.

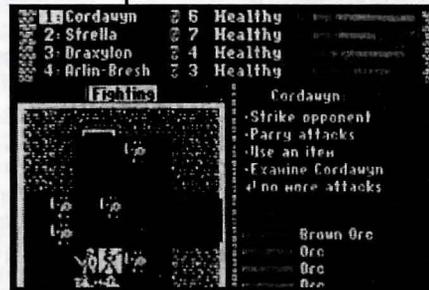
There are five such deities, each governing a particular realm. Drutho rules the underworld and everything pertaining to things in the underground, such as hidden doors and traps. It is possible (and embarrassing) to attempt to cure wounds suffered in combat and wind up killing the Priest (this can happen during combat or at other times). That's because the deity to whom you must plead in order to cast a spell may be in a bad mood and zap your Priest instead of simply ignoring his plea for help, or granting assistance by allowing the prayer to work.

Puzzles too

Most puzzles are of the "which key operates that door" type. Some hints are found in the game, but it is through trial and error that you must figure out the purpose of many of the various objects found in and amongst the pathways and wrested from the death grip of assorted villainous foes, and then determine where and on what to use them.

Woe be to the foolish one who rubs a vial of liquid onto his skin only to discover it is an acid. (Worse yet if he decided to drink it!)

The simplistic interface is comprised of menus and keyboard. Some thoughtful



Bar Graphs Enhance Stats

options available during battle allow you to change the speed of the combat report and view a summary of the magic points possessed by your Mage and Priest.

You can save the game in a Sanctuary or at any time, anywhere, except in the middle of a battle. An unusual save option lets you create a back-up of your saved game on the your play disk. This saved the day for me when I made the Classic Adventurer's Error: things were going poorly in a battle, so I turned off the computer—unfortunately, while the disk was being accessed. I rebooted but got a disk error when I tried to reload the game; the back-up reloaded without a hitch, saving me hours of time otherwise spent covering the same ground. [But if something went wrong with the disk, this

Continued on page fifteen

By Bruce E. Wiley

Iron Lord

As a young knight in England during the time of the Crusades, your goal in life is to assemble an army and defeat the legions of demons and other minions of Zolphar, the Evil Wizard who slew your father and torched the ancestral castle 20 years before the action commences. A typical plot, but in this case one that extends beyond the documentation's description of the scenario. The Monk at the Knight Templars' abbey, for instance, when asking you to convince the Herbalist to make a healing potion for him, explains that he can't ask him because they've been feuding since he accused the Herbalist of stealing from the abbey 20 years ago. Other characters find occasion to color their stories with such references, lending depth and resonance to the story.

Though many people in the seven towns, villages and other inhabited areas displayed on the aerial view map will send you out on assorted mini-quests like that of the Monk, there is no major quest to accomplish. After solving a few quests, achieving high scores in archery and other action games, and mustering an army, you must defeat Zolphar in a simplistic war game.

Starting outdoors, you can click on a castle, village or another place to travel there. Along the trail you see a little animated horse riding to your destination, while a detailed close-up of the steed is seen striding along in a window that simultaneously moves across the screen. (If this sounds like *Hillsfar*, it's because it looks like *Hillsfar*.) When it reaches the town, you click on the icon to enter it.

Then the left half of the screen shows an illustration of average quality; the lower right half holds text messages. In the upper right half you see an aerial view of your immediate surroundings in the town. Your character is depicted with a tiny figure seen from overhead, and the buildings scroll past as you move around with the mouse or joystick, punching the button to enter them if you can find the door. This is a novel presentation scheme that helps keep the game from dragging too much to be a total flop.

Occasionally you can pick up clues and background information from the townspeople. Enter a shop, for example,

and the left half of the screen shows the person's picture; the right, a menu pictures are enhanced with spot animation, but this and the illustrations themselves are less than inspirational. The menu lets you check your Money or Inventory, Discuss, Buy, Give and Examine (the person in the scene). You can examine things in your inventory by clicking on their names for a one-line description.

Conversation is limited to choosing statements or questions. Giving things to people may affect their cursory responses. Your question might elicit a response that, after you hit the OK button, immediately brings up a related question or statement you can make by clicking on it; several of these are sometimes strung together to fashion a semblance of a running dialogue, but a superficial one at best. If you don't want to pursue the resulting dialogue chain, you can hit the left or right arrow buttons to scroll through several more conversational choices.

Most people have a chore, task or mini-quest for you to accomplish before they'll give up a valuable item or provide you with troops for the eventual battle. The Innkeeper, a prime example, will give you 100 soldiers if you find the pearl necklace that a Knight ripped off.

Action games include arm wrestling (a good way to break your joystick), archery (like a golf simulator with bow and arrows instead of clubs and little white balls), and random, first-person view combat (reminiscent of *Ultima I*). All are tedious and flimsily

animated except for

the archery contest, and the designers might have been more successful had they aimed for an archery simulator rather than an action adventure. You can also play a simple dice game to boost your assets. A fair amount of proficiency in at least some of these games is elementary for success in getting enough soldiers for your army; none are challenging, however—when someone as uncoordinated as I can score a bulls eye after a dozen shots, they're downright easy.

After rounding up at least a regiment,

you can return to your castle, still in ruins, enter the tower and Declare War (it's also the only place to save or load a game). On the battlefield, each unit is represented by a shield bearing a different coat of arms. Win the little war game and you'll have to wend your way through a series of top-down mazes, scooping up keys and swords as you go to attain a satisfactory conclusion. More combat occurs here.

Joystick and mouse are supported and required. But the interface suffers from inconsistency in their implementation. Too often I had to drop the joystick and reach for the mouse, since it's easier to move

around in town with the joystick, but you can't make menu selections with it. I had a list of other little things that annoyed me—like the time I tried to buy some grey armor and was told "it's not for sale," which left me wondering why it was included in the Buy list—but they were minor flaws that I might not have even noticed had I enjoyed the game.

Music is fair and varies from scene to scene, but you don't hear any sound effects during combat or other action sequences. The most effective tune was the one that accompanies combat and other dramatic situations: the drums make it sound like the *Miami Vice* theme.

The "manual" is a little booklet with eight pages of background and nine of how to play. You also get a free poster—which many people will probably find more exciting than the game. It's a two-disk game that supports two drives.

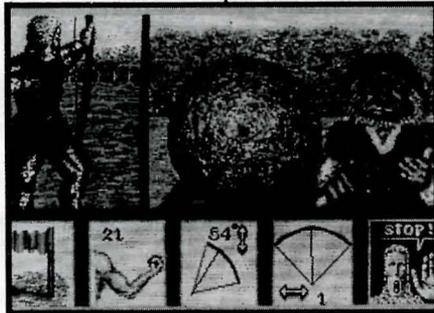
Conclusions: *Iron Lord* is reminiscent of *Hillsfar*, but the activities aren't as much fun and the questing element isn't as strong. (In fact, *Hillsfar* on the C64 is more fun than *Iron Lord* on the Amiga.) Amiga owners looking for a game that takes even moderate advantage of the machine's capabilities should keep looking; I didn't see the ST version, but there's no reason to suspect it looks or plays any better. *Iron Lord* is a typical English import: original story and inventive design frustrated by weak execution. Just because European programmers work dirt cheap is no reason for US companies to continue importing them to clog already overcrowded store shelves with this stuff—for every *Populous*, there are 20 *Iron Lords*.

Skill Level: Novice

Protection: Program

Price: \$39.95

Company: UBI SOFT/EA



On the Archery Range

By Shay Addams

Walkthrough: Mines of Qyntarr

Forest: S. E.

Cabin: Get saber. Get lamp. Fill lamp with oil. W. W.

Cave Mouth: Look needles. Get lighter. Light lamp with lighter. W.

Narrow Crawlway: Get parchment. Read it. SW.

Moldy Room: Get skeleton key. Look skull. Look portrait. NE. E. S. S. SE.

Sloping Crawlway: Get pen. SE.

Idol Room: Get idol. NW. NW. SW. SW.

Sponge Room: Get note. Read it. E. E.

Windy Room: Give qfo to Pirate. S. S. E. E.

Muddy Room: Get gast mask. W. W. W.

Smokey Hall: Wear mask. W.

Supply Room: Get geiger counter. E. E. E. E. SW.

Marble Corridor: Unlock door with skeleton key. Read inscription. Open door. SW. S. S.

Piano Room: Get candelabra. Drop key in well. Drop candelabra in well. Drop note in well. Drop lighter in well. Remove gas mask. Drop gas mask in well. Drop parchment. W. W. NW. NW. NE. NE.

Garbage Room: SW. (The Blooble will follow.) SW. SE. SE. E. E. N. N.

Library: (The Blooble will eat the glass case.) Read book. Get book. Get small pill. S. S. S. S. NW.

Cool Corridor: Get cowbell. Ring bell. NW. N.

Cold Passage: Get medallion. Wear medallion. S. SE. SE. N. N.

Piano Room: Drop bell in well. S. S. E. E. NE. NE.

Dragon's Lair: Give pill to dragon. E.

E.

Real Estate Office: Get strange coin. W. W. SW. SW. SE. SE. W.

Closet: Get lead suit. E. D. D.

Dusty Passage: Wear lead suit. E.

Uranium Mine: Get colored packet. W.

Dusty Passage:

Remove lead suit. Drop lead suit. W. W. W. NW. NW. W.

West End of Rainbow Room: Get pot of gold. E. SE. SE. SW. SW.

North Side of Great Chasm: S. S. S.

Roundhouse: Drop saber. Drop colored packet. U.

Janitor's Office: Get teacup, teapot, dirty rag. D. E.

Igloo Room: Get parka. W.

Roundhouse: Drop parka. SW. SW.

Oracle: Get jade cross. NE. NE. S.

Applause Hall: Drop geiger counter in well. Drop idol in well. Drop teacup in well. Drop teapot in well. Drop pot of gold in well. Drop cross in well. Drop rag in well. S.

Arena: Choose I. Get penny. D. NE.

Strange Passage: Read scratches. Read drawing. NW.

Bird Room: Get yellow feather. SW. D.

Turnstile Room: Put coin in turnstile. SE.

South Landing: Read wall. Read graffiti. NE. NE. NE.

Phone Booth: Dial uisff gpbs uxp gpbs six uisff (type in as numbers, not words). SW. W.

Music Shop: Get violin. Read motto. E. NW.

Cobbler Shop: Get snowshoes. SE. SE.

Jewelry Store: Get pearl necklace. Get yellow opal. NW. S.

Tavern: Get pretzel. Get mug. S. D. E. E.

Dome Room: Read wall. Read writing. Drop all but lamp and feather. E.

Anthill Room: Get ruby. E. E.

Ogre Room: UjdImf ogre with gfbuifs. SE. SE. SW.

Seamstress Room: Get uniform. S.

Glass-bottomed Hall: Get diamond. S.

Spherical Room: Look hole. N. N. NE. NW. NW. W. W. W.

Dome Room: Get snowshoes, violin, opal, frankfurter, necklace. Eat frankfurter.

Roundhouse: S.

Applause Hall: Drop opal in well. Drop feather in well. Drop ruby in well. Drop diamond in well. N. SE.

Pigsty: Cast necklace. Get necklace. E.

Antique Room: Get cuckoo clock. S.

Art Studio: Get clay sculpture, grape, painting. N. SW.

Prison: Read scratches. NE. W. NW. S.

Applause Hall: Drop painting in well. Drop sculpture in well. Drop necklace in well. Drop clock in well. N.

Roundhouse: Get all. NW.

Iron Gate Room: Cut knot with saber. N.

Sandy-floored Room: Get bow. S. SE

Roundhouse: Drop saber and grape. W. W.

Steel Monster Room: SW. (Monster will follow.) S.

Rainy Room: N. NE. NW. N.

Blizzard Pass: Wear snowshoes. NE.

Glacier Crest: Wear parka. N. N.

Snowbeast Room: Play violin with bow. NW. D. N. N. U.

Court Room: Get gavel. D. S. W. W. N. N. N. SE.



By Sandra K. Walton

Hardware Store: Get crowbar. NW. E. SE.

Sporting Goods Store: Get mallet. NW. S. NW.

Bakery: Get cake. SE. NE.

Florist: Get vase. SW. SE. N.

Gazebo: Drop mallet in well. Drop cake in well. Drop vase in well. Drop gavel in well. Drop bow in well. Drop violin in well. Remove snowshoes. Remove parka. Drop snowshoes. Drop parka. S. NE. NW.

Butcher Shop: Get steak. SE. E. SW.

Fruit Stand: Get peach. NE. W. S. SW.

Post Office: Get letter. Read letter. NE. W. SE.

Schoolhouse: Get apple. NW. NE. N.

Gazebo: Drop letter in well. Drop apple in well. Drop peach. S. SE. E.

Oak & Cherry: Open cover with crowbar. D. E. E.

Zoo Entrance: Wear uniform. E. N. NE. E.

Tiger Cage: Feed steak to tiger. Get collar. U.

Aquarium: Feed colored packet to whale. SW.

Small Cave: Get orb. NE. D. W. SW. S. W. W. W. U. W. NW. N.

Gazebo: Drop collar in well. Drop

crowbar in well. Remove uniform. Drop uniform in well. Get all. Wear parka. Wear snowshoes. S. SW. S. E. S. U. SE. S. S. SW. S. SE. E. E.

Roundhouse: Remove parka. Remove snowshoes. Drop parka. Drop snowshoes. Get grape. Eat grape.

Mall Center: E. Dial **gjwf afsp uisff tfwfo ojof** (type in as numbers, not words). E.

Vault: Get bag of money. W. W. S. S. D. E. E.

Dome Room: Get all. S.

Chess Room: S. Approach Queen. Get king. S. S.

Swimming Pool: Get doubloon. S. SE. NE.

Cloudy Hall: Get pear. SW. NW. N. N. N. N. W. W. U. N. N.

Mall Center: Throw penny in fountain. Get pyramid. Eat pretzel.

Piano Room: Drop mug in well. Drop bag of money in well. Drop king in well. Remove medallion. Drop medallion in well. N. N. NE. NE. W. W. N. N. W. W. NE. NE. N. N. E.

Stone Path: Put pyramid on pedestal.

Long Stone Room: N. N. Say Amnoth said hello.

To decode **clues** count one letter back—**RC = Q**.

Locations of Artifacts

Saber: Cabin
Lantern: Cabin
Parchment: Narrow Crawl-way
Skeleton Key: Moldy Room
Ball-point pen: Sloping Crawlway
Bronze Idol: Idol Room
Note: Sponge Room
Geiger Counter: Supply Room
Gas Mask: Muddy Room
Small Pill: Library (book)
Candelabra: Piano Room
Gold Medallion: Cold Passage
Cowbell: Cool Corridor (silver bell)
Strange Coin: Real Estate Office
Lead Suit: Closet
Colored Packet: Uranium Mine
Pot of Gold: West end of Rainbow Room
Teacup, Teapot, Rag: Janitor's Office
Yellow Feather: Bird Room
Parka: Igloo Room
Cuckoo Clock: Antique Room
Sculpture, Painting, Grape: Art Studio
Shiny Penny: Arena I

Jade Cross: Oracle
Violin Bow: Sandy-floored Room
Violin: Music Shop
Snowshoes: Cobbler Shop
Bag of Money: Vault
Necklace, Opal: Jewelry Store
Crystal Pyramid: Mall Center
Beer Mug, Pretzel: Tavern
Frankfurter: Dome Room
Ruby: Anthill Room
Zookeeper's Uniform: Seamstress Room
Pear: Cloudy Hall
Crowbar: Hardware Store
Croquet Mallet: Sporting Goods Store
Peach: Fruit Stant
Steak: Butcher Shop
Vase: Florist
Cake: Bakery
Old Letter: Post Office
Gavel: Courtroom
Apple: Schoolhouse
Jeweled Collar: Tiger Cage
Blue Orb: Small Cave

The King's Quest Companion

Peter Spear's clue book on the *King's Quest* series does more than provide answers and maps to game *I* through *IV*. Spear skillfully embroiders and elaborates on Roberta Williams' stories about the world of Daventry, transforming a mere clue book into an entertaining story.

It all began when Spear started "getting electronic mail from Daventry." The E-Mail was from Derek Karlavaegen, a self-described "writer and magician" who dwells in that land. In his messages he described those fantasy worlds in far more detail and color than possible in the games themselves, and Spear edited Derek's messages into stories that guide you through each of the quests.

This section is great for people who want to discover more about the fantasy world they're exploring—and at the same time find the answer to a puzzle or two at a time. It's nice because, unlike a standard walkthrough, there's little chance of unintentionally reading more than you need to know and spoiling the fun of solving other puzzles yourself. (It also means the answers don't have to be coded.) This section covers about 200 of the book's 363 pages.

Then the solutions to the games are treated in a more direct manner in "The Easy Way Out." A "Things to Come" section tells how to deal with each of the main puzzles, and you get step-by-step solutions and maps in "How to Do It." The *KQ IV* solution, for example, lists the five quests you must complete and warns you to avoid areas like the ogre's house in the early stages, and finally fleshes out the solution to each quest.

Finally, Spear compiled "An Encyclopedia of Daventry," which alphabetically lists every creature, person, object, place and thing in the land, then notes the *KQ* games it is found in, and provides a suitably flowery description that explains its purpose and where to use it. This is the section I found most intriguing, as it offers the fastest way of finding precise information on a specific topic. "The Final Score" answer a persistent question: how do you get all the points in each game?

If I had to buy a clue book about the *King's Quest* series, this is the one I'd want. In addition to telling you everything you ever wanted to know about Daventry but were too lost in the woods to ask, Spear spins some fascinating tales of his own.

Price: \$14.95

Publisher: Silicon Valley

Centauri Alliance

Continued from page one

back and watch the stars shoot past in a brief animated sequence that can't be aborted. (A fold-out map shows the star routes connecting the dozen worlds in this part of our galaxy.) After exploring Lunabase, situated on the moon orbiting Earth, you'll zero in on Omicron VII and the first mini-quest, which entails rounding up the parts of an ancient and powerful weapon, the Fractyr Fist. Other mini-quests turn up left and right as you Blade-fist and bludgeon your way across the galaxy.

The first-person graphics closely resemble those from *Bard's Tale*, only they are bigger ("jumbo" the press release calls them, as if they were some kind of computer game shrimp). The spot animation in these illustrations is also similar to that game and *Wasteland*. But the "maze walls" (which may depict the halls of an Alliance base or ship, or even a cavern on an asteroid) are not decorated as intricately as those in the third *BT* or *Might and Magic*, and after awhile I didn't even bother looking at them.

That's because of the unique auto-map. While viewing it, you can actually move the party through the halls of the maze; the team is represented with a black square and most doors are clearly marked, making the auto-map a serious time-saver. Even more time could have been saved if the map didn't disappear every time you exit a level, which means you've still got to draw your own maps of each 16 x 16 level. (*Phantasia* employed an auto-map that, while you couldn't move on it, was saved to disk and redisplayed the next time you stepped into the same maze.)

Sound effects are sporadically harnessed for the mandatory footsteps and to dramatize situations like stumbling into a radiation trap, but you won't even hear music during the boot-up sequence (conceivably this could change with the C64 version).

When you run into a band of bad guys, they and your party are represented by chess-like figures on a grid of hexes. The shape of the grid varies from one battle to the next. It might be a ring of hexes encircling a lone hex, with black ones indicating the space between them can't be crossed, thereby eliminating Melee at-

tacks. Or it may be a less vexing layout resembling a conventional board game.

Your first decision upon being attacked is whether the team will can move to another hex, attack or attempt to flee (yeah, sure...we all know what that means). This introduces an element of tactics and strategy. If you know the enemy can't attack with long distance weapons or a Psionic attack, you will want to stay several hexes away and use those same attacks on him, for example. After each team member's actions are punched in via mouse, stick or keyboard, the battle is described in a scrolling text report.

The biggest drawback to this system affects gamers who don't have a mouse or joystick, for they'll have to punch the cursor keys to cycle—one hex at a time—from either end of the grid

till they reach and highlight the one they want to attack. If the enemy is near the center, that means you've got to go through half the hexes on the board.

But with a mouse or stick, combat becomes a streamlined affair, for you just point and click on the intended target; without one, combat quickly grows tedious. Other than this, the combat system is more enjoyable than those employed by many first-person games, which typically show only a picture of the monsters and a scrolling text report.

(Though the C64 version is not out yet, the manual "strongly recommends" using a mouse with it.)

Outside of combat, using a mouse or joystick bestows the gamer with additional time-savers. Besides clicking directly on the auto-map to move the party, you can click on a person's name in the

roster to call up his status an inventory screens, Activate objects in order to use them, and conduct other common actions with ease.

The "Magic" of Psionics

Cranford's science fiction rendition of fantasy gaming's magic materializes as a system of Psionic abilities that are divided into four categories: Mind, Body, Matter and Energy. Each group includes eighteen abilities that are broken down into ten levels; the first eight levels have two abilities each, such as Mind's ILLUS

(Illusion, which is comparable to summoning a monster) and BERRG (Berserker Rage, which is a Berserker on a Rage), and the last two levels of each group have one ability each. (Yes, in yet another similarity between *Centauri* and *Bard's Tale* Psionic abilities are selected by typing in their abbreviated names.)

When a character is advanced to the next level in Psionic ability for Mind, he can draw on the next group of Mind abilities. The range, number of foes that will be affected, and other aspects of the assorted types of Psionic attacks, are de-

scribed in terms similar to those used in magic systems such as those of *Wizardry* and *Bard*, and veterans of those RPGs will have no trouble learning the ins and outs of Psionics.

Some Psionics are not for attack or defense and can be invoked at any time. Spatial Sense, for instance, will dis-

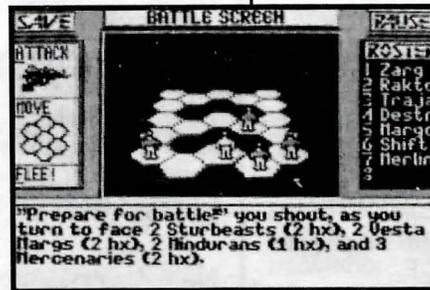
close your position in these terms: "You are facing north and stand 7 points north and 6 points each of the reference marker." Members of the Praktor species can use their Psi points to change into animals like a Gamma Goblin and the fabled Zon Dragon, creatures possessing an assortment of powers that must be discovered through experimentation.

Psi points parallel the magic points of a fantasy game. These are slowly restored as you play, and can be boosted faster at the local Bio Tech location, where hit points are also for sale.

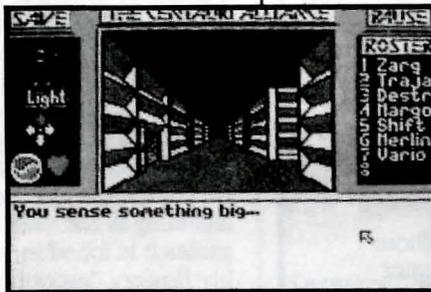
Thrill, Spills and Skills

A character's effectiveness with weapons is determined by his training in the combat skills: Melee, Thrown and Side-arm weapons. Master Warrior training is available once you've attained level five in these three. Other skills include Hardware (for robot repair), Weaponry (gun repair), Bio (people repair) and Ancient (antique artifact repair). Psionic abilities are also considered skills. When a character earns enough experience points to attain the next level, he gets to pick one of several skills to improve. The status screen never refers to a party members as a level three character, for example, though you do get more hit points and related attribute increases with each promotion.

You must rocket all the way back the Academy on Lunabase for advancement, but *Centauri* thoughtfully informs you of



Hex-style Combat Arena



Inside a Maze

Continued on page fourteen

The Puzzle Gallery: At the Carnival

As you were being strapped into the front seat of a roller coaster and sent lurching and clanking up the first rise, did you ever wonder just how safe these old rides really are? Well, Cliff Johnson is here to confirm your worst nightmares. At Hazard Park, the motto is "safety last"—for the management has spared no expense...to you and your health!

A Fool's Errand Sequel

The Puzzle Gallery: At the Carnival is the latest product from the author of *The Fool's Errand*, a truly innovative program that came out for the Macintosh in 1987 and was recently rereleased in a color version for that machine, as well as converted for MSDOS. *The Fool's Errand* involved an amazing variety of onscreen graphic and verbal puzzles, loosely strung together by an adventure story whose elements are gradually revealed as you solved each puzzle.

The new product is even less of an adventure game in the strict sense. There is no linear story. Rather, you are confronted with 40 carnival attractions crammed with a total of 180 puzzles similar in style to those in *The Fool's Errand*: mazes, jigsaws, crosswords, codes, word searches, 3 x 3 blocks of letters that must be rearranged to form words horizontally and vertically, and so on. Instructions for each puzzle are available on-screen, and almost all can be handled without touching the keyboard by using the mouse to point, click and drag.

You can solve the attractions in any order, except for the last one, which is only available once all of the others have been completed. Most of the time you are rewarded with some wonderful sound

Type: Assorted Puzzles
Systems: Macintosh Plus or higher; supports color and Multifinder
Planned conversions: None

and graphic effects and a sarcastic comment about the aptly named Hazard

Park, such as "Mingling with customers is often more scary than the rides!", or "This ride cost so much to build...they couldn't afford to finish it!"

New Features

Johnson added several improvements. In the word searches, for example, you can use control keys to highlight rows, columns and diagonals, making it easier to pick out the hidden words. The sounds and graphics are up to the high standards of *The Fool's Errand* (though my Mac SE is still stubbornly monochromatic, so I can't say what it looks like in color). On the other hand, there is virtually no animation. This lack is especially noticeable in the anticlimactic endgame, for it doesn't reward a winner with a four-minute animated sequence to watch, as did *Fool's Errand*.

Besides the usual documentation, the package actually includes two different programs on two separate 800K disks. Neither program is copy-protected, and they can be run together from a hard disk drive. *The Puzzle Gallery* serves as a kind of gaming template, and *At the Carnival* contains the particular puzzles for this specific game. In this way, Miles Computing hopes to release future puzzle disks that can be used in conjunction with *The Puzzle Gallery* to produce similar games organized around different themes.

Two Big Questions

This approach sounds good in theory—if Miles Computing can come up with new puzzle disks quickly and cheaply. My question is whether it may limit the kinds of puzzles each new game will include. *At the Carnival* has only ten different types, far fewer than *The Fool's Errand*. It lacks the earlier release's card games and arcade-type challenges, for example, and challenges you to solve only three mazes and four polygon puzzles. I wonder how long players will be willing to try new variants of the same 3 x 3 puzzles or concatenations before they get

By Steven Payne

bored. (On the other hand, I faithfully turn each week to the *New York Times* Crossword puzzle, which doesn't vary much in format either, so perhaps that's not a serious problem!)

More Clues Needed

I also wonder whether it might not be possible to somehow insert more clues into these games. At present, almost all the puzzle solutions are unrelated, so solving one will not help you with others. But instead of pushing lettered buttons randomly for hours, hoping to hit accidentally on the solution to the polygons, wouldn't it be better, for instance, if the letters formed some word which you could discover elsewhere in the game? Miles Computing does offer a hint book for \$12.95, but that's about a third of the cost of the game itself.

Conclusions: While it's not as varied and elaborate as *The Fool's Errand*, I still enjoyed this game very much. It will provide a healthy break from linear, plot-oriented adventure gaming and still give plenty of puzzles to solve—and besides, what else is available on the Macintosh these days anyway? The humor is a tad gross at times (ride the "Roto-Vomit," the "Loop-O-Puke" or the "Alpine Upchuck!"), but what's that to a mighty Orc-slayer? So hand over your money (and your life) and pay a visit Hazard Park. To quote the voice of the game's carnival barker, "Hurry! Hurry! Step right up! Another winner!"

Skill Level: Varied

Protection: None

Price: \$49.95

Company: Miles Computing/EA

Time to Renew?

Each month we send postcards alerting everyone whose sub will expire soon. If your renewal gets here by the date indicated on the card, you won't miss a single issue. Otherwise your sub will restart one issue later—unless you've got a 1st Class sub. Just to be safe, why not check the mailing label on this issue and renew now if it expires in the next three months? To upgrade to "Adventure Express," which goes 1st Class in an envelope, send \$24 when your renew for a full year. If your sub isn't about to expire but you want to upgrade and renew at the same time, count the number of issues left in your sub and multiply by 50¢.



Keys to the Kingdoms



Dark Heart of Uukrul

One way to open the door to reach Sagar is the Sage is to invoke the massive prayer Belamoq, which blows it open. Priests should have at least a gold ring for this. When at a teleportal, try entering the word Melas, which may teleport you to the spot where you can acquire the medallion. The medallion can be used at any time and place (except combat) to transport you back to the place you found it. (Rub it.) At the dungeon past the Sanctuary of the Dragon, invoke the prayer Kuuraoth to destroy the vision in the black mirror (found far to the north), which will give you a Kauri plaque. To get the urn holding Uukrul's heart, pull down levers **uxp**, **tjy** and **tfwfo** to open the way. Be sure to copy down all the information in the Archives, since you lose it when you enter scenario disk B, just before passing the level after the Sanctuary of Twisted Paths. This occurs around the eleventh Archive message.

Robert Breezley

Answer to the Priest's riddle: **gbjui**. To get the Dark Heart, push levers **pof**, **uisff**, **gpvs**, **gjwf** and **fjhiu** before entering the maze. To arm the beacon, use the following codes: north quadrant—**pof uxp uisff pof**; east quadrant—**uisff pof gpvs gpvs**; south quadrant—**pof uisff gpvs gpvs**; west quadrant—**uisff uisff uxp gjwf**. Answers to Gargyle's riddles: **qsjftu**, **nbhjdjbo**, **ibnnfs**, **tbhbsjt**. Answers to Phoenix riddles: **Vvlsvm**, **bespo**, **j xjmm svmf**. To free Mara, use sequence **B W D M S F Z**. To finish the quest, type the last line of the prayer called **Mbjsjbo**.

Khalid Hassan

You don't have to wait to go up another level to earn a ring. Return often to the Temples of all four gods and the Magician's Circle. A level 10 character may have earned at least 20 rings. The first two hearts are located behind locked grates near the marketplace. The keys to the grates are in the ancient catacombs beneath the temple. There are a number of 180-degree rotating squares ("spinners") in the middle of rooms and in the halls here, so check your bearings frequently. The first heart is also behind a grate opened by the iron key, but you must cast a magic spell to open the secret door at the end of the passage. The second key opens the grate north of the marketplace; this leads to a room filled with noxious gas. The heart is in a room

guarded by a secret door requiring magic to open, just before you enter the gas room.

Fred Andoli

Champions of Krynn

The entrance to the catacombs in Throtl is at 9, 0. Be sure to take care of business at 12, 7 (Temple) first. It's a very long passageway, with many battles. Continue east about halfway through the passage to a room that is safe. You'll also find some key magic items here. Continue to the chamber with multi-colored lights for a battle that will net you treasure and a +1 Ring of Protection. Keep following passageway to the caverns, go south through a door then bear west. Use Wand of Ice Storm on White Dragons. Be sure the target is three spaces from your party, or they'll be wounded. After this battle, return to Sir Karl for another quest. He'll send you to Gargath. You'll find an Inn at 7, 11. Visit guards at 13, 6 for Plate Mail and Gauntlets of ogre strength. The Dracs guard secret doors at 7, 7. From there, follow map in Journal entry 23 to reach the Keep. There follow map #72. There is an exit outside in the northeast corner on level one. The Castellan is in the southeast room on level two. One level four, go to the west rooms for battles that will yield white and red magic scrolls. Myratani is in the room to the northeast. Follow Myratani upstairs to the top of the Tower, defeat Black Dragons with Ice Wand and return to outpost.

Richard Rasmussen

Be sure to include a Knight in the party; he's needed in the Knight's Tomb. The "Test of Fear" can be completed only by a Knight. Fireballs, Magic Missiles to slay odd Mages, and Prayer are very important spells to obtain. Always keep a couple of Detect Magic spells ready, for they're necessary to find good stuff among the junk you'll find as treasure. Gargath: the magic Longsword and Greatsword on level six are cursed—leave them alone! Journal entry 13 is outpost three. Journal entry 23 is Gargath Keep (entrance portion). Journal entry 45 is the town of Jekel. Journal entry 72 is the Tower of Gargath Keep.

Paul Hill Jr

It Came from the Desert

When escaping from the hospital, find a wheelchair as soon as possible. You need five pieces of evidence to convince the Mayor the threat is real: plaster casts of the ants' tracks (go to the site of the me-

teor crash for these), tissue samples for an ant's leg (give to you by a neighbor later in the game), sending off a piece of dead ant to Dr. Wells (after you firebomb enough ants to get it), recording ant sounds (charter a plane) and fluid samples (after the attack on Neptune Hall). Always aim at the ants' antennae during shooting sequences.

Andrew Phang

Dragon Wars

Here's an easy way to build up characters. When you first load the game, tell the program you want to begin a new game. Your characters will retain all their skills, attributes, spells and so on, but will lose all items and gold. Then go to the Arena in north Purgatory. Get your free weapons and run from the gladiators. Go to the statue of Irkalla in west Purgatory and leave an item there until she is pleased. Then enter the Apsu Waters to get to the Magan Underworld. Go west and follow the edge of the lake till you reach a wall. Follow the wall west and north to a door. Kick through two doors and move one space forward. Then go north into the canyon. You will receive five free skill points. *Save the game here!* Reboot and begin a new game: your characters will have the five skill points to spend, and you can repeat this sequence as often as you need to get them up to turn them into Supercharacters. This is most effective when just starting out, not such a good idea if you're really far into the quest; it's also best to find three other NPCs to join your party so you'll have a full group and all will benefit.

Andy Nguyen

Windwalker

Sail to the island with the cave north of Xiang Loh and enter the cave to find instructions on how to perform the Tantric Dance. Whenever you find an idol, perform the dance in front of it to gain blessings. All talismans need a striped-turtle shell (found by hailing friendly fishing frigates). The Isles of the Dead are near the northeast of the game map. The shaman who creates the talismans is found in the northeastern-most cave in these Isles. The talismans are: Invisibility (requires a blind man's shoe), Levitation (heron feather), Waterwalking (mandible from sea beetle), and Invulnerability (scale of sea dragon). Mantras for all talismans can be found in the shaman's cave. Make sure you use the Invulnerable talisman before fighting Zhurong. Ingredients for the elix-

ir needed to cure the Emperor: peach seed (from Isles of Dead, only during full moon), jade (behind Emperor's throne), god (from freeing the explorer in cave found on isles north of the palace), jasmine (from Nubian princess on ground floor of main palace) and rhinoceros horn (from Zhurong's possessions upstairs of main palace). Combat tips: best way to kill Thieves is with the staff. Assassins and Palace Guards are best dispatched barehanded, since they move fast and you can quickly cartwheel backwards when barehanded. Use the roundhouse kick to attack in this mode (attack when your foe's legs are crossed as they move toward you) and always be in Concentration mode.

Andrew Phang

To defeat Warlord, first burn incense to quicken self (the prayer is "Quicken my pace."). In battle, scoot forward till you're at a point where you can do a front kick and just overlap his sword when he has it horizontal (strike position). When he raises his sword, scoot forward, do a back kick, then step back. Repeat the process till he's vanquished.

Bob Shumaker

Colonel's Bequest

To find the secret rooms, try moving the armoires in the hallway of the top floor and the clock and mirror on the first floor. To find the ultimate location of the bodies, go to the old carriage house and take the oil can from the table; get the crowbar from inside the carriage. Walk to the Chapel and step on the boards in the left lower corner till you find one that moves. Lift it with the crowbar. Get the Bible and copy the names of the people who lived in the house. Go to the bell tower and oil the bell, but not while directly under it, then pull the ring with the cane (found in a secret room in the second act). After the bell falls, take the crank from it. Enter the kitchen and take the bone from the refrigerator. Walk to the doghouse in the second act and give the bone to the dog. Look in the doghouse and get the necklace. Walk to Celie's house and knock on the door. When she opens it, give her the necklace and enter the house. Take the carrot from the table. Leave the house and walk to the stable; give the carrot to the horse. Open the gate and take the lantern. Return to the big house and oil the armor (tin man) in the entrance on his head. Read the note and take what's inside. After Clarence dies in the seventh act, get the matches. Go to the hedge garden outside and insert the valve in the shaft. Turn it and push the statue. Light the lantern and go down. To know which vault to open in

the big grave, read the list of names from the Bible and check which name does not exist. Use the monacle to magnify objects. To enter the big grave, insert the crank into the hole in the metal plate in the laundry section of the basement. Do not kill the Colonel!

Eran Lahen

Swords of Twilight

To complete the first quest, go east from the starting castle to Eastmarch Castle. Find the Knight of the castle (when you ask "who" he will say that his words are heard). Offer him a gift, your name and cause. Ask for aid and he'll give you the shield (repeat if he doesn't do so right away). Take it back to Aedifice Castle. The Shadowlord of Avon is Gog (fears Sword of Protection, found in Arcadia). Shadowlord of Annwyn is Aryonek (fears Sword of Salvation from Arden. Shadowlord of Arcadia is Maron (fears Sword of Cold from Avalon). Shadowlord of Avalon is Circe (fears Sword of Relief from Achemar). Use Flask of Alexin as protection against Gog; Vervain against Aryonek; Nepenthe against Circe; Mandragora against Maron. Avoid combat unless absolutely necessary, for once you kill an innocent group (even if they attack you) everyone will attack you. Even when facing hostile foes, try to talk your way out of it by being friendly, greeting them, offering your name and cause; continuing conversation will reduce their aggression.

Andrew Phang

Centauri Alliance

In the early stages, a Drenot Mech from Trader Drake's (level two, Omicron VII) will give you plenty of firepower. On level three, find the computer and type **bmmjbodf, ebzobc** and **gsbduzs**.

Bruce E. Wiley

Keef the Thief

Turn left upon entering Tel Hande. The first right turn leads to the contest, the second right (follow the left wall till after the second floor) leads to the Magician King—stop at his library on the third level. Mem Santi Maze: there are six secret doors, all at the ends of passageways. The maze can be mapped on a normal grid; just be aware that passageways can cross over each other. Map the northeast area first, since the doors that don't lead to Mem's first teleport you to this area. Also at Mem Santi, see the Curator, then go upstairs to visit the treasury. Take the key and a Clydesdale to the hut. Trade the horse for another key, then find the library, the treasury, and the door downstairs. Then go to the ruins and find the matching door.

Traps and how to pick them: walls (wave weapon ahead of you); floor (tap it carefully); right of pedestal (stick knife in hole); back wall (twist upright sword); front of pedestal (push in the front panel); tree (use rope to secure yourself); egg (carefully take it); leaking brick (slip knife under brick); ceiling (use rope to secure loose rock); front of pedestal (push buttons one and three); torches (pull torch holders forward); floor (use knife to jam spikes); right wall (use knife to jam panel); ceiling (squirt oil into cracks in ceiling); sceptre (crush its top); gem (remove it from stand); right side of bench (squirt oil inside hole); candles (remove them from wall); fireplace (brush embers back into fire); teapot (keep it from spilling); torch (pull it forward); pedestal (slide knife under it).

William Gustafson

Leisure Suit Larry III

Chip n' Dales: Talk. Give tips. Sit. Applaud. Stand. Talk to Dale. Sit. Look at Dale. Ask about: Larry, date, bamboo. Leave. Go to Cabana fountain and fill bottle. Go to cliff east of Comedy Club and enter bamboo forest (a maze). Exit is in the extreme northwest corner. Look for subtle paths north. Drink water when exhausted. (Exact path: N, 2N, 2E, N, W, N, E, 3N, 2W, S, 3W, 2N, W, N.) Exit at river. Swim if you want, but save first. N. Drink from river. North to rock. Remove pantyhose. Tie to rock. Pick leaves. Make lasso. Climb tree. Get coconuts. Down. Throw lasso at rock. Tie lasso to tree. Rip dress. Cross rope.

Fred J. Philipp

Keys to the Keys

For new subscribers, here's how this section works. First you send in clues and tips to recent adventures—those not covered in previous issues, walkthroughs or *Quest for Clues I or II*. We'll publish the most useful ones, and you'll get three free issues of *QB* for each passage of clues and tips that appears (two for Canadian and 1st Class subscribers, one for overseas). That means that you may never have to renew your subscription again! [All submissions become the exclusive property of *QuestBusters*.]

When sending in clues, do not code them—we'll do that here. If you can do a thorough walkthrough for the game, let us know in the same letter. Be sure to put your name and address on the sheet with your clues, to ensure credit. It's ok to send clues for several games at once.

To decode clues,
count one letter back.

Centauri Alliance

Continued from page ten

exactly how many experience points are required for each party member to be promoted. Instead of stating the number of experience points accumulated in battle, the characters' status report lists the number each team member needs to earn for advancement.

Right now Capt. Xdd's report says he needs 486 experience points; when he wins another battle and earns 86 points, the report will say 400. After it hits zero, he is ready to be promoted. This novel and insightful addition to computer role-playing more than compensates for that vanishing auto-map.

Another convenience shows up when examining a character's inventory so you can trade items to another one. There are three display screens for each character, showing his status, skills and inventory. If, when looking at Capt.

Xdd's inventory, you hit the number 2 to examine Shorty, the display goes directly to Shorty's inventory, making it easier to compare their possessions. Trade a weapon to Shorty from Xdd's inventory, then hit 2, and Shorty's ready to ready that weapon. (And speaking of readying weapons, I really like the way the game lets me ready a weapon and fire it on the same combat turn.)

A Potpourri of Puzzles

On the third level of Omicron, Capt. Xdd ran across his first logic puzzle. Several Mechanoids guarding pieces of a crucial and powerful weapon called the Fractyr Fist insisted he tell them the authorization code before they'd let him get hold of the goods.

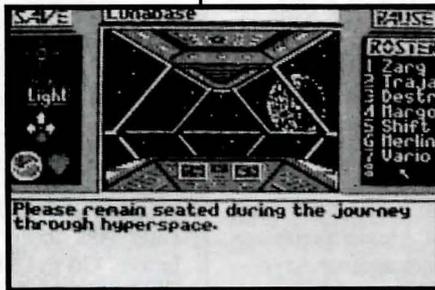
Instead of scouring the maze for clues to the code, Xdd studied the numbers inscribed on the robots: one said 10-7-4, a numerical progression whose next number is 1 (subtract 3 from each preceding number). The others on this level were similar but based on different progressions.

Real-time puzzles are also in store, and these are tied into the story line as sub-quests or missions from HQ. One mission sends you out to shut down a runaway reactor before it reaches critical mass, which involves racing through the maze and finding the central core within a time limit.

Fail to do so, and the party dies—but since there's no special illustration for the

party's demise, you might think something's wrong with the program when the game's opening menu is displayed instead. This allows you to reload a saved game without having to reboot the program when everyone gets killed, as must be done with many RPGs, including *Bard's Tale*.

Throughout the quest you must solve the standard RPG puzzle-type: "what the heck does this frobitz board do, and where's the battery?" Trial and error is usually the only way to figure out much of the hardware that is strewn about the dozen worlds that comprise the game's universe. Weapons, armor, artifacts and



Space Travel the Easy Way

other objects can at least be identified and compared by using the Sell command. This describes their potential damage and other factors that tell which, if any, of your crew can wield the Ion Blaster, for instance.

But many pieces of hardware won't be useful till you figure them out by trial and error. That Ion Blaster needs a power pack, and the Armory sells f8, f10 and f9 packs—no clues here, you just have to buy and try till you hit the right one. You lose a bundle when reselling a useless pack to the Armory, which can be frustrating. (To raise cash, you can sell weapons and jewels obtained in battle.)

The plot is pretty linear but flexible; there's a preferred way to accomplish the quest, but many parts of the main path are interchangeable. There is no significant character interaction in terms of conversation, though you can find computers to type words into in hopes of extracting a clue or two. Upon completing some of the timed puzzles, you'll be rewarded with big bonuses for your characters and sometimes treated to a mini-movie composed of a series of graphics. (The end game sequence is five minutes long.)

Documentation consists of a comprehensive 49-page booklet, a Field Guide with background on this mission (sequels will have their own such Field Guides), a reference card of Psionic abilities and the star map. The game itself spans both sides of three regular-size floppies.

Conclusions: There are no major breakthroughs in computer gaming here, just a good old-fashioned step-on-every-square dungeon game interlaced with stimulating logic puzzles and a combat system that is unique for role-playing games. It's filled with hardware (weap-

Artura

The back of the package says this is an "action adventure" set in medieval England. You're supposed to be Artura, whose quest is to rescue a beautiful apprentice to Merdyn the Mage who also happens to be keeper of the secret of the ancient treasures. Bigger letters proclaim: "Hack and slash your way to glory!"

Hack and slash your way through a mediocre arcade game is more like it.

Each screen of this arcade game represents a room in a four-level castle. Your character, about two inches tall and weakly animated, moves from room to room tossing axes at the guards, rats and anything else that gets in the way.

You're supposed to pick up six Runes whose possession will enable you to complete the quest. Food, which replenishes your life force, is also lying around on the floor. A fold-out map of the entire maze is included, and the manual reveals the location of all food stores and the Runes.

Conclusions: It's common to see action adventures that focus more on the action than the adventure, but *Artura* contains no elements of adventure or role-playing games whatsoever. Someone in marketing must have decided that since action adventures like *Times of Lore* are selling well, they might be able to fob this dog of an arcade game off on adventure gamers. Because even if you *are* looking for an action game as a change of pace, *Artura* is a loser.

Skill Level: Novice

Protection: Program

Price: \$39.95

Company: Gremlin/Mastertronic

ons and artifacts) to figure out, and you'll spend lots of time going over your team's inventory, skills and capabilities as they grow in abilities and collect more artifacts. Despite the tedious nature of combat because I didn't have a mouse, *Centauri* held my interest till 2 A. M. last night, and I started playing again right after breakfast—this could turn into the next big science fiction series.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Protection: Scenario disks

Price: \$49.95

Company: Broderbund



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Trade or sell your old adventures with a free ad. (Adventures only, no pirated software, limit of 10 games per ad. Please state system.)

APPLE

Sell/trade: Times of Lore, \$10. Dragon Wars, \$15, M & M 1. GS: Pirates, King's Quest 4. Want Ultima 4, Dark Castle 2. Brian Hardwick, 9339 Viento Fuerte Way, La Mesa CA 92041

\$20 @: Battletech, Ultima 5, Azure Bonds. \$15 @: Ultima 4, Demon's Winter, 2400 AD, Autoduel, M & M, Bard's Tale, Deathlord. Robert Breezley, 4922 Coco Palm Dr, Fremont CA 94538

Trade/sell: Ultima 3, Murder on Mississippi, \$20 @. Gemstone Warrior, Dungeon Master's Asst. #1, \$15 @. Chris Sampson, 2013 NE 32 Ave, Ft Lauderdale FL 33305

Knights of Legend & solution, \$30. Pool of Rad & cluebook, \$20. Legacy of Ancients, Wasteland, \$10 @. Chris Carlucci, 8 North Santa Cruz Ave, Los Gatos CA 95030

Dragon Wars, \$20. *M & M 1, \$15. Apsai Trilogy, \$10. GS Bard 1 & *2, \$15 @. Dark Castle, \$20. *King's Quest 2, \$15. *Dream Zone, \$10. *Manhunter 1, \$20. Keef the Thief, \$25. (* = w/cluebook) Will trade one for any GS football game. P. Matta, 2081 Boulevard, West Hartford CT 06107

Sell only: Pool of Rad, Azure Bonds, War of Lance, Dragon Wars, King's Bounty, Wizardry 1-5. Brad Kinman, 3 Cedar Lane, Lenox MA 01240

Seeking Telengard. Chris Cook, POB U-1405, Mobile AL 36688

COMMODORE

\$15 @: Ultima 1 & 2, Omega, Phantasie 2 & 3, M & M 1, Bard 2 & 3 (w/cluebooks), Book of Adventure. Kevin Hidingier, 14 Coronet Ct, Schenectady NY 12309

Sell only: Dragon Wars, Pool of Rad, Azure Bonds, Heroes of Lance, Tangled Tales, Demon's Winter, Times of Lore, Legend of Blacksilver, Magic Candle, more. Bob Greenfield, 106 Heritage Dr, Freehold NJ07728

Amiga: Want Nord & Bert, Hitchhiker's Guide, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Planetfall, Suspect, Seastalker, Sherlock (Infocom), Deadline. Wendy Prinkey, 13851 Marven Dr, North Huntington PA 15642

Amiga: Trade/sell—Swords of Twilight, Times of Lore, *Keef the Thief, Federation, *Starflight, Adventure Construction. (* = w/cluebook) Tony Ellison, 407 N Division, Lowell MI 49331

MSDOS & Quest-alikes

Trade/sell (3.5"): Indy's Last Crusade (action), \$17. Wizardry 5, \$20. Impossible Mission 2, \$10. Want Ultima 5, other 3.5" games.

Dark Heart of Uuk'

Continued from page six

wouldn't be a boon—putting the back-up on the same disk as the saved game is hardly solid insurance against disaster.]

Conclusions: With its innovative auto-map features, *Dark Heart* could become one of those pivotal points in game development, much as the original *Ultima* and *Wizardry* were in their time. Due to the complexity of the objects and their use, it's definitely not for a beginner. It's recommended for anyone who enjoyed the first three *Wizardry* games, especially *Knight of Diamonds*, or adventurers seeking a significant challenge.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Protection: Off-disk

Price: \$49.95

Company: Broderbund

Andrew Arno, 101 W. Summit, San Antonio TX 78202

Best-selling games, mostly 3.5", sell only. Send for list. Steve Lake, 90 McKay St, Beverly MA 01915

Trade/sell, both disk sizes, \$25 @: Arthur (Infocom), Shogun. B C Nolan, 8 Longmeadow Rd, Lincoln RI 02865

Trade: Faery Tale, Magic Candle, Wasteland, Manhunter NY, Battletech—all 5.25" disks. Want Paladin, Ultima 4, Azure Bonds, Neuro-mancer, or send list. Richard Carlin, 91-48 108 St, Richmond Hill NY 11418

Trade: Prophecy, Space Quest 3, Wizard's Crown, Crimson Crown, many Infocom. Want Police Quest 2, Hero's Quest, Lurking Horror, Zak, others. Send list & phone. Steve Clarke, 3673 Wyola Dr, Newton Square PA 19073

Trade only: Mean Streets, Journey, Manhunter 2, SimCity, Ultima 5, Omnicron Conspiracy, Prophecy, Nobunaga's Ambition, Hero's Quest, Indy 3 adventure, more. Want Neuro-mancer, Starflight 2, Colonel's Bequest, Codename Iceman. Send list. Michael Loftus, 8619 Crescent, Raytown M) 64138

Azure Bonds, both sizes, \$20. B. Yee, 175 W 85th 2-B, NYC, NY 10024

\$25 @: Wizardry 5, Mechwarrior, Magic Candle, Heroes of Lance. \$20 @: Gauntlet 2, War in Middle Earth, Capt. Blood. Al Polanec, 403 Whitestown Rd, Butler PA 16001

Trade: Mines of Titan, Battletech. Both sizes. Ronald Kow, 1209 Limeridge Dr, Walnut Creek CA 94518

ATARI

Want to buy Ogre, Killed Until Dead. Send prices. Ed Hall, 66 Morrison, Yellowknife, N.W.T., Canada X1A 2Z1

MISCELLANEOUS

Want Book of Adventure 1 & 2. Todd Walker, 1305 Chesterton Way, Walnut Creek CA 94596

Kobold Korner: Knights of Legend

Occasionally we hear from gamers who disagree with a review. When enough of them pile up, we actually publish some of these letters in the Kobold Korner column. Here are a few about Eric Todd Mitchell's RPG from Origin.

KOL has some strong pluses—a very good plot, interesting characters and unique combat and magic—but there are many flaws. Armor provides a random amount of protection on each hit, which makes no sense. If a character has a Bow ready in combat, the only way to switch to a Melee weapon is to discard the Bow, losing it permanently. But many monsters can use Missile weapons while they have Melee weapons ready. And how about when an Archer aims at an enemy on the far side of the screen and hits the tree right in front of his face—no one would ever have the coordination to do that. It's also stupid for the Wizard not to be able to cast spells (such as Healing All). And the mini-quests called "interesting and challenging" in the review are the ultra-MegaFlaw of the century. I've played nearly every RPG of the past few years, and the mini-quests in *KOL* are easily the most tedious I've ever done! In Combat Mode it takes forever to get through one, and there's not one bit of text description as the characters go step by agonizingly slow step searching for the quest object. When you get it, the only way to exit is for the person with the object to walk all the way back to the entry spot (another half hour wasted). And if you Flee, the object is lost! Of course, there's no way he could maybe put it in his pack before fleeing! Since there are 24 of these utterly ludicrous quests, which are the game's goal, it is very much ruined for me.

Ken Nigro

KOL has great potential and gorgeous graphics, but the disk-swapping is wearing out my C128 drive. After checking into an Inn for saving, it took seven swaps (over eight minutes) to get out again! It takes six or more swaps to get out of a town and into the wilderness. Often the same two disks are swapped several times consecutively! Combat is pretty sensible, but even when you are still raw recruits, you may easily meet twelve Great Orcs, of which a new gang can possibly handle two. The Arena where you must fight to get a promotion is two or three days from the nearest town, so you never get there in one piece. Finally, there is no means of trading gold between characters. [The last three complaints are true for all versions.]

Paul Hill Jr

Waiting for Duffy

*Duffy is deciding on new drapes,
so contact these
people if you can help.*

Ultima 3: need maps and tips on how to get lots of money, plus other help too. **Enchanter:** how do I kill dragon and Krill? Got the Guncho scroll. **Uninvited:** Need help in general. Todd Walker, 1305 Chesterton Way, Walnut Creek CA 94596

Deathlord: Where can I find the six items needed to complete the quest? What are the seven words? I also need a map of Lord. Gordon Wu, 310 Hill St, San Francisco CA 94114

Ultima V: How do I get Sandalwood Box with the Harpsichord? What is it used for? Need help in Doom. Steven Paster-

nak, 5 Garfield Ave, Adams WA 01220

Battletech: need maps and hints. What am I supposed to do in the Starport? James Kessler, 301 Circle Lane, St Michael, MN 55376

Battletech: need to know what to do in the map room at the end of the game. B. C. Nolan, 8 Longmeadow Rd, Lincoln RI 02865

Elite: Need help on fifth mission—the 16-bit version. Clarence Brown Jr, 817 W Grand Ave #5, Waukegan IL 60085

Wizardry IV: Found level 11 and solved all riddles but one—"Where am I?" What's the answer? Will this end the game? (Have got the clear light from this level, but found nothing else.) Hillel Kaminsky, 1290 E 19th St 2-A, Brooklyn, NY 11230

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