



QuestBusters™



The Adventurers' Journal

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February, 1991

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QuestBusters not included in MCA deal!

Emerging from a sensory deprivation tank for the first time in three months, *QuestBusters* publisher Shay Addams denied all rumors that the internationally acclaimed adventure game journal was sold to Japan's Matsushita Corporation as part of their acquisition of MCA, the entertainment conglomerate.

"That's as unfathomable," he muttered, pausing to lob a few Waterfall and Frazier bottles at reporters who had gathered in the early morning fog in the *QuestBusters*' parking lot to catch the elusive Addams on his way to work at Eldritch Towers, the recently constructed skyscraper that dominates the Tucson skyline, "as the notion of Matsushita running the hot dog stand in Yosemite. And even if MCA had secretly owned the journal all these years, why would Matsushita sink \$250,000 into making *QB* a slick, glossy, ad-filled computer game magazine? Like most rumors, this one was started by some irresponsible individual whose identity we will probably never know."

Supertext adventure?

Magnetic Scrolls, famed for graphic adventures like *The Pawn* for the C 64, is back with *Wonderland*. It's billed as a "supertext" adventure that features dynamic

mapping, multiple windows, and animated graphics as well as interactive graphics. The MSDOS original calls for 640K, and MasterTronic recommends a hard disk and 8+ MHz. Look for Amiga and ST versions this spring.

CES previews

As we packed up the *QuestMobile* and set the auto-pilot for Vegas, a few communiqués regarding the CES show arrived. Sir-tech Software will be showing off the recently released Amiga version of *Bane of the Cosmic Forge* in their first-ever hospitality suite at the event.

The press party for *Spirit of Excalibur* will not be at the Excalibur Hotel. Interplay, however, will be at the Excalibur to unveil *Castles*, a strategy-type simulation that's been compared to *Sim City* and *Railroad Tycoon*.

Origin will be showing *Martin Dreams*, the second in their *Worlds of Ultima* series. (Origin will not be showing the sequel to *Wing Commander* — *Buffalo Wing Commander: The Hot and Spicy Mission*.)

SSI will let everyone eyeball *Eye of the Beholder*. They're planning a "Beholder Bonus Points" contest in conjunction with the MSDOS version, which was to ship in late January.

MicroProse is likely to unveil the next game from

Legends Software, Bob Bate's time travel adventure.

Electronic Arts will be showing a plethora of Sega titles, such as *Sword of Sodan*. These and other new CES quests will be covered in Russ Cecolla's feature article next month.

Thief of Fate for MSDOS

Electronic Arts shipped the *Bard's Tale III* in January. The press release did not note the amount of memory required, nor graphic and sound boards it supports.

C 64 still kicking

B. A. T. was imported from Europe by EA, with plans for MSDOS, Amiga and ST versions. (*That's a switch.*) You play an agent of the Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters, out to foil the evil plans of a mad scientist.

Fat Agnus and the Dragon

The Fat Agnus chip in the latest Amigas makes it impossible to play SSI's *Dragons of Flameon* those machines.

World to world

Greg Malone recently left the world of *Ultima*, where he headed up Origin's public relations, for New World Computing. Malone, who wrote *Moebius* and

Windwalker, will handle marketing at New World, which will release *Might & Magic III* this spring.

Let's go surfin' now...

Last month we reported veteran game producer Joe Ybarra had launched a new development house. Sunami Productions, a team that already boasted Ybarra and Infocom's Mike Moore, was recently joined by Karl Buitter. Buitter wrote *Future Magic* and *Hard Nova* (reviewed in this issue).

Compute kills Amiga coverage

After consolidating *Amiga Resource* and their other computer-specific publications into the main magazine not long ago, *Compute* is eliminating the Amiga section entirely. It may become a separate magazine again. Since *INFO* is cutting their games coverage, let's hope so.

Options

- 2: *Adventure Road*
- 3: *Quest for Glory II*
- 4: *Spirit of Excalibur*
- 6: *The Prognosticator*
- 7: *Elvira*
- 8: *The Stealth Affair*
- 10: *Hard Nova*
- 12: *Walkthru: Dark Heart of Uukrul, pt. 1*
- 13: *Keys to ye Kingdom*
- 15: *Swap Shop*

Shay Addams' Adventure Road™

Just when you thought it was safe to turn the page, I have stumbled across yet more rumors that must be dealt with. For one, the rumor that *QB* will be publishing a **rumor column** is a rumor. However, I will be lacing this column with the few that slip in under the dungeon door...

...such as the story about Interplay working on a *Star Trek* game. Could *Wasteland* co-designer Michael Stackpole be the mastermind behind this project? I also hear the foundation has been laid for *Dragon Wars II*, though construction won't commence until Interplay gets a building permit. Origin, following up on the successful *Bad Blood*, may be working up a game based on the *Mad Max* character made famous by **Mel Gibson** in *Road Warrior*.

Quests for cartridges

Yet another rumor has Nintendo playing off the name of Sega's **Genesis** machine when they release their new 16-bit Nintendo machine by calling it **Revelations**, "the final chapter in 16-bit technology."

Nintendo-equipped questers can now venture into *Ultima IV* on that machine. *Might & Magic I* is also a Nintendo game now, but *Might & Magic II* will be available only on Sega. **New World Computing** also got hold of *Faery Tale Adventure* and is converting that classic for the Sega.

Even better, they reunited David Joyner with the rest of the original team and are toiling away into the night on *Faery Tale Adventure II*. Like the original, it will be for the Amiga first.

Quest for Clues III: The Bug

Eldon Andersen reported an apparent flaw in the *Bad Blood* solution in the latest clue book. He says "there is no button 19 on the map, but there is a button in the game that's not on the map (probably 19!!!). Even if this is button 19, though, the door before E won't open." We are perplexed, since Origin was supposed to verify solutions of their games. As

soon as the discrepancy is cleared up, we'll publish an update here and ask Origin to make any necessary correction on the next print run.

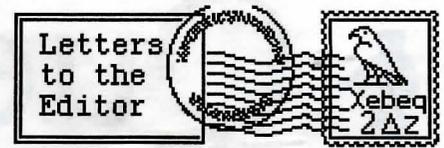
South American Explorers Club

Several subscribers have noticed *QB* is a member of this group and wanted to know more about it. The Club is a non-profit, **tax-deductible** organization devoted to all forms of scientific field exploration and research in many fields, lending its members assistance in expedition planning, offering a clubhouse in Lima, Peru, and Quito, Ecuador, and a quarterly magazine that's fun reading even if you never get further south than Key West. Membership is as low as \$25, and they'll send a sample magazine if you're interested: 1510 York St, Denver CO 80206.

More free stuff!

The response to last month's offer of a free bumper sticker with each game was so vigorous, so enthusiastic, that it is being extended to all orders for any of the *Quest for Clues* books. (Book orders, however, do not include free mapping paper, which you get with a game; the amount of mapping paper depends on the type of game, number of mazes, etc.) Pick your bumper stickers from this list (name several, in case we run out and have to substitute): On a Quest, Never Mess with a Wizard, Never Mess with a Dragon, Support your Local Wizard, Support your Local Dragon, Beware of Troll, Mad Max School of Defensive Driving, My Dungeon or Yours?, Caution: Driver Easily Distracted by Elves, Dragon Wagon, or He's Dead Jim - You Grab his Tricorder, I'll Get his Wallet.

Renewals: don't forget to check the mailing label on this issue and renew if it's due to expire soon. Special thanks go out to Bop Shepherd, George Chang, and George Perez for their five-year renewals. (In case you're wondering, there is no price break: you do, however, lock in the current sub rate before postage rates go up a couple of times in the next five years, as it's doing this month, triggering higher sub rates.)



Dear QuestBusters:

Why do you charge \$6.00 shipping to APO addresses? The purpose of APOs is to alleviate the cost of mailing to service members overseas. The rates are the same as mailing something in the USA, though it does take a little longer. I've considered buying game from you to help support the magazine, but the shipping fee puts it over the edge.

Frank Scalise

The APO shipping charges only seem exorbitant. We ship via UPS, which is less expensive than the US Mail, provides free insurance, and doesn't require a ten-mile drive to stand in line for centuries. But since UPS can't handle APO deliveries, we are forced (ouch! quit twisting my arm!) to charge more for these. APO and FPO subscribers should also upgrade to Adventure Express delivery (1st Class in an envelope). The military delivers bulk mail far slower than the civilian post office.

QuestBusters™ The Adventurers' Journal

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MEMBER: South American
Explorers Club

Best Quest for Glory II of the Month: Trial by Fire

Quest For Glory II? Where was *Quest For Glory I?* Trademark conflicts led Sierra to change the name of their *Hero's Quest* series, so *this* is the sequel to *So You Want To Be A Hero*.

The last time we saw the superstar of Spielberg, he was riding off into the sunset on a magic carpet. As this story opens, who should come over the horizon but the hero and his friends, Abdulla Doo and the Kattas, Shameen and Shema.

It seems the land of Shapeir is plagued with problems. The Sultan is a good man. Unfortunately, his governor (called the Emir) in the city of Raseir has been overthrown by the Sultan's evil brother. As Hero of the Day, you must scout the surrounding

Type: Animated Role-playing Adventure

System: MSDOS (640K required; 8+MHz & hard disk recommended, VGA, EGA, CGA, MCGA, Hercules, Tandy; Ad Lib, Roland, Sound Blaster, PS/1, & "other synthesizers" supported; mouse, joystick optional; 720K 3.5" and 1.2meg 5.25" disks in same package

Planned conversions: Amiga

territory, discover the fate of the former Emir and restore him to rightful power in Raseir.

Characters R Us

You can import a *Hero's Quest* character, a distinct advantage if you built up his or her statistics. Or you can still create a brand new champion.

As before, you have the choice of Fighter, Mage or Thief. The Fighter's quest is most straightforward. He goes around slashing and killing things, and is strong enough to get away with it. He has some unique puzzles, but they usually involve brute strength.

Far weaker, the Mage uses wit and magic to solve problems. He buys

spells and practices until proficient. Most versatile of all is the Thief — the only character class that can take on all the attributes of each type, becoming a true Renaissance man.

There is a price to pay, though. Not only is the Thief weak in the early game, but he also has no magic with which to defend himself. He must rely on stealth and cunning if he is going to survive long enough to save Shapeir.

Spreading it around

All classes have the same basic attributes: Strength, Intelligence, Agility, Vitality, Luck, etc. There are also learned skills, such as the ability to use weapons, to parry and dodge. Then there are Stealth, Lock picking, Throwing, Climbing, Magic....

The number of points you get in each category when creating a character is determined by your class (I don't have any, so I got zero points). You also get 50 points to distribute as you like. If *really* desperate, you can de-allocate some basic attributes in one category and assign them to another.

When you things during the game, your attributes go up accordingly — Unless you start the game with a skill set to zero. For example, a Fighter begins with zero ability to pick locks. You may use some of your initial 50 points to give yourself this ability (it costs three times as many points to give yourself a new skill in this manner). But unless you do, you will never improve as a Locksmith. Likewise, a Thief or Fighter will never be able to perform magic unless this skill is added at the beginning.

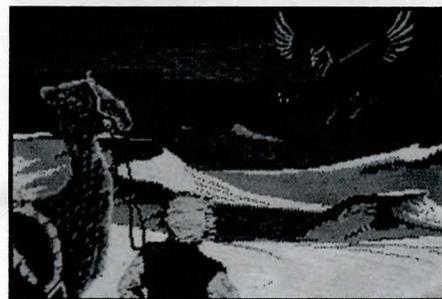
Get a map!

You need to explore, and talk to everyone you meet. One vital thing you will need right away is a map! The Vendor would be happy to sell you one if only you had some local money you could use. The money changer would, no doubt, gladly exchange your Spielberg coinage for something more useful, if only you could *find* her! Ah well...perhaps someone can offer directions.

Shapeir is truly a maze of streets. Sierra provided a diagram of the streets in the box to help you navigate

till you can buy a map. *Use it!* Your orientation changes at about every other street corner.

Visit every dead end and back alley in Shapeir. Many special locations are buried deep in the city. The first time, you must manually walk past every square inch of road. Once you've



The eagle has landed, in Trial by Fire

bought a map, you can go directly to any location in the city by looking at the map and pointing at the place.

You'll begin with a fair chunk of cash. Even so, you'll soon be wondering where your next meal will come from. (Hint: They are always happy to feed you at The Katta's Tail, as long as you remember to ask at the right time.)

Always bargain with vendors, and you'll have enough dinars to get you through the day. Usually, if you can buy something, you can figure it will come in handy at some point in the game.

Also keep your eyes peeled for inside jokes and puns. This game is liberally sprinkled with them. Even more than any other Sierra title (or *any* title for that matter), and I've seen, and I've seen most of them. I spent a good deal of time chuckling over them, from the golfer stuck in the world's biggest sand trap, to the names of various characters, such as the weapon shoppe owner (Issur, which A. E. van Vogt fans will recognize).

Practice makes perfect

As in the first game, there are various ways to hone your abilities. There are doors everywhere just begging to have the locks picked, for example. Most are barred from the inside, but even these will enhance your talent.

By Stephen King

Uhura, the mistress of the Adventurer's Guild, will help develop fighting skills, and the Weapon Master will gladly wager that he can arm wrestle you to submission. The rope-walking nomad in the Fighter's Plaza would love to give you some lessons in balance and agility.

Trial by Fire is like *The Thousand And One Nights*: there are several other stories running along with the main one, and some are happening out amongst the dunes in the desert. Aside from obvious things like water, you need a mount from the "used saurus" dealer near the gates.

Saurus are little man-sized dinosaurs that are the primary draft animal in Shapeir. Extremely loyal, they are much smarter than a horse, but are also terrible cowards.

A chance encounter with even a common brigand will send the creature scurrying away at top speed while you tumble into the dust. Any self-respecting hero might abandon it in disgust, but the best thing about a saurus is its unerring sense of the quickest and easiest way home.

Career counseling

Like most sequels, *Quest For Glory II* continues down the same path as the first game. This sequel is quite a bit richer in detail, however. In addition to the standard plots of "save the city" and "destroy the evil wizard," the player faces the challenge of advancing the personal development of his chosen profession.

A Fighter strives to achieve the rank of Paladin; a Magician, to become a full fledged Wizard; the Cutpurse, to attain Journeyman Thief status.

Because of this enhanced focus, each character type is played quite differently from the others, even more than in the first game. Most puzzles are solved in divergent ways.

The Fighter usually moves in a "straight ahead and no nonsense" manner. If something is in his way, he moves it. The Mage's puzzles almost never have an easy answer. Much more thought must be given to what he is doing and why.

This concentration on the individual eventually leads to a completely different trio of endgame sequences instead of the generic celebration screen like the one from Spielburg.

The Rogue Bug

Trial by Fire was clearly rushed a little to get out on the shelves by Christmas. There were an odd assortment of minor glitches in the first version. The parser freezes up occasionally, for example, and if you import a character, you end up being forced into the role of a Fighter.

My personal favorite was "ye olde disappearing saurus" as you take a drink from the oasis. None of the bugs are big ones, and most have already been addressed by version 1.105, now available to people who are having bug problems. You won't even have to call Orkin.

Graphics & sound

Quest For Glory II is not quite up to the excellent standard of visual performance as it's predecessor. I was disappointed that it was not released with full-color VGA, since it came out around the same time as *King's Quest VI*.

It still supports everything from VGA 16-color down to CGA in monochrome mode, and what there is, is still quite good when compared with many of the games I've seen.

With *Space Quest III*, Sierra produced the standard by which sound support is judged. This one may not be quite as nice as that in the audio department, but it's a close second.

My favorite effects are the subtle ones, like the dry sounding desert wind when you're walking outside the city gates. It took a while for me to realize that there was sound at all, but once I did, I was amazed at its authenticity.

Conclusions: *Trial by Fire* is a very solid sequel. The first game in the series was my favorite game of 1990, and I was even more pleased with this one. It's much more fulfilling, with non-stop action and lots of excellent humor. If you liked *So You Want To Be A Hero*, you can't miss with this one — best quest of the month!

Company: Sierra
Difficulty: Intermediate
Protection: None
Price: \$59.95

Spirit of Excalibur

Computer games are a form of literature, and many have been inspired by the Arthurian mythos. I haven't seen them all, but I do know that none have achieved the popularity of *Ultima* or *Mario Brothers*. Right now there are two notable Arthurian games available to ye medievalist gamer: *Spirit of Excalibur* and *Conquests of Camelot*. They have similarities and differences, which I'll get to soon.

Excalibur casts you in the role of Constantine and gives you five major challenges to overcome in your attempt to reunite a shattered kingdom. The quests are: the Kingmaking, the Return of Lancelot du Lac, the Enigmatic Giant, the Enchanted Knights of the Forest Sauvage, and Morgan le Fay's Revenge. You can't advance to the next episode until accomplishing the previous one.

You command not only your own character, Constantine, but all those Knights, Priests and Damsels loyal to you. You also need Fighters, Clerics and Magicians to hold the country together.

Episode One is the easiest quest, serving mostly to show you how the game works, how to move your pieces around and conduct combat. It's so easy, that if you wander off the straight line to Camelot, everyone you meet will tell you to get back on the road to Camelot.

In Episode Two, things get a lot tougher immediately. As King Constantine, you have only seven Knights, one Priest and one Enchantress to help fight the Saxons attacking London and a huge army invading from Scotland.

You must rally your forces, a hundred men here, two hundred there, from around the land and move them to effective positions. I probably spent over ten hours trying various methods to solve episode two, and I'll admit I haven't succeeded yet.

Outlined in the instruction manual, episodes three to five sound like more of the other-worldly quests normally associated with Arthurian legendry. Giants, dragons, demons! I'm determined to keep playing until I'm

By Ken St. Andre

worthy to undertake those quests.

Excalibur meets Camelot

In many ways, *Spirit of Excalibur* and *Conquests of Camelot* are physically and thematically similar. Both are played on the strategic map level and on the tactical scene level. In both you are the king, trying to save your land and knights by performing quests. Both have lovely animated art; Sierra's requires more memory and offers more variety.

Both games give you a lot for your money. Sierra furnishes a 16" by 24" full-color map of Europe and North Africa with Celtic scrollwork in the corners and decorations straight out of swords-and-sorcery fiction. Virgin offers a 22" by 34" full-color map of England, Cornwall and Wales, with shields of the knights on the edges.

The protection scheme for *Spirit* depends upon looking at the map and

<p>Type: Role-playing & War System: MSDOS (512K required for EGA, Tandy; 640 for VGA, MCGA; hard disk and 8 MHz+ recommended; Roland, Ad Lib, Covox, CMS; mouse, joystick optional; 5.25" disks in package, 3.5" available) Planned conversions: Amiga and ST</p>
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cross-indexing two shields to name a place shown on the map. (This is clumsy, as the place they want you to enter may not be very close to the actual intersection of lines drawn from the two shields. I have had to try repeatedly to get the right word even while looking at the map.) The Sierra map is excellent, but the Virgin map is better — I'd like to frame it and hang it on the wall.

But the comparison that really matters is the size of the games. *Spirit* is packed on four low-density disks. *Camelot* requires ten disks. In this case, more is better, and you will find *Camelot* has more great art and more interesting art than *Excalibur*.

Spirit's author, Robert Clardy, really did his research on this game. [Clardy, by the way, wrote one of the first aerial view role-playing games, *Wilderness Campaign*, back in the Seventies.] I really felt that I was continuing the Arthurian adventure.

The game graphics are very well done, whether you are on the map level or the first-person "scene" level. *Spirit* is a role-playing game, not a puzzle-solving game like *Camelot*. When your characters get into a fight, their success depends either on *their* prowess, as determined by their combat rating, or *your* ability in striking and defending if you choose to use the optional manual combat.

Attributes change depending upon your actions, and as a die hard role-player, I really appreciated that. The overall story line is original and very strong, and I never suffered the humiliation that *Conquests* put me through when it abruptly kills me because I hadn't visit a chapel and pray for a blessing earlier on. Clumsy gamer that I am, I still died in *Excalibur* from time to time, but I never felt it was unfair.

War of the Rings revisited

Excalibur has an element of wargaming found in few RPGs. Armies move around the land, and when they get too close, they clash. Usually the larger army wins, but man for man, your Arthurian forces are slightly better than anything the foe can put against you.

There is no tactical maneuvering or clever use of assorted units, but basic strategy is required in amassing as large a force as you can before engaging the enemy. This wargaming is not quite as much a part of the game as it was in *War of the Rings*, and you don't have unit counters to move around, but it is enjoyable.

I did feel, occasionally, when the program would take over my player and move him into a no-win situation with the bad guys, that it was kind of stupid, though. I lost so many knights who'd get too close to the Saxon Arcaus and his huge army.

As much as I liked the ideas behind this game, there were mechanical aspects about its presentation that were poorly thought out and repetitious. It obviously utilizes some of the same technology as *War of the Ring*. I rather enjoyed the knightly shields moving all over the luscious 3-D scrolling map of England, but sometimes they got stuck and dithered back and forth in the same spot without going where I sent them.

On the scene level, there are all these beautiful backdrops of castles, forests and internal chambers, but very often nothing is happening there.

I saw only six different characters used for every encounter. All the Knights, good guys and bad, wear the same suit of plate armor and carry the same shield. Everyone fights with a sword. It may be easier to program the game this way, but it definitely gets boring to look at the same characters time after time after time. Since the knights all have attributes that at least imply personality, would it have been too much trouble to give



Ye ancient map view

them their own unique shields when they walked into a scene?

Unique shields are shown for movement around the map. For the damsels, couldn't there have been at least a change in hair-color? The underlying story was tremendous, but the effect was of watching the same six puppets pop up over and over.

Though you can use a mouse to move your sword-cursor around the screen, I found it very slow in getting in and out of scenes. At times I waited at least a minute after giving the command to leave a location and go back to the map. There were also several long hiatuses where my screen went black while switching from one scene to another. Maybe I wouldn't notice this if I had a faster machine instead of an old Tandy.

Conclusions: If you're seeking smooth action, lots of great graphics and the challenge of solving a number of logical puzzles, then you should play *Conquests of Camelot*. If role-playing and wargaming in a medieval world, with some puzzle-solving required in a graphically beautiful environment, is more your thing, try *Spirit of Excalibur*. Both are highly recommended for Arthurian fanatics, but be warned, the frustration level is fairly high in both of them.

Company: Virgin Mastertronic
Difficulty: Medium
Protection: Map
Price: \$49.99

The Prognosticator

It's February, so why aren't there any Valentine's Day games? With three *Leisure Suit Larry* titles out there, you'd think *one* could have involved Valentine's Day. The only game I've seen that even hints of February 14th was *King's Quest IV*, when Rosella stumbles upon Cupid near a pool.

Now you know why I test games for a living. Where else can someone actually devote time to such thoughts and manage to stay out of a mental hospital? Oh well, on to more realistic news.

Flash! Developers bare all!

It's CES time again and for anyone who doesn't know, CES stands for the Consumer Electronics Show. If you've never been to one, let me assure you that it can be the wildest gaming experience of the year. All the developers gather to show off all their Top Secret projects the public (and each other). Every angle you turn, there's another booth full of people eager to show *and* tell you why their games are going to be the best of the year. I can't tell you how many times the games I've seen there somehow never even got published.

It was at one of these shows that I first saw *Wing Commander* playing on a huge screen. The Origin people I talked to seemed amazed at the reaction of the crowd. Seems they weren't quite sure how the public would receive such a game and it was obvious that they had their doubts. If you haven't played *Wing Commander* yet, you are definitely missing the Game of the Year for 1990, without question.

You heard it here first!

They may be unleashing all those incredible secrets in Las Vegas, but your friendly neighborhood Prognosticator is always one step ahead of the game. Some of the goodies showing at CES will include the sequel to *Spirit of Excalibur*, called *Vengeance of Excalibur*. It uses the same interface but takes place in Spain (and since TCSC will be testing it, you can bet it will be even better than the original). You'll need all the luck in the world if you want to save Constantine and Nineve.

Also being shown will be another product from Mastertronic that borrows from *Spirit of Excalibur*. *Conan the Barbarian* will be on the shelves soon and looks to be a real

winner. It loosely uses the *Excalibur* interface but improves on it drastically. Mastertronic will also show the near final version of the long awaited *Overlord* and I can tell you, it was well worth the wait.

With *Eye of the Beholder*, SSI has won my gaming time in back-to-back titles (the first being *Buck Rogers*). *Eye*, the first in their Legend Series, continues to progress well past early expectations. The scalable monster icons look good enough to scare you to death, let alone hack off the heads of your party.

One word of advice when you play it: if you plan on mapping out the dungeons, buy a large eraser, because things often aren't as they seem here. Countless times I have mapped entire sections only to find that I stepped on a magical spot somewhere and had to start all over.

Two thumbs down

Two titles that probably won't make the Best of 1991 are *Khalaan* and *Xiphos*. Both are from Electronic Zoo, and if they don't start finding better titles soon, it may be a tough year for them. They have had some luck locating some great looking prospects, but only time will tell.

Khalaan takes place in ancient times around the Tigris river in the desert Lut. The rule over *Khalaan* was split between four leaders called caliphs. Your goal is to act as one of the four and destroy the other three. A sage predicted a prophecy of a coming alien intruder, and only the strongest among the four would have a chance at defeating it. If you succeed then you win and become Grand Caliph of *Khalaan*. Basically you need to manage your resources and combative troops better than your enemy.

The problem with *Khalaanis* that there is nothing about it that makes it stand out as a product. The graphics are average at best, and sound is limited to the old PC speaker. Match this with a barely tolerable interface, and you have the making for one average game.

Xiphos is a space-based action/arcade/adventure. You will meet aliens, dock at space ports, take part on lots of space trading and also gobs of arcade space battles. Your goal is to survive the ongoing battles of two factions called the Pio and Qon. You aren't actually tied to either side, but for personal gain you occasionally fight for both. If you



survive, you get a chance to defeat Xiphos, the game's ultimate enemy.

Foaming at the mouth already, aren't you? Anyway, options abound as you manage complete weapon systems, build energy, take part in complex trading and much more. As with *Khalaan*, there is nothing here that we haven't really already seen. The VGA graphics might just as well be EGA. There is Ad Lib support, but not very good. If any of you pick this game up, let me know how you liked it. I obviously didn't care for it.

Looking for a new system?

People often ask me to recommend products, so I want to point out a "can't lose" company for anyone looking for a new PC. If you don't mind mail order, I highly suggest you give Northgate Computer Systems a call. In all the time I've been dealing with them, I've never had I problem I couldn't get resolved and most very quickly. Northgate recently adapted a 60 day No-Risk trial period. If you order from them and aren't satisfied for any reason, you get a complete refund.

They also have a toll-free 24-hour technical support line you can reach seven days a week. Along with this you get free on-site service if something does go wrong that can't be solved over the phone. Their systems are all excellent values at great prices, and delivery is free. They give you a one-year warranty on the computer and five on the keyboard (which I feel is the best in the business). You can reach them at 1-800-548-1993. If you want more information, feel free to write me care of *QuestBusters*.

By Rich Heimlich

Rich Heimlich is President of TCSC, Inc., a quality assurance testing firm specializing in entertainment software.

Elvira: Mistress of the Quest

Everyone, horror buff or not, has heard of Elvira, the Mistress of the Dark who, dressed in a black outfit that fully accentuates her "twin peaks" (thank you, David Lynch), hosts late night horror shows. Now she's starring in a British quest imported by Accolade. **Disclaimer:** I promise not to mention Elvira's most obvious features again in this review. The only thing I'll say about her figure is that quite often in the game, you get to see Elvira in lots of positions, and that her cleavage moves up and down a lot.

Continuing with my *Twin Peaks* references, however, I'll tell you right

Type: Role-playing Adventure
Systems: Amiga (one megabyte; hard disk supported), MSDOS (640K and hard disk required, mouse and 8+ MHz/AT class recommended; EGA, 256-color VGA; Ad Lib, Sound Blaster Gameblaster, Casio, PC, 3-voice PC and Tandy, generic MIDI, Roland; both disk formats in same box)
Planned conversions: ST
Version reviewed: Amiga

off that Elvira is one fine game. Your initial goal is to help her rid a castle of monsters and other assorted bad guys put up to the task by her long-dead ancestor, Queen Emelda. Winning involves correctly using a vast number of objects and emerging victorious from constant combat with the undead 'visitors.' Also important is a good sense of direction and searching skills.

The ultimate goal is to prevent Emelda from taking over the castle and returning to this plane of existence, which means you must find the Scroll of Spiritual Mastery. It is in a large chest hidden in the castle that can only be opened by finding the keys to open its six locks, also strewn

throughout the castle.

Elvira is a huge game. It has over 800 locations in and around the castle, and you really feel like you're there because of the attention to detail in the 3-D graphics. More important is its simple interface, offering especially strong combat controls.

Much of the screen is taken up by a first-person point of view of your location. The graphics are smooth, so the scenery scrolls by as you move around the castle. On the left of the picture are arrows you click on to move forward, turn around, left and right, and for going up and down stairs. The directions in which you can move are highlighted in red, a helpful technique in such a large game. Other elements, such as the ferocity of monsters, are also color-coded.

Inventive points & clicks

Beneath the picture is your inventory window. It can show objects in three ways, which you choose by clicking on Room, Inv or Weapons. The first brings up all objects you have found in the room into the inventory window. Clicking on Inv calls forth everything you're carrying, including weapons; click on Weapons, and you'll see only your instruments of death.

Most of *Elvira* is played by selecting objects, transferring them into your inventory and clicking on the directional arrows. You can also click directly on the picture to take objects, move forward, enter doors and fight enemies. This flexibility comes in handy in places like the maze or dungeon.

The twelve basic commands (open, examine, mix, etc.) are on the right side of the screen and may be selected when needed. They round out the interface and make the complete system work well.

Combat is easy to control but still requires quick reflexes and skill.

When you begin an encounter, the first-person view disappears, and an enlarged view of the foe pops up. It will attack on your left or right side, and you must block its attack by selecting one of two icons at the correct time to Block or Parry.



The eagle has landed, in Elvira, too (Amiga version is shown here)

If you successfully block the creature's swipe, you can choose the Lunge icon or the Hack icon to attack on the left or right side. If your opponent blocks your advances, it gets the offensive options for a brief second and takes another shot at you. The action goes back and forth like this till one of you is dead. If your timing is great, you should have no trouble with combat, but don't expect success without any effort.

Above and below the combat icons are numbers that indicate how much damage is being done to you and by you respectively. These numbers indicate the changes made to your characteristics.

Role-playing too

Elvira is more than just explore, hack and slash. Your character has five characteristics that directly affect your performance. They show up on a status bar under the picture: Strength, Resilience, Dexterity, Skill, Life and Experience. The first four stats can be changed and augmented with spells and success in combat. The farther you get in the game, the more they come into play.

Having to worry about the stats keeps you from running around the castle without purpose. You do get tired if you have too many items. This affects your combat performance, and before long you'll be dead. Unlike in

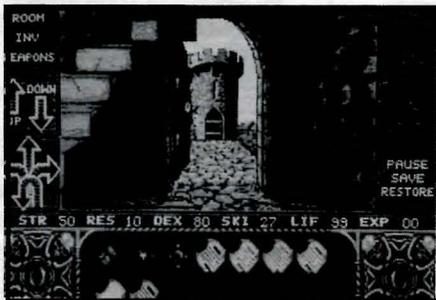
some games, objects that you drop will still be in that location when you return. With the large number of weapons, scrolls, potion ingredients and other miscellaneous objects, this is a must.

Cooking with Elvira

Besides combat and exploration, spell concoction is another fun part. Most spells improve combat performance, but some prove instrumental in solving certain puzzles. The Alphabet Soup spell, for instance, lets you read runes, and Herbal Honey reveals the true names of plants and herbs.

You put together spells, most of which have a certain number of charges, by bringing the correct ingredients to Elvira in the castle's kitchen and letting her mix them. The ingredients would make any witch drool with delight and are found

The
MSDOS
version
shows off
the game's
inventive
interface



throughout the castle. Such things as parsley, nettles, spiders, beetles, honey and nightshade are combined into a large assortment of magical functions. Plus, you get to see Elvira!

So far, you can see that Elvira has a neat interface and spooky spells. But what about the game itself? Without a doubt, Elvira's is the nicest castle I've seen in an adventure. It embodies any adventurer's idea of a haunted castle, adding a garden, hedge maze and catacombs to the musty hallways, four-poster beds and towers.

As you learn the layout of the castle and surrounding areas, you will be drawn into the adventure and start picking up subtle clues to finding the necessary objects. The game is designed very well and is never overwhelming. As you explore each area, you will find another piece of the big picture. The feeling of accomplishment comes frequently in

this game. In fact, I've decided to continue playing *Elvira* until I complete this quest.

The graphics and sound effects are absolutely stunning. From the 3-D effects to the death scenes, every picture is drawn with detail and realism. Some look digitized, especially the scenes with Elvira.

Monsters were all creatively designed and move smoothly. In the close-up combat view, slashes and blood appear on the monster's body when you hack away at it. Nice touch, guys.

Ultimately, the death scenes are the neatest parts of the game, because there are so many of them. I found myself saving it in places just to see if there was a different death scene; often, there was.

Haunting music plays throughout the whole game, but it never got on my nerves. If it does, you can turn it off. The sound effects are real good,

and Elvira's voice was recorded and used in the game.

Conclusions: What more can I say about the game? Nothing. *Elvira* rules! From the moment I started, it has been a worthwhile endeavor. I just can't wait to see how the horror hostess rewards me

for saving her castle. Now if I could only get to meet Elvira in the flesh and get my reward for solving her adventure in person....

Company: Accolade
Difficulty: Intermediate
Protection: In manual
Price: \$59.95

Next month...

The long-awaited *Tunnels & Trolls* review will finally emerge from the subterranean, along with *Power Monger*, *King's Quest V*, *Dark Spyre*, *Spellcasting 101* and perhaps *Legend of Faerghail*. And part two of C. L. Shaffer's exclusive solution to *The Dark Heart of Uukrul*.

James Bond: The Stealth Affair

The Stealth Affair and *Operation Stealth* are basically the same product. USGold is distributing the ST version here as *Operation Stealth*, which is essentially the original European version. Interplay changed some game elements and replaced the John Glames character with James Bond for the USA IBM and Amiga versions, correcting some improper English in the European English language and making minor changes in the design..

Stealth plunges you headlong into the world of international espionage. You will be sent across the globe in an attempt to find the missing, super-secret *Stealth Bomber*. You must investigate a list of suspects that include a Latin American Dictator, the Russian KGB and organized crime (not some salad "croutons" from Betelgeuse, as in *Future Wars*). You must sift through clues, track down villains and unravel a conspiracy which goes beyond the theft of the *Stealth Bomber* and threatens the safety of the globe.

Improved interface

Stealth was produced by Delphine, the French company that did *Future Wars: Adventures in Time*, with their "Cinematique" game system. The system has been slightly refined since *Future Wars*. That game required one pixel accuracy when you pointed at things to click on, which was often frustrating, while *Stealth's* interface is much more forgiving.

On the other hand, *Stealth* lacks the strikingly beautiful and breathtaking art of Eric Chahi, who did the illustration in *Future Wars*. He was replaced with Michele Bacque and Emmanuel Le Coz, who create a more cartoon-like feel.

More complex and predictable than *Future Wars*, *Stealth* reminded me more of similar efforts by Lucasfilm and Sierra. Gone also is the side-splitting humor that distinguished *Future Wars*. I found *Stealth* dry and humorless by comparison. (But then I have always preferred comedy to drama.)

Still, it's a good James Bond thriller that could even be made into a movie. It is full of gadgets and special effects, and the suspenseful plot moves right along with lively action interspersed with arcade action sequences. The arcade sequences are

Type: Animated Adventure
Systems: Amiga (512K), MSDOS (512K; CGA, EGA, Tandy, MCGA & 256 color VGA; Ad Lib, Roland and Sound Blaster; mouse and hard disk supported and recommended), ST (512K)
Planned conversions: none
Version reviewed: MSDOS

just as hard and frustrating as those in *Future Wars*. You should save before every arcade sequence.

Beautiful animation

Stealth's opening scene is a particularly beautiful job of animated art. The pilot of the *Stealth* plane is replaced by an imposter who looks very French. The imposter drives up to the plane and flies it away. Before you know it you are being briefed in the persona of James Bond (or John Glames) at the CIA in Langley, Virginia. (Keep your eyes on the picture behind the desk in the office. Someone has been projecting porno on the screen behind the picture.)

The sequences include swimming out of a cavern before your air runs out, operating a bracelet device and swimming out of a watery grave with a beautiful woman, and finding the enemy HQ in a complex maze.

Delphine's interface is an imaginative, easy to use point-and-click variant of Sierra and Lucasfilm games. The mouse can be used to access pop-up window containing verb menus, inventory lists, disk access menu and save game menu. (You have ample room for saved games which you can name for easy identification.)

Your right mouse button accesses

the pop-up windows; the left one allows you to point and click on items in the animated screen. The pop-up windows are mouse sensitive and they pop up at the mouse pointer's current location. This allows you to easily access the menu without having to move the mouse all over the screen to get to where the menu has popped up. For those so inclined, you almost never have to touch your keyboard.

Stealth play on the IBM can happily be enhanced by the keyboard interface. All the action words can be accessed through the function keys. The keyboard interface is intelligent and well thought out, and if you type well, you may prefer the keyboard over interactive graphics.

Other game functions and settings can be adjusted via the keyboard. Arrow keys may be used to move the cursor fast or slow, and others enable you to move your alter ego around the screen. Sound can be turned on or off.

Animation sequences can be accelerated or decelerated to make it easier to complete them.

Even areas on the screen can be accessed by pressing the control key and a number key. Each number represents a section of the computer screen. Gone are the one pixel active areas that plagued adventurers from Paris, France to Paris, Texas in *Future Wars*. But the keyboard interface is sadly non-existent in the Amiga and ST versions.

Animated sequences are interspersed throughout the game, as in similar games from Sierra and Lucasfilm. These "cut scenes" are mandatory and cannot be bypassed by any means. While entertaining, they grow monotonous upon the third or fourth dozen viewings.

Sound effects were still handled by Marc Minier who did them for *Future Wars*. The sound effects are good, but not up to the caliber of those from Sierra or Lucasfilm. Jean Baudlot performed admirably in writing a good musical score for *Stealth*.

Both the Interplay and USGold

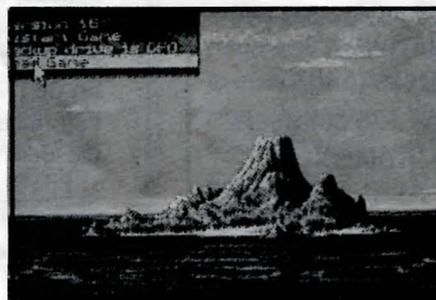
manuals describe the *Stealth* Bomber and the special spy equipment used in the game. It is interesting to note that John Glames is .02 meters taller than James Bond and one kilogram lighter. Maybe James should go on a diet?

Color me frustrated...

Copy protection is in the form of a color picture in the manual or on a photographic sheet. The copy protection scheme is very similar to the one used for *Future Wars*. You must match a particular pattern from the color picture in the manual with the same pattern on a black and white display onscreen.

Many people, including myself and many color blind people, find this test impossible if not difficult. If you get the color wrong you must reboot the game. They should have at least given us three tries.

Conclusions: *Stealth* is



The Amiga version exhibits the easy-to-use menus in *Stealth Affair*.

an excellent game. Though the graphics suffer in comparison with the striking artistic renditions in *Future Wars*. *Stealth*'s humor is good but not quite up to the standard of its predecessor. Still, it is clever, well-conceived and stands up admirably to the competition. For anyone who enjoyed *Future Wars*, this game is recommended. Unless, of course, you happen to develop nervous disorders from difficult arcade sequences, or have a color deficiency or color blindness condition.

Skill Level: Novice

Copy Protection: In manual

Price: \$54.95

Company: Delphine/Interplay

Hard Nova: Starflight meets Zaxxon

Hard Nova is a follow-up to EA's older, ambitious but less flashy *Sentinel Worlds: Future Magic*. The space displays are reminiscent of a cross between *Future Magic* and *Starflight 2*. But this one is a worthy sci-fi RPG with an interesting story line and game mechanics that are detailed yet relatively simple.

As the game starts, you've just lost most of your crew in an accident that also destroyed your ship somewhere in the four systems, which are all connected by stargates that transport you through vast distances instantaneously. Somewhere at the other side of a stargate, an alien race is preparing to leave their homeworld as their sun is dying. They are prepared to colonize a new world, by force if necessary....

Type: Role-playing
System: MSDOS (640K required; EGA, 256 colors in VGA; Ad Lib, Roland, Soundblaster, PS/1; mouse and hard disk supported)
Planned conversions: none

You play either a human female or male mercenary, with varying combat abilities. Character statistics are preset initially, and the experience points you earn will raise your hit points and produce bonus points you can allot to your various skills.

In a bar on the planet Mastassini, you and your Bremar (an alien race) navigator are looking for...well, anything that will come your way. You should find NPCs willing to join your party immediately, as the Bremar is the only race capable of navigating through hyperspace jumps via the stargates that connect the four systems, and you don't want to lose him in combat.

You already have a new ship, courtesy of your commander in Starkiller, an intergalactic merc group. There's lots of NPC interaction, which is important to

success. And though you choose statements and questions from a menu instead of typing them in your own words, the game remembers your past conversations with the NPCs and adjusts the menus accordingly.

Similarly, the NPCs all have relatively distinct personalities, as does your hard-bitten rough-riding, merc PC. There are several alien races, including a sting-ray looking race that takes humor in its digestive, scatological processes. Sounds like a Redskins fan.

The play's the thing

Movement is directed via keypad or mouse (which I used). The party marches around, your PC displayed in green, your NPCs in yellow. Other NPCs are blue if benign, orange if hostile. There are many of these; unfortunately, you see little more than the tops of their heads.

You click on icons to access things such as ship functions or character inventories. Each player has his or her own inventory, in which you can carry around weapons, armor, medical lining (more on this later) and assorted other goods. The party also has a pack for keeping items such as extra ammo or goods "acquired" from the less fortunate. You can cycle items from your party's individual inventories into the pack, and vice versa. Just point and click, more or less.

Some thought was given to the various mercenary groups, aliens, subcultures and politics of your little universe. You can press F9 at any time to access a portable information bank and read about the major players and planets of your star system, in case you confuse Zero-L mercenaries with Delta-Coro nasties.

Surface combat is a bit quirky. You select targets for combat and/or conversation by using the right mouse button, whereupon a little picture, profile and icon will appear. You can open fire on NPC friendlies, and often

they won't turn "red" (unfriendly), even if you "nailed the poor fool" and kill it. Still, only your lead character



Nova offers more engaging control of your ship than Starflight, and witty NPC interaction, but less substance in the story.

(Nova or Stark) can attack in these "friendly fire" situations.

If the target is hostile, your entire party will gleefully blast away until victory or defeat. The VGA graphics (EGA and CGA are supported) are of the top-down type tile variety and very good. There's little animation, typically glowing reactors, weapons fire and movement. There is a slightly annoying musical score, and Ad Lib boards are fully supported, not just with music, but laser zaps as well. There are various stores, bars, and even a training area you gain quick experience around; all your options are well-defined and easy to access.

You can always return to your hovership, which you fly from your starship to the surface and use to move around there. It looks like — *Zaxxon!* Or is it *Populous?* Or both! You zoom around the planet surface in a hover vehicle. The 3-D perspective shows the landscape nicely, and there's a little cockpit view at the top of your screen.

Populous in Space?

The landscape and the space cities and reminiscent of *Populous*, and the overall effect of flying reminds me of *Zaxxon*. You have a laser cannon, and combat is conducted thusly by targeting other ships and pressing Return. You fly around trying to unload your smuggler's goods (providing you get a smuggler) and

By Bernie Yee

finding hoverdocks (a red arrow on the ground) where you can enter the cities and bases, but you have a limited amount of fuel. In a procedure much like *Starflight 2* but without the boring landing screens, you get dropped from the ship at any point on the planet that isn't blocked with a force field-type shield. You then fly exactly where you want by piloting your hovership, as in *Zaxxon*.

Faster than a speeding Starflight 2

Space movement is strictly 2-D, though the graphics have a 3-D look. Planets and star systems, of course, are not to scale, but that's ok — though it still lends a cartoony feel to the alleged "vastness" of space. I felt like I was running over to the Korean grocery on Amsterdam Avenue. Still, the game plays a lot faster than *Starflight 2* did — thank God.

The story is very similar to *Future Magic* (both were designed by Karl Buitter). Software runs your computers, and if you get an accomplished software hound, he or she can improve the efficiency of your thrusters, targeting, evasive and communications systems — your entire ship, basically. You can also load your weapons bay with various missiles, board certain ships, and implement all sorts of electronic countermeasures.

You can pilot your ships through asteroid belts, into orbit, or into star gates, which link the four systems, or shadow target ships — and of course, blow them to bits. If you get damaged, you can replace systems at any space station that orbits a planet. You can usually purchase weapons upgrades or refills there too. Piloting your ship and engaging in combat requires little skill, however. It's just move around and activate your lasers or missiles until the other guy gets blown to itsy bitsy space debris.

You can assign your party to various stations on the ship, i.e. pilot, gunner, engineer, but you can only take three with you onto a hovership to the surface. This neat little fiction means you *always* have an empty party slot in case you have the opportunity to recruit someone.

Once more, into the breach!

After you get off Mastassini, you'll get a message from the head of the Starkiller mercenary outfit to return to Holbrook (the planet your base is on). There you'll meet other Starkillers and Kendall, who will give you certain missions designed for an enterprising young person with your...talents. These missions are designed to ease you into the game itself — but even the first one is not a free ride.

To earn money, visit the space station above Mastassini for smuggling missions that vary in degrees of difficulty and payoff. While smuggling requires no more than flying your hovership to designated coordinates, the difficulty comes in the amount of armed resistance you might face.

These missions segue into the real heart of the game, the "stargate to nowhere" and the impending alien invasion. A nice obstacle is that the two toughest planets to land on have the best weapons in their stores; your base shop sells ammo cheap, but the best weapons must be stolen. You'll have to turn to more warlike arts to get energy weapons and battle armor.

A hit, a most palpable hit!

Combat is straightforward — or, it may be overly simple for your tastes. It's a standard "fire away until the bad guy's (or their ship's) hit points are zero" situation, with two interesting twists. The first of these is the AML — automated medical lining. It is a lining for your combat armor that pumps you full o' vitamins and drugs that heal you constantly. It's nice not to have to hunt around for hospitals or hoard healing tablets for a change. The other twist is that the bad guys have AMLs too.

The percentage to hit, the amount of damage you inflict, and your rate of fire depends on your weapon, agility and weapons skills level. The more bonus points you allocate to the skills, the better your chance to hit the target. And there are lots of targets, usually outnumbering your party. But hey, heroes and insurmountable odds are like salt and

pepper, Bonnie and Clyde, R2D2 and C3PO....

(Flourish. Exeunt.)

All in all, *Hard Nova* (despite its Robert Palmeresque name) is the game *Starflight 2* and *Sentinel Worlds* should have been. It has its moments of humor, lots of action, a fairly standard made interesting with smooth and playable game design, great graphics, lots of action, an easy-to-use-game interface, a slew of sci-fi tech-weenie inventory items, a good way of conversing with NPCs, lots of action, an imaginative game universe and lots of action.

I like its equal-but-different approach to a female PC. But it has horrible off-disk copy protection, which jettisons you back to DOS if you don't type in the appropriate number from the chart. At least there's no code wheel or rune chart or something really asinine.

The game didn't blow me away like *Battletech 2*, but it has enough horses to qualify as a best-quest runner-up. My only criticism is that it feels small, even with several planets and many maze levels to explore. This may be due to the game's ease of play, because I found it so easy to zip back and forth between star systems.

It also looks better than it plays — substance-wise, not interface-wise. The story and the range of player options are pretty standard, but it has an excellent NPC interaction routine that's quite witty, and the graphics and sound are state-of-the-art. **Conclusions:** *Hard Nova* is a good game, especially if you don't want to get caught up in a super-detailed space game like *MegaTraveller*. But most importantly, it's fun. A lot of effort went into this one, but it still left me a bit unsatisfied. Maybe I'm just jaded. Or maybe someone's gotta listen to that Eliot/Joyce/Pound modernist admonition to "make it new" — again.

Company: Electronic Arts
Difficulty: Novice-Intermediate
Protection: In Manual
Price: \$49.95

Walkthru: The Dark Heart of Uukrul

This is the first installment of one of last year's hardest role-playing games, one for which no solution was published by its manufacturer, Broderbund, and a solution requested by many subscribers. Future installments will offer maps for the trickiest parts.

The Beginning

There are thirteen Sanctuaries: Urtas, Uurlasar, Uurmor, Uurlusam, Uuran, Uurshas, Uureal, Uurtehn, Uurzhut, Uurqol, Uurqastur, Uuroqlamn, and Uurxaszal.

A small area precedes the first sanctuary, Urtas. At the end of the first passage is a secret door. Run your staff around the outline to make the door appear. The one-way door opens into a large entrance hall, where the central pillar has a secret door on its north side. The secret door contains a key that unlocks a grate in the northwestern section. Beyond the first grate, you will find a key to unlock the second grate in the southwest.

Urtas

On the east wall of the entrance hall, you will find Urtas. Sanctuaries are training areas, resting places and have vaults for storing items. There are two doors to every sanctuary: a west door and an east door. The west door goes back toward the beginning of the maze; the east door goes deeper into the maze.

Leaving Urtas by the east door, you find a hall with seven doors. This is the Hall of the Ancients. The southern door on the eastern wall leads on to Uurlasar. The other doors lead to small adventures and treasures, none of which are essential.

To the south is an area with spinners, which can't be mapped with the game's auto-mapping feature. You must continually pause to get your heading in order to map the area.

To the northeast is an area with lots of bats. A treasure can be found to the south behind a secret door. The

southern door on the eastern wall leads to Uurlasar, an encounter with a wolf and a vision of Mara.

Uurlasar

In this region are the shops, the four temples and the Magic Circle. When you reach the marketplace there is also a storage area West that has a few encounters, but in the meeting room is a secret door with a valuable gem. There are two hearts in this area, one in the Crypt below the Temple, the other located behind the locked grate near the Borasal teleporter.

After unlocking the grate north of the Borasal teleporter, you will have to cast the Hayamoq spell to open the secret door. If you have a silver ring of knowledge you could also use the Altis spell. (Occasionally you must cast Altis two or three times.)

The Temple in Uurlasar

The temple area is arranged in the shape of a large cross with temples at the points of the cross. Visit each temple. It's beneficial to burn incense in the temples before the altar.

Priests may be awarded a ring upon visiting temple altars. These are awarded according to experience in praying to the temple god anywhere in the game. The awarding of the next higher ring of power is not related directly to the attainment of levels awarded in the sanctuaries. Visiting the temples often may result in quicker acquisition of rings.

Each temple has a secret door and treasure. The room back of Fshofth's temple contains the Kris of Resting. The battle for the Kris of Resting is difficult. Don't try it unless you are at least 7th level. To get out of this room you must stand in front of the mural, summon Fshofth, and then genuflect to be let out.

In the temple there are stairs down to the catacombs. The catacombs contain a lot of Spinners and one-way doors. Catacombs are small and must be mapped manually, so always check your headings. In the catacombs you must battle an armed skeleton to get an iron key, which opens a grate in the Crypt. Behind

the grate is a secret door hiding the first stone heart. Use your sword to search for the heart, which is in a corpse. A second key can be found in this area if you map it carefully.

The Magic Circle

South of the temple is a zig-zag passage leading to the Magic Circle. Inscriptions on the walls in the Magic Circle tell you about the six hearts you must collect. In the Magic Circle you will find teleporter Alariq. The small room in the center is where rings are awarded to the Magician. Rooms off the Magic Circle have minor treasures and encounters. You will want to return here often to get more rings, as this gives your Magician more power. Rings are awarded by experience in casting spells in the five areas of the Arcana. The awarding of magical rings in each of the five Arcane areas is not directly related to the attainment of levels in the sanctuaries. Higher rings give the Magician higher magical powers.

Uurmor

This area is large but does not contain many difficult encounters. The area contains mostly caves and a training area. There is a large treasure in the Thieves Den. Find the key-shaped room with key-like tiles on the floor and search for a bas-relief of a large key on the wall; explore the handle to obtain the chrome key. You will have to fight the Thieves to get the treasure. Spend the money from the treasure on better armor and weapons.

Sagaris

Near the end of the caves you will find teleporter Sagaris. The Sage Sagaris is just south and west of the teleporter. Sagaris will identify items for a price. Sagaris will send you on a quest to retrieve a certain item for him, which is located past the sanctuary Uurlusam. Be very careful on hit points, magic points, and poison, as you are a long way from safety on this mission.

Continued next month

By C. F. Shaffer

Verified and edited by AIC. Giovetti



Keys to the Kingdoms



Bane of the Cosmic Forge

To operate the drawbridge, use Mystery Oil (Queequeg has some) on the rusted control panel. The correct sequence of control buttons: safety, pump, coilwrap, truss, safety, winder.

Stephen A. Blythe

King's Quest V

The Desert: In the following, W4 means walk west through four screens, and so on. Using tree with bees as starting point, locations are: Tents, W4, S4, W7; Oasis, W4, S4; Oasis, W5; Skeleton with shoe, W7, S1; Oasis, W8, S1, W2; Oasis & Temple, W8, N2; Oasis, W10, S1 (get shoe). The maximum number of moves you can make without water is seven.

Fred J. Philipp

Town: Enter any shop own and leave. Go to broken cart in alley. Get shining silver coin. Go to barrel. Get fish. Leave town. **Bee Tree with bear:** throw fish at bear. Get honey. Get large stick next to tree. **Ant Castle with dog:** throw stick at dog. **Inn & Haystack:** search haystack. **Other places:** talk to man crying on log, talk to tree playing harp. Go into "Enter at your Own Risk" path and talk to anyone.

Derek Figg

Witch's House & Willow Tree's

Heart: Get spinning wheel from chest, key from hanging lamp, pouch from chest of drawers on left side of room. Leave house, go east one screen to tree with small door. Open door with key from house. Inside it heart of the talking willow tree.

Leaving the forest: The door to the forest closes when you enter it. Go to Witch's House, then one screen west. Squeeze honeycomb on trail. Bring up inventory screen and cycle through the icons controlled with the mouse or keypad (not the icons at top of screen). Place hand icon on the pouch and activate it. You'll have three

emeralds in your inventory now. Throw them on the trail.

L. W. Henderson

Covert Action

At higher levels, it is very difficult to make an arrest or conduct a break-in without strong combat skills. With an Excellent or Awesome combat rating, you can usually make up for weak Driving skills (if you run off the road, you can often defeat the attackers, and it's better to make arrests in buildings, anyway. Wiretapping won't yield as much info as breaking into a building. At the Global Crisis Level, unrelated clues are often found in a building. The most accurate and telling clues are in wall and floor safes, so bring along safe-cracking equipment. Clever use of grenades is the key to a successful fight. If a swarm of guards enters the room, drop a gas grenade (make sure you're wearing a mask) and hide behind furniture. Then use your weapon and other grenades to finish him off. Another good tactic is to throw a grenade at a door as the guard opens it. He'll step through, and it hits him perfectly. Also make good use of booby traps. Computers are very useful if you ask the right questions. A computer in the building of the suspect you're after usually gives damning evidence against him but won't be useful with others suspects. If you ask about an Organization, it often tells their location in the city you're in. Enter a city name, and the location of the group whose building you're in is provided. The latter is often a real break in the case.

Frank Scalise

Lord of the Rings

There are several mini-quests to help you get started. Find Ansom's dog for him in the Western Woods (use Charisma). Taffy and Freddi need to be returned to their parents. Taffy's in the East Woods, beset by wolves. But get Freddi first, for Taffy won't come along without him. Freddi's in a spider cave in the North wall. You'll

find some goodies there too, plus what's left of Druin's uncle and his axe. There's a cave in the southwest corner of the Shire. **Leaving the Shire:** Get Druin to join the party as soon as possible, since Hobbits are poor fighters at the outset. Don't leave the Shire via the Buckland Bridge. You'll never get past the Nazgul. Take the Hedge Gate into the Old Forest. **The Old Forest:** Explore this and the Barrow Downs thoroughly. There are several caches of goodies, and you'll find your first real weapons and several hundred silver pennies (enough to buy armor in Bree). The multi-stage quest for Tom Bombadil's wife will raise everyone's stats.

Mike Prero

The Immortal

To open passageway to second level, hold up amulet against sunbeam so it strikes the jewel. **On second level:** search bones for sword to boost combat ability. Talk to dealer twice to get oil (60 gold pieces). Use oil to safely walk past slime. To get past goblin guarding door, fight the one of the right. He drops a bag of magic dust, which is used on the old man with the gem. However, if you enter from the north (use the other door), you can make the goblin on the left follow you. Exit via the door when he reaches you, then enter using the door on the right. To get past the goblin king's two guards, use charm scroll again. Deposit bag of spores on the dirt, then exit. Wait, reenter room and walk to king. Give him water, and he'll tell you combination and give you a . The third jewel is encased in the stone. Drop it near a slime to get the jewel.

Andrew Phang

Codes for each level (0s are zeros):

Level 2: CDDFF10006F70
Level 3: F47EF21000E10
Level 4: B5FFF31001EB0
Level 5: C75F843000EB0
Level 6: 563FF53010A41
Level 7: C250F63010AC1

Level 8: C6DOD730178C1

To defeat dragon on level 8: use Blink to avoid fire, then Fire Resistance. Use Amulet. Use Body Statue to avoid lightning and ghost, and Sonic Protection to keep from exploding. Use Magnetic Hands to win.

Nate Franklin

Spellcasting 101

Spellcasting Simulation: If you do this before the school is attacked, you'll be graded but the spells disappear. Do it after the attack, and you can keep the three spells. Don't waste time reading the spell book or looking at things, or you won't have time to do everything. In that case, stand up, then sit in the chair again. To pass the test: Gub tree. Zem me. S. Kill dragon with sword. Vai Ivy. Up. Pull lever. Open chains. Open trap door. W. Frimp trap door. Open trap door. Down.

From an upcoming walkthru by Walt Mueller

Quest for Glory II

To defeat Fire Elemental: ask Harik in Apothecary about Fire Elemental and Flame Then buy 1 pack of incense from him. From fountain, put water into flask to use as the contrary element. Get a lamp to contain the Elemental. When you see Fire Elemental in plaza, lure him to the north. Quickly put lamp down, then weaken him with water. You'll then capture it in the lamp. **To defeat Air Elemental;** a Fighter should ask Issur in Weapons Shop about bellows, then armwrestle him for it. A Magic User should cast Fetch on it, but only at night. The Thief will have to first buy a magic rope from Keapon Laffin in the Magic Shop, and steal the bellows at night. After obtaining the bellows, get the contrary element, dirt, from potter in the Fountain Plaza. When you find the Elemental around the Palace, the Fighter should use Strength, then drop dirt. The Magic User needs to cast Levitate, then drop dirt into funnel. The Thief can just throw the dirt on him. After it's weak, catch it in the bellows.

Russell Greenspan

Wizard's Institute: To find it, cast Detect Magic in streets of Shapeir. Arrows will lead to end of Sahir Tarik, the northernmost street. Cast Detect Magic to find door, Open to enter it. When asked who will initiate you, choose Erasmus. Be sure you have mana pills to restore Magic Points if low. In dark room, cast Detect Magic to find the magical bell. Fetch it. Cast Trigger. After passing that test. four Wizards give you another. Cast Fetch at **Air Wizard's staff.** Cast Levitate till it passes you. Pass **Earth test** by casting Trigger to transform wall into living earth, Dazzle to blind it, so you can climb the wall. After climbing it, cast Trigger so you won't fall off. Or cast Calm when it awakes. **Water trial:** cast Flame Dart at iceberg, cast Force Bolt till it falls apart. **Trial by Fire:** cast Open to open door. Cast Calm to calm flames. Cast Fetch to close door. Aim Force Bolt spell at top of door to make a bridge. When asked question by Wizards, say no. Erasmus gives you Reversal spell. Brass lamp may be lighted up at end of Askeri Darb, by locked door. To get sand in desert, buy cloth sacks from cloth merchant in Fighter's Plaza.

Al Ihm

Thief's first job: on second night, after midnight, sneak after entering and get silver tea service on top shelf. Use oil on cabinet. Search cabinet. Move rug. Wait till drunk brother goes by. When next brother enters, replace everything and "hide in cabinet." Now you can continue getting money from under the rug. **Job Two:** You'll need Strength of over 100 to move the anvil at the Weapons Shop.

Noel Baur

James Bond: The Stealth Affair

Airport: Enter bathroom. Enter toilet. Open briefcase. Open passport. Take currency, passport, pen. Operate calculator. Program for French. (This is an example, because the nationality of the bogus passport is randomized. To determine which nationality to use for the passport, examine coin return slot on newspaper box. Insert coin in slot. Get and read newspaper, which

determines the nationality to use.) Enter blank passport into the "French" passport. Show bogus passport to Customs official (use it on him. Talk to hostess. Read message. West. Show ticket to guard. In. Move to baggage carousel. Take "blue" bag (Mr. Martinez). Open. Take watch and razor. Go to bathroom. Examine razor. Plug razor into socket. Leave terminal. Wait outside near taxi stand. Walk to taxi.

Fred J. Philipp

Mazes: there are four levels in the Palace and Rat-infested mazes. Pushing some doors might affect doors in other parts of the maze. To open the safe in the President's office, operate the statue's arm, then use the safe-cracking box on the safe. **SPYDER HQ:** to escape, use the pen on the lock, then use the watch on the left and right walls. Climb toward the grill and operate it. **Soldier in Bathroom:** operate him, examine boots to find laces, and tie him up with laces. Use the soldier's boots and clothes as a disguise. Get the glass, and use the napkin on the soldier to shut him up.

Andrew Phang

Rise of the Dragon

In the apartment, wear Blades clothes and jacket, then get the First Aid kit and can of NaPent. Play back messages on phone, get picture and car. Leave gun at home for now. Go down elevator to Em-Way and go to City Hall square on the map. Buy roses from Bliss. Go to Bureau of Records in City Hall. Give rose to Karyn and talk really nice to her. Grab your keys and head for **Pleasure Dome.** Talk to guy in green coat. Say you want information, that a friend of his is in trouble, and show him the picture. Keep it up till he gives you Chen's address.

Roland Ketchley

This month Noel Baur and Al Ihm were randomly selected to win the game of their choice for sending in Keys. Send in yours today! (All clues become exclusive property of Eldritch, LTD until October 11, 2137, A. D.)

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Will buy 16-color version of King's Quest 5, Monkey Island and/or Drakkhen. Sell or trade Space Rogue, Megatraveller 1, Hero's Quest, Sci-Mutant Priestess. Norman Hughes, 5801 Flaxman St #75, Pensacola FL 32506

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