

alternate REALITY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 1

Issue 4

Greetings Alternate Reality Adventurers:

First things first! We'd like to thank everyone who participated in the Awesome AR contest. A lot of hard work and creativity was put into the dozens of entries, making the final decision difficult, to say the least.

Since some of the "autobiographies" accompanying the characters were so wonderful, we decided to make two categories: The most "awesome" character (highest level and experience), and the most creative descriptive story, regardless of the character's level.

We'd also like to give honorable mentions to the high runners-up in both categories of the contest and, for the next few issues, a section of the newsletter will be dedicated to an Awesome Character's Autobiography.

AWESOME CHARACTER WINNERS:

The winner of the highest level character is Cletis, a character belonging to Richard Carnduff of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Cletis is a level 15 character, with stats that match the level accordingly: STA 27; CHR 108; STR 255; INT 152; WIS 23; SKL 24. In AR year 3, his experience level is 7,122,176. Cletis' ACTIVE MAGIC includes Invulnerability Air, Sharp, Water, Blunt, and Fire. His attire consists of Fine Fur-lined clothes and a Simple Fur-lined hat. Financially secure in The City, Cletis carries 34,620 coppers in his pocket and has 1,051 Jewels and 1,222 Gems in stock. He also carries 255 potions. As weapons, Cletis has 2 MAGICAL FLAMESWORDS, 1 MAGICAL BATTLE HAMMER, and is protected with MAGICAL CRYSTAL PLATE ARMOUR. Last, but not least, Cletis has 240 Food Packets and 250 Water Flasks.

Honorable mention goes to:

- Marlene Bird of Ames, Iowa and her character **Who Cares**
- Donel Wyman of Oshkosh, Wisconsin and his character **Thorex**
- John Motter of Hummelstown, Pennsylvania and his character **Yrrab**
- Roe Adams of Hyde Park, Massachusetts and his character **Hawkwind of Skara Brae**
- Ed Lutz of Cincinnati, Ohio and his character **Hasan**.

NAME:	Who Cares	Thorex	Yrrab	Hawkwind	Hasan
LEVEL:	14	14	13	13	13
EX:	2,435,36	2,565,031	1,211,584	1,277,130	1,304,067
YEAR:	4	3	2	2	2
HP:	242	218	144	153	163
STA:	33	30	23	23	26
CHR:	60	65	40	35	47
STR:	255	236	106	254	112
INT:	21	67	49	109	39
WIS:	27	28	22	27	16
SKL:	33	29	24	22	27

The winner for the Awesome Autobiography is Deborah K. Bickford of Sacramento, California. Here's the story of Bethel (edited for space):

Dark. So dark I couldn't see my hand in front of my face - even if I could open my eyes. The pain is getting worse. Oh God, the painpainpain. . . .

How long has it been? It's a little lighter, a dark red instead of the black. I try to open my eyes. Again the pain strikes. How to hold on to my sanity? Try to remember what happened.

Walking down the street. Green trees, blue sky, a cloud. No, it can't be a cloud, it's too shiny. Maybe the University is putting up another weather balloon. Funny, I don't remember reading about it in the Campus Rag. It's getting bigger, tho' - *hmm*. I'll have to tell Dirk about this. A sudden flash of light, then total darkness and a shock of pain as though all my flesh was being flayed from my bones.

Then nothing. Mustn't have been a balloon after all. It couldn't have been a nuke or I'd be dead. I might go for

the UFO theory, if I believed in flying saucers. Good thing I don't.

The pain recedes. Again, I try to open my eyes. Blink. Adjust to it. That's better. What seemed to be so bright is actually a soft gray, diffused off the ceiling. To one side there's a door, with numbers constantly changing above it. I look around and see another body. It's a man, still out of it. His pulse is slightly rapid, but his breathing seems to be normal. I wish now that I had paid more attention in First Aid Class.

I wish there was a mirror. If I look as bad as I feel, I might just as well lie down and wait for them (whoever THEY are) to come bury me. Back to the other victim. I don't have any light source to check his pupils, and couldn't do anything even if they didn't check out anyway. Wish he'd come to. Maybe he knows what's going on. Wishful thinking. He's probably just as bad off as I am. Was.

Things are getting a lot better, fast! Suddenly, a voice out of nowhere, directs me to the door. Wait! *IT'S NOT IN ENGLISH!!!* I talk, and listen to my words. They make perfect sense to me, but they're not in any language I've ever heard before. What is going on?? Again the voice tells me to go out the door. I look at the numbers again, and they start to make more sense. Suspend disbelief guys, the Universe has played the ultimate joke. I'm stuck in a Role-Playing Game! Either there *are* flying saucers, or I stayed up too late reading Jerry Pournelle.

I take a long look at my traveling partner. If we meet again, I want to recognize him. Keeping an eye on the numbers, I choose the best configuration I see and jump. An electric jolt goes through me. Looking down at myself, I discover my nice wool clothes are gone, replaced by barely enough to be decent. Somehow I'm not too very surprised to see the door floating in mid-air, with no ship attached. How easy it is to adjust when you've got the background for it. This must be how Flynn felt after getting sucked into the computer in TRON. Except this is no movie, Beth. Better get organized and fast. Get the basics down first. Find a place to eat and a place to sleep. *Then* figure out how to pay for it.

Famous last thoughts. Even before I made it to the tavern at the corner square, I was accosted by a mugger. Thank the Lord that Dirk insisted I have some classes in self-defense. I never thought I would have to use it to actually kill a person, though. The mugger had a few coppers in a purse which I appropriated, so I'm now able to at least buy something to eat and drink. Unfortunately, his knife was broken against the street. I have to find some kind of weapon soon. There are entirely too many evil-looking characters around here. And this is the middle of the day! I have to find some kind of shelter before night falls.

I've seen one person from Earth, much as I hate to admit it. Not one of our better examples. Almost, I went over to talk to him; but just before I did, he pulled his sword on

one of the other patrons. The bartender stopped what might have been a bloody fight, but later the patron was found not far from the tavern with his throat slit. A good example of what not to be. I somehow keep expecting current circumstances to follow the rules I've always played my RPG's by. That is, when stuck, push RESET. I don't think that it will work here!

* * *

It has been a month since I last made an entry in this journal. Since then, I have acquired a magical longsword and plate armor. I've applied for apprenticeship at each of the guilds I have found, but everywhere the story is the same: "We are not accepting apprentices at this time." The other night, while at a nearby tavern, one of the other patrons said that one must prove worthiness by bringing back an object from the Dungeon. What the object is, or how I go about entering the Dungeon, he didn't know. There must be a key somewhere. I shall keep searching until I find it.

Last week impressed upon me again that this is more than a game to play. I heard cries for help coming from an alley and went to render assistance, but was too late. The ruffians had fled, but the victim was beyond saving. It was my co-traveler. Who did he leave behind, I wonder. A wife, children? Was he adjusting to the circumstances? If only I had met him earlier in the city, what would have happened? Has his family given up on ever seeing him again? How is my own family carrying on? I must find the way home!

* * *

Another month gone. Part of it has been spent recovering from a debilitating disease which has seriously sapped my stamina. Luckily I have increased my strength to such a point that most battles don't last long. I'm almost ready to phase into this society as a member of the upper class. I have invested my money in high interest savings accounts, saving only enough in the low interest accounts to serve as a buffer in case of a bank failure. After discovering the death of my fellow Terran, I've taken to haunting the night streets. I almost feel guilty, as though I should have searched him out earlier, perhaps joined forces. Odd, because I have no such feelings about other Earthers who are here.

I am willing to let normal citizens pass me by if they will, although I won't be lenient in case of attack. I have been lucky enough in the use of potions to increase certain attributes, as well as the increases given to me by the Guilds and gained through experience. I still have had no luck in discovering an entrance into the Dungeon, but contacts say a warrior who has been there is due soon. His name is Thoreandan, and he's even better known for biting off the hand of a dragon! Apparently, after having performed this feat of daring, he took off for the Wilderness. I shall bide my time waiting for him.

I had the opportunity last evening to try matching Thoreandan's deed. I was in a battle with a small blue dragon, and getting very much the worse end of the deal, so I bared my teeth and bit. It was through sheer luck that I was able to pick up myself and my magical longsword before the dragon finished me off. I think it was taken a bit aback by the attempt, though, as I was able to take advantage of a pause on its part and stab it cleanly through the underarm and into the heart. After gathering the coins which were embedded in its underbelly, I went over to the Alpha Omega Healer for some quick first aid.

While waiting for the healer to return, I got into conversation with another warrior. He said he had heard of me (oddly enough, very few of the kidnapped Earthers are female, so identification isn't that difficult), and that rumor had it that I was walking a very thin line between evil and decency. I tried to reassure him of my intentions of going straight, and he warned me that the best way is to leave the commoners totally alone, even going so far as to leave the area when I meet one, rather than just ignoring them, as is my wont. He also said he had heard that Thoreandan is due tomorrow and that he usually hangs out around Mom's Bar.

This is my last entry before I talk to Thoreandan and learn the way into the Dungeon. I have great hopes that I'll learn something there that will help me find a way home. For now, I'm going to Mom's to listen to the bard, who either is from Earth or has talked to a lot of us who are.

Future literary works of art to look forward to are by the following Awesome Authors:

- LADY PAT by Patricia Smith of Buhl, Idaho
- WHO CARES by Marlene Bird of Ames, Iowa
- LAR OF CARLSTADT by Larry Schwartz of River Edge, New Jersey
- WHY ME? by John E. Boyle of State College, Pennsylvania
- AH CLEM by Fred Bussell of Syracuse, New York
- WIDENOT's Resume by Wayne Borkowski, of Parlin, New Jersey.

THE DUNGEON

The Dungeon is going to be released in late October, but it's well worth the wait! Any of you who just can't wait until The Dungeon gets to your local dealers, see the form attached to this newsletter to order directly from us.

Attention **COMMODORE 128** owners: The Dungeon is compatible with the 1571 drive!

Some hints on **The Dungeon**:

Money will be a necessity, of course, but coppers are not an accepted form of currency.

An evil character from The City will have a tougher time in The Dungeon than a good one. However, there's a way to redeem yourself.

First impressions are important, so make sure you look presentable upon entering The Dungeon.

BANKS

After year two in AR, Banks have a much higher failure rate than previously. The first time you go into a bank after year 2, you may be tied up for as long as an hour; if you wait, it will eventually clear. Go in the morning. This way, if the calculations take a long time, you won't be in the bank at closing time (and risk being thrown out forever!).

Marlene Bird says that she goes to the banks the last day of each month and takes out her money. She goes back the next day (anticipating the failures) and waits until they are over. After that, she deposits her wealth back into the bank and hasn't lost any savings or interest.

HINTS

We made a mistake in one of the previous newsletters; the rate your STATS go up does *not* depend on your Stamina. Stamina, Wisdom, and Skill are random and have the possibility of moving up one point each level. Sorry for those of you who have been struggling to raise these stats with no success.

If some of your powerful weapons seem to be suddenly losing their umph! during encounters, there's a good chance that you've actually worn them out or broken them (didn't think of that, huh?). When this occurs, discard them. They are totally useless once they have been overused.

Many people are confused about where to find money, weapons, potions, etc. Except for what's available in the shops or smithies, *everything* else is completely random.

Certain life forms like molds and dragons can only be hit by magical weapons.

If you continually sip a potion, you can discover what it is. But be careful; sipping also delivers some of the potion's effects!

Christopher Beard of Nottinghamshire, England has some helpful hints to share:

If you need money, waiting outside the Granite Bank early in the morning may help; this area seems to attract merchants and noblemen. Don't attack guards, knights, or noblemen until you're at least a level 10 character.

When "Treasure Finding", don't sample any more potions. Other potions can interfere with your Treasure-Finding magic.

When you are Hungry, two bowls of fruit or 2 apple or lemon pies should do the trick. When you're Famished, 3 of the same works. If you're Starving, eat as much as you can. Water, mineral water, juice or milk should quench your thirst. If you're Very Thirsty, it takes 3 of any drink mentioned. Drink 5 when you're Parched.

Hints from Paul Hill of Wappingers Falls, New York:

Have you ever been walking down the street and suddenly found your hit points dropping off 10 at a time? You look and there is no indication of poison or disease; you're truly stumped. You've been *slimed* by the black slime sometime in the past and are now dying. The only hope is the Healer.

It's a good idea to carry a minimum of 1600 coppers during all hours of the night. This way, if you become poisoned or diseased, you can immediately go to the Healer without losing stats while waiting for the bank to open.

Appraisals at Gram's Gold Exchange are really beneficial. This place is hidden inside the complex in the far Northwest corner of The City. At the Granite Bank, you're lucky to get a maximum of 1600 coppers, but I've received as high as 15,000 coppers for one gem at Gram's.

From Wayne Borkowski of Parlin, New Jersey: When you encounter a character and take hit point damage from a spell, don't worry, the hit points will return when the spell wears off.

When you acquire potions, it is wise to save them for when you really need them (like when you get diseased or poisoned).

RECUTS

When mailing in for recuts, please send **both disks**. Even though the problem appears to be occurring in only one of the disks, it is important that both are sent back. The combination of one disk replaced with the latest revision with one that isn't, could cause the game to lock-up at various points.

Atari ST Versions of The City

The Atari St version of The City is completely separate from the original Atari version of The City, due to the fact that the ST has many more capabilities that we have taken advantage of. You can't take a character created on an 8-bit machine into the ST City. You'll have to start fresh, but it's worth it!

Commodore users: Turning the disk drive off and on again *before* inserting your character or back-up disk, is for **all** of you, not just if you've experienced MONDO AWESOME! If you neglect to do this, the results are absolutely unpredictable.

Generic Questions and Answers

Q. What is an easy way to become rich?

A. Like in real life, there is none.

Q. How high can your stats reach?

A. The highest possible number of points you can get for any one stat is 255.

Q. How long do you have to wait at the beginning of the game to get the right stats to start the game?

A. There are no 'right' stats; it's all random, kind of like a slot machine.

Many of you are having a lot of difficulty finding the guilds. Below is a list of co-ordinates to **all 12**.

Thieves'	35N, 44E
Blue Wizards'	48N, 19E
Light Wizards'	5N, 3E
Green Wizards'	43N, 12E
Red Wizards'	15N, 48E
Dark Wizards'	22N, 34E
Star Wizards'	12N, 28E
Wizards of Chaos	60N, 51E
Wizards of Law	50N, 62E
Guild of Order	50N, 58E
Physicians'	15N, 6E
Assassins'	3N, 56E

Many of you are confused about the grid system on the map. If a location is, say, 21N, 4E, begin from the bottom left-hand corner of the map and count 21 upwards(north), and 4 to the right(east). Count that bottommost square as 1 North, 1 East.

Thanks to all of you who let us know when you encounter peculiar happenings in the game. Not only does it help our readers, but it helps our programmers to detect the possible cause and get to the root of the problem. Because of the nature of Alternate Reality, many aspects of the game remain unknown. For instance, it would be difficult to know what reaction a level 30 character might trigger in The City, because we simply don't have access to one. The more you reveal to us, the better it is for everyone involved. Thanks again for all the support!

THE DUNGEON ORDER FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I have a _____ Commodore 64/128™ _____ Atari® _____ Apple II® Series Computer.

Quantity

_____ The Dungeon game disk @ \$39.95 \$ _____

Postage & Handling \$ 2.00

Sub-Total \$ _____

Sales tax - California Residents Only @ 2.60 ea..... \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

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