

VISIONS OF AFTERMATH

The Boomtown

User Guide



From the Designer...

Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown has been in development for twenty months now. It began life as a rainy day think-tank exercise for my friends and me and has evolved into what is presented here. I'm quite proud of it. When people first play with *The Boomtown*, their tendency is to expect it to be a tactical war-game or a graphic adventure. *The Boomtown* is more like an electronic Tinker Toy™ (brand) play set for would-be pioneers—a valley construction set. Its goal is to present the laws of nature in an interactive environment without seeming arbitrary or trite. Modeling life always requires that short-cuts be taken, but *Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown* strives to be as subtle as can be understood.

This program will begin by killing you...repeatedly. Don't judge it as too aggressive for what is actually a stern lesson in reality. *The Boomtown* is designed to model life to a larger degree than is common in a 'geographic scenario-oriented computer model'. The land is designed to seem like places instead of squares. Lots of possibilities exist, and none are thrust upon the player. The reward for dying repeatedly in *The Boomtown* is that as you learn its interface, you are mastering skills which will give you unprecedented control of such a reality. You will interact on a more intense basis than you have ever seen.

As a multi-player game, *The Boomtown* is seductive in both its simplicity and its complexity. There are no survival tips that I can give. The "Golden Rule" applies well to some groups while "Cover Your Backside" works for others. In the most aggressive groups, "Search and Destroy" is the only reasonable advice. *The Boomtown* is like a Monopoly™ board with 4000 squares where you can play or take any card and do most things on most squares if you have done the right things previously and brought appropriate materials. Know your opponents. Expect them to act as if it were real. Remember that desperate persons commit desperate acts.

My pride in *The Boomtown* is shared by a close-knit group of friends without whom the project would have been impossible. *The Boomtown* began as a "what if" discussion and has benefitted by constant input from its conceptual creators. I promised that I would mention the names of my co-conspirators, so here goes: Thanks to Amber and Keating, and to brothers Chuck and Scott, and sisters Valerie and Sheril. Thanks to Monica and Shea and Ian and Kyle and Jeff-called-Lothaire and Jeff-called-Dimitri. Thanks to Neil and Cathy; thanks to Danya. Most especially, thank you Sherri, for the hours of play testing and the comfort and support when things seemed most impossible. Without these people *The Boomtown* would be less than the shadow of what it is.

It is the consolation to completion of a much-loved creation that when the artist has ended his enjoyment, others may begin theirs.

Enjoy, Sparky Starks

Ways to Play

Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown

There are many ways to play *Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown* (hereafter called *Visions of Aftermath*). Some of you will see this as a straightforward survival simulation; others will see this as a strategy game. It is all of these things and more. Always keep in mind that *Visions of Aftermath* is in fact a reality unto itself. It is a place where you can act as you wish and do what you want. Where the single player will go after the high-score, the group of players can interact and recreate civilization, or simply battle for territory. The rules are really up to you.

Visions of Aftermath can support up to 16 players on any single world. Do not feel that you need to find 15 of your closest friends and invite them over for a game. Be creative. Two people can just as easily play eight characters each as they can two, but the implications can dramatically change the game.

Before you begin your first game, take a look at the materials included in the *Visions of Aftermath* package. We have provided you with a copy of the 1988 survivalist's best-seller, *New World Vision* along with the *EZFISH Shelter Manual*. These two guides have been provided to you by the author, Sparky Starks, so that you may study the knowledge of the bygone days of pre-holocaust 1988 as you attempt to survive the radio-active present.

We will not tell you that you can not play the game without reading these books; you can. You will have just as likely a chance of surviving as would any uneducated person dumped into the middle of a radio-active catastrophe... We STRONGLY suggest that you read them if survival is in your future plans.

Experiment, create, explore!! It's up to you to refashion the world as you see fit.

Mindscape Inc.

Installation

Installing COMMAND.COM on the Program Diskette

For Two Floppy Disk Drives:

1. Insert the *DOS* diskette into drive A and the *Program* disk into drive B.
2. Turn on the computer and the monitor.
3. Enter the date and time if prompted.
4. At the A>, type **COPY COMMAND.COM B:** and press either [RETURN] or [ENTER].
5. Your *Program* diskette is now ready.
6. Remove your *DOS* diskette from drive A and replace it with the *Program* diskette.
7. At the A>, type **BOOM** and press [RETURN] or [ENTER]. The program will then load.

For One Floppy Disk Drive:

1. Insert the *DOS* diskette into drive A.
2. Turn on the computer and the monitor.
3. Enter the date and time if prompted.
4. At the A>, type **COPY COMMAND.COM B:** and press either [RETURN] or [ENTER].
5. Follow the on-screen instructions using the *DOS* disk as "Diskette for drive A" and the *Program* disk as the "Diskette for drive B."
6. Your *Program* diskette is now ready.
7. Remove your *DOS* diskette from drive A and replace it with the *Program* diskette.
8. At the A>, type **BOOM** and press [RETURN] or [ENTER]. The program will then load.

Running from a Floppy Drive System:

1. Insert the *DOS* diskette into drive A.
2. Turn on the computer and the monitor.
3. Enter the date and time if prompted.
4. Remove your *DOS* diskette from drive A and replace it with the *Program* diskette.
5. At the A>, type **BOOM** and press [RETURN] or [ENTER]. The program will then load.

Installing the Program on a Hard Drive

After you complete the procedure outlined below, *Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown* will run entirely from your hard disk. The procedure will create a sub-directory on the hard disk and copy all relevant files to it. You will be asked to provide a name for the new sub-directory.

NOTE: This is a ONE-TIME installation. After you have installed *Visions of Aftermath* on your hard disk, you will not be able to re-run this procedure—unless you first follow the procedures in the “*Uninstalling the Program from the Hard Disk*.”

WARNING: Do not attempt to Backup or “Optimize/Defragment” your hard disk unless you have first uninstalled *Visions of Aftermath*. Any attempt to do so could result in a corruption of the program files and would render the program unexecutable from the hard disk. You will be able to re-install *Visions of Aftermath* to your hard disk after you have run your backup or optimization only if you have followed the uninstallation procedures.

Installation:

1. Boot your system and get a C>.
2. Insert the *Program* diskette in the A drive and close the door.
3. Type **A:SETFIXED <Name>**, where <Name> is the name of your sub-directory. Press [RETURN] or [ENTER].
4. Re-boot your system and type **CD\<Name>** and [RETURN] or [ENTER].
5. Type **BOOM** and press [RETURN] or [ENTER]. The program will then load.

Uninstalling the Program from the Hard Drive

1. Place the *Program* disk in drive A, and at the A> type **UNINSTALL** and press [RETURN] or [ENTER].

Running the Program

(**Note:** If you are running on a floppy-drive system, be sure to prepare a blank formatted data-disk. We strongly encourage you to store the maps you create on this diskette.)

Once you have loaded *Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown*, you will see the title-screen. You will then be presented with the opening screen of the program.

Stuff to do with a World

The opening screen, titled **Stuff to do with a World**, will appear with several options divided into two groups. The top group:



Create It From Nothing
Choose It Of All Possible Worlds
Destroy And Forget it
Investigate It
Clone It

is the **World Group**. It is from this list that you will generate the world you will attempt to survive, examine the worlds you have created to date, delete worlds, and copy worlds.

The bottom group:

Switch To EGA Version
Turn Sound Effects Off
Change To Partial Music Only
Switch To Numeric Scores
Start Joystick Allow
A: New Map Drive

is the **System Group**. This list allows you to set the parameters of the system on which *Visions of Aftermath* will run. From here you can set up your graphics card, toggle music and sound on and off, enable your joystick, etc.

Using Menus

Menu selection in *Visions of Aftermath* is very simple. Your cursor keys will move the highlight either up or down, and the [**SPACEBAR**] is used for selection. If you are using a joystick, just move the joystick up or down and select with the fire button. There are a few different cursor types in *Visions of Aftermath*. They are:

- — The Selection Box
- ⇨ — The Arrow
- > — The Caret

They all work very much the same way and should be considered identical when encountered. The only change is when you are playing the game and you want to exchange items back and forth. At this point you will be able to "Shuffle" items between two lists using the Caret and either the Left - Right cursor keys or by moving the joystick to the Left or Right. (More on this later.)

Status Line

If you forget what to do or where you are, all you need to do is consult the Status Line at the bottom of your screen. It is the line, now yellow, which says "Boomtown World Editor." This line will always change to inform you of your current option or place in the game. When it is red as opposed to yellow, pay special attention because the action you are about to take is either irreversible or of extreme importance.



— Status Line

SYSTEM GROUP

Before you create a world, examine the list of system options. When any one of these options is set, its setting will be saved in a configuration file as the default settings for your next game.

Switch to EGA Version

This menu will automatically switch the graphics mode between EGA and CGA graphics mode. Once chosen, EGA graphics will be used during game-play and the menu will be changed to read **Switch to CGA Version**. If chosen again, play will be returned to CGA graphics mode.

Turn Sound Effects Off

This menu will turn off the sound effects in the game. These sound effects are generally used to denote key-presses and events within the game. Once chosen, the menu will read **Turn Sound Effects On**. Choosing it at this time will restore the sounds.

Change to Partial Music Only

There are three levels of music in *Visions of Aftermath*. They are:

Full music (now completely off)

Change to partial music

Disable music (now partial)

Cycling through these options will set the music accordingly. This will allow you to turn the music on or off, or to have it play only important musical clues.

Switch to Numeric Scores

Scores can be represented either numerically or graphically. You have the option of setting this by toggling **Switch to Numeric Scores** or **Switch to Graphic Scores**. Scores appear at the end of a turn or when you request the standing of the Hordes.

Start Joystick Allow

You can turn on/off your joystick by selecting **Start Joystick Allow/Stop Joystick Allow**. (**NOTE:** Some systems will only operate properly when joystick is not allowed. Please turn off this option if you are experiencing any difficulty running this program.)

A: New Map Drive

When you first start *Visions of Aftermath* we suggest that you create a storage disk for your maps or that you plan to store them on your hard drive. Once you have the **New Map Drive** option, the status line will read **Arrows to Change, Bar to Choose**. You have the option of setting the map drive to be any drive from drive A - G just by using your up/down cursor keys. (Just so long as you have the drive you have specified.) From now on, any map you create/load will be placed/taken from the specified drive.

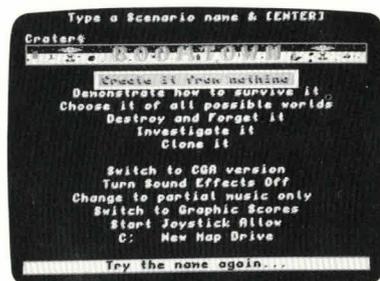
If you have selected a floppy-drive for your map drive, you will be prompted to insert a new blank formatted diskette before continuing.

WORLD GROUP

Now that you have your system set just the way you want it, it's time to create your first survival scenario.

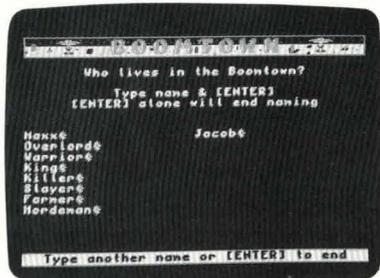
Create It From Nothing

Now create a world of your own. Choose **Create It From Nothing** from the menu and begin.



1. Your first prompt asks you to **TYPE A SCENARIO NAME & [ENTER]**. You need to supply a name for this new game before you can create it. This game will then be stored to disk under that name and can be recalled at any time in the future for further play. *Visions of Aftermath* will also automatically save the game for you at the end of each turn, so this world will always be kept current.

You may only use (8) characters to name your world. You are allowed to use both upper- and lower-case letters in your name. When you are done press **[ENTER]**.

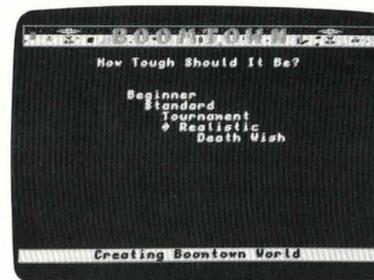


2. **Who Lives in the Boomtown?** You can type in up to (16) players. Once you have typed a name and pressed **[ENTER]** you will be asked for a shelter-key. This key is the password key for your bomb-shelter. It is the only way you have of preventing other players from wandering in and ransacking your supplies. It will also be necessary for you to press your shelter-key at the end of each round so that play may continue.

(It is advised that you not use the Y,N, or Q keys as shelter keys as they are also used by *The Boomtown*. For added security you may also use a shifted key.) Once you have chosen your shelter-key, write it down and don't show it to anyone. If you wish to play without shelter-keys have everyone press **[SPACEBAR]** as their key.

Once you have finished entering all of the players, press **[ENTER]** one more time.

3. **How Tough Should it Be?** There are (5) levels of difficulty in *Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown*, each one harder than the one before it. They are:

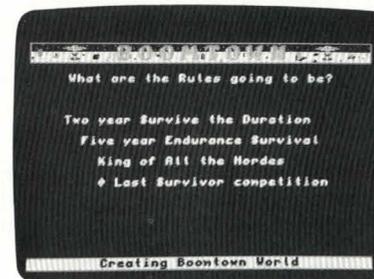


Beginner
Standard
Tournament
Realistic
Death Wish

The first time you play choose **Beginner** and go easy on yourself. *Visions of Aftermath* is not an easy game to master. In the beginner's game you are already given all of the skills that you need to survive as well as all the basic staples of survival. Remember, practice makes perfect—and you have to stay alive to be able to practice.

(NOTE: Beginner level has been designed to help introduce you to the game elements of *Visions of Aftermath*. We highly recommend that once you have played a bit in Beginner level that you advance to greater levels of difficulty and really test out your survival instincts.)

4. **What are the Rules Going to Be?** You will now be presented with either (3) or (4) options for the "WIN" conditions of the game. They are:



Two Year Survive the Duration
Five Year Endurance Survival
King of All the Hordes
Last Survivor Competition

In the first two options, **Two Year and Five Year Survive the Duration**, you are playing against the straight aggregate high-score that you can amass in the game-time allotted.

The King of All the Hordes adds The Hordes to the game and uses your strength in leadership ability to determine the scoring.

The **Last Survivor Competition** is only offered when there are two or more players. The win condition here is obvious.

5. Choose Terrain. Now you are asked to specify what the terrain is like in the area you wish to conquer. In order of difficulty, your options are:



Virginworld
Suburbia
Riverworld
Jungleworld
Desertworld
Wasteland
Aftermath

These areas are described as follows:

Virginworld—a beginner's park. Survival here is not *too* difficult.

Suburbia—populated with an abundance of deserted shelters.

Riverworld—a land covered by twisting rivers making travel difficult.

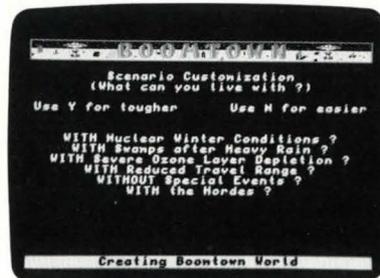
Jungleworld—a densely populated forest making farming difficult.

Desertworld—very little of anything.

Wasteland—crag covered, making settlement nearly impossible.

Aftermath—the worst of all worlds, where blast zones leave the land irradiated.

6. You can now customize your world. There are (6) additional options that you may or may not want to have some influence on game play. They will appear as questions for you to answer with either a [Y] for yes or an [N] for no. Choosing [Y] will always make the world more difficult to survive in. These options are:



WITH Nuclear Winter Condition?
WITHOUT The Greenhouse Effect?
WITH Swamps After Heavy Rain?
WITH Severe Ozone Depletion?
WITH Reduced Travel Range?
WITHOUT Special Events?
WITH The Hordes?

These options will effect the game in the following ways:

Nuclear Winter makes the year two months colder.

Greenhouse Effect, makes the year two months warmer, and doubles rainfall. (Only offered if Nuclear Winter is declined.)

Swamps appear after rain and create hazards.

Ozone Depletion doubles environmental radiation levels.

Reduced Travel doubles the amount of fuel and time needed for travel.

Hordes add a trading aspect in the game. (Automatic in **The King of all Hordes.**)

7. Your world is now ready to be created. You will see the game create your world step-by-step.

NOTE: This process may take anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes depending on the world you are creating and the computer you are running on.

The game will inform you that the following things are happening (depending upon the scenario you chose):



Creating Map
Running Rivers
Doing Shelters
Interior Forests
Doing Blasts
Pretty Rivers
Placing You
Stocking Shelters
Placing Books for Shelters
Placing the Hordes

Once this is done you will need to press any key so that you may return to the World Maker menu and choose your newly created world for play.

Stuff to do with a World (continued)

Before you choose your new world, let's look at the other things that you can do with a world.

Clone It

Selecting this option allows you to "Clone" or duplicate a world. You may want to do this in order to save the game as of a certain month, or to share a particular scenario with a friend who also has a copy of *Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown*.

When you select this option, you are presented with the list of worlds currently on your diskette (38 maximum). Simply choose the one you would like to copy. You will then be prompted for a new name for the copy and it will be stored on your diskette. If you decide that you do not want to duplicate a world, simply select the **Forget It** option.

Destroy and Forget It

Selecting this option will forever remove a world scenario from your disk. DO NOT select this option unless you are absolutely sure that you really want to throw away the world forever. You will be prompted for a [Y] Yes or [N] No to confirm your choice before the world is erased.

Investigate It

When you choose this menu you will be given the list of all of the worlds presently available on your disk. This option allows you to look at the specifications of a world before you load it for play.

Once you have chosen the world you are interested in you will be shown the "Boomtown World Statistics." It will show you:



The name of the world,
The number of people in the world,
The age of the world in game-time,
The terrain type,
The win condition, and
The scenario customizations.

After you have looked this over, you can also press any key to view the map of the world. When you have finished viewing the map, pressing any key will return you to the main menu.

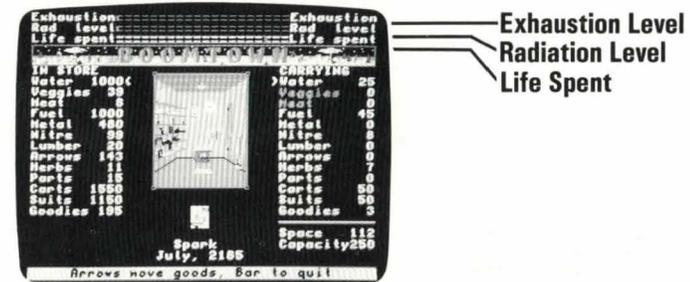
Choose It of All Possible Worlds



It is now time to choose the world you have created. Select **Choose it of All Possible Worlds** from the menu and then select your world from the list. Your world will now load.

(NOTE: If you have chosen EGA as your video type, the screen will go black and it will take a few extra seconds to load the scenario.)

Once your world is loaded you will be presented with a new screen. On the left is the stock of supplies that you have in the shelter, on the right is the stock you are currently carrying, and in the center is a picture of your current position—in this case inside your shelter. Below the picture in the center is an icon depicting the type of area you began the current turn on, also a shelter. Below the icon is the name of the current player (play order is randomized), and below that is the game date.



At the top of the screen you will notice a graph showing your current standings in **EXHAUSTION**, **RADIATION LEVEL**, and **LIFE SPENT**. These graphs go from the left at 0% to all the way right at 100%.

When your **Exhaustion Level** reaches 100% your turn is over, and you collapse from exhaustion. You are better off deciding to sleep before this happens.

If **Radiation Level** reaches 100% you will collapse and some life will be spent due to radiation damage.

If **Life Spent** reaches 100% you are DEAD. The graph will change color and become red when you have reached a critical level.

At the start of your turn you will first see the messages of the day (if there are any). These messages alert you to weather conditions, problems with your shelter, etc. The status line will then read **Waiting for You to Continue**. Pressing any key will begin your turn.

Let's run through a sample turn to show you how it's done.

First press any key to begin. Now transfer some items from your storage so that you are carrying them. You can carry up to 150 W.U. (weight units) unless you have a cart which allows you to carry an additional 100 W.U.s. To transfer items simply cursor up or down to the item you would like to move, and then cursor left or right to move it. You will also notice that each item has its own minimum W.U. that you can move at any one time. Play around with shuffling items until you have them balanced as you would like and then go outside.

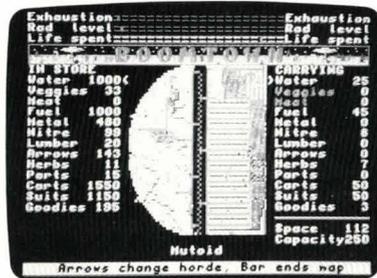
To go outside just hit the [SPACEBAR] to bring up your play options and then choose **Go Outside**. (Pressing the [SPACEBAR] anywhere will always bring up the list of your current options.) You are now outside and on the map, roaming around in your All

Terrain Vehicle or ATV. Go west three "Clicks" by pressing the left arrow three times. Notice the icon below the map. It is showing you that you started your turn in a shelter. Also notice the arrows around it? They are showing you the direction that you must travel in order to return to this point. You may have also noticed that the **IN STORE** list has disappeared and has been replaced by a heading of **TERRAIN**. Below this heading you will always see a description of the type of terrain you are currently traversing.

Now hurry back to the shelter by following the arrows. Once on top of the shelter icon press [SPACEBAR] for your options and then choose **Enter** to return to the inside of your shelter. Now choose **Sleep Over** to end your turn. Next time out you can do even more exploring.

Function Keys

In addition to the menus presented on screen, you also have the capabilities stored in the 10 Function keys. They are as follows:



Display Map

- F1—Horde Transaction Record
- F2—Graphic/Numeric Reports
- F3—Turn on/off Sound
- F4—Turn on/off Music
- F5—Add a New Player
- F6—Delete a Player
- F7—List Skills
- F8—Exit at End of Month
- F9—Display Map
- F10—Momentary Pause

Horde Transaction Record



Of all the function key commands, the only one which really needs further explanation is **F1, Horde Transaction Record**. When you are playing a game with The Hordes and you press the **F1** key you will see a report on your current "Horde Standings." This screen will let you know how you stand with regard to **Friendliness, Respect, and Attraction** with The Hordes.

In a one player game the scores are straightforward. The three categories are ranked on a scale of 0% to 100% left to right for each Horde group. This assumes you are in graphic scores. Press **F2** to toggle back and forth between numeric and graphic scores. In a two or more player game you have two columns in graphic scores mode, **Absolute** and **Relative**. **Absolute** is the same as above, while **Relative** shows you how far (in percentage) you are from the current leader. In numeric scores, you will still only see the **Absolute** ranking.

In a **King of The Hordes** game you will also see another category on the numeric scores screen called **Required**. This is the percentage you will need in order to become the **King of The Hordes**.

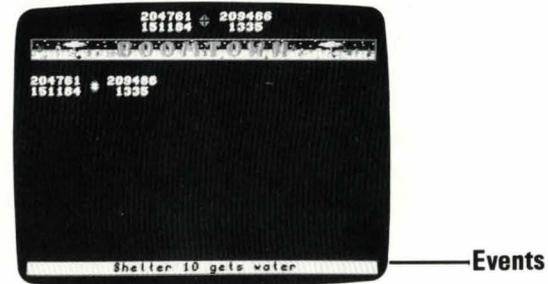
Map Legend

The following is a legend of all the different items that can be encountered on the map.

	Shelter		Fire
	Shed		Veggies
	Bridge		Crops
	Mill		Herbs
	Road		Desolation
	Rivers		Blast Zones
	Stage 1 Forest		Caves
	Stage 2 Forest		Crag
	Stage 3 Forest		Horde Encampment
	Stage 4 Forest		

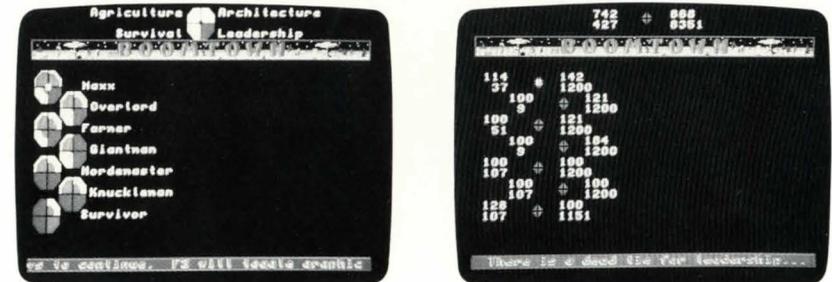
End Turn

At the end of everybody's turn you will be taken to a screen which will report to you the events of the month, show you the present score, store the game and begin the new month with a weather and event report.



Scoring

Scoring is broken down into four categories: **Agriculture, Architecture, Survival,** and **Overall.** (Overall is replaced by a **Leadership** category if you are playing with The Hordes.) In most "win" conditions the first three (or four) scores are totalled to determine the current leader. The exception is the **King of The Hordes** scenario where progress is based solely on your **Leadership** ability.) In the **Two and Five Year Survive the Duration** games the winner is the player with the most points at the end of the specified time. In the **Last Survivor Competition** the winner is chosen when there is only one player left alive. (**NOTE:** You can amass enough points to be the winner of the game and not be the last survivor. Remember, stupid actions can kill you off and leave a player with fewer points alive, thus ending the game. Be careful!)



Graphic scores are shown as follows. A green segment means that you are the overall leader in the specific area designated by that pie-slice. Red on a yellow segment shows the percentage you have of the leader's score in that area. The closer in the red is towards the center, the closer the contest. A yellow dot in the center of the pie designates the overall leader. At the top of the screen is another chart showing the

progress of all the characters combined. This is very helpful when you are all trying to work cooperatively.

End Game

NOTE: To exit from *Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown* simply press the **Ctrl-Alt-Del** keys simultaneously while on the opening menu. This will reboot your system and clear the program from memory.

Author's Disclaimer Sheet

This is the sheet to which all other documentation contained in *Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown* refers.

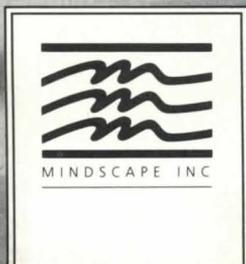
The *Visions of Aftermath* series is a sequence of simulations and therefore the documentation provided has been tailored to present a reality that requires a minimum of suspended disbelief. Some of the material in this package represents itself as non-fiction. None of the material presented here is intended to educate or inform. This is solely an entertainment product and no warranty is extended concerning its fitness for any purpose. All persons and places presented in this package are completely fictitious. Any similarity to living persons or actual places is purely coincidental with the exception of some of the titles presented as books in the various shelters which depict certain actual book titles and the names of several persons of historical notoriety. Some real persons of historical notoriety have been credited with works that are fictitious. This is a work of fiction.

All information presented herein was drawn from the author's casual knowledge of the subject and although some research was done, advice and information contained herein should not be treated as factual. Some of the information presented was designed to enhance the pervasive reality of the game at the expense of accuracy.

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